



PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

NOV 16TH 2021

2007 - Now!
CEN



LET'S BE LOUDER
AND BOLDER ABOUT
WHAT IS NEEDED!

Community
Education
Network
Meeting



NOV 16TH 2021

- 10.00 Welcome and updates: Suzanne Kyle, AONTAS
- 10.05 Recognition of five women who have retired from community education, Suzanne Kyle, AONTAS
- 10.20 AONTAS update and introduction to MAED Fund input, Niamh O'Reilly, CEO, AONTAS
- 10.30 MAED Fund Discussion, Nessa White, Executive Director of Transformation, SOLAS
- 11.00 A Guide to Applying for Funding for Community Education, Frances Haworth, Head of Grants, Donor Care & Impact, The Community Foundation for Ireland.

Community Education Network Meeting



The purpose of this CEN meeting was to reflect on and celebrate the contribution of five women who were all involved in the establishment of the CEN back in 2007, and who have supported the work of AONTAS over many years, as well as community education in their local areas over decades. Bríd Connolly of Maynooth University, Catherine Aylmer of LCEN, Marian Donegan of NCCWN –Access 2000, Anne Flannery of the Larkin Unemployed Centre, and Pauline McGaley of Warrenmount Community Education Centre are all newly retired or plan to retire and were recently presented with AONTAS Awards for their outstanding contribution to community education and the CEN. The meeting provided a space to mark this celebration and reflect on how we can ensure that their contribution and values continue to shape community education practice in to the future.

INTRODUCTION

This meeting also included a funding workshop aimed at highlighting funding information and prospects of use to community education providers. We heard from Nessa White, Director of Transformation, SOLAS who gave an input on the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF). This input also allowed CEN members to share the impact that the fund has made on their organisation as well as some of challenges of the fund. Frances Haworth, Head of Grants, Donor Care & Impact, with the Community Foundation for Ireland, also provided very useful tips, guidance and opportunities for community education practitioners in order to increase their knowledge and opportunities around accessing funding.

25 Attendees

10 Organisations

6 Counties

.. RECOGNISING the
CONTRIBUTION of MEMBERS ...**Recognition of Five Women who have Retired from Community Education**

AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN) had the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding commitment of five CEN women, who have retired recently from Community Education and who were instrumental to the establishment of the CEN and in driving community education in their communities. The five women are listed below:

- **Bríd Connolly**
Maynooth University
- **Catherine Aylmer**
Limerick Community Education Network
- **Marian Donegan**
NCCWN - (Access 2000)
- **Anne Flannery**
The Larkin Centre
- **Pauline McGaley**
Warrenmount Community Education Centre

I WILL REALLY MISS WORKING WITH THESE WOMEN

**STARTING the CEN**

- BRINGING DIVERSE GROUPS TOGETHER
 - FINDING WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON
- ↳ *Solidarity* ←

Suzanne Kyle, AONTAS Senior Community Education Officer spoke about the impact these women had on the CEN, their dedication to community education, and the joy of working with each of them over the last number of years. They were recently presented with AONTAS awards for their outstanding contribution to community education and the CEN. Their achievements were celebrated by their colleagues, peers and former students.

Community Education Network Meeting

Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO acknowledged the significant contribution made by these women as leaders and innovators in community education. She spoke about succession and holding onto this sectoral knowledge when so much of it has been built by volunteers and largely by women. While there is a huge community of expertise there and within the CEN, clear professional career paths and sustainable multiannual funding are required to attract and retain community educators.



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YOUR IMPACT WILL CONTINUE

CATHERINE AYLMER

EMBODIES WHAT
COMMUNITY ED. IS
ALL ABOUT

GRASSROOTS
PERSPECTIVE



BRÍD CONNOLLY

SHAPED COMMUNITY
ED. in IRELAND

WRITING & EDUCATION of
OTHERS



DIALOGIC PRACTICES
GROUP WORK

MARIAN DONEGAN

EMBODIES THE PHRASE
'FROM THE PERSONAL
TO THE POLITICAL'



STRENGTH in
HIGHLIGHTING
INJUSTICE

PAULINE McGALEY

CREATED A CULTURE
of CARE & RESPECT
in WARRENMOUNT



ANNE FLANNERY

REFLECTION, ANALYSIS
& COMMITMENT to
COMMUNITY ED. VALUES

WHAT is the PURPOSE
of EDUCATION?

Community
Education
Network
Meeting



Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage (MEAD) Fund Input & Discussion

The meeting provided members with the opportunity to learn more about the impact of the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage (MAED) Fund, with inputs from Nessa White, Director of Transformation in SOLAS, and the practitioner perspective of Maura Kearney, Education Coordinator with the Acorn Project, Edenderry.

Input from Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO

Niamh introduced the session and took the opportunity to highlight how important community education in Ireland is, the significant impacts it has on people's lives and how continued work is needed to sustain it including job security and consistent funding for people working in the sector. AONTAS will continue to strengthen their advocacy efforts in this area.

