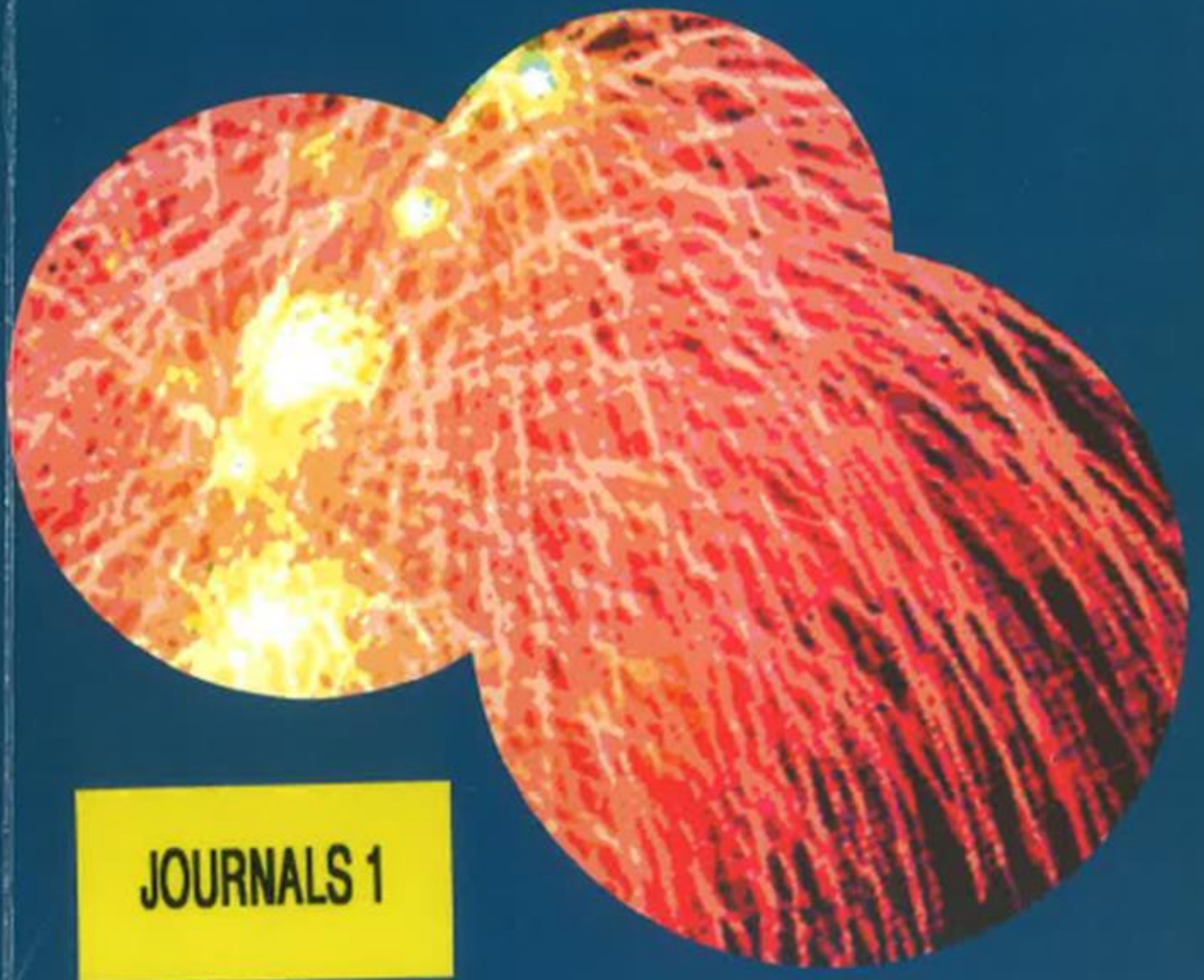
The Adult Learner

Adult Education and Social Exclusion



JOURNALS 1

The Journal of Adult and Community Education in Ireland 1997

The Adult Learner

Adult Education and Social Exclusion

The subscription for the 1997 issue of The Adult Learner is
Organisations/Libraries - £10.00
Individuals - £5.00

