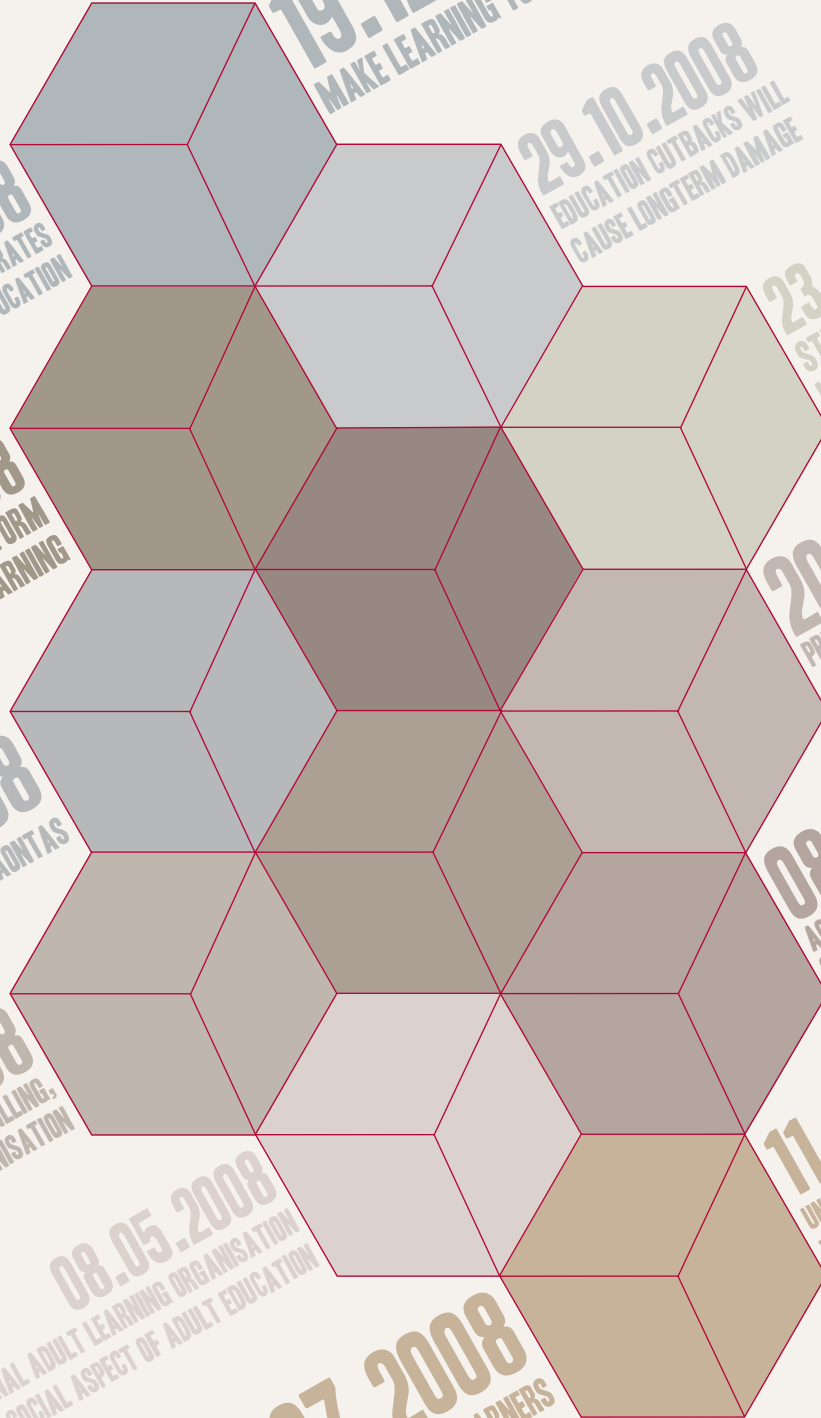


# AONTAS

## ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 2008

GO DIRECT TO CONTENTS 



04.02.2008  
FESTIVAL CELEBRATES  
'CHAMPIONS' IN EDUCATION

06.02.2008  
TIME TO TRANSFORM  
ADULT LEARNING

19.02.2008  
NEW JOBS NEED SKILLS, SAYS AONTAS

11.04.2008  
TIME FOR ACTION ON UPSKILLING,  
SAYS ADULT LEARNING ORGANISATION

08.05.2008  
NEW PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ADULT LEARNING ORGANISATION  
HIGHLIGHTS SOCIAL ASPECT OF ADULT EDUCATION

22.07.2008  
DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT OLDER LEARNERS

19.12.2008  
MAKE LEARNING YOUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

29.10.2008  
EDUCATION CUTBACKS WILL  
CAUSE LONGTERM DAMAGE

23.10.2008  
STRONGER VOICE NEEDED WITHIN  
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

20.10.2008  
PRESIDENT PRAISES INTERNATIONAL  
ADULT LEARNING INITIATIVES

08.09.2008  
AONTAS URGES GOVERNMENT TO HONOUR  
COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING

11.08.2008  
UNIVERSITY FEES DEBATE NEEDS  
TO INCLUDE PART-TIME STUDENTS



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# CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Overview	6
Organisational Development	8
Policy and Research	11
Promoting Adult and Community Education	14
Representing AONTAS	17
Financial Statements	19 – 38



[➔ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[NEXT PAGE ➔](#)

## FOREWORD

It is no secret that we are currently experiencing a financial and economic crisis in our country. However, in the midst of this crisis, one area of endeavour shines out, as it has done in the past, as a beacon for those who are experiencing the pain of disadvantage whether engendered through personal and social circumstances or through the economic hardship of sudden redundancy and unemployment or indeed both.

Involvement in Adult & Community Education has always provided a pivotal focus for those who are seeking to redirect their personal, social and civic lives as well as for those who are upskilling and retraining for the labour market.

We must therefore concentrate on ensuring that involvement in Adult & Community Education is an enriching and empowering experience. It is imperative that access to it comes with an aspiration, not only to improve our practical capabilities, but also to reinforce our sense of well-being, self-esteem and pride in ourselves not only as valuable individuals but as valuable members of our families, communities and society as a whole. Adults who are affirmed in this way will look critically at themselves, their antecedents and their descendents, to analyse where they have come from and where their aspirations may lead them.

This recognition and validation of themselves for who they are and where they are at, leads them to examine and actively promote their prospective potential. AONTAS recognises and promotes the importance of partnership in the practice of Adult & Community Education. Working together is essential for strength, effectiveness and growth. Those engaged in the Lifelong Learning process, at whatever level, must also constantly ensure that there is recognition and affirmation for the tremendous work that people are doing individually and in groups across the country. Recognising this work is not enough. It is essential to strive through lobbying to ensure that when fires are lit the flames must continue to be fanned.

As members of the Lifelong Learning Community we all have a mandate to ensure that Adult & Community Education is kept to the forefront of all political debate. It is the most practical ideological tool for the revitalisation of our society particularly in a time when individuals and communities are suffering the ill-effects of the economic recession.