**MEAD Fund Discussion –
Practitioner Perspective**

Maura Kearney, Education Coordinator, Acorn Project, spoke about the impact of the MAED Fund on the Acorn project, a project aimed at supporting young people at risk in the community through the provision of social, education and employment opportunities. Key points from Maura's discussion are summarised below:

- Access to the fund allowed the Acorn project engage fourteen learners online that would otherwise have been unable to do so
- The provision of IT equipment was effective in overcoming the digital divide
- The challenge of staffing costs is an ongoing issue and for every new computer obtained a human element and daily support is required to effectively support the learners

**MEAD Fund Discussion –
Input from SOLAS**

Nessa White, Director of Transformation, SOLAS discussed the MAED Fund with members including how to came to be, the purpose of the fund and key learnings from the fund going forward. Some key points are captured below from Nessa's discussion:

- Feedback from the MAED fund overall was very positive but there is still room for improvement and consideration of how funding is provided going forward
- The MAED Fund was successful in helping to bridge the gap in educational equality by building capacity to address specific barriers but the human element required to drive this need to considered
- The upcoming Community Education Framework is an opportunity to put in place structures that can increase access to more accessible and consistent supports for community education



MAED FUND

I SEE the IMPACT
on the GROUND
& I WORRY THAT WE
CANNOT SUSTAIN THE
WORK NEEDED to
SUPPORT LEARNERS

CHALLENGES:

- RETROSPECTIVE grant
- * GATHERING PPS NUMBERS NO!
- * STAFFING and AGE PROFILE of STAFF

ENCOURAGING YOUNG
PEOPLE to WORK in
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION is
A BIG CHALLENGE

Nessa opened the discussion to the CEN members and invited feedback. The key points highlighted by members are captured below:

- Accessibility of the application process by ensuring all community education centres are fully aware of the funding, have the resources and time to apply for it and the application process is standardised across all ETBs

- The consideration of other barriers to learning such as travel costs, childcare and one to one support for learners
- The need for adequately resourced staff and tutors to sustain community education and to effectively support their learners and the additional challenges they face

CEN members were encouraged to reflect on the discussion and get in touch with Dearbháil Lawless, AONTAS Head of Advocacy with any further feedback: dlawless@aontas.com

[Click to email](#)

APPLYING for FUNDING



FRANCIS HAWORTH

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
for IRELAND

WE REALLY CARE ABOUT
the COMMUNITIES we
SERVE - REACH OUT TO US!



MEET the FUNDER 1:1

WHAT DO FUNDERS LOOK FOR?

ADDING VALUE:

- * PILOT SCHEMES
- * RESEARCH
- * INNOVATIONS
- * PROJECTS



€ REALISTIC BUDGET

CRITERIA

WELL THOUGHT THROUGH



SUSTAINABILITY



- * NO CLEAR NEED
- * NO CLEAR OUTCOMES
- * NO PLAN & MEASURE IMPACT

IF YOU GET A **NO** DON'T BE
PUT OFF: ASK FOR FEEDBACK

A Guide to Applying for Funding for Community Education

Frances Haworth, Head of Grants, Donor Care & Impact, the Community Foundation Ireland joined the CEN to discuss the funding they have available and to provide some key tips to members on best practice when completing funding applications.

For AONTAS CEN members, the Community Foundation for Ireland could be an avenue for funding in areas such as work with lone parents, elderly learners and women in the community. Frances shared some key tips when applying for funding as highlighted below:

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APPLYING *for* FUNDING

- Provide a detailed funding proposal, clearly showing how the project or work will be carried out, how it meets the funding criteria and key timelines to achieve this
- Demonstrate why the project is needed using research and evidence and clearly outline the project impact and planned outcomes
- Develop a realistic budget, exact quotes are not necessarily required but it should be detailed and well thought out
- Demonstrate how the project can be sustained within the community i.e. show how it can carry on after the funding period ends (if relevant)
- Reach out for support from the funding organisation you are completing a funding application for – remember they want you to succeed with your application
- Engage with key people involved in your project to ensure your application includes all the right voices
- Finally, remember you are the expert and know what is best when working with your target audience, use that knowledge to your advantage

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For further information on applying for funding with the Community Foundation for Ireland please get in touch through their support hub here:

[Click to go to webpage](#)

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PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

2007 - Now!
CEN
NEXT COMMUNITY of PRACTICE meeting
SUZANNE

*DON'T FORGET: *
STAR AWARDS! NOMINATIONS

... WELCOME to NEW FA
COMMUNITY ED. OFFICER
AMY

.. RECOGNISING the CONTRIBUTION of MEMBERS ..

MAED FUND

THANK You for the WORK You Do!



NESSA WHITE
SOLAS

THIS FUND IS DRIVEN by NIAMH'S WORK

WHY?