For more details contact
Aontas, 22 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 475 4121 Fax: (01) 478 0084

ISSN 0790/8040

The views expressed in this journal are the authors' and are not necessarily those of AONTAS or the Adult Education Organisers' Association

© 1997

Design and Production *Language*

Contents

Editorial Comment

"Education creates jobs and opportunities" proclaims a large sign on the outskirts of Athlone town. Many are the claims that are made in the name of education, which is advanced as the panacea for a variety of ailments. In the recent British election, education was high on New Labour's list of priorities, and, not to be outdone, in the Irish election campaign, there was an election leaflet for one candidate which declared boldly that "Education is everything". Do such claims, however, have a basis in reality? Are they simply asserted rather than substantiated? What is the evidence that education makes the difference and effects radical changes in critical areas? There is, after all, the much trumpeted fact that some of our most successful business entrepreneurs did not complete their formal schooling, with the implied corollary that they may have been better off without formal training or education.

In this edition of **The Adult Learner**, then, we examine a specific area where it is often supposed that education can make, and has made, a crucial contribution. This is the area of social exclusion and the topic is approached from the twin perspectives of the theoretical and the practical. Professor Fred Powell of UCC argues that in post modern society, where the class struggle has been replaced by identity politics, the central debate hinges on the question of access to knowledge as the key to empowerment and democratic participation. Similarly. Eileen Curtis writes of women returning to education because they feel they need knowledge, which they see as being related to power and a complementary piece describes the efforts being made by the South West Kerry Women's Association in removing barriers to education and employment for women in a rural situation. On the practical level, we have accounts of attempts being made through adult education programmes to combat exclusion in Ireland, including an innovative project to counter drug addiction through adult education philosophy and practice. The sensitive question of traveller participation in our society is addressed in a thoughtful article entitled Travellers, Inclusion and Adult education

In Africa, where exclusion is experienced both internally and in the wider international context, serious efforts are being made to tackle the problem through the application of adult education principles and methodology and we are pleased to include here accounts of projects currently being run in Tanzania, Lesotho and Zambia.

In writing about development issues, there is need for an informed analysis, conceptual clarity and theoretical reflection. This is provided for in the contributions from Paddy Reilly and Tony Downes (The Arusha Experience) and Tom Collins, and Anne Ryan (From Kildare to Kapane) without losing contact with the practical experience of working in the field. In addition, we have two descriptive pieces of projects based in Lesotho from APSO workers

Abigail Amos and Mike Parker. This, then, is a very full edition of the Adult Learner, one of the more ambitious that we have compiled and hopefully you, the readers, will find it interesting and informative.

My special thanks go to my colleagues on the Editorial Board. Thanks are also due to Celia Gaffney, who has worked so hard in preparing the manuscripts for the publishers.

Helen Keogh has left the Board this year and we would like to thank her for her input to this and previous editions.

Liam Bane, Editor
South Co. Dublin Adult Education Service
1b Ballinteer Road, Dundrum, Dublin 16

Editorial Board
Tony Downes A.E.O. Co. Dublin VEC
Ted Fleming, Centre for Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth
Kathleen Forde A.E.O. City of Dublin VEC

Women's Education: Reaching for Autonomy, Risking Marginalisation

Eileen Curtis

Each year, all over Ireland increasing numbers of women return to adult education. It has become one of the routes through which women have sought to address the isolation and loneliness which some feel within what they see as the constricting realities of their lives. Many of these women experience the day to day realities of unemployment, poverty and marginalisation and are struggling to gain some control over their own lives in the midst of a changing world. Their engagement in adult education is often a response to their vague, undefined need for some kind of change in their lives, one which would enable them to become active participants in shaping their own lives and the life of their community and society. They choose the education route because they feel they need knowledge, which they see as being related to power and ultimately the means by which they can translate their visions and hopes for a different future into a living reality.

