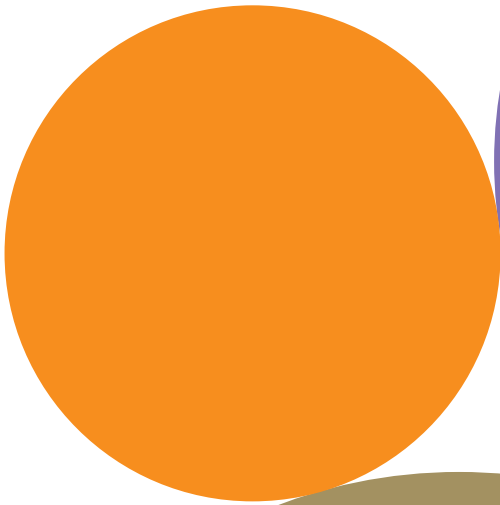
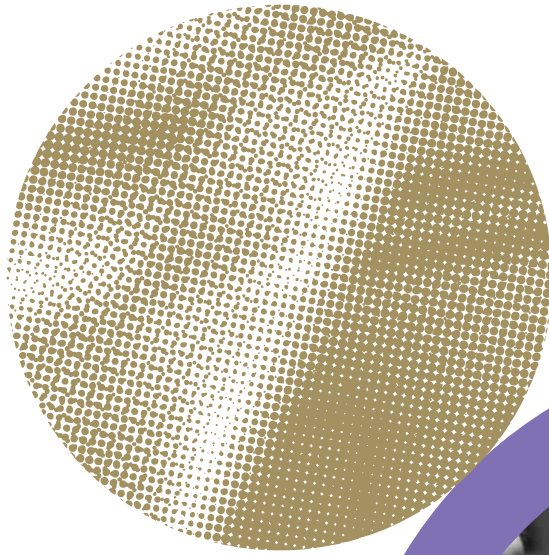


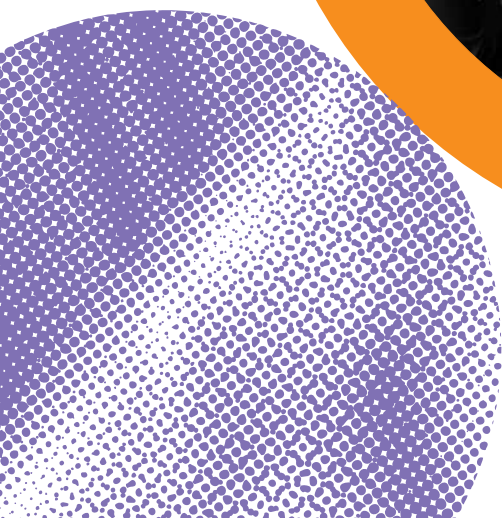
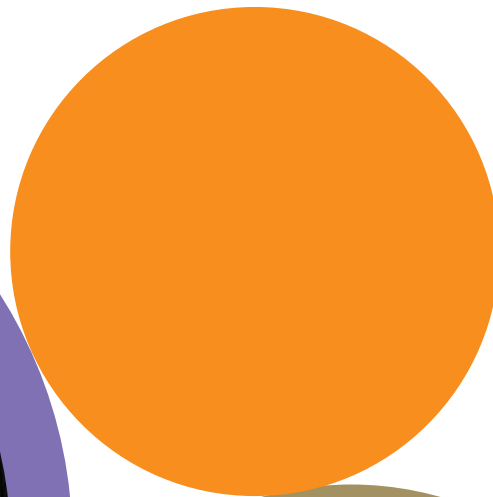
**AONTAS
ANNUAL REPORT &
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
2013**





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FOREWORD

The adult & community education sector is in a process of profound change, possibly the most significant change process since the launch of the White Paper 'Learning for Life' in 2000.

During 2013 we have seen the development of an entire new strategy for further education and training and by implication for adult and community education. While this process creates significant challenges for the sector it also provides opportunities. I am president of AONTAS but I am also an active practitioner in the community education sector and in both roles can see the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved by AONTAS. I want to comment on the overall achievements of the past year but leave the detail of those achievements to the Director's Report.

AONTAS has contributed in a number of ways to the development of the Further Education and Training Strategy (FET), through the well thought out organisational strategy which is grounded in the reality of 'on the ground' organisations, best practice and engaged learner participation.

I want to acknowledge the entire team in AONTAS who have worked in such a committed manner to achieve significant outcomes for the sector. I believe community education and its contribution to reshaping the social, economic and cultural identity of this country has been clearly evidenced to politicians, the SOLAS Board, Oireachtas committees, advisory groups and other strategic fora. The sector has been consulted, educated and informed on all FET developments in a way which ensures practitioners and learners are at the heart of the process.

The appointment of Director Berni Brady to the Board of SOLAS is acknowledgement of her own expertise and experience in the whole area of adult and community education, her understanding of policy and practice and the inevitable inherent tensions therein and her commitment to working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the sector.

It is also a pleasure to express my thanks to the officers and all the members of the Executive Committee. They are committed to guiding and supporting the strategic direction of AONTAS and bring a wide and diverse range of experience, skills and knowledge to the process.

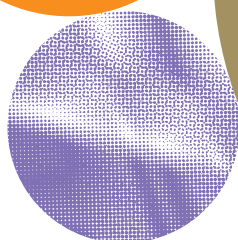
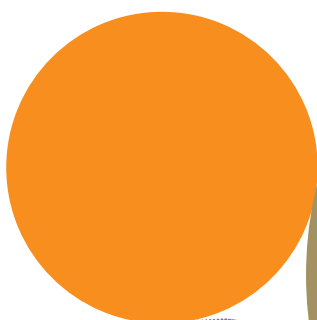
At every level in the organisation work is carried out to the highest standards; this annual report and audited accounts are a testament to those standards of compliance, transparency and value for money.

Today AONTAS stands at the intersection of old and new ensuring adult and community education makes its contribution to the reshaping of our nation for the future. There are significant challenges facing the sector as we go forward but AONTAS will continue to be a voice for the sector seeking resources, acknowledgement and ensuring its place at the heart of the Further Education and Training Strategy.

While I both acknowledge the work and achievements of the adult and community education sector I want to comment on some of the challenges facing us in our performance. The community education sector needs to be better able to evidence its outcomes and thus make an ever stronger case for resources. Such events as the Star Awards and the Lobby for Learning days are powerful evidence of the success of our work but we also need to develop the hard data to accompany such events. We are all struggling with such limited resources that at times it is difficult to remain hopeful and positive but I know our work with learners inspires and supports our efforts.

We must also maintain positive relationships with policy makers and funders and find ways of working in a collaborative effort to ensure education and training opportunities for all adults are available and accessible particularly for the most marginalised. AONTAS has and will continue to support this work proactively. As President of AONTAS it is my privilege to thank on behalf of all the stakeholders the committed and engaged team and its excellent leader Berni Brady, Director.

Elizabeth Waters,
President, AONTAS



OVERVIEW

Introduction

2013 has been an eventful year for the adult and community education sector as it adapted to the enormous changes which are continuing apace. Dealing with the changes and contributing to the new developments in a positive and strategic way has meant that AONTAS has had one of its busiest but also most productive years ever, in terms of influencing policy and acting as the voice of adult learning. We concentrated our energies on advocacy and lobbying work as the legislation for the establishment of SOLAS was published and we developed a plan designed to ensure that the legislation was as inclusive as possible. We concentrated particularly on the inclusion of learners and of community education providers.

Contributing to the development of legislation for the establishment of SOLAS

Once the draft legislation was published early in the year we analysed it and developed a short paper suggesting changes, including a definition of Further Education and Training, the naming of community education providers and learners as key groups to be consulted on the FET strategy, and the importance of the inclusion of a representative voice for adult learners on the SOLAS Board. During March and April we met with political spokespeople from all parties and other key policy makers outlining our case and asking them to support our key proposals. The AONTAS Community Education Network also supported the lobby for our proposals by organising a campaign to raise awareness among political representatives at a local

level and asking them to bring our proposals to the attention of the both Ministers at the Department of Education and Skills. We attended the meeting of the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills in April where we watched the debate on the SOLAS legislation and we were gratified to see the influence of our work as political spokespeople used the information we had prepared for them to support their arguments. At this meeting Minister Cannon agreed to a private hearing of the Committee to try to hammer out a consensus on the Bill. He fulfilled this promise and we met with him on May 16th for a final discussion. The Further Education and Training Bill establishing SOLAS was passed in July and we were very happy to see the inclusion of both community education and learners in the script.

Contributing to other SOLAS work

While the legislation was a key focus for AONTAS we also contributed in other ways to the development of SOLAS work. In April I was invited to be part of a Steering Group established by SOLAS to address the issue of data collection to support the work of the Further Education and Training Service. The PLSS (Programme and Learner Supports Service) group as it is known comprises representation from a range of stakeholder groups and has met frequently to guide the establishment of a National Course Database, a National Course Calendar and a National Adult Learner Database. Development groups have been established to progress the work, reporting back to the main Steering Group. It is expected that the Course database and Calendar will be up and running in 2014 followed by the Learner database in 2015. Later

in the year AONTAS was invited to participate in an Advisory Group established by SOLAS to support the development of the five year Further Education and Training Strategy which is a requirement of the SOLAS legislation. The group met on two occasions in the Autumn of 2013. Research and consultation on the strategy was begun during the summer by the ESRI working on behalf of SOLAS. AONTAS was among the fifty individual stakeholders interviewed by the ESRI and we also contributed data about community education to the process through the CEN. Our work culminated in my appointment to the SOLAS Board. A key part of my work on the Board will be representing the voice of the adult learner.