Marian Duffy, *President, AONTAS*

 **BACK TO CONTENTS**

 **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** 

## OVERVIEW

2008 has been a mixed year for AONTAS with events happening in the second half of the year signalling changes for our ways of thinking and working. The year got off to a lively start with the second Adult Learners' Festival which took place from February 4th to February 8th. Opened by the Minister for Lifelong Learning, Mr. Sean Haughey and hosted by Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, the STAR Awards ceremony in Dublin Castle proved to be the highlight of the week with 11 projects winning awards from 131 nominations for a wide range of activities. Throughout the week hundreds of activities were organised by adult education providers all over the country attracting new learners and highlighting the important role of adult and community education. The increase in the level of interest by adults wishing to pursue learning opportunities was indicated by the huge increase in inquiries (from 3442 in 2007 to 6927 in 2008) to the AONTAS Information Referral Service.

At the close of the Festival AONTAS focused on how the political parties had performed in relation to adult and community education since the general election in 2007. AONTAS, using the theme, *Learning Matters*, highlighted, in particular the possibility of extending the Back to Education Allowance to lower paid workers and used the research done by Stephen Stewart, a mature student member, to draw attention to the major barrier of finance for mature students pursuing part-time studies. Stephen's research entitled, *A Modest Policy Proposal*, was followed up with great interest by the education spokespeople leading to questions in the Dáil and a presentation to the Oireachtas sub-committee discussing the new Student Support Bill in April. Stephen's proposal can be viewed in the policy section of the AONTAS website. AONTAS built up strong contacts during the year with all the political party education spokespeople, keeping key policy issues on the agenda. Those issues focused on by AONTAS in 2008 included:

- Back to Education Allowance
- Third Level fees
- Upskilling
- Interculturalism

- Older learners
- Distance Education
- Funding for Adult and Community Education.

AONTAS met with other partners in education throughout the year including FETAC, HEA, NALA, IVEA, TUI, NCCRI, USI, NCCWN. A number of submissions were made to government on a range of the policy issues identified above. Copies of submissions can be accessed through the policy section of the AONTAS website and are also listed in this report.

As soon as the Adult Learners' Festival was completed planning began for the 2009 Festival and for two major events scheduled for the Autumn i.e. the hosting of the EAEA General Assembly and Grundtvig Awards, and the National Conference to mark the European Year of Interculturalism. The EAEA Assembly was attended by 98 delegates from 42 countries across Europe and they joined another 150 delegates at the National Conference. The evaluation of both events showed that they were very successful and AONTAS was honored to have the President Mary McAleese present the Grundtvig awards to two transnational projects focusing on interculturalism. The winners of the awards presented workshops on their work at the conference. A full report of the conference will be available on the website in spring 2009.

During the second half of the year the economic situation both globally and nationally began to change rapidly, resulting in notification from the Department of Education and Science that cutbacks were on the way. AONTAS had prepared a budget submission in July and had discussed it at a meeting with the Principal Officer of the Further Education Section, Mr. Seamus Hempenstall, on July 21st. Later in the month AONTAS was asked by the Department to put on hold its Training and Support Programme for Community Education Facilitators subject to a review. On November 17th a meeting of the Steering Group of the CEF Training and Support Programme was held and it was agreed that the programme would become part of the Continuous Professional Development Programme of the

## ➔ BACK TO CONTENTS

local VECs. The work of AONTAS during the five years of the Programme was acknowledged by the Department and the Steering Group and a closing event was planned for early 2009.

AONTAS was also informed that cutbacks of at least 3% in administrative areas across the Further Education Sector were being flagged as the recession began to deepen. Following the announcement by Government of an early budget on October 14th 2008 AONTAS sought a meeting with the Minister for Lifelong Learning, Mr. Sean Haughey and the Principal Officer of the FE Section. A meeting was scheduled on October 6th and the president, Marian Duffy and the Director, Berni Brady made a case for preserving the core work of AONTAS and indeed the Adult and Community Education Sector as a whole. In the budget announcements the adult and community education budget was cut by 8% including a reduction in places on the BTEI and Senior Travellers' Training Workshops. AONTAS has also received notification of cuts of 3% to its core funding and 5% of its supplementary funding for 2009. It will however receive some funding to consolidate the QAF Project and for research for 2009. In the light of this information AONTAS will review its budget and work plan in early 2009.

During 2008 AONTAS engaged in a number of research activities. Through the Information Service AONTAS has built a databank of case studies of both adult learners and projects which it uses as an evidence base for policy and promotion work. It also gathers statistics relevant to the development of adult and community education and plans to upgrade the information systems during 2009 to make access to such data more efficient. AONTAS uses this information to inform its policy submissions to government, to provide media and political spokespeople with factual information and to promote the importance and benefits to people's lives of engaging in lifelong learning.

In 2008 AONTAS assisted the Further Education Development Unit in drawing up guidelines for attracting men back to education. Research was also undertaken into the learning needs of older people and presented in a report entitled, *Don't Stop Me Now*, which will be launched during the 2009 Adult Learners' Festival. The research was part funded by Age and Opportunity. Earlier in the year AONTAS was approached by the Development Education Unit of Irish Aid with a view to exploring the possibility of linking development education with adult and community education. The research is now complete and a final report will be presented to Irish Aid in March 2009. AONTAS also explored the possibility of developing a database to quantify participation in community education but came to

## ➔ PREVIOUS PAGE

the conclusion that such a project was more appropriate for providers to pursue. AONTAS will however conduct a piece of research on community education in 2009.

AONTAS continued to provide training to women's community education groups in the delivery of the Quality Assurance Framework and eleven groups and networks were presented with their QAF certificate by Minister Haughey in November. A guide book for using the QAF is currently being prepared and will be published in 2009. The annual issue of the *Adult Learner* was launched at an IRAACE meeting in October. The journal, which is a collaborative project between the Adult Education Officers' Association and AONTAS now provides a forum for refereed articles from researchers at home and abroad as well as practitioners in the field. The work is managed by an Editorial Board which was chaired by Eileen Curtis, Adult Education Officer, Kilkenny VEC during 2008.

At the Annual General Meeting on May 7th six new members were elected to the Executive Committee including three new Officers, Marian Duffy, President, Ruth Smith, Hon Secretary and Maria Gorman, Hon Treasurer. The outgoing officers, John Ryan, Patrick Nolan and Brid Connolly were thanked for their work and commitment over the years and each received a small presentation on behalf of the membership. The Executive Committee met six times in 2008 and one of those meetings was a day long training session in governance and the role of a Board of Directors. Members of the Committee, in particular the Officers of the Organisation, represented AONTAS at a range of key events throughout the year. Examples are the Teachers' Unions conferences, IVEA conference, NALA events and number of others.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Executive Committee and the Officer Board for its support throughout the year and the staff of the Department of Education and Science Further Education Section for its continued support of AONTAS. The Minister for Lifelong Learning, Mr. Sean Haughey has also been consistently supportive of AONTAS and its work. During the year two members of staff moved on, Maureen Kavanagh and Adele McKenna, and I would like to thank them for their work and wish them success in their future careers. It is perhaps with some trepidation that we look forward to 2009 but I am convinced that the skills, expertise, energy and commitment of all of us working in the adult and community education sector will see us through these troubled times.

Berni Brady, *Director, AONTAS*

## NEXT PAGE ➔

**BACK TO CONTENTS**

**PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE**

# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

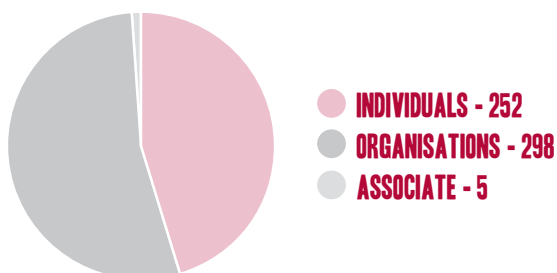
## AONTAS Membership

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 555 members. The breakdown of membership is expressed in the pie chart below: 298 organisations, 252 individuals and 5 associate members. There was a drop in the number of associate and individual members, mainly due to the lapsing of non-paid up members. Also, the actual number of organisational members has increased and is now the largest portion of members. The changing proportions may be, in part, due the cost of membership for a small organisation being equal to individual membership.