The Legacy

The world of adult education in Ireland into which they have ventured is fragile and precarious. It is, however, one in which women have always played a central, participative role. As an adjunct to the mainstream system of education, the adult education sector has been neglected and marginalised. Its practice has been dominated by models of education founded on the twin principles of luxury and remediation and based on a traditional ideology which has been reflected in the conservative nature of its provision down through the years. Such an ideology has cast education for women in the mode of the frivolous or the remedial, with prevailing cultural discourses relating to women and their position in society translating into restricted educational opportunities and provision at local level.

In recent decades, as women have begun to challenge this tradition, adult education has become one of the shifting grounds on which, as Sallie Westwood puts it, 'the ideology of femininity and the social construction of woman as homemaker (is) both contested and reproduced at the same time" (in Lovett, 1988 : 59). It has in a sense become one of the battle sites where women have sought to contest this legacy while simultaneously striving to reclaim their own heritage and identity. A glance at an adult education brochure from any centre around the country bears testimony to that challenge, as one finds traditional subjects like cookery and dressmaking side by side with such current favourites as assertiveness training and self-development. This speaks volumes about the manner in which provision and

engagement have been framed and controlled within a distinctive ideological framework - a framework largely dominated by men.

The Challenge

It is from within this shadow that women's day-time education groups have emerged, seeking to create another space and place in education where women can begin to acknowledge and affirm other ways of being in the world, other ways of knowing and learning. It is a context in which education is challenged to move beyond the narrow definitions of learning for mastery and control bequeathed from the traditional education system to one which begins with the acknowledgement that adult education can be innovative, dynamic and challenging, one which is a celebration of learning, a process which can help people to realise their potential, a practice which facilitates enlightenment, empowerment and freedom. This is education of a different kind, exciting and vibrant. It is, in essence, Freire's learning for liberation.

However, this world of women's education is an 'unofficial' place, on the margins of the margin, one where women are playing an invaluable role in combating educational and social disadvantage by providing learning opportunities that are accessible, relevant and empowering. These groups are reaching out to and helping women, in particular women in the home. They recognise the needs of women not just as mothers but as people. Creche facilities are an integral part of these educational endeavours. For these women, adult education has become a tool in their struggle against oppression, marginalisation and poverty, helping them to recognise the link between personal circumstances and broader social forces, enabling them to realise that structures and beliefs can serve to suppress as well as express human potential.

The Struggle

The Liberating Learning Report (1993) surveyed 96 women's groups who, between them, offered 769 courses and embraced a constituency of 8,723 women, a staggering achievement for a largely under-resourced, unsupported and unrecognised sector. Significantly, this report most likely underestimates the numbers of groups currently operating. Its findings suggest that Personal Development is the single most popular course. 36% of the groups surveyed referred to it as their most popular course, with some suggesting it as an essential prerequisite before progressing on to other courses. It is important that the high participation rates in Crafts and Home Management programmes recorded should not be considered a reflection of women's acceptance of traditional conservative values and horizons so much as part of a strategy of initially offering participants activities which are familiar to them before offering opportunities to progress beyond these. This is, in fact, an indication of the low base from which many of the women attending these courses come.

These groups are motivated by the desire to respond to women's needs for contact, support and courses, but even more by women's need to take control

over their own learning so that they cannot just adapt to change but contribute to it by shaping their own lives and the lives of their communities. As groups have developed new needs have emerged, creating new demands and in turn fashioning new responses and opportunities. However, these women's groups have had to battle against the 'interest' legacy, the notion of them as 'sponsored wives' looking for some form of distraction, the often dismissive perception of them as "just a bunch of women having coffee" (Mulvey, 1994 : 6).

The Excitement

For these women education has become a tool for understanding the world as it is and for envisioning it as it may be. Here, learning is oriented towards personal and social understanding, beginning with and using as its critical material the lives of women. In this environment, learning is participative, communicative and non-hierarchical. It gives women a time and place to sit down, think and generate ideas, a space to learn that these ideas are valuable. In this space women can begin to make connections between their own realities and those of other women: they learn to trust in their own experience as accurately reflecting reality. The awareness of agency which emerges from this process represents the beginnings of empowerment and development. This can be both exhilarating and disconcerting but, once discovered, is rarely relinquished. In this learning configuration, women's culture is valued and respected, challenging a dominant discursive theme among women themselves "that the lives they lead have nothing to offer the sphere that is academic, theoretical or philosophical" (Fagan, 1991 : 67)

Coming to class thus becomes a first step for many of these women towards reclaiming a space for themselves, a means by which they can open their minds and become part of the real world again. However, when they connect with education they are often without a vocabulary to articulate their needs. By becoming housewifes and mothers many find themselves with an identity and a lifestyle which they do not feel they have consciously chosen. They feel trapped, powerless to make choices about what society suggests are choices available to them.