Other Highlights of the Year

Adult Learners Festival

The seventh Adult Learners Festival got off to a colourful start on February 25th with the STAR Awards Ceremony which was opened by the Minister for Training and Skills, Ciaran Cannon. The key speaker was John Lonergan, former governor of Mountjoy Prison and passionate advocate for lifelong learning. Throughout the week more than 400 events were held nationwide culminating in the AONTAS Lobby for Learning day which, once more, brought together learners and key policy makers including the Minister Ciaran Cannon and SOLAS staff. The focus of the event was on community education as a strategy for success and a valid activation measure for adult learners. The event was also attended by a group of community education providers and was designed to strengthen our campaign to have community education and the learner voice included in the SOLAS legislation.

Membership meetings

The Annual General Meeting was held in May and focussed on the upcoming Further Education and Training Strategy from an ETB perspective. Four learners participated in a panel discussion on how the new strategy might best serve learners and a very informative presentation was made by Eileen Curtis, Acting CEO of Kilkenny VEC on behalf of ETB Ireland. She outlined the challenges facing the Education and Training Boards which were formally established in July. The Autumn General meeting concentrated on the PIAAC results with an input by Donal Kelly from the Central Statistics Office followed by workshops. Throughout the year AONTAS also organised four national meetings of the Community Education Network including one to review the work of the Network as we move into our next strategic planning phase.

One Step Up Campaign

During 2013 AONTAS was invited by the Department of Education and Skills to participate in an EU campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation in adult learning. The campaign includes a new website www.onestepup.ie, a Freephone Helpline 1800 303 669 and an interactive online calendar of learning events.

The One Step Up campaign is funded by the European Commission, as an initiative which promotes the EU Agenda for Adult Learning. This part of the campaign is managed by AONTAS on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills and is supported by a Steering Committee which includes ETBI, NCGE, NALA, AEOA and Léargas. Other parts of the campaign include the training of learning ambassadors by NALA and the promotion of adult education by ETBI. This project runs until September 2014 and is described in more detail in the body of the report

Developing the next Strategic Plan

Throughout the year a number of discussions were held to feed into the development of the next strategic plan. We were very conscious of the external developments taking place in the sector and the transitional nature of the space in which we are currently operating. During the first half of the year we held a number of brainstorming sessions with staff and Executive Committee members. We engaged an external facilitator to assist us with some of these meetings in order to allow AONTAS personnel to fully participate. We also held discussion groups at our membership and CEN meetings. At the September Executive Committee meeting it was decided that the planning process would be best done in the context of the development of the new FET strategy and other important changes which would take place in 2014. The new strategic plan will be developed during 2014 and will draw on the feedback from the 2013 discussions as well as other consultations planned for 2014.

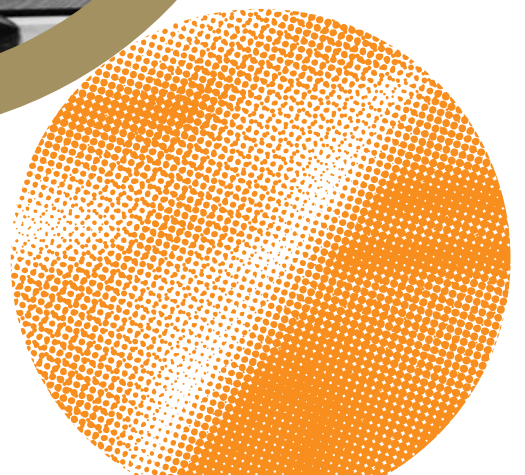
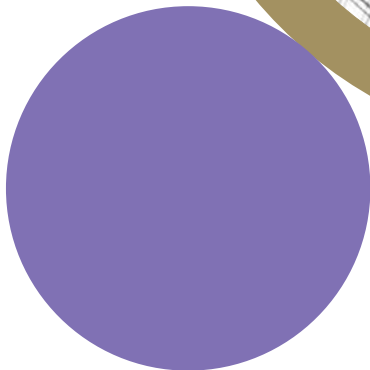
Conclusion

While in this short overview I have highlighted the key activities of the year, AONTAS has also engaged in a wide range of other activities which are described in more detail in the body of the report by the staff who have responsibility for delivering on the actions of the Strategic Plan. We acknowledge the continuing support of the Department of Education and Skills, our members and other key stakeholders with whom we have formed strong partnerships.

Our Executive Committee which met six times in 2013 has, under the Presidency of Liz Waters, provided good governance for the organisation and strong support for the staff team. The Committee brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the work of AONTAS. We particularly acknowledge the support and encouragement of the Minister for Training and Skills, Ciaran Cannon who has attended many of our events and met with us formally on two occasions during 2013. The year has been a bit of a roller coaster and our successes also bring with them many challenges. However we believe we are up to the task and we look forward to continuing to contribute our experience and expertise to the growth, development and success of the sector.

Berni Brady,
Director, AONTAS



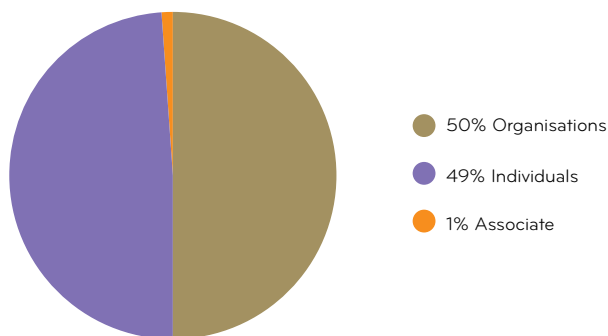


SECTION 1

VALUING ADULT LEARNING

AONTAS Membership

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 534 members. The breakdown of membership illustrated in the pie chart below, now comprises 269 organisations, 261 individuals and 4 associate members. A full list of AONTAS members is available online at www.aontas.com/membership/



In percentage terms membership type can be broken down as follows: 50% organisations, 49% individual and 1% associate members. However, many adult educators or learners who are part of organisations also subscribe as individual members.

Geographical representation of members excluding Dublin

Dublin members account for 34% of our total membership, with 183 members). Other areas with high membership include Cork (25 members), Limerick (24 members), and Kildare (25 members). The areas with lowest membership are Tyrone and Monaghan.

Membership Recruitment Strategy

Membership recruitment and development is a key focus of the AONTAS Strategic Plan 2011–2013. AONTAS has developed a recruitment and retention strategy to ensure that existing members are retained, and to increase membership around the country. The recruitment strategy was based on a membership analysis and survey carried out early in the year. AONTAS will initially focus on recruiting new members from the regions where membership numbers are low.

Promotional material and plans developed during the year included:

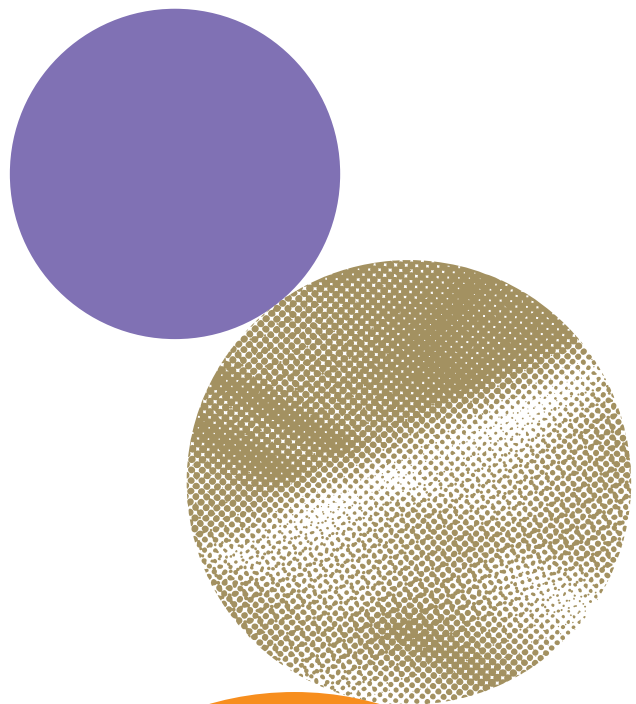
- New membership leaflets for both individual and organisational members
- Video testimonials from members on the website
- Prospective members invited to AONTAS meetings and events
- Recruitment campaign during the Adult Learners Festival
- Regional meetings to enable consultation with members and invite prospective members to attend are planned for 2014

As part of the recruitment strategy AONTAS attended many Education Information Fairs and Expos around the country during 2014. These are listed on page 18. AONTAS targeted events in counties with low levels of membership. As well as disseminating information to learners on their education and training options, this opportunity was used to network with local organisations and individuals with a view to encouraging them to become members of AONTAS.

New Members

The recruitment strategy has borne fruit with 78 new members joining the organisation in 2013 representing 15% of the current total membership. These included 56 new Individual members, 20 new organisational members and 2 associate members. Looking at the trend in member applications, the largest number of individual and organisational membership applications was made in September. This can be attributed to the promotional work engaged in by AONTAS through the education supplements in the national newspapers, Executive Committee members promoting AONTAS and the fact that learners are starting courses at this time of the year, thus raising the levels of interest in adult education. There was also an increase in membership applications in February and March compared to 2012. This can be accounted for by the membership recruitment campaign during the Adult Learners Festival. The following table illustrates the new membership applications for the year.