The AONTAS Annual General Meeting took place on May 7th 2008 at the Royal Dublin Hotel with one hundred practitioners and learners from the adult and community education sector in attendance. The achievements of outgoing officers, including the Vice President Brid Connolly and President John Ryan, were celebrated and a new Officer Board elected. A newly elected Executive Committee: officers and ordinary members were introduced together with the new AONTAS President Marian Duffy, Adult Education Officer with Co. Carlow VEC.

**A full list of AONTAS members is available online at [www.aontas.com/membership/](http://www.aontas.com/membership/)**

*Total AONTAS Membership  
(Individual, Organisational and Associate Members)*



## Outcomes of work with membership

- Creation of an online facility for payment of membership fees <http://www.aontas.com/membership/renewmember.html>.
- Readjustment of members by reviewing membership payments, total lapsed from this process was 16.5% of the previous total membership.
- Proportion of new members (joined 2008) is 12% of total membership.
- Increase in the proportion of organisational members by 5% (2007: 49% organisations, 48% individuals and 3% associate; 2008: 54% organisations, 45% individuals and 1% associate).
- Specific targeting of prospective members that would add value to AONTAS.
- First adult learner elected to the Executive Committee in the position of individual member.

## Community Education Network

The Community Education Network is a platform for community education groups within the AONTAS membership and it serves as a space to promote community education and shape policy. The need for such a platform was articulated during the strategic plan consultation process when community groups voiced their need for a representative body for community education, a stronger voice for community education, and a more direct way to participate in the policy work of AONTAS. Members of the AONTAS staff team and a steering group, composed of AONTAS members from a community education background, guide the network's work and policy actions.

**The network is in existence for over one year and has met on four occasions. A report and details of these meetings are available from the AONTAS website <http://www.aontas.com/commed/network.html>**

## ➔ BACK TO CONTENTS

The frequency of these meetings ensures a sustained momentum of the work. Sixty five organisations are members of the network, some of which are networks themselves therefore the reach of the groups is extensive and in turn allows small groups to benefit from participation through their respective networks. Over half of all of the Irish Republic's counties are represented and this is expected to expand as more meetings are held at a regional level.

### Strategic Work Plan for the Community Education Network

A strategic work plan for the Network outlines its aims and objectives which are divided into three themes:

- Resourcing community education
- Recognition for the value and distinctive nature of community education
- Raising the profile of community education and lobby for its needs.

Further information is available on the AONTAS website: <http://www.aontas.com/commed/network.html>

### Community Education Network Meetings

Date	Location	Participants
12th March	Dublin	34
21st May	Dublin	20
12th November	Limerick	20
Total attendance		74

### Outcomes

- Three strategic Community Education Network Meetings held (reports from each are available on the AONTAS website).
- Network agreement on the definition of community education through numerous participative processes.
- Community Education Network leaflet produced, available for download on the AONTAS website.
- Funding secured from the Wheel Training Links programme in order to increase capacity of Network members to lobby effectively (training will be undertaken in 2009).
- Funding secured from Sound and Vision in a joint application with DCTV for the development of television programmes that will highlight and promote the value, ethos and methodology of community education.

## ➔ PREVIOUS PAGE

## ➔ NEXT PAGE

- Expansion of the Community Education Network Steering group to 7 members in order to reflect diversity and groups outside Dublin.
- Online Discussion Forum set up in order to develop and expand the Community Education Network, will be launched in 2009 (<http://groups.google.ie/group/aontas-community-education-network>).
- Continued promotion of the Community Education Network through AONTAS Explore magazine, E-bulletin and website.

### Learner Networks

Learner Networks were first created in 2006 and as a result of their success were identified as a specific area for work in the AONTAS Strategic Plan 2007-2010. A framework for developing networks was produced in order to create effective spaces for learners to come together and share experience, identify their needs and to work collectively to create better conditions and opportunities for learning. In order to ensure such networks are effective AONTAS established a steering group and made strategic alliances with other organisations with the aim of using collaborative work that responds to the needs of learners.

One cohort of learners that were identified as in need for such a network was older learners. Their needs were identified during a research project conducted by AONTAS, *'Don't Stop Me Now - the Lifelong Learning Needs of Older People.'* The first Senior Learner Network meeting took place in July 2008 in Galway; it was run in collaboration with Active Retirement Ireland and University of the Third Age (U3A). AONTAS also linked in with Age Action and VECs in order to ensure that as many learners as possible were reached. Over 70 people attended this meeting. A follow up seminar was carried out in collaboration with U3A in the Mansion House in September.

The outcomes of the meetings have directed the work so far and created a plan for future activity. The aim of the Senior Learner Network is to provide a forum for dialogue with, and between, older learners. By developing networks, learners are enabled to come together to discuss their experiences as adult learners and the barriers and issues that arise during their learning journeys. It is hoped that through this process of sharing experience, specific issues will be identified and a solution found through the support and assistance of AONTAS. Adult learners are empowered to take on these issues and through a collaborative approach with others reach a satisfactory outcome. Learner networks are inspirational in that the learner's experience is used to motivate others to work together for a better adult learning

## 👉 BACK TO CONTENTS

service in Ireland. This is one way of addressing the needs of senior learners (55+) and raising the profile of this important, but often overlooked target group.

For more information please see <http://www.aontas.com/membership/learnernetworks.html>

### Mature Student Learner Network

The development of a sustainable mature student learner network was explored and researched. Due to the limited capacity of mature students to attend meetings a method for creating effective discussion was created in line with their needs, resulting in a Mature Student Learner Online Network which will be launched in 2009. Preliminary discussions with relevant bodies have taken place and the aim of the online network will be to create an accessible, open forum to facilitate dialogue between, and with, mature students in order to ensure that their needs are responded to.

This forum is available online: <http://www.aontas.com/membership/learnernetworks.html>

### Outcomes

- Establishment of the first AONTAS Senior Learner Network.
- Development and strengthening of partnerships with a number of organisations involved with older learners.
- One Senior Learner Network meeting hosted with an audience of over 70 participants in Galway, July 2008.
- A seminar for Senior Learners hosted in collaboration with University of the Third Age (run by Age Action Ireland) in the Mansion House, September 2008.
- Creation, and strengthening, of Learner Network Steering Group.
- Expansion in the number of Senior Learner Network Members, now standing at 233 learners. A host of networks and organisations are also part of the network and therefore a large reach of senior learners achieved.
- Strategic plan created for the Senior Learner Network based on the responses of learners at the first exploratory Network meeting (July 08).
- Development and strengthening of partnerships with organisations involved with Mature Students.
- Creation of an online discussion forum for all adult learners which will be launched in 2009, <http://groups.google.ie/group/aontas-learner-networks>.

## 👉 PREVIOUS PAGE

## NEXT PAGE 👉

### Community Education Facilitators' Programme

Under the Community Education Facilitators' Training and Support Programme 2008 AONTAS delivered a set of three regional meetings in the spring. These concentrated on Time and Stress Management.