Women who return to education speak of feelings of isolation, of lack of confidence and of the need for social contact. They speak also of their initial fears about learning and their subsequent sense of excitement and exhilaration. They speak, too, of learning that has given new meaning to their lives. Women reveal experiences of lives lived locked inside themselves, feeling like they only half existed, feeling that they were slowly but surely going out of their minds. The release which they speak of is related to finding a voice, having their opinions count, of realising, as one woman so aptly puts it, "that I had something to say and people were listening to me" (in Inglis and Bassett, 1988 : 50). Such sentiments are apparent in all the research as women express in their own words the sense of dignity, confidence and independence which this learning has brought into

their lives. It is essentially a process through which they have begun to disentangle their own definitions of themselves from those of others.

They talk of making connections, of becoming aware of social issues, of almost accidentally developing a strong political consciousness in relation to their roles and position as women in Irish society. Significantly, in this scenario women see themselves as valued for what they say and do and not for how they look. This gives them a window on the world, an objectivity which enables them to look outwards forwards and with it to develop a more critical perception of Irish society. Through this women are beginning to ask critical questions about why their concerns are often seen as less important than those of men and to recognise that the "political is more than just collective actions and campaigns in the public world" (Segal: 1987 : xi). In this context, the education process is transformed and articulates in a small but significant way a resistance to the constraints of the past and a struggle for change. These experiences can, in effect, be seen as a barometer for how women see and experience the world. Issues of identity, power and control are central to this learning activity as women strive to do justice to their vision of the world, a vision the intention of which is to reconstitute the world for women as a better place.

The Frustration

Yet, in spite of all this energy and enthusiasm, women's education remains a struggle. Women's groups are angry and frustrated at the failure to recognise and value their activities, which they know have become central to the lives of women in their areas. Lack of recognition, support and resources make their attempts at educational provision a precarious endeavour. They are essentially providing meaningful educational provision for women at their own expense and in their own time. Ironically, they are involved in the empowerment of marginalised, oppressed people, yet they do so from positions of low status and powerlessness. As the Liberating Learning Report points out, "it is very difficult to get status and power without an official address and official recognition" (1993) : 60). This is reflective of the local site struggles which day-time education groups face as they proceed from year to year without either security of tenure or adequate insurance cover. Their failure to date to achieve charitable status has also been critical.

The White Paper's (1995) failure to acknowledge women's education and its contribution has, by association, defined and confined it in a most critical space, on the margins, outside the mainstream. It seems that little value is placed on this model of education. Perhaps, as some suggest, policy-makers have a vested interest in not acknowledging it. Perhaps, too, the all male photograph of the mandarins in the Department of Education contained in the Paper tells us something about why this has happened. In this dialogue on an educational vision for the future women's voices have not been heard,

their absence is presumed as once again they become casualties of a system which orders its priorities according to a different scale.

In addition, the credentialisation of education in this country has contributed to the creation of a society in which success favours evidence; certificates are more important than experience. Recognised educational qualifications have become the currency of the labour market, providing avenues of better incomes and positions of power. Women are again marginalised in this configuration as the experience of learning which they speak about can neither be measured nor assessed. This, together with the oft 'once-off' nature of provision, has, according to Mulvey, created a 'learning cul-de-sac', out of which there is an urgent need to provide progression routes. Thus, while women's education groups may represent a classic example of people taking direct control over their own learning, the advantages of this autonomy have to be measured against the ever present threat of marginalisation within the sector in terms of both funding and impact.