Month	Individual	Organisational	Associate	Total
Feb/Mar	9	4	0	13
April	3	1	0	4
May/Jun	8	5	1	14
July	4	1	1	6
August	6	2	0	8
Sept	16	3	0	19
Oct	4	2	0	6
Nov	6	2	0	8
				78



Lapsed Members

The total number of members lapsed during 2013 was 11; 5 Individual and 6 organisations. This was a very small number compared to previous years. Lack of funding leading to closure of projects and members no longer being involved in adult education were the main reasons given for cancelling membership.

Membership Meetings

AONTAS AGM

The AONTAS Annual General Meeting took place on 15th May in Dublin with over 70 members attending. The focus of the meeting was the amalgamation of the VECs into 16 ETBs and how the Further Education and Training Service might develop as a result of the establishment of SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority. Four adult learners were invited to participate in a panel discussion chaired by Berni Brady, AONTAS Director, to share their views about how the newly configured service could respond to their needs. Eileen Curtis, Acting CEO of Kilkenny VEC representing the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) responded to the panel discussion which was followed by a number of discussion groups. Feedback from the discussion groups was used to inform AONTAS's work with the SOLAS process and the development of its own strategic plan. Elections for the Executive Committee took place and six new members were welcomed at this meeting as follows:

- Mary Hilda Cavanagh
Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- Brendan Curtis
Irish Men's Sheds Association
- Crona Gallagher
Adult Education Officers Association
- Michael Kenny
NUI Maynooth
- Máire Uí Eanaigh
Community Education Facilitators Association (CEFA)
- Noel Fitzgerald
Individual member

Autumn Membership Meeting

Over eighty members of AONTAS attended the General Meeting on November 20th at the Ashling Hotel in Dublin. The focus of the meeting was on the results of the OECD PIAAC research which was published in October 2013. Donal Kelly from the Central Statistics Office gave a presentation on the research and the outcomes for Ireland. AONTAS Director, Berni Brady also gave an update on developments in the SOLAS process since the AGM. A number of discussion groups were held to allow AONTAS members to contribute their views about priorities for the upcoming Further Education and Training strategy. Finally Niamh Farren from AONTAS gave an input on One Step Up, a web-based information campaign developed by AONTAS in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills, ETBI, NALA and NCGE. The project is supported by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme.

Community Education Network

The AONTAS Community Education Network, which was established in 2007 as a platform for independent community education groups who are members of AONTAS seeks to increase visibility, raise the voice of, and promote the value of community education. Currently the AONTAS Community Education Network comprises over 140 independently managed groups in the community and voluntary sector who offer community education programmes in a variety of settings.

During 2013 the CEN was supported by a part time co-ordinator Sara Bourke, substituting for Niamh O'Reilly on maternity leave, and administrator Dympna Larkin. The work of the network is guided by a steering committee drawn from the membership which comprised Colm Kilgallon, All Hallows College, Rachel Morrissey of D8CEC, Catherine Alymer and Suzanne Kyle, Limerick CEN, Avril Bailey of An Cosan and Camilla Fitzsimons of Respond!

Activities in 2013

- In February CEN providers and learners met Minister Cannon and senior policy makers at the Lobby for Learning day which was organized as part of the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival. The purpose of the event was to illustrate how Community Education is a strategy for success, and how it can offer a legitimate pathway to employment as well as other outcomes. The report of that event is available on the AONTAS website.
- Four National Network Meetings were held in March, June, September and December. These meetings updated members on the latest policy developments in Further Education and Training. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) staff attended the September meeting to consult with CEN members on their proposals for new policies governing accreditation across the educational spectrum. Meetings also offered a valuable space for sharing best practice and reflecting on the issues facing members. Reports on the meetings are available on the AONTAS website.
- CEN and AONTAS made a number of submissions to QQI on their 14 Green Papers published during the year. The submissions can be viewed on the AONTAS website.
- CEN members lobbied their local TDs and Senators during the campaign to have Community Education included in the Further Education and Training Bill which established SOLAS. This proved to be very effective leading to the inclusion of Community Education providers in the legislation. The campaign was supported by material designed by AONTAS and circulated to members.
- CEN members participated in a consultation process with the ESRI on the development of the FET strategy.
- “Measuring the Outcomes of Community Education” was an intensive course run in October to support CEN members. Facilitated by Eilis Lawlor of Just Economics, the course covered methodologies and approaches to the topic including Social Return on Investment. The programme was supported by funding from the Wheel Training Links programme.
- CEN members received regular information bulletins on matters of interest.
- At the end of the year the Network was facilitated by an external expert to review its work and identify strategic actions for its future development. The outcomes of this work will be fed into the AONTAS strategic planning process.

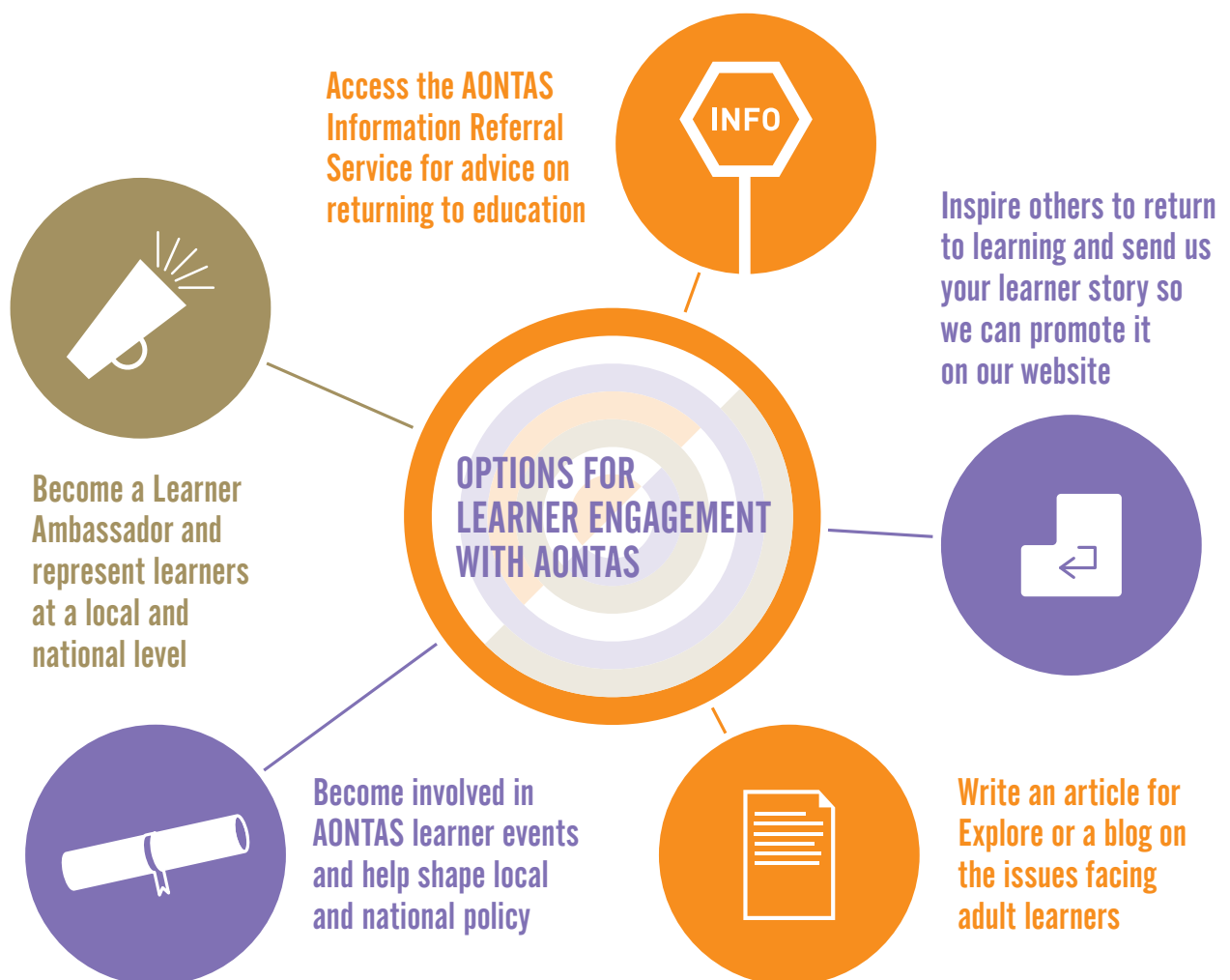
SECTION 2

RAISING THE VOICE OF ADULT LEARNING

Learner Support Work

One of the three underpinning principles of the AONTAS strategic plan is Voice and AONTAS has committed to developing the capacity of learners to articulate issues of concern to them and to influence policy and practice in adult and community education. In order to fulfil this commitment AONTAS has developed a Learner Support Strategy based on consultations with learners and feedback from discussions with learners at AONTAS events.

The work is lead out By Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Learner Supports Officer and is designed to support and encourage learners to engage with AONTAS in a variety of ways depending on their availability, time and capacity to become involved in this work. AONTAS has made it a priority that the learner support work feeds into and supports the policy, promotion and membership strategy of AONTAS, and that it informs and contributes to policy developments at a national level. The elements of the strategy are illustrated below.