Following these meetings a National Training Seminar was held in Athlone. The main aim of this was to enable the CEFs as one group to reflect on community education 8 years after the White Paper on Adult Education.

The Training and Support Programme was put on hold in the summer of 2008 and following negotiations with the Department of Education and Science and the Training and Support Steering group will be subsumed into the VECs' CPD programmes.

### QAF: Quality Assurance Framework

During 2008 AONTAS continued its work of mainstreaming the Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education.

### Outcomes

- 11 groups and networks achieved the Quality Assurance Framework Certificate having completed the training process.
- Certificates presented by Minister Haughey at a day of celebration on November 20th 2008.
- New QAF guide book to be published in early 2009.

The following groups and Networks successfully completed the training process and quality assured their work:

- Clare Women's Network – Clare
- Limerick Women's Network – Limerick
- Longford Women's Link – Longford
- Ronanstown Women's Group/CDP – Dublin
- South West Kerry Women's Association – Co. Kerry
- Southside Women's Action Network (S.W.A.N.) – Dublin
- St Munchin's Women's group – Limerick
- SOLAS-Ballymun-Dublin Southside Women's group – Limerick
- Waterford Women's Centre – Waterford
- Women of the North West – Mayo.

➔ **BACK TO CONTENTS**

➔ **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** ➔

## **POLICY AND RESEARCH**

AONTAS plays a key role in influencing and responding to policy development within the adult and community education sector. Its policy work is underpinned by its information resources and based on continuous feedback from its members on developments at a local level. It brings these issues to the attention of government, media and to other fora where AONTAS represents the voice of adult learners. In 2008 AONTAS identified key policy issues including:

- Abolition of part time third level fees
- Attracting men back to education
- Interculturalism/Integration
- Investment in adult learning
- Older Learners
- Supports to learners through the Back to Education Initiative
- Upskilling.

### **Submissions**

AONTAS made a number of submissions relating to these issues to government and other relevant bodies during 2008. These included:

- Submission to the Higher Education Authority on Open and Distance Learning (April 2008).
- Submission on the Student Support Bill (July 2008).
- Submission to the Committee on the Implementation of the National Skills Strategy (July 2007).
- Pre-Budget Submission (July 2008).
- Submission on the re-orientation of the Millennium Fund (November 2008).
- Submission on the Institutes of Technology Information System Research (December 2008).

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Copies of submissions can be accessed from the AONTAS website. <http://www.aontas.com/policy/papers.html>

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### **Oireachtas and Media Monitoring**

AONTAS maintains an Oireachtas and Media Monitoring system enabling it to respond quickly to relevant policy issues as they arise through news releases, letters to the editor and Parliamentary Questions. AONTAS endeavours to take a lead role in speaking on issues relating to adult and community education. The following news releases were issued in 2008:

- AONTAS critiques Minister Hanafin's vision of a culture of learning (24th January 2008)
- Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh urges government to 'Make Learning Matter' (1st February 2008)
- Festival Celebrates 'Champions' in Education (4th February 2008)
- Time to transform Adult Learning (6th February 2008)
- AONTAS welcomes the Student Support Bill (6th February 2008)
- 'Time to Get Real about the Cinderella Sector', say Education Spokespersons (11th February 2008)
- New Jobs Need Skills, says AONTAS (19th February 2008)
- AONTAS welcomes establishment of new Interdepartmental Committee (22nd February 2008)
- Flaws in grant initiative must be revised to address current skills shortage, says Adult Learning Organisation (5th March 2008)
- New statistics on pupil retention show little progress, says Adult Learning Organisation (28th March 2008)
- Time for Action on Upskilling, says Adult Learning Organisation (11th April 2008)

## 👉 BACK TO CONTENTS

- Adult Learning Organisation supports Intercultural Education Strategy (14th April 2008)
- Mature Student calls on Oireachtas Committee to review criteria for grant scheme (28th April 2008)
- New president of National Adult Learning Organisation highlights social aspect of adult education (8th May 2008)
- AONTAS Director disappointed at Hanafin decision not to revise grant criteria (16th May 2008)
- Upskilling is the obvious response, says Adult Learning Organisation (11th June 2008)
- Closure of IILT 'a severe setback' for immigrants (18th June 2008)
- New Access Plan for Education identifies 'Room for Improvement' (9th July 2008)
- Adult Learner Journal 2009: Call for Papers (14th July 2008)
- Dispelling Myths about Older Learners (22nd July 2008)
- University Fees Debate needs to include Part-Time students (11th August 2008)
- Student Support Bill 2008 (21st August 2008)
- Nominate a group for an AONTAS STAR award (2nd September 2008)
- AONTAS urges Government to honour commitment to lifelong learning (8th September 2008)
- Budget fails to invest in our economic future (15th October 2008)
- President praises international adult learning initiatives (20th October 2008)
- Stronger voice needed within intercultural dialogue (23rd October 2008)
- Education Cutbacks will cause longterm damage (29th October 2008)
- Call for Applications – Grundtvig In Service Training Grants (31st October 2008)
- Funding Information Sessions under the Grundtvig Adult Education Programme (6th November 2008)
- Make Learning Your New Year Resolution (19th December 2008).

## 👉 PREVIOUS PAGE

AONTAS received significant media coverage during 2008 – see examples below:

- Return of Full Time Fees: Letter to the Editor, Irish Times (13th August 2008).
- Older people Reap Benefits of Lifelong Learning: Sunday Business Post (31st August 2008).
- BTEA Broadcast Interview with Berni Brady: City Channel.
- Adult Learners' Festival – RTE Radio 1 Mooney Goes Wild.
- Return to Learning Supplements (Autumn 2008).

AONTAS also received substantial coverage from local media including radio interviews with Limerick Live 95, Dublin South FM, Inishowen Community Radio, Raidio na Gaeltachta, Clare FM, NEAR FM and West Limerick Community Radio on AONTAS and a wide range of adult education topics.

As mentioned previously, AONTAS policy work is underpinned by research undertaken as part of the information gathering process inhouse and through its involvement in larger research projects.

### Case Studies

AONTAS continues to gather a broad range of case studies to support the policy work of AONTAS. Over 2008 the Information Officer made several inputs at various meetings calling for case-studies whilst also requesting learners to share their stories via the AONTAS website. As a result of this AONTAS has:

- Developed and promoted a clear description of adult and community education and the range of learners who avail of it.
- Showcased learners stories at various events.
- Promoted learners achievements on the information section of the website.
- Developed a clear and concise data-base of case studies.
- Undertaken a piece of research on the benefits in monetary terms to three adult learners in preparation for the 2009 Adult Learners' Festival Policy Event.
- Built on existing media links to promote and share learners stories.

## NEXT PAGE 👉

 **BACK TO CONTENTS**

 **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** 

### Research Projects

- Guidelines for attracting men back to education; on behalf of the Further Education Development Unit (completed).
- The lifelong learning needs of older people; on behalf of Age and Opportunity (completed).
- Exploring the links between development education and adult and community education; on behalf of the Development Education Unit of Irish Aid (to be completed Spring 2009).
- Development of a guidebook for delivery of the AONTAS Quality Assurance Framework for Womens' Community Education (to be completed 2009).
- Adult Learner Journal (published Autumn 2008).

### Irish Research Association for Adult Education and Community Education (IRAACE)

- First IRAACE event was held on 4th April 2008. The event offered attendees the opportunity to network with other researchers, to discuss current projects and to showcase their work
- In June IRAACE Secretariat was handed to NALA and IRAACE held its second event in autumn.