These frustrations are on-going. They represent a failure by the official sector to recognise this other space in education, a place inhabited mainly by women who involve themselves in a series of day to day activities to get things done and get things changed. As a result, many women's groups are fearful about their future in an adult education environment which continues to perceive them as interlopers rather than as potential partners. The challenge facing all those who work in the adult education sector today is to find a means to recognise, value and accommodate these alternative spaces and visions.

The Vision

Despite these difficulties, women's education groups continue to grow and develop. The majority believe in their capacity to continue as providers, in the short term at least. They do so in large measure because, as the women who directly experience the on-going realities of poverty and inequality, it is they themselves who are best placed to know what is needed to combat it. In addition, they are patently aware of how important the service they provide is to the women in their areas. For many, coming to class has been a first step in their attempt to create a time and space to explore and define their own realities. For most it has marked the beginning of a struggle for hope and change. In doing this, some women have had to overcome the negative reactions of others, a clear signal of on-going struggles on the home front. Education which is organised as praxis, resistance and struggle enables links to be made between these forms of individual isolation and collective social struggles. Women's education, though focused on the personal and manifest at local level in the struggle for access and participation, is but an expression of a wider attempt by women to battle against inequality, marginalisation and oppression. Their vision is about revision, about acknowledging the past, exploring the present and illuminating the future. Education has become a tool in that process, a mechanism for sustaining hope, a practice which

explores the political through the lens of the personal, a medium through which women can begin to create new understandings and new beginnings.

The Future

Today, women's education, though exciting and vibrant, remains on the margins of the adult education system. This positioning reflects the often uneasy relationship between women's education groups and the formal adult education sector. Their's is a landscape bearing the hallmarks of closure and exclusion as well as the scars of challenge and neglect. Here, women's visions and dreams have been translated into demands and consequences, their struggles reflected in the on-going search for space and resources. For many women's groups, the politics of penetration has become the art of the possible as they attempt to continue to create meaningful learning opportunities for themselves in a context in which they are more likely to encounter resistance rather than support.

Ironically, to date policy-makers and, indeed, some practitioners have found no way of accommodating this development with their vision of a comprehensive adult education sector in Ireland. Their tendency has been to respond to the educational demands of women on only the most superficial of terms, regarding it as nothing more than a problem of access, one which they have sought to address through curricular expansion. Such a stance fails to appreciate the possibilities for enriched practice which women's education, with its innovative methodologies and creative models of provision, embodies. The struggles of women's education groups can essentially be seen as a resistance to this process of incorporation. In the absence of accommodation, it seems that the price of resistance for women's groups can essentially be seen as a resistance to this process of incorporation. However, in the absence of accommodation, it seems that the price of resistance for women's groups has been marginalisation. Thus, while creating a space for women, women's education groups must guard against the possible risks of ghettoisation and the potential creation of a kind of educational apartheid involving a traditional high-status curriculum on the one hand and an innovative, but low status, curriculum on the other. Perhaps the best means of preventing this is to continue to sustain the space, but simultaneously to strive to create progression routes for women into mainstream provision where their impact may assist in the creation of a more embracive definition of education, founded on the principles of equality and justice.

In spite of on-going difficulties, and the recognition that this is a contested site, tempered by the realities of history, "the truth is to this day, women still dream" (Segal, 1987 : 5).

Eileen Curtis is Adult Education Organiser, Co. Kilkenny VEC.

This article is based on her M.A. thesis Beyond the Myths and the Magic: Naming the Place of Women in Adult Education. *1996*

References

Department of Education. 1995 *Charting Our Education Future - White Paper on Education. Dublin.* Government Publications.

Fagan, H. 1991. "Local Struggles: Women in the Home and Critical Feminist Pedagogy in Ireland" in *Journal of Education.* 173. 1. 65 - 75.

Inglis, T and Bassett, M. 1988. *Live and Learn Daytime Education in Coolock, Dublin.* Dublin: Aontas

Inglis, T. with Bailey, K. and Murray, C. 1993. *Liberating Learning.* Dublin: Aontas

Mulvey, C. 1994. *The Support and Development of Voluntary Daytime Education Groups in Ireland.* Dublin: Aontas

Segal, L. 1987. *Is the Future Female.* London: Virago.