Outcomes of the Learner Support Work in 2013

Promotion

- Throughout the year testimonies were sourced from adult learners to highlight the value of returning to education and training and inspire others to do the same.
- The Adult Learners Festival and the Star Awards were used as an opportunity to celebrate and promote the value of learning with learner case studies, learner competitions and a learner bus tour.
- Explore, social media and the AONTAS website were used to promote our learner work allowing us to connect in with a wider group of learners.

Learner Representation

- AONTAS is continuing to explore the development of an Adult Learners Forum and how we can feed the learner voice into the ongoing work of SOLAS
- AONTAS organised and facilitated a focus group of adult learners for the HEA National Access Office. It was designed to feed the issues and experiences of learners accessing higher education into the Access Office's new Strategic Plan.
- Learners were supported to be at the heart of key AONTAS events over the course of 2013 including the general meetings and the Lobby for Learning Day
- Adult Learners were included at our Annual General Meeting in May in a discussion on putting the learner at the centre of the new Further Education and Training service. A panel of four learners from a variety of different areas and programmes took part. They discussed their experiences of the service, how it could be improved and what should be made a priority in the new FET strategy.
- The AONTAS position paper, 'Building Meaningful Representation for Adult learners' was updated and used in our policy and lobby work

- In December a group of five learners were included in a delegation invited to Brussels by MEP Emer Costello to participate in the EUCIS Lifelong Learning week
- As part of the December visit to Brussels AONTAS also supported Ms Una Buckley who is the learner representative on the Board of QQI to participate in a discussion organized by the European Association for Education for Adults (EAEA) on PIAAC
- Una Buckley also gave a presentation to a conference organized by the DES on qualifications and quality frameworks during the Irish Presidency of the EU
- Berni Brady, Director was appointed to the SOLAS Board and part of her brief is representing the voice of adult learners.

Information Referral Service 2013

AONTAS runs an information referral service to support adults wishing to return to education and training. The service provides both direct and referral information on adult education and training and supports. AONTAS receives calls, emails and website visits from prospective and current learners seeking information on courses, entitlements, funding and other supports as well as government labour activation measures.

This work is supported by our information booklet, 'What Next' which was reviewed and updated in 2013. The newly designed booklet was published in September 2013 and over 8,500 copies were disseminated by the end of the year. The information booklet is also available on the AONTAS website and is a popular choice for website visitors. Many more people now seek information via the web but are more likely to follow up with a telephone call having done some research online.

Telephone contact

There has been a 28% increase in the number of people contacting the AONTAS Information referral service in 2013 showing the greater need for clear information for adults who wish to explore their training and education options. In 2013 AONTAS received 335 direct information requests compared to 261 in 2012. Analysis of calls revealed the following information:

- Top three most popular queries were **Returning to Education, Funding and Teacher/Training/Tutor/SNA** (Leaving Certificate did not make the top 3 queries which it has done for the last two years)
- Information requests consisted of **60% female and 40% male**
- Information requests were high in **January, May and August**, phone calls peaked in **September** with over 70 queries and declined in **April, June, November and December**
- The top reasons for adults returning to education are: **to gain employment, to gain new skills and to improve income**
- **Dublin, Cork, Kildare, Wicklow and Mayo** were the top 5 counties from which information calls were received in 2013
- **16%** of people contacting the service had a **third level certificate or diploma**; **36%** of people contacting the service reported the **Leaving Certificate or equivalent** as their level of education to date; **13%** have the **Junior Certificate or equivalent**
- The two biggest obstacles reported in returning to education were **lack of information and lack of financial support**
- **50% of people reported living in an rural area and 45% lived in an urban area**, 5% of people didn't state what area they lived in (This is the first year that rural areas have overtaken urban areas)
- In 2013, **21%** of people contacting the service were **long term unemployed**; **28%** of people were in **either full time or part time employment**; **13%** were **students**

- **In 2013, 41%** of people contacting the service were looking for **full time education options**, **31% for part time and 12% for distance learning options**

Website Contact

During 2013 AONTAS recorded nearly 65,000 visitors to its website. From September onward, when we started to use the google "adwords" online campaign, AONTAS received over 26,000 visitors. Overall there was a significant increase in website visitors, rising by 50% in comparison to 2012. Again in 2013 the most visited part of the website was the information section and in particular the 'What Next' pages, followed by the Publications and Links section. For example from January through to August 'What Next' received 17,653 pageviews with the three most popular pages being:

- 1 The home page
- 2 Springboard courses
- 3 How to repeat Leaving Certificate

The booklet was revised during the summer and from August until the year end AONTAS recorded 6,155 page views with the most popular pages being:

- 1 Training courses and Community Employment
- 2 Springboard courses
- 3 The homepage

These data show the strong need for information about adult learning opportunities and tell us that many of the people consulting our website information section are unemployed people looking to reskill or upskill.

The top three sites that referred people on to education and training programmes in 2013 were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1 citizensinformation.ie | 1,219 |
| 2 welfare.ie | 470 |
| 3 adultlearnersfestival.com | 422 |

These referrals show that the AONTAS website is recognised as a useful source of information for adult learners.

Fairs and Expos that AONTAS attended in 2013

In 2013 AONTAS attended nearly 20 fairs and exhibitions throughout the country including the National Ploughing Championships which we attended for the first time. This allowed us to disseminate information and make new links with organisations and learners. Events attended included:

- Which course, Dublin, **January**
- Donegal Adult Learners Festival, **January**
- Central Library stand, Dublin, **February**
- Cavan Adult Learners Fair, **February**
- Monaghan Adult Learning Event, **February**
- Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, Castlebar, **April**
- EURES Fair, Blanchardstown, **April**
- Kiltimagh Education Fair, Mayo, **April**
- Whichcourse, **August**
- Cork Education and Training Fair, **September**
- Ballina Education and Training Fair, **September**
- ETBI Congress, **September**
- Ballymun Education Fair, **September**
- The National Ploughing Championships, **September**
- Roscommon Education and Training Fair, **October**
- EURES Fair, Dun Laoghaire, **November**
- Sharing and Caring Conference, Duleek Women's Forum, Drogheda, **November**
- Dublin Inner City Fair, **November**
- Ahead Better Options Fair, **December**

One Step Up Campaign

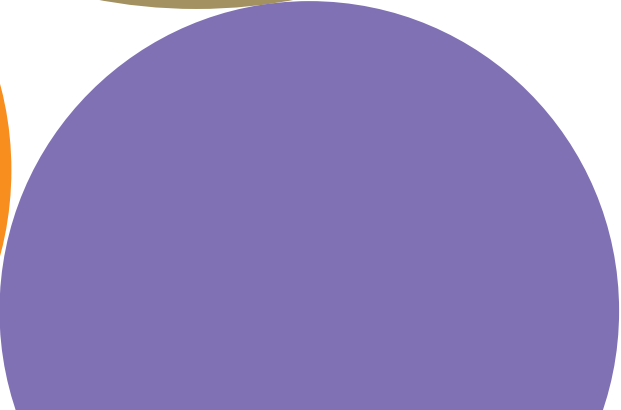
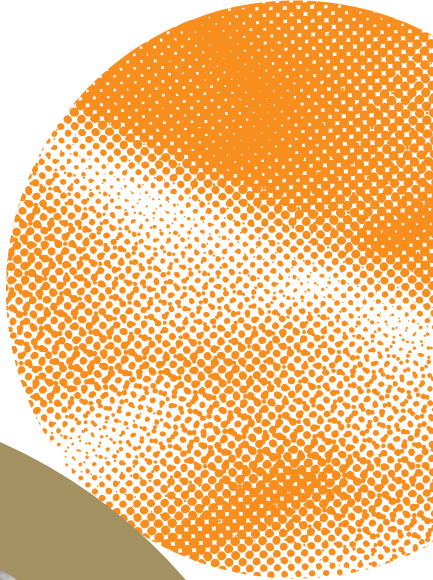
During 2013 AONTAS was invited by the Department of Education and Skills to participate in a EU campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation in adult learning. The campaign includes a new website www.onestepup.ie, a Freephone Helpline 1800 303 669 and an interactive online calendar of learning events.

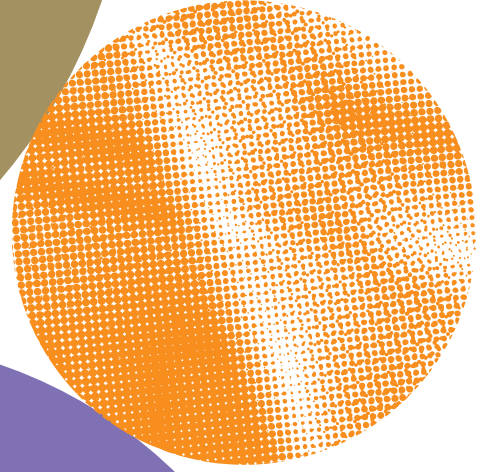
The One Step Up campaign is funded by the European Commission, as an initiative which promotes the EU Agenda for Adult Learning. This part of the campaign is managed by AONTAS on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills and is supported by a Steering Committee which includes the ETBI, NCGE, NALA, AEOA and Léargas. This project runs until September 2014. Since the recession, the demand for information about adult education and training has increased dramatically. Phone calls to AONTAS indicate that accessing information is a challenge for adults who want to take up learning opportunities.