### Library and Publications

- The library continues to be a valued resource for AONTAS staff and Executive members and assists them in the completion of submissions/research etc.
- The public, particularly those studying adult education continue to request publications from AONTAS. The Information Booklet was the most requested publication in AONTAS in 2008 and, where possible, learners are encouraged to download it in pdf. format
- AONTAS receive approximately five requests each month. Gender & Learning 2003, Community Education 2004, The Adult Learner 2008, At the Forefront and Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework Project Report 2003 – 2005 were the most requested publications. Where possible, the requests were directed to our website to download the publications in pdf. format. The website also includes the latest policy analysis from AONTAS, developments in the community education sector, an extensive range of publications and research reports.

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**A database of contacts and researchers has been developed as well as a website. Web address: [www.iraace.ie](http://www.iraace.ie)**

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 **BACK TO CONTENTS**

 **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** 

# PROMOTING ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

## Communications

During 2008 AONTAS continued to develop the communications strategy in line with the objectives identified within the strategic plan. The Communications Officer works closely with other members of the staff team to ensure that the communications strategy supports the members, promotes the information service and highlights key policy issues.

## Media Queries

AONTAS is regularly called upon to comment on issues relating to adult learning. These issues are generally tied into the policy focus of the organization and examples of coverage have been listed in the policy/research section in addition to these:

- The Irish Times Back to Education Supplement featured both articles and case studies promoting the work of AONTAS
- The Irish Independent Back to Education Supplement promoted the Information Booklet, referral service and research project *'Don't Stop Me Now'*
- The Irish Examiner did a feature on *'Don't Stop Me Now'* and included a case study
- Both the Evening Herald and Herald AM promoted the AONTAS Information Referral Service.

## Adult Learners' Festival

By far the largest promotional event in the adult and community education calendar is the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival. The second festival took place in the first week of February 2008. In keeping with the overall aim of promoting adult learning, the Festival is key to raising the profile of the sector locally, regionally and nationally. The Festival is supported by the Department of Education and Science and in 2008 was also supported by FETAC and the NQAI.

## Outcomes

- 131 projects were nominated for STAR Awards, and over 250 representatives attended the STAR Awards ceremony at Dublin Castle.
- 108 events were listed on the website, taking place in 25 counties. Some events such as the Tallaght Adult Learners' Fair saw attendance exceed 700.
- An extensive advertising campaign featuring the well known voices of Pat Shortt and Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh ran on local, community and national media around the country.
- Over 23 different interviews on local, national and community media took place the week of the Festival, including a feature on RTE's *'Mooney Goes Wild'*.
- A print advertising campaign ran in local and national newspapers in the lead up to the Festival. Over one hundred articles relating to the Festival were gathered.
- For the first time AONTAS launched a text line service to promote the Information Booklet. During the timeframe leading up to and immediately after the Festival 728 copies of the booklet were sent out.
- DCTV (Dublin Community Television) produced a ten minute DVD with highlights from the STAR Awards Ceremony and activities that took place over the week, which was distributed to members and uploaded onto YouTube.

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**More information on the Festival can be accessed via the AONTAS website or by visiting [www.adultlearnersfestival.com](http://www.adultlearnersfestival.com)**

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## 👉 BACK TO CONTENTS

### Conference: Creating Intercultural Communities

AONTAS used the national conference, 'Creating Intercultural Communities' held in Dublin in October to highlight the role of adult learning in promoting intercultural dialogue. The conference which was held alongside the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA) General Assembly, was highlighted through national and local media, for example:

- RTE's Spectrum programme featured an interview with one of the Grundtvig Winners
- The Irish Times covered the EAEA Assembly and Presidential Visit
- Newstalk's Global Village featured an interview with Berni Brady, AONTAS Director, and Benedicta Attoh
- Two short videos were produced by DCTV – one about the Assembly and the other about the Conference. These videos are available on the AONTAS website.
- A report of the conference will issue in Spring 2009.

### Explore

Three issues of Explore were produced and distributed to AONTAS members and other relevant agencies and organisations.

- Issue 9 – focused on the Festival, including reports from local event organisers around the country. The issue included a DVD about the Festival
- Issue 10 – focused on the learning needs of older people, drawing on research supported by Age and Opportunity and conducted by AONTAS
- Issue 11 – focused on the link between adult learning and intercultural dialogue, following on a European conference hosted by AONTAS and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

### E-bulletin

The AONTAS E-bulletin is a mechanism for AONTAS members to share information with each other as well as a means for AONTAS to communicate regularly with members. It is e-mailed to all members with an e-mail address on a monthly basis. The E-bulletin includes AONTAS News, Adult Education News as well as a dedicated Adult Learners' Festival section from September to January.

## 👉 PREVIOUS PAGE

## NEXT PAGE 👉

### Website

- The website [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com) was revamped, and content reorganised in time for the launch of the Adult Learners' Festival
- New features include a highly accessible information section, which is updated regularly to include the most recent information on guidance, education options and financial support. It makes use of creative technologies such as podcasting and videocasting.

### Training and Capacity Building

AONTAS also supports member organisations to engage in their own promotional work.

### Outcomes

- In April the Communications Officer delivered a workshop on communications and media planning to members of staff at Knockanrawley Family Resource Centre.
- The Communications Officer regularly assists members with their media work – through advice on writing press releases, handling media queries and general promotion.
- AONTAS initiated a link between the Community Education Network and DCTV (Dublin Community Television). In autumn 2008 two member organisations of the CEN (MAIN and an Cosán) participated in a training course in studio television production under the DCTV Initiative 'Community in a Studio'.
- AONTAS also submitted a joint proposal for funding with DCTV in Autumn 2008. The proposal was successful and as result a project, which will go into production in spring 2009 will involve a series of programmes about community education.

### The Information Referral Service

AONTAS continues to deliver an Information Referral Service which provides both direct and referral information on adult education issues to individuals and groups. The success of the two previous Adult Learners' Festivals coupled with the increased media coverage in the past year has led to a dramatic increase in queries which more than doubled since 2007.

In response to this increase in queries a new section has been added within Explore entitled "Ask Jenny". This section attempts to answer the most frequently asked questions to the referral service on a quarterly basis. The Information officer also updated and improved the Information Section of the website to respond to the most frequently asked questions

## 👉 BACK TO CONTENTS

in line with the Information Booklet and regularly directs learners to avail of links and publications on the site.