Westwood, S. 1988. 'Feminism in Past Time (1870 - 1920)', in Lovett, Radical Approaches to Adult Education: A Reader. London: Routledge.

From Kildare to Kapane

Tom Collins, Anne Ryan

> *"The poor are look-alikes and weak.*
> *We know their needs. They need not speak".*
> (Chambers, R. 1997:67)

Themes of oppression and exclusion permeate the literature and ideology of community education (Action Aid, 1997; Boal, 1979; Brookfield, 1990; Mezirow, 1990; Hope & Timmel, 1995). An approach to community analysis from a perspective of power and exclusion is predicated on a view of community, be it territorially or sectorally defined, as an entity in which there is differential access to resources and at times mutually incompatible interests. In this article, we propose to explore these themes as they manifest themselves in a Third World and an Irish community development context. The discussion is based on two action research case studies, one in Kildare (Ireland) and one in Kapane (Zimbabwe). The paper will argue for a model of community development that is sophisticated enough to reflect the differences in both projects and speculates upon the conditions in which participatory processes and structures are more or less democratic.

Case Studies

Both of the case studies instanced here focus on the development of local indigenous resources. Kapane in Metabeleland is a dry arid region in South Zimbabwe. The population is entirely rural, living on subsistence agriculture in conditions of stark, absolute poverty - though in relative terms somewhat more advantaged than most other sub-Saharan regions in Africa.

Prolonged water scarcity and almost continuous drought conditions make the tasks of domestic and regional food security both difficult to attain and always uncertain. It is for this reason that Irish Aid in association with APSO began a programme in 1994 of borehole construction throughout the area. In approaching this task the APSO personnel in the area entered an alliance with an NGO in Zimbabwe, the Self Help Development Foundation (SHDF). This is an organisation that offers small scale saving and credit facilities to members. SHDF works mainly through small groups of rural women though men are welcome to join. Its primary aims are to promote self-reliance, self-confidence and co-operation by encouraging members to use their savings for development purposes. The organisation consists of 10,000 savings clubs throughout Zimbabwe. In association with some of these clubs, Irish Aid constructed about 14 boreholes up to the end of 1995. Apart from meeting domestic water needs, the clubs have constructed small gardens around each borehole to supply vegetables to the participating households and to provide

a source of cash income for the club. The authors completed an evaluation of this programme in December 1995.

Earlier in 1995, the authors were involved with a group of Master's students in Maynooth in working with a range of voluntary groupings throughout the Northwest Kildare area in preparing a Local Development Plan. Northwest Kildare is a reasonably unique area in that, though it is predominantly rural, its economic mainstay - up to recently - has been industrial - turf production and electricity generation. At the time of our work there, the area had experienced the virtual collapse of both industries and was in the painful process of restructuring its economic, if not indeed, its social infrastructure. The Centre for Adult and Community Education was asked to facilitate the process of local planning and to assist in the task of drafting a development plan for submission to the emerging LEADER and Global Grants for Local Development programmes.

Central to both projects was the need to identify the local development priorities. In undertaking this task a number of common themes and principles emerged from such diverse contexts. Establishing a process that was inclusive of all sectors of the population highlighted issues relating to power and exclusion, firstly within the communities themselves and secondly with regard to the terms upon which the communities interact or are integrated into the broader political context.

Power and Exclusion within the Community

In both instances, the task of needs identification was approached from a bottom-up perspective. In the case of Kapane, meetings were held and organised through the local SHDF clubs to discuss the development needs of the area. The fact that the meetings were generally conducted in the daytime and out of doors made them little different either in process or purpose to the range of meetings conducted in community centres, parish halls and hotels throughout N.W. Kildare.

It is very easy as an outsider to consider poverty in terms that imply uniformity of disadvantage and to forget that any community or group embraces personal and professional relationships that embody power differentials. The status of individuals and families within a community differs in terms of age, access to resources, education, employment and gender.