OneStepUp.ie provides local contacts and useful resources for those looking for a particular course or information on further education and training opportunities in Ireland. It is easy to use and has been especially developed for use on a smartphone or tablet but works equally well on a PC. The website also has Frequently Asked Questions and video testimonials from adult learners who have returned to education. Another feature of the new website is an online calendar of learning events which provides information about lifelong learning opportunities taking place nationwide. The online calendar of events allows individuals to subscribe to events in their area and receive a reminder text or email before the event takes place.

Onestepup.ie was launched in November 2013 with a radio advertising campaign. The website will continue to be promoted throughout the project and promoted extensively throughout the Adult Learners Festival, and through an online marketing campaign.

Data gathered during the project; through the website and Freephone Helpline will provide more information for the Further Education and Training sector. This information will give an insight into those seeking to return to further education and training; their employment situation, learning interests and the challenges they experience in accessing education and training. This information will be useful to inform policy makers, SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills, especially at a time of reform within the sector.





SECTION 3

MAKING ADULT LEARNING VISIBLE

Adult Learners Festival 2013

The seventh Adult Learners' Festival took place from the 25th February – 2nd March 2013. Each weekday was themed while the overarching Festival message was Love to Learn. The slogan 'Love to Learn' helped to promote the positive message that learning brings many benefits to the individual learner and to society as a whole.

Themed Days

Celebrate Learning Monday, 25th February

Green Learning Tuesday, 26th February

Learning Communities Wednesday, 27th February

Learning for Work Thursday, 28th February

Lobby for Learning Friday, 1st March

Family Learning Day Saturday, 2nd March

STAR Awards Ceremony

The 2013 AONTAS STAR Awards Ceremony took place on Monday 25th February in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. The ceremony marked the start of the seventh Adult Learners Festival. Nearly 300 people attended, representing thirty eight organisations shortlisted for the awards. The projects represented a wide range of adult learning organisations and projects including those dealing with issues such as disability, mental health, aging and unemployment.

115 nominations were received over five categories: Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster and Nationwide. 38 projects were then shortlisted by the five judging panels. For the second year running,

the judging panels travelled around the country to meet with these projects face to face and to choose their five winning projects. The five awards, designed by Kerry artist Julie Ann Foley, were presented by Minister Ciaran Cannon and John Lonergan, former governor of Mountjoy Prison who gave the keynote speech. The five outstanding adult learning initiatives which won were:

- Connaught – Goal to Work Sports Coach Training Programme
- Munster – Ballybeg Horticulture Project
- Ulster – NIAMH (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health) Live and Learn Partnership
- Leinster – On The Edge – The Chair Project
- Nationwide – Training for Success.



Lobby for Learning Day

The 2013 Lobby for Learning Day event built on two previous successful policy exchanges organised by AONTAS which marked the closing of previous Adult Learners Festivals. For the closing event of the Adult Learners Festival 2013 a round table format was adopted to focus on the role of community education as a strategy for success for people most distant from education and training and the labour market, and as a valid form of activation for them. The event involved providers from the Community Education Network and learners who had made significant progression and in many cases gained employment as a result of their experience in community education. The event was attended by Minister Ciaran Cannon along with senior officials from the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Social Protection and SOLAS who engaged in dialogue with providers and learners. Learners identified the particular supports which assisted them in a community education setting, whilst providers outlined how community education should be a vital strand of the Further Education and Training Strategy.

Festival Events

Events for 2013 rose marginally from 415 to 418. The fact that the number of events have remained as high as they are is a testament to the organisations who continue to provide and promote opportunities for learning despite the challenges of economic recession. There are also high levels of collaboration among participant groups with 46% of organisations working together to promote and celebrate adult learning. In 2013 there was also an international aspect to the week with a visit from a Danish study group who were interested in participating in some of the Adult Learners Festival events. The events were organised by a wide range of providers including libraries, VECs, adult education providers, community groups, museums, galleries and private businesses. There was also a pop up series of workshops organised by Open Learning Ireland at the Seomra Spreaoi centre in Dublin. Saturday was also included as Family Learning Day which increased the week from five to six days and focused on intergenerational learning.

AONTAS developed new partnerships with museums and groups such as Down's Syndrome Ireland, the National Print Museum and Dublinia.

'Love to Learn' Bus

As part of the Adult Learners Festival launch AONTAS gave adult learners a unique opportunity to be active learners by visiting some of Dublin's cultural attractions on the "Love to Learn" bus. Headed up by tour guide Pat Liddy, Dublin Bus brought 25 adult learners to some of Dublin's museums and cultural attractions to visit their collections and see what they had to offer adult learners. Experts, including a participant of the Dublinia Heritage Course, gave exclusive guided tours to the participants. Bus Eireann also provided a courtesy 'Love to Learn' bus which was used by participants from Limerick Community Education Network to help celebrate their 20th anniversary.

Local Contacts

The Festival website provides details of 45 local contacts throughout Ireland who have organised events for the Festival in the past. These contacts are willing to share their event organiser experience with other interested parties.

Adult Learners Festival Website

AONTAS has a separate Adult Learners Festival website which is linked to the homepage: www.adultlearnersfestival.com. This is updated daily during the lead up to the Festival and then monthly throughout the year. Since 2010 there has been a 74% increase in visits to the Festival website. On the ALF website the majority of people visited the "Festival in your area" section. The second most visited section was the STAR awards while the "resources" page was the third.

E-Bulletins

Festival e-bulletins were sent out once a month during the months March 2012 to October 2012 to our mailing database of over 5,000. From October 2012 until the beginning of March 2013 they were sent out weekly.

Social Media Activity

AONTAS used an integrated social media campaign which covered Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Pinterest. AONTAS uses social media to share content, promote the Festival and to strengthen alliances and partnerships with other organisations.

YouTube

AONTAS commissioned adult learners from Co. Laois VEC to come up with a concept for a short video to help promote the STAR Awards. They planned, designed and shot the promotional video which was entitled 'Book Your Free Seat on Board Flight 2013'. This was used to launch the STAR Awards nomination process. It received over 1,300 views.

The AONTAS radio advertisements were reinforced with videos of the three learners which were uploaded onto YouTube. Three different learners, Sarah, Richard and Aishling shared their adult learning experiences with us. AONTAS circulated these short 30 second YouTube videos with their stories in the lead up to the Festival. The YouTube videos received over 1130 views.

AONTAS also compiled a short STAR Awards video to provide a snapshot of what happened during the ceremony by profiling some of the award winners and what winning the award meant to them.

Facebook

AONTAS has a dedicated Festival Facebook page and an AONTAS Facebook page. From the Facebook statistics we can see that the most viewed posts were:

- 1 Morning Edition Ireland
- 2 STAR award winners
- 3 Events around the country on Pinterest

12,599 people viewed posts or comments related to the Festival during the month of February 2013. In 2012 this number was 6341 so this is a 50% increase on last year.

Twitter

Our Twitter following increased to 1,882 and the Adult Learners Festival had its own hashtag #adultlearnersfestival for the Festival.

Pinterest

For ALF 2013 AONTAS held a photography competition to help document all the events that took place throughout the week. People attending events and the organisers of events were asked to take photos of events happening in their area and send it back to us by email, Facebook or Twitter.

We then pinned it to our AONTAS Festival Events Around the Country Pinterest board and promoted the link through Facebook and Twitter. The competition was very popular and we received over 100 photos. Everyone who submitted a photo was put into a draw to win a €50 One4All Voucher and the winner was Fingal Adult Education Centre.

Advertising

For the 2013 Festival AONTAS partnered with Eason Advertising to develop a strategic advertising approach across all media outlets for the campaign. In print media AONTAS took out 12 advertisements in the national newspapers: 1 in the Metro, 1 in the Ticket, 2 in the Irish Daily Sun, 1 in the Irish Sun on Sunday, 2 in the Sunday Times, 1 in the Star, 1 in the Sunday Independent and 3 in the Evening Herald. For radio AONTAS produced three 30 second advertisements featuring three learners. The advertisements were played on 3 national radio stations, 12 local stations and 22 community stations for one week. Finally AONTAS took out a Leaderboard advertisement and an MPU on Independent.ie from mid- February to mid- March. This banner led directly to our Festival website.

Media Coverage

The event organiser evaluation showed that over half of all events gained media coverage. There were 200 Festival related articles in the local press. The local newspapers featured information on events, advertisements and articles on STAR Award winners.

There were five articles in the national press including the 'Love to Learn' launch on February 19th in the Irish Times.

Radio Coverage

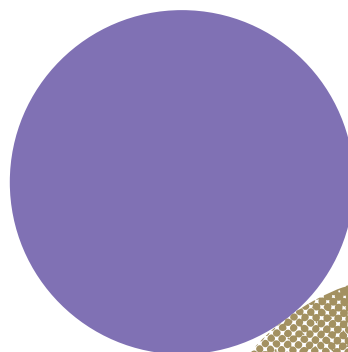
Interest in the Festival generated radio coverage in the form of 17 interviews, event notices and reporters being sent to events on both local and community radio. Philip Boucher Hayes from RTE's Drivetime programme also interviewed Berni Brady and adult learners at the AONTAS Lobby for Learning event.

Internet Coverage

The AONTAS Adult Learners Festival was featured widely on the internet. The free Dublin event guide included information about events and the website. Information about the Festival was included on websites such as Activelink, The Wheel and Qualifax.ie. Events were also listed on cultural websites such as CultureFox, Discover Ireland, Entertainment.ie and Festivals.ie.