### Emerging Trends

- The queries for 2008 totalled a substantial 6,927 – this signified a doubling from the previous year's records which clearly indicated that this service is a very important starting point for many learners. Once again the website, the Adult Learners' Festival, word of mouth and media coverage continue to play a role in the promotion of the service
- Analysis of the queries indicates that there were two peak periods i.e. during the Adult Learners' Festival and throughout the summer months as a result of media promotion through newspaper supplements
- There has been an increase in the numbers of people requesting retraining/up skilling as a direct result of the rise in unemployment. In 2008 over 1036 learners indicated that they had recently been made unemployed. A further 407 stated that their employer was encouraging them to up skill or that they themselves felt they needed to build up their skill base to adapt to the changing environment in their workplace
- 65% of the queries received in 2008 were from men which indicates an increase of 36% based on last year's figures
- A new trend emerging is the number of people now contacting the service by e-mail. Over previous years the majority of queries were dealt with over the telephone. However the online facility of e-mailing in queries has developed dramatically. In 2008, 4236 e-mails were received and handled by the Information Officer. This trend can be directly linked to the updating of the Information section of the website. Over 2000 people used the telephone while almost 600 used the textline. Fax, letter and face to face meetings were also recorded as means of contact
- Learners are not the only people availing of this service. Practitioners working in the field of adult education have also been in touch with the service in 2008 seeking advice. There has been an increase in the number of organisations particularly; CICs, libraries, Guidance Services and community groups contacting the service. Feedback from practitioners has suggested that the Information Booklet is an invaluable resource for them in their daily work
- Distance learning and part-time courses remain the more popular choices for learners. However there was a 13% increase in the number of people wanting to pursue full-time courses compared to last year's figures

## 👉 PREVIOUS PAGE

- Funding remains the biggest barrier for learners and over 37% of the queries received were from learners seeking financial support
- Those seeking full-time education indicated that upskilling or change of career were the main reasons they wanted to go back to education. Those pursuing part-time or distance education routes indicated that both upskilling and developing a hobby or interest were the two main reasons they had chosen to return to education
- Another new trend identified was the numbers of disabled mature learners contacting the service seeking advice on financial and study supports. In 2008 approximately 90 learners contacted the service and in response to this AONTAS met with AHEAD and built on the existing relationship between the two organisations. The Information Officer also inserted a new section into the "How to?" section of the Information Booklet
- Fifty two percent of learners contacting the service were from Leinster followed by 27% from Munster, 15% from Connaught and 6% from Ulster.

## NEXT PAGE 👉

### The AONTAS Information Booklet

The AONTAS Information booklet continues to be an invaluable resource to the AONTAS membership, practitioners and learners since its introduction in 2007. During 2008 the Information Officer has monitored the range of learners who use the Information Booklet 2008. AONTAS has promoted the booklet widely and encouraged learners to avail of this resource.

### Outcomes

- While learners can download copies of the Information Booklet 2,768 hardcopies were requested in 2008. The booklet is now established as an invaluable resource to the many adult learners who avail of it.
- Building on the success of the first edition the second edition of the AONTAS Information Booklet includes new up to date information on financial supports, disability supports, scholarships and a new workplace learning section.
- The booklet has proved to be a valuable resource during the Adult Learners Festival when queries increase substantially.
- The text message facility has been a great success. From January until the end of February annually, anyone interested in returning to education can text their names and contact details to 53377, and will then be sent a copy of the Information Booklet.

➔ **BACK TO CONTENTS**

➔ **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** ➔

# REPRESENTING AONTAS

During 2008 the Information Officer, other members of staff and members of the Executive Committee attended and delivered presentations to various organisations at a number of events on behalf of AONTAS.

These included:

- Seven Information briefings to Occupational Therapy Departments in St John of God's Hospital and Cluain Mhuire
- The Finnish Folk High School Association
- Second Chance Education project, Donegal
- Longford Women's Link
- AHEAD
- USI
- Association of Community Education Directors Conference
- TUI, ASTI and IVEA conferences
- NALA
- NWCI
- A range of conferences and membership events
- Hosting a range of international delegations.

AONTAS Director, Berni Brady represented AONTAS on the following groups in 2008:

- AEGI Steering Group
- ACCESS to Higher Education Advisory Group
- NQAI Consultation Group
- CEF Training and Support Programme Steering Group.

## Representation at an International Level

AONTAS has been an active member of the EAEA since its establishment and has supported a member of the Executive Committee to represent AONTAS on its Executive Board for twelve years. Brid Connolly was the AONTAS representative in 2008 when her term of office came to a close at the Annual General Assembly in October. AONTAS hosted this event which was very successful and included a visit from the President,

Mary McAleese who presented the Grundtvig Awards. AONTAS did not nominate a candidate for the Board at the Assembly as it was felt that Ireland should now stand back and allow member countries who had joined more recently to take up a place. Also given the current economic context AONTAS may not be able to support a Board member. However AONTAS will remain an active member of EAEA and will attend the General Assemblies.

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**More information about the EAEA can be accessed on its website at [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org)**

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## DARE Conference

The European conference 'Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education' was organised by the DARE network within its EU-funded project Democracy and Human Rights Education in Adult Learning in Vienna (14-16 November 2008). 230 people from 37 European countries representing the broad field of non-governmental practice, research and policy level attended the event in order to come closer together around the core competence of civic education.

The aim of the conference was not just to produce another statement on the importance of intercultural dialogue in Europe, but to set the focus on practical challenges for the work of NGOs in the field of education for democratic citizenship or human rights education (EDC/HRE). The two main purposes for the DARE network are:

- to offer an opportunity for further networking
- to offer professional further education and training adequate and fitting to the diverse approaches and structures of NGOs in the field of EDC/HRE.

AONTAS representatives participated in a variety of workshops including:

- teaching complex issues like the EU and globalisation in adult learning
- strategies and tools challenging gender-based discrimination in adult education
- adult education for peace.

## 👉 BACK TO CONTENTS

### Outcomes

- Gained knowledge on new practices and thinking in the area of intercultural education.
- Shared information on the conference with members:  
Explore article.
- Made mutually beneficial connections with other European NGOs for future work, including Grundtvig projects.
- Strengthened the AONTAS connection with the DARE network.

### INFONET

INFONET is a large Grundtvig 4 project which supports a network of adult education journals across Europe. It also provides a newswire for adult education. Currently twelve countries including Ireland are members of the Network. Correspondents agree to write at least six articles for the Infoletter each year. Berni Brady is the Irish correspondent and she attended the conference of correspondents in Vienna in June.

**The Infoletter can be accessed via the website which is [www.infonet-ae.net](http://www.infonet-ae.net)**

### IALLA

IALLA is the International Adult Learning Academy organised by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). It was established in 2005 with the aim of training young adult educators in global advocacy. The third International Academy was held in Cape Town over a three week period from October 26th to November 13th. AONTAS Director, Berni Brady was invited to be a member of the training team in the final week which was focussed on practical advocacy strategies. Twenty five adult educators from all over the world successfully completed the course.

### PROCEDE Conference, Canada

In October, Director Berni Brady and Maureen Kavanagh, now CEO of Active Retirement were invited by the Western Quebec Education and Library Board to present to its annual PROCEDE Conference. Berni Brady conducted two workshops on the Irish experience of delivering community education while Maureen Kavanagh gave a workshop on the services for senior learners. They also visited a number of adult education projects in Western Quebec. It is hoped that some follow-up exchange of information and experiences will develop as a result of this contact.

## 👉 PREVIOUS PAGE

## NEXT PAGE 👉

### CONFINTEA VI

UNESCO's Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) will be hosted by Brazil from 19th – 22nd May, 2009. The importance of CONFINTEA VI on adult learning and education in Ireland cannot be underestimated; the 6th International Conference on Adult Education will provide an opportunity to renew momentum in the development of adult education policy, practice, quality, methods for evaluation and for achieving goals of international policy frameworks (e.g. Millennium Development Goals). AONTAS has carried out a strategic, focused work plan in preparation for this conference.