DECLINE in PARTICIPATION
FOCUS on DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS

DISCUSSION

BARRIERS OTHER THAN DIGITAL STILL EXIST
NOW they ARE MORE VISIBLE

I SEE the IMPACT on the GROUND & I WORRY THAT WE CANNOT SUSTAIN THE WORK NEEDED to SUPPORT LEARNERS

AONTAS ARE RELENTLESS IN THEIR ADVOCACY ON BEHALF of MEMBERS

UPDATES

BREAKING DOWN PARTICIPATION
CHILD CARE TRAVEL COSTS
DIGITAL DIVIDE
APPLYING THROUGH ETBs...
90% EXTERNAL to the ETB
2021
648 FUNDING REQUESTS
€7.2m GIVEN OUT
56% GIVEN TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

WE KNOW THE UNDERSPEND is NOT a REFLECTION of the NEED.

CHALLENGES:
RETROSPECTIVE grant
* GATHERING PPS NUMBERS No!
* STAFFING and AGE PROFILE of STAFF

ENABLING US TO RUN SHORT COURSES HAS REALLY SUITED our LEARNERS!

IT WAS VERY FAST!

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE to WORK in COMMUNITY EDUCATION is a BIG CHALLENGE

4 CATEGORIES



FEEDBACK

ANNUAL?
COMBINING with other STRANDS
HARMONISING the PROCESS
STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS with COMMUNITY GROUPS

APPLYING for FUNDING



FRANCIS HAWORTH
THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION for IRELAND

WE REALLY CARE ABOUT the COMMUNITIES we SERVE - REACH OUT TO US!

MEET the FUNDER 1:1

WHAT DO FUNDERS LOOK FOR?

ADDING VALUE:

- * PILOT SCHEMES
- * RESEARCH
- * INNOVATIONS
- * PROJECTS

IF YOU GET A NO DON'T BE PUT OFF: ASK FOR FEEDBACK



RED FLAGS

- * NO CLEAR NEED
- * NO CLEAR OUTCOMES
- * NO PLAN to MEASURE IMPACT



NIAMH O'REILLY
AONTAS CEO

Thank you! TO THESE WONDERFUL WOMEN LEADERS

... I THINK of the FUTURE and I'M WORRIED FRANKLY.

SUCCESSION

OPPORTUNITY

C.E. FRAMEWORK
FURTHER ED STRATEGY

WE NEED:

- * SUSTAINABLE FUNDING
- * CLEAR CAREER PATHWAY

LET'S PROGRESS THESE ISSUES!

LET'S BE LOUDER AND BOLDER ABOUT WHAT IS NEEDED!

CEN CENSUS tells us:
C.E.N. MEMBERS JUGGLING:
9 GOV'T DEPT'S
51 DIFFERENT FUNDING STREAMS

MAED FUND

A WELCOME BOOST to the SECTOR.
UNIQUE.
AONTAS LOBBIED STRONGLY for the MAED FUND
WE KNEW HOW GREAT the NEED IS.

MAED FUND RESEARCH

VALUABLE? IMPROVEMENTS?
IT EQUIPMENT
14 LEARNERS & THEIR FAMILIES
EQUIPMENT is GREAT! ADDITIONAL STAFF HOURS WOULD BE WELCOME.

HOW CAN WE ENTICE PEOPLE to WORK in the SECTOR if the RESOURCES ARE NOT THERE?

MAURA
ACORN PROJECT



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Community Education Network Meeting



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Conclusion

Today's CEN provided the platform to celebrate the significant contribution of the Brid, Catherine, Marian, Pauline and Anne's retirement from community education and to acknowledge their influence in shaping community education in their localities and beyond while bringing extensive knowledge to the CEN. Their impact was evident through the kind words shared by their colleagues, former learners and AONTAS. A consideration for 2021 is to look at how community education can hold onto this sectoral knowledge and expertise when key people in the sector move on or step down from their roles?

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to funding. CEN members heard from Nessa White on key learnings from the MAED Fund. CEN members provided some really useful feedback to Nessa on their experience of accessing and using the fund. It was really beneficial to hear from the Acorn Project on how they used the fund from a community education perspective.

Finally, CEN members had the opportunity to take away practical tips and guidance when applying for funding and completing applications.

AONTAS would like to thank our guest speakers Nessa White, Maura Kearney and Frances Haworth and all our CEN members whose knowledge and contributions make the CEN what it is today. Many thanks to our CEN Steering Group members for guiding and supporting the work of the CEN:

Cathleen McDonagh Clarke,
Exchange House

Ciarán McKinney,
Age & Opportunity

David O'Brien, Soilse

Lia Clarkson, Warrenmount CED

Mary Hughes, LCEN

Mary Maher, DAL

Maura Kearney, Acorn Project

Rachel Morrissey, D8CEC

We recommend that AONTAS CEN members join EPALE (the European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) so that you can be included in our CEN EPALE groups and receive more information on our CEN meetings, including presentations and other relevant news and events.

You can register on EPALE by clicking here:

[Click to open link](#)

For more information on the AONTAS Community Education Network, or to become a member, please click here:

[Click to open link](#)