Television Coverage

Berni Brady, AONTAS Director and Sinead Kelly from An Cosan appeared on the Morning Edition on Monday 24th February.



SECTION 4

PROMOTING AND ADVOCATING FOR ADULT LEARNING AT HOME AND ABROAD

AONTAS Communications Strategy

AONTAS Communication Strategy includes a number of elements i.e. media and public relations, online marketing, publications and advocacy. Key activities within the communications strategy during the year included an intensive advocacy campaign during the development of the FET (SOLAS) legislation, and the development of a new, online awareness campaign to promote the EU Agenda on Adult Learning. The profile of www.aontas.com increased significantly as an invaluable resource for adults looking to return to education. In addition, we increased our profile on national media, with features on RTE Radio and Television, Newstalk and national print media throughout the year.

A number of important drivers provided the backdrop for our promotion and policy work in 2013. These included the new FET legislation and the subsequent establishment of SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, the establishment of the 16 new Education and Training Boards and the publishing of the findings of the PIAAC Data. We engaged with and actively responded to these changes by offering information to our members and the wider public, and by creating opportunities for our members to explore, analyse and respond to these changes.

Throughout the year we actively used data and reports from the OECD, ESRI, QQI, DES, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the Oireachtas to inform our work.

AONTAS in the media

During 2013 AONTAS issued 23 press releases which promoted our events and responded to the changes taking place in the sector. The Adult Learners' Festival is an important focus of our promotional strategy. This begins in January when we promote the STAR Awards shortlist. In 2013 we increased our profile in local media with 200 articles in local media and 5 articles in national media promoting Festival events and the STAR Awards. RTE Television's Morning Edition Programme covered the Festival, and RTE's Drivetime programme broadcast a report from the Lobby for Learning Day later that week.

AONTAS media strategy promotes learner stories which illustrate a diversity of learner experiences of the FET services. Throughout the year AONTAS in partnership with ETBs and community education organisations identified learners to act as advocates for learning on national radio, newspapers and online. AONTAS was also called on to provide both a policy context and an analysis of community education and the PIAAC data.

As is the case every year, in August we provide national media with information about adult learning which is used to inform the publication of a number of dedicated supplements in the national media. This resulted in AONTAS featuring in supplements in the Irish Times, the Sunday Business Post and the Irish Independent.

AONTAS Online

AONTAS manages and updates two websites – www.aontas.com and www.adultlearnersfestival.com. During 2013 AONTAS applied for the Google Grants initiative, a programme which allows NGOs and charities to avail of free google adwords. AONTAS staff members developed their skills in the area of online marketing through formal and non-formal upskilling opportunities. As a result, traffic to www.aontas.com significantly increased during 2013. AONTAS continued to make use of social media and blogging, activities which help to raise our profile online and engage with our members and the wider public. We produced 7 blog entries and increased our Facebook following to 800, and our Twitter followers to 2220.

Explore Magazine

AONTAS produces the magazine Explore which features examples of best practice, information and analysis of policy developments relevant to the adult and community education sector. During 2013 two issues of the magazine were produced, with a third in production and scheduled for dissemination in early 2014.

AONTAS e-bulletin

The AONTAS e-bulletin “AONTAS Weekly update” is sent each week to just under 1000 people including the AONTAS membership, practitioners in the field of adult and community education, an average of 350 people engage with its content each week. The newsletter contains membership updates, adult and community education upcoming events and courses, policy updates and international adult education news.

Advocacy and Policy Work

AONTAS advocacy work in 2013 focused on the introduction of FET legislation and subsequent establishment of SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority. The Community Education Network established by AONTAS was a partner in our advocacy strategy. Meetings of the Network allowed AONTAS to keep community education providers informed of the changes taking place through presentations and workshops.

Legislation

The introduction of the FET (SOLAS) Bill in early 2013 provided AONTAS with the opportunity to develop its role as an advocacy organisation. Following initial review of the legislation, AONTAS drafted a response highlighting the need to consult with independent community education organisations as well as adult learners. AONTAS engaged with Minister Cannon, Minister Quinn and members of the Oireachtas Sub Committee on Education and Skills to highlight these issues. Community education organisations contacted their local TDs and Senators highlighting their role and potential in the new FET services. In July 2013, following a number of amendments the legislation was passed by the Oireachtas. The FET (SOLAS) Act 2013 commits to consulting with both community education providers and adult learners in the development of a five year strategy for Further Education and Training.

Establishment of SOLAS

Following the formal establishment of SOLAS in October 2013, AONTAS Director Berni Brady was appointed to the Board. Berni Brady was also invited to participate on the FET Strategy Advisory Committee, which includes a wide range of stakeholders from across the education spectrum. The Committee was appointed to advise on and input into the development of a five year Strategy for FET. The FET legislation requires the strategy to be launched within six months of the establishment of SOLAS.

Position Papers/ Submissions

During 2013 AONTAS published the following policy papers:-

- Lobby for Learning Day Report (February 2013)
- Response to the FET (SOLAS) Bill 2013
- QQI submissions (July 2013)
- Building Meaningful Representation for Adult Learners (August 2013)
- Submission to the Action Plan on Jobs 2014

Stakeholder relationships

Building relationships with stakeholders in the sector is an important part of our advocacy strategy. During 2013 we developed our relationships with key stakeholders as follows:

Political representatives and Public Servants

We engaged regularly with Minister for Training and Skills Ciaran Cannon with whom we met to discuss the FET legislation. The Minister also attended and spoke at the STAR Awards ceremony, and participated in 'Community Education – a strategy for success', our Lobby for Learning event. He also attended the closing seminar of the VITA project, and presented members of the Southill Men's Shed with their awards. In addition to the Minister, AONTAS engaged regularly with Education Spokespeople within the opposition, and members of the Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Education and Skills, who we briefed regularly about our work. Senior civil servants within the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Social Protection and SOLAS participated in our Lobby for Learning event in February.

Stakeholders in the sector

Collaborating with partners and stakeholders helped strengthen our advocacy work at a key time of change for the sector. In April we delivered a media training workshop to members of CEFA (the Community Education Facilitators Association) and helped publicise their activities marking ten years in the statutory sector through our e-bulletin

and Explore. We met with the Adult Education Officers Association (AEOA) and engaged with and supported the work of AEOs through our development of the One Step Up campaign. We continued to advocate for the role of adult guidance and promoted the guidance service through the One Step Up campaign. We communicated and met with organisations such as the QQI, INOU, NALA, NCGE, ETBI, AEGA to brief them about our work and explore ways of collaborating to mutually support the work.

Publications

Since 2000 all AONTAS publications are available on the website and the Publications and Links section is the one most frequently visited after the Information Section. AONTAS also maintains a small collection of library resources which are used by AONTAS staff and Executive members to assist them in the completion of submissions, policy papers and research. Public requests usually come from students and researchers in adult and community education. The publications request has increasingly moved from hard copies to material accessed online. Publications most often downloaded for 2013 included the information booklet, What Next, the Adult Learner Journal, the AGM 2013 briefing paper, the White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life (2000), and the two community education research reports Community Education: More than just a Course and Sowing the Seeds of Social Change.

Adult Learner Journal

The Adult Learner is the Irish journal of adult and community education founded in the mid 1980s. It aims primarily to serve the needs of the adult education community in Ireland by providing a forum for critical reflection on the practices of teaching and learning. The journal aims to continue to make knowledge, research and writing accessible to the widest possible audience and emphasises the implications of critique for practice. The journal has a long established practice of giving priority to subject matter that addresses disadvantage, social exclusion, equality, workplace learning and the study of the teacher/student relationship.

Community education, literacy, citizenship and access issues are also of importance in the journal. The journal welcomes papers which are relevant to those working across the broad field of Adult and Community Education and which make a contribution to debates both in Ireland and internationally. In 2013 the journal was viewed 437 times and 450 hard copies were distributed.

Information Communication Technology

AONTAS completed the migration of data into a CRM (client relationship management) system thus enabling the AONTAS staff to improve the contacts, events and information referral data management.

Representing Adult Education at home and abroad

AONTAS's key work in influencing policy, promoting the value of adult and community education and representing the interests of adult learners has been done in a mixture of ways during the life of our current strategic plan. Many of the working/advisory/steering groups which proliferated during the 2000s are now defunct as government has centralised policy making and closed, or no longer funds agencies that had a broad social partnership representation. This has meant our work has become more fluid and strategic allowing us to focus on particular issues as they arise.

In 2013 our policy work has focused on meeting with key policy makers and stakeholders on a regular basis as described earlier. AONTAS also continues to act as the voice of adult education in a number of arenas. AONTAS staff and Executive Committee members also attended a range of conferences during the year including the Irish Presidency Conference, Teacher Union Conferences, ETBI Congress, NALA Conference, INOU as well as others.