**Further information is available on the website:**  
<http://www.aontas.com/international/>

### Outcomes

- Submission to the Department of Education and Science for the development of the National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Education and Learning in Ireland (28th April 2008).
- Submission to the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) Virtual Seminar on the specific themes for advocacy including: Literacy, Migration and Adult Education, Poverty Education and Work, Policy Legislation and Financing for Adult Education (April 21st to May 9th).
- Inclusion of Legislation and Financing for Adult Education advocacy article in the special CONFINTEA edition of Convergence.
- Participation and representation of AONTAS members in the ICAE Seminar, Leicester, UK (23rd and 24th May).
- Submission to the Department of Education and Science in response to the National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Education and Learning in Ireland (3rd November 2008).
- Establishment of a CONFINTEA VI focus group representing the non-governmental, University and public sector for advocacy preparation at CONFINTEA VI (3 meetings carried out throughout the year).
- AONTAS representation at, and preparatory position paper created for, the Pan-European CONFINTEA VI preparatory regional conference which took place in Budapest, December 3rd to 5th. AONTAS ensured that the needs of our members were well represented and recommendations were taken into account which will inform the main conference in Brazil (May 19th to 22nd).
- AONTAS membership mobilisation through AONTAS website (international section), Explore Magazine articles (9th and 10th edition) and through the Ebulletin.

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)

[NEXT PAGE →](#)

# **AONTAS**

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

### **2008**

[!\[\]\(76571bca9499390beeae0a355d0e74a9\_img.jpg\) \*\*BACK TO CONTENTS\*\*](#)[!\[\]\(b6fe3d974b20682aca79f7e6638f28cd\_img.jpg\) \*\*PREVIOUS PAGE\*\*](#)[\*\*NEXT PAGE\*\* !\[\]\(76a3e8b971e3f4e3e7bf4f40612c8a29\_img.jpg\)](#)

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

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

Registration Number: 80958

Charity Number: 6719

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)

[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

## Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### Company Information

<b>Directors'</b>	<p>Ms. Marian Duffy (President)          Ms. Maria Gorman (Hon. Treasurer)          Ms. Ruth Smith (Hon. Secretary)          Ms. Una Buckley          Mr. Morgan Dunne          Mr. Stephen Flitton          Ms. Jillian Harrison          Ms. Loretta Needham          Ms. Jan Lewis          Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha          Ms. Elva O'Callaghan          Ms. Lorne Patterson          Mr. John Ryan          Ms. Mary Sweeney          Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh (Term completed 7th May 2008)          Ms. Brid Connolly (Term completed 7th May 2008)          Ms. Cora Foley (Term completed 7th May 2008)          Mr. John Murphy (Term completed 7th May 2008)          Cllr. Patrick Nolan (Term completed 7th May 2008)</p>
<b>Secretary</b>	Ms. Ruth Smith
<b>Registration Number</b>	80958
<b>Charity Number</b>	6719
<b>Auditors</b>	<p>Anne Brady McQuillans DFK          Chartered Accountants &amp; Registered Auditors          Iveagh Court          Harcourt Road          Dublin 2</p>
<b>Business Address</b>	<p>83-87 Main Street          Ranelagh          Dublin 6</p>
<b>Bankers</b>	<p>Bank of Ireland          Lower Baggot Street          Dublin 2</p>
<b>Solicitors</b>	<p>P.J. Walsh &amp; Company          Solicitors          12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street          Dublin 2</p>
<b>Registered Office</b>	<p>83-87 Main Street          Ranelagh          Dublin 6</p>

[👉 BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[👉 PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE 👉](#)

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

### **Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008**

The directors' present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2008.

### **Principal Activities, Business Review and Future Developments**

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

Both the level of business and the year end financial position were satisfactory and the directors' expect that the present level of activity will be sustained for the foreseeable future.

### **Results and Dividends**

The surplus for the year after providing for depreciation and taxation amounted to €4,962 (2007 – €3,930).

### **Directors' and their Interests**

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:

Ms. Marian Duffy (President)

Vacant (Vice-President)

Ms. Maria Gorman (Hon. Treasurer)

Ms. Ruth Smith (Hon. Secretary)

Ms. Una Buckley

Ms. Morgan Dunne

Mr. Stephen Flitton

Ms. Jillian Harrison

Ms. Loretta Needham

Ms. Jan Lewis

Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha

Ms. Elva O'Callaghan

Ms. Lorne Patterson

Mr. John Ryan

Ms. Mary Sweeney

There were no changes in members between 31st December 2008 and the date of signing the financial statements.

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

## Directors' Report for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 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 are 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 company are maintained at the business address.

### Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The directors' have assessed the risks and have taken measure to manage these risks in AONTAS as follows:

#### *Market Risk*

In common with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic conditions.

#### *Fraud Risk*

This risk is mitigated by maintaining segregation of duties for receipt of funds and the payment of creditors. The directors' have put processes and controls in place to ensure that detailed checking is carried out at all stages of the purchase to pay and order to cash processes to ensure the accuracy and validity of all transactions.

### 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.

### Section 40(1) Companies Act, 1983

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

### Events after the Balance Sheet date

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

On behalf of the Board

Ms. Marian Duffy  
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman  
Director

Date: 23rd March 2009

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

### Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The directors' are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Irish Company law requires the directors' to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the directors' are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then 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' confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The directors' are responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and with Irish statute comprising 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. Marian Duffy  
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman  
Director

Date: 23rd March 2009

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

### **Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS**

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31st December 2008 which comprises the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

### **Respective Responsibilities of Directors' and Auditors**

As described in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities the company's directors' are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

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

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.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the 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 financial statements 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 disclosed and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

We read the directors' report and consider implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

[👉 BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[👉 PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE 👉](#)

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

## Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS

### Basis of Audit Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), 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 31st December 2008 and of its surplus/deficit for the period then ended: and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of 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 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: 23rd March 2009**

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2008

		2008	2007
	Notes	€	€
<b>Income</b>			
Restricted and unrestricted funds	3	1,304,444	1,255,624
<b>Resources Expended</b>			
<b>Administration</b>			
Salary costs		192,195	175,766
Pension scheme		27,746	24,686
Staff training and expenses		15,433	15,608
Postage and courier services		22,370	28,183
Stationery		10,506	13,353
Telephone		8,369	9,025
Travel and subsistence		10,302	9,859
Executive and general committee expenses		20,751	20,604
Legal fees		63	55
Audit and accountancy fees		7,550	7,314
Bank interest and charges		718	837
Representation and affiliation		17,663	25,410
Miscellaneous		63	684
Rent of venues and equipment		1,285	3,790
Computer costs		979	839
Research and projects apportionments		(24,355)	(13,450)
		<b>311,638</b>	<b>322,563</b>

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE](#)

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

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2008

		2008	2007
	Notes	€	€
<b>Premises</b>			
Light and heat		3,233	3,624
Rent and rates		91,993	92,724
Repairs and maintenance		24,619	19,077
Leasing charges		8,870	6,515
Insurance		7,743	7,634
Cleaning		3,073	3,307
Depreciation of computers and office equipment		12,220	18,669
		<b>151,751</b>	<b>151,550</b>
<b>Development</b>			
Salary Costs		361,245	321,150
Pension scheme		39,926	35,473
Consultants and contract staff		25,753	18,354
Travel and subsistence		20,845	22,544
Printing and publications		60,802	98,733
Conferences/seminars/membership meetings		86,057	16,123
Public relations strategy		8,418	5,326
Adult Learner Festival		106,005	134,102
Information resources		3,088	4,797
Recruitment		-	1,990
Childcare		240	117
Research and Project Apportionment		(67,546)	
		<b>644,833</b>	<b>658,709</b>