Groups/organisations where AONTAS currently represents the interests of adult and community education:

- Advisory Group on Access to Higher Education
- QQI learner representative
- National LLL Steering Group, DES
- European Association for Education for Adults, Board member
- INFONET, Grundtvig European Information Network
- International Council for Adult Education
- Governing Authority, University of Limerick
- Issue-focused working groups set up by DES from time to time; e.g. Literacy Review, Developing guidelines for Community Education, wider benefits of learning etc.
- Further Education and Training Advisory Group, SOLAS
- PLSS Steering Group, SOLAS
- Board of SOLAS

Current working groups: usually comprise a mixture of staff, Executive and AONTAS members

- CEN Steering Group
- Judging panels, ALF
- Adult Learner Journal Editorial Board
- Membership working group
- AONTAS review and Strategic planning group

EAEA and representation at a European Level

Niamh O'Reilly has represented AONTAS and its members on the Board of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) since 2011. She was re-elected to the EAEA Board at the EAEA General assembly which was held in Leicester and hosted by NIACE in June. The Assembly was attended by Jacinta Cuthbert and Berni Brady who facilitated a workshop to develop the workplan of the EAEA for the next year. AONTAS also contributed its ideas to the development of the new publicity leaflet produced by the EAEA in 2013.

Through active participation at Board meetings AONTAS contributed to the membership subgroup of the EAEA with its resulting membership strategy, and influenced key areas of European policy pertaining to adult learning.

EUCIS-(LLL)

On behalf of the EAEA AONTAS is represented on the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) which comprises 25 European networks working in education and training. In December 2013 a study group from AONTAS of ten people including AONTAS staff, Executive Members and five learners was invited to Brussels by MEP Emer Costello to participate in a discussion on Lifelong Learning policy organized for the EUCIS Lifelong Learning Week. The trip included a presentation on the institutions and working processes of the European Union. Following the visit to the European Parliament AONTAS participated in a seminar about the PIAAC survey. Una Buckley, AONTAS Learning Ambassador participated in a panel discussion as part of the seminar.

ARALE Conference

In October AONTAS was invited to present at the ARALE(Awareness Raising for Adult Learning and Education) Conference organized by the EAEA in collaboration with the Danish Adult Education Association. The aim of the conference was to examine how to best promote adult education and lifelong learning and to share best practice from across Europe. The conference was attended by Niamh Farren and Berni Brady who made a presentation on the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival. A report of the ARALE conference and recommendations can be accessed at www.org/arale

Lithuanian EU Presidency Conference

AONTAS was invited to attend the closing conference for the Lithuanian EU Presidency in December 2013. The conference was hosted by the EU Commission together with Unesco. The conference entitled “Equipping adults for the

21st century – Joining forces for action on skills and competences” included presentations about the PIAAC findings and other relevant policy developments, and provided a range of networking and learning opportunities through panel discussions and workshops. Conference delegates came from across a number of EU countries and included representatives from government departments and civil society organisations.

NIACE Conference

AONTAS was invited to attend ‘Learning for a Better World’ in Cardiff, Wales which was organised by NIACE as part of their activities to promote the EU Agenda on Adult Learning. The conference provided more information about the policy context in the UK, as well as the opportunity to share experiences with and learn from our UK counterparts.

VITA

During 2013 AONTAS continued its involvement as a partner in VITA ,a European funded project which explored and tested ways of measuring soft skills or “competencies” for adult learners.

AONTAS worked with Jim Prior, Executive Committee member from the Limerick Community Education Network to facilitate the Irish pilot programme for the project with members of the of the Southill Men’s Sheds group-Limerick. The group engaged in a personal development course called “the Southill Men’s Shed Skills Challenge”. The aim of the course was to improve the problem solving, leadership and networking skills of the participants. The VITA level 5 methodology was used to measure the development of these skills. At the end of the course the 10 Southill learners received VITA certificates showing their progress. The certificates were presented by Minister Ciaran Cannon at the final VITA conference which took place in Dublin on Wednesday 9th October 2013. It was attended by the Irish and European partners and was a great success. Full details of this project are available online on www.vita-eu.org

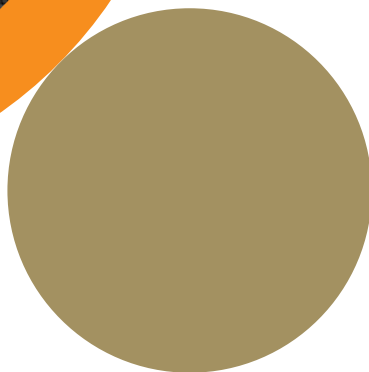
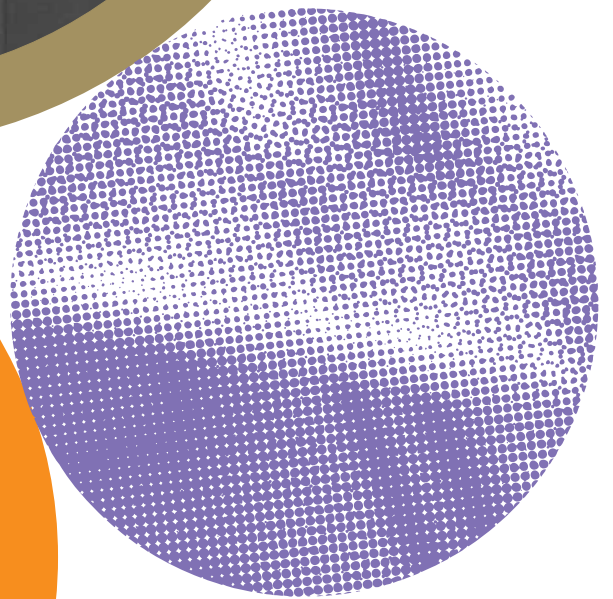
INFONET

AONTAS continues its involvement in the INFONET Project which is a Grundtvig funded project. It provides a comprehensive web-based, database of reports, news, articles, background articles and interviews related to adult education as well as a regular newsletter. It has a network of around 40 correspondents (journalists / experts) all across Europe and cooperates with important organisations and networks across Europe. Berni Brady acts as the Irish correspondent and during 2013 contributed two articles to The INFONET website. She also attended the INFONET Milestone Conference which took place in Tallinn in April 2013. Details of the project can be accessed online at www.infonet-ae.eu

German Visit

During 2012 AONTAS hosted an intern from the German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn. Matthias Alke is a PhD student at the Institute whose interest is in Community Education. Part of his research included a study of the AONTAS Community Education Network. In 2013 as part of an exchange Berni Brady was invited to give a lecture on Community Education and Networking to students in the University of Magdeburg. The lecture was followed by a discussion and workshop which featured models of practice in both Ireland and Germany.







AONTAS

DIRECTORS' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2013

Registration Number 80958

Charity Number 6719

Company Information

Directors	Ms. Elizabeth Waters <i>(President)</i>	Auditors	Anne Brady McQuillans DFK Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors Iveagh Court Harcourt Road Dublin 2
	Mr. Liam Kilbride <i>(Vice-President)</i>		
	Ms. Maria Gorman <i>(Hon. Treasurer)</i>		
	Ms. Lorraine Cunningham <i>(Hon. Secretary)</i>	Business Address	83-87 Main Street Ranelagh Dublin 6
	Mr. Brendan Curtis <i>(elected May 2013)</i>		
	Ms. Mary Farrell	Bankers	Bank of Ireland Lower Baggot Street Dublin 2
	Ms Tara Farrell		
	Mr. Noel Fitzgerald <i>(elected May 2013)</i>	Solicitors	P.J. Walsh & Company Solicitors 12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2
	Ms. Crona Gallagher <i>(elected May 20 13)</i>		
	Ms. Lorraine Hennessy	Registered Office	83-87 Main Street Ranelagh Dublin 6
	Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh		
	Mr. Michael Kenny <i>(elected May 2013)</i>		
	Mr. Colm Kilgallon		
	Mr. James Prior		
	Ms. Maire Ui Eanaigh <i>(elected May 2013)</i>		
	Ms. Deborah Brock <i>(term completed May 2013)</i>		
	Ms. Gillian Wild <i>(term completed May 2013)</i>		
	Ms. Ruth Smith <i>(term completed May 2013)</i>		

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

The directors present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2013.

Principal Activities, Business Review and Future Developments

The principal activity of the company is to advocate for the right of every adult in Ireland to quality learning.

The company is limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

The directors expect that the present level of activity will be sustained for the foreseeable future.

Results

The (deficit) for the year after providing for depreciation and taxation amounted to €(50,488) (2012-€(15,819)).

Going Concern

The company is dependant on income provided from government funders, membership and donations. As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic restraints. The directors have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

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

Ms. Elizabeth Waters (*President*)

Mr. Liam Kilbride (*Vice-President*)

Ms. Maria Gorman (*Hon. Treasurer*)

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham (*Hon. Secretary*)

Mr. Brendan Curtis

Mr. Colm Kilgallon

Ms. Crona Gallagher

Mr. James Prior

Ms. Lorraine Hennessy

Ms. Maire Ui Eanaigh

Ms. Mary Farrell

Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh

Mr. Michael Kenny

Mr. Noel Fitzgerald

Ms. Tara Farrell

There were no changes in members between 31st December 2013 and the date of signing the financial statements.

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.

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The directors have assessed the risks and have taken measures 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. The directors are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

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 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.

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 to or disclosure in the financial statements or in the notes thereto.

On behalf of the Board

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President

Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer



Date: 12th April 2014

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish Law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements giving a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and the surplus or deficit of the company for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Irish Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and Irish law).

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

The directors are responsible for keeping proper books of account that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 1983 and 1990 to 2013. 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.

In so far as the directors are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the company's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the company's auditor is unaware, and
- the directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

On behalf of the Board

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Date: 12th April 2014

Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer



Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31st December 2013 which comprises the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

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 opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practice Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors including 'APB Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Small Entities (Revised)', in the circumstances set out in Note 16 to the financial statements.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the directors; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

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 2013 and of its net incoming resources and cashflows for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 1983 and 1990 to 2013.