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2008

		2008	2007
	Notes	€	€
<b>Research and projects</b>			
Research		78,396	52,674
Quality Assurance Framework		63,870	37,271
Development Education Project		44,474	-
BTEI men's participation research		-	13,545
Wheel training links project		4,520	15,382
		<b>191,260</b>	<b>118,872</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Total incoming resources	3	1,304,444	1,255,624
<b>Resources Expended</b>			
Total resources expended		<b>(1,299,482)</b>	<b>(1,251,694)</b>
<b>Net surplus resources for year</b>	12	<b>4,962</b>	<b>3,930</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 32 – 38 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on and signed on 23rd March 2009 its behalf by

Ms. Marian Duffy  
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman  
Director

 **BACK TO CONTENTS**

 **PREVIOUS PAGE**

**NEXT PAGE** 

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

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2008

	Notes	2008		2007	
		€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible Assets	9		32,423		36,989
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	10	25,129		32,753	
Cash at bank and in hand		296,408		174,539	
		<b>321,537</b>		<b>207,292</b>	
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	(315,829)		(211,112)	
<b>Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)</b>			5,708		(3,820)
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>			<b>38,131</b>		<b>33,169</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>					
Unrestricted Income Funds	15		38,131		33,169
<b>Total Funds</b>			<b>38,131</b>		<b>33,169</b>

The notes on pages 32 – 38 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 23rd March 2009 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Marian Duffy  
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman  
Director

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st December 2008

		2008	2007
	Notes	€	€
<b>Reconciliation of surplus to net cash inflow from operating activities</b>			
Net incoming resources		1,709	2,032
Depreciation		12,220	18,669
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors		7,624	(19,565)
Increase in creditors		104,717	117,739
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		<b>126,270</b>	<b>118,875</b>
<b>Cash Flow Statement</b>			
Net cash inflow from operating activities		126,270	118,875
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	13	3,253	1,898
Capital expenditure	13	(7,654)	(43,832)
<b>Financing</b>		-	-
<b>Increase in cash in the year</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>121,869</b>	<b>76,941</b>
<b>Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds</b>			
Increase in cash in the year		121,869	76,941
Net funds at 1st January 2008	14	174,539	97,598
<b>Net funds at 31st December 2008</b>		<b>296,408</b>	<b>174,539</b>

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 1. Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

#### 1.1. Accounting Convention

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 Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued in March 2005 in Ireland, applicable to Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006.

#### 1.2. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are initially recorded at historic cost. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less residual value, of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Plant and machinery – 20% Straight Line  
Computer Equipment – 20% Straight Line  
Motor vehicles – Over three years

#### 1.3. Leasing Commitments

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

#### 1.4. Income Resources

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 Womens CE Quality Framework and grant income receivable from the Wheel Organisation, Age and Opportunity, ESB and TUI Donations and from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid are treated as being restricted as the incomes are applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

Voluntary income including donations, gifts and legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 1.5. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements and performance related grants are recognised as goods or services are supplied. Other grant payments are recognised when a constructive obligation arises that result in the payment being unavoidable.

- Costs of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds
- Charitable activities include expenditure associated with the educational programmes include both the direct costs and support costs relating to this activity.

### 1.6. Pensions

Pension benefits for employees are met by payments to a defined contribution pension fund. Contributions are charged to the profit and loss account in the year in which they fall due.

## 2. Non-Audit Services Provided by Auditors

In common with many other businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit the financial statements.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 3. Sources of Income

	2008	2007
	€	€
<b>Restricted Funds</b>		
Department of Foreign Affairs – Irish Aid Research Grant	44,465	-
Department of Education & Science Grants:		
CEF Training and Support programme	59,319	156,872
Adult Learner Festival (Deferred Income)	30,000	94,083
BTEI Research	-	13,543
Research	78,384	52,674
Information Pack	-	35,000
Quality Assurance Framework Project	63,870	41,471
FETAC Festival Sponsorship	-	12,650
NQAI Festival Sponsorship	-	3,000
ESB Festival Sponsorship	2,000	-
TUI Festival Sponsorship	1,000	-
Age and Opportunity Research Grant	18,200	-
The Wheel Training Links Grant	4,520	15,382
	<b>301,758</b>	<b>424,675</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>		
Department of Education & Science:		
Grant in Aid (Core Funding)	517,000	442,000
S.P.I.D.A.S. supplement	421,500	355,142
Members' subscriptions	27,696	31,543
Training/Consultancy	12,143	-
National conference	17,369	-
Interest receivable	3,253	1,898
Miscellaneous	3,725	366
	<b>1,002,686</b>	<b>830,949</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,304,444</b>	<b>1,255,624</b>

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 4. 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 (Amendment) Acts, 1983 and 1986.

### 5. Net Incoming Resources for the year

	2008	2007
	€	€
<b>Net Incoming Resources for the year is stated after charging:</b>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	12,220	18,669
Operating lease rentals – Plant and Machinery	8,870	6,515
Auditors' remuneration	7,550	7,314

### 6. Employees

	2008	2007
<b>Number of employees</b>		
The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were:	11	10
<b>Employment costs</b>	€	€
Wages and salaries	553,440	496,916
Other pension costs	67,672	60,159
	<b>621,112</b>	<b>557,075</b>

### 7. 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 €67,672 (2007: €60,159).

### 8. Taxation

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

[👉 BACK TO CONTENTS](#)
[👉 PREVIOUS PAGE](#)
[NEXT PAGE 👉](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 9. Tangible Assets

	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Fixtures, fittings, and equipment	Totals
Cost	€	€	€	€
At 1st January 2008	64,306	25,446	49,519	139,271
Additions	-	7,654	-	7,654
At 31st December 2008	<b>64,306</b>	<b>33,100</b>	<b>49,519</b>	<b>146,925</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1st January 2008	32,188	22,498	47,596	102,282
Charge for the year	8,029	2,268	1,923	12,220
At 31st December 2008	40,217	24,766	49,519	114,502
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31st December 2008	24,089	8,334	-	32,423
At 31st December 2008	32,118	2,948	1,923	36,989

### 10. Debtors

	2008	2007
	€	€
Other debtors	16,206	14,198
Prepayments	8,923	18,555
	<b>25,129</b>	<b>32,753</b>

### 11. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2008	2007
	€	€
Trade creditors	9,055	1,331
Other creditors	298,759	201,553
Accruals	8,015	8,228
	<b>315,829</b>	<b>211,112</b>

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[PREVIOUS PAGE](#)

[NEXT PAGE](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 12. Total Funds

	Statement of Financial Activities	Total
	€	€
At 1st January 2008	33,169	33,169
Retained surplus for the year	4,962	4,962
At 31st December 2008	<b>38,131</b>	<b>38,131</b>

### 13. Gross Cash Flows

	2008	2007
	€	€
Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	3,253	1,898
Capital expenditure		
Payments to acquire tangible assets	7,654	43,832

### 14. Analysis of changes in net funds

	Opening balance	Cash flows	Closing balance
	€	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	174,539	121,869	296,408
Net funds	<b>174,539</b>	<b>121,869</b>	<b>296,408</b>

### 15. Unrestricted Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
Specific Funds				
Grants	33,169	1,304,444	(1,299,482)	38,131

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#)[NEXT PAGE →](#)

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008

### 16. Controlling Party

The organisation is controlled by the Board of Directors.

### 17. Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 23rd March 2009 and signed on its behalf by

**Ms. Marian Duffy**  
Director

**Ms. Maria Gorman**  
Director



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**➡ BACK TO START**



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