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS

Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 1963 to 1983 and 1990 to 2013

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purpose 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Acts 1963 to 1983 and 1990 to 2013 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosure of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.

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



Natalie Kelly (Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of

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

Date: 12th April 2014

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2013

		2013	2012
	Notes	€	€
Income			
Restricted And Unrestricted Funds	3	991,176	917,720
Resources Expended			
Administration			
Salary costs		184,135	163,047
Pension scheme		27,301	23,384
Staff training and expenses		10,853	11,071
Sundry staff costs		3,795	2,436
Postage and courier services		17,744	15,706
Stationery		7,328	4,065
Telephone		5,867	6,484
Travel and subsistence		4,214	8,742
Executive and general committee expenses		7,490	8,094
Legal fees		2,550	393
Audit and accountancy fees		6,851	6,850
Bank interest and charges		725	953
Representation and affiliation		20,188	13,652
Miscellaneous		353	-
Rent of venues and equipment		1,105	958
Research and projects apportionments		(36,999)	(2,758)
		263,500	263,077
Premises			
Light and heat		3,761	3,918
Rent and rates		60,760	78,307
Repairs and maintenance		16,951	15,714
Leasing charges		4,785	4,413
Insurance		6,515	6,945
Cleaning		3,318	3,547
Depreciation of computers and office equipment		5,397	6,053
		101,487	118,897

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2013

	2013	2012
Notes	€	€
Development		
Salary costs	340,867	329,781
Pension scheme	48,534	47,477
Accommodation and subsistence	5,308	2,841
Printing and publications	34,118	34,993
Conferences / seminars / membership meetings	16,692	10,434
Public relations strategy	3,438	2,982
Adult learners' festival	118,916	97,054
Information resources	4,481	4,836
Organisational development	3,293	-
Recruitment	180	360
Childcare	50	275
	575,877	531,033
Research And Projects		
Research	10,444	9,347
EALL - One Step Up	52,341	-
Vita Project	34,537	-
Grundtvig Sowing the Learning Seeds	-	4,258
Wheel Training Links	3,478	6,927
	100,800	20,532

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2013

		Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Total
		2013	2013	2013	2012
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from restricted activities	3	84,123	-	84,123	12,488
Incoming resources from unrestricted activities	3	-	907,049	907,049	905,218
Total incoming resources		84,123	907,049	991,172	917,706
Resources expended					
Total resources expended		(84,123)	(957,541)	(1,041,664)	(933,539)
Operating (deficit)/surplus		-	(50,492)	(50,492)	(15,833)
Interest receivable and similar income		-	4	4	14
Net (deficit)/surplus resources for year	12	-	(50,488)	(50,488)	(15,819)

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 45 – 51 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 12th April 2014 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President

Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer




Balance Sheet as at the 31st December 2013


		2013		2012	
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		16,341		17,359
Current assets					
Debtors	9	15,609		23,322	
Cash at bank and in hand		90,451		92,265	
		106,060		115,587	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(53,748)		(9,165)	
Net current assets			52,312		106,422
Total assets less current liabilities			68,653		123,781
Accruals and deferred income	11		(19,494)		(24,134)
Net assets			49,159		99,647
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	12 & 15		49,159		99,647
Total funds			49,159		99,647

The notes on pages 45 – 51 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 12th April 2014 and signed on its behalf by

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President

Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer




Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st December 2013

		2012	2011
	Notes	€	€
Reconciliation of (deficit)/surplus to net cash (outflow)/inflow from operation activities			
Net (outgoing) (before interest)		(50,492)	(15,833)
Depreciation		5,397	6,053
Decrease / (increase) in debtors		7,713	(1,161)
Decrease in creditors		44,583	873
Government grant released		(4,640)	(3,866)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		2,561	(13,934)
Cash flow statement			
Net cash outflow from operating activities		2,561	(13,934)
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	13	4	14
Capital expenditure	13	(4,379)	8,668
Decrease in cash in the year		(1,814)	(5,252)
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds (Note 14)			
Decrease in cash in the year		(1,814)	(5,252)
Net funds at 1st January 2013	14	92,265	97,517
Net funds at 31st December 2013		90,451	92,265

The notes on pages 45 – 51 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 12th April 2014 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President

Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer




Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

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 accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and with reference to the recommendations of the revised Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued by the Charity Commissioners in 2005.

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:

Fixtures, fittings and equipment	– 20% Straight Line
Computer equipment	– 20% Straight Line
Office equipment	– 20% Straight Line

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 and grant income receivable from TUI, Teagasc, The Wheel organisation, VITA, ETBI, ASTI and sponsorship income 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 from the Department of Education and Science 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.

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

AONTAS operates a defined contribution scheme and pension benefits are funded over the employees' period of service by way of contributions from the company and employees. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

2. Going Concern

The company is dependant on income provided from government funders, membership and donations.

As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic restraints. The directors have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

3. Sources of Income	2013	2012
	€	€
Restricted funds		
Department of Education & Skills Grants	4,640	3,866
Department of Education & Skills/EALL- One Step Up	52,341	-
Vita Project	13,875	-
NQAI Festival Sponsorship	-	4,000
Teagasc Festival Sponsorship	1,000	-
TUI Festival Sponsorship	1,000	1,000
ASTI Festival Sponsorship	500	-
ETBI Festival Sponsorship	1,600	-
The Wheel Training Links Grant	4,000	-
Brussels Festival Sponsorship	2,200	-
Grundtvig Sowing the Learning Seeds	-	3,622
Infonet Expenses Reimbursed	1,428	-
Vita Expenses	1,539	-
	84,123	12,488
Unrestricted funds		
Department of Education & Skills:		
Grant in Aid (Core Funding)	885,000	887,000
Members' subscriptions	21,938	17,145
Bank interest received	4	14
Miscellaneous	111	1,073
	907,053	905,232
Total income	991,176	917,720

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

4. Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources for the year

	2013	2012
	€	€
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year is stated after charging		
Depreciation of tangible assets	5,397	6,053
Operating lease rentals		
- Office equipment	4,785	4,413
Auditors' remuneration	6,851	6,850

5. Employees

	2013	2012
Number of employees		
The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were	11	9

	2013	2012
	€	€
Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	525,002	492,828
Other pension costs	75,835	70,861
	600,837	563,689

6. Pension Costs

The company 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 company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by AONTAS to the fund and amount to €75,835 (2012: €70,861).

7. Taxation

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

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

8. Tangible Assets

	Computer equipment	Office equipment	Fixtures, fittings and equipment	Totals
	€	€	€	€
Cost				
At 1st January 2012	83,954	11,713	49,519	145,186
Additions	3,872	-	507	4,379
Disposals	(21,377)	-	-	(21,377)
At 31st December 2013	66,449	11,713	50,026	128,188
Depreciation				
At 1st January 2013	66,743	11,565	49,519	127,827
On Disposals	(21,377)	-	-	21,377
Charge for the year	5,221	75	101	5,397
At 31st December 2013	50,587	11,640	49,620	111,847
Net book value				
At 31st December 2013	15,862	73	406	16,341
At 31st December 2012	17,211	148	-	17,359

9. Debtors

	2013	2012
	€	€
Other debtors	5,673	16,358
Other taxes and social security costs	1,308	-
Prepayments	8,628	6,964
	15,609	23,322
	2013	2012
	€	€
Included in other debtors is the following		
Membership fees	4,193	8,765
Wages and salaries	1,480	-
Trade creditors overpaid	-	7,593
	5,673	16,358

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Included in other taxes and social security costs (opposite) are the following		
PAYE/PRSI	1,308	-

10. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2013	2012
	€	€
Trade creditors	1,839	1,665
Deferred income	44,409	-
Accruals	7,500	7,500
	53,748	9,165

11. Accruals and Deferred Income

	2013	2012
	€	€
Government grants		
At 31 December 2012	24,134	-
Increase in year	-	28,000
Released in year	(4,640)	(3,866)
At 31 December 2013	19,494	24,134

12. Reconciliation of Movements in Funds

	Statement of Financial Activities	
	2013	2012
	€	€
Fund balance at beginning of year	99,647	115,466
Net movement in funds	(50,488)	(15,819)
Fund balance at end of year	49,159	99,647

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2012

13. Gross Cash Flows

	2013	2012
	€	€
Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	4	14
Capital expenditure		
Payments to acquire tangible assets	(4,379)	(19,332)
Receipt of grant	-	28,000
	(4,379)	8,668

14. Analysis of Changes in Net Funds

	Opening balance	Cash flows	Closing balance
	€	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	92,265	(1,814)	90,451
Net funds	92,265	(1,814)	90,451

15. Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfer to designated reserve	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€	€
Specific funds					
Restricted grants	-	84,123	(84,123)	-	-
Unrestricted grants	44,647	907,053	(962,424)	55,000	49,159
Designated reserve	55,000	-	-	(55,000)	55,000
	99,647	991,176	(1,041,664)	-	49,159

At the year end the directors did not transfer any additional funds from unrestricted reserves to a designated reserve and the designated reserve brought forward from 2012 was used on projects during 2013.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2012

16. 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.

17. Status


The liability of the members is limited.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members or within one year thereafter for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding €6.35.

18. Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board on the 12th April 2014 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Ms. Maria Gorman
Hon. Treasurer