Even at the level of household, there are differences in power and life opportunities based on differences in gender, age and income. If it is naive to assume homogeneity even at this level, it is surely more so to assume it within the broader community.

Individuals who attend meetings or volunteer their services on committees generally do so by virtue of their position in society and not necessarily

because of their personal qualities and leadership skills. The most marginalised within the community are unlikely to put themselves forward or to be nominated. This is particularly true of women.

In the Kildare project one of the community remarked in relation to the small number of women participants:

> *"If they wanted to be here they could. There's no one stopping them".*

This was true. There was no one at the door turning away members of any sectors of the community. However, it is also true that members of the most marginal groups are by definition "outsiders" and their involvement has to be actively sought, encouraged and welcomed. Before this can happen those who dominate as well as those who are excluded have to acknowledge that differences exist and that there are structural barriers that need to be overcome if the least powerful members of the community are to have a voice in decision-making.

In Kapane the majority of those involved in the project were women. This is because most men emigrate to Botswana and South Africa to find work and only return for a few weeks annually. However, even in these circumstances, the office holders in SHDF clubs tended to be men.

In Kapane it was easy as an outsider to see the differences between men's and women's status and roles and therefore to consciously ensure the inclusion of women in the consultative process. In Kildare the differences were less obvious. Men and women sat and chatted together. It would be easy to assume they had equal input to the process.

However, while the daily lives of women in Kapane and Kildare are very different, their response in both projects was amazingly similar. They had little to say in large mixed groups but when spoken to either individually, in women only groups or in small mixed groups, they expressed a wealth of ideas and suggestions.

In both contexts, it was obvious that social and cultural constraints limit women's participation in public decision making fora and that equal representation of women requires a concerted effort at a number of levels. As such capacity building interventions necessitate not only management and accountability skills, but also social analysis to identify what barriers exist, how these are maintained and how they can be overcome.

It is within the context of such considerations that questions relating to who exactly are the intended beneficiaries of specific projects emerge. If the answer is the "entire community", then it is vital to recognise that the priorities of different groups and individuals within any community may not

only vary but may be mutually incompatible. In such a situation, if conflict of interest does not become apparent, one can assume that the process is not challenging the existing power structure within the community and as such the priorities identified are not only unlikely to threaten the status quo but may in fact be bolstering it. If this is the case, a development programme needs to consider the extent to which it is merely alleviating poverty or challenging the structural conditions of power and resource inequalities which underpin such poverty.

In embarking on a community development project then, the fundamental analytical starting point involves an understanding of the power relationships within a particular community so that the least powerful sectors can be identified. A failure to understand power differentials within the community is not only going to result in a failure to reach the most vulnerable groups, but will further crystallise and secure existing relationships of domination and subjection. It is therefore imperative that representatives of the most vulnerable sectors of the population be included in any decision-making fora.

Power and Exclusion between the Community and the Polity

Community development work increasingly involves a degree of interaction between the local organisation or group and a more powerful and superordinate extra-local body, whether it be the State or a donor agency. The communication channels between those two parties may be narrow and limited or broad and generalised. As a crucially scarce resource, it is reasonable to expect significant degrees of competition for control of these channels. It is in the competition for control of these routeways that a variety of individuals or indeed organisations emerge as mediators between the local and the extra-local. This role is at its most visible when communications between the local group and the extra-local one is via an interpreter - as was the case in the Kapane. The power of the interpreter to translate the world in a particular way to both parties and negotiate a shared meaning between the main actors, despite their differing perspectives, was strikingly apparent.

In a situation where no such obvious communication barriers exist - as in the Kildare case - it may be all too easy to ignore the potential communication barriers or misconceptions between the local and the extra-local and to fail to observe the tendency amongst those who control the channels of communication to act as interpreters and to impose their particular world view.

Being marginalised in a community is to be excluded from the communication routeways or to be included in them only on terms more or less dictated by the dominant gatekeepers - be they local or agency based. An area based local development programme which lacks a sectoral focus is particularly prone to excluding the least powerful groupings and to be

captured by the more powerful within the community. As discussed in the previous section, even where the approach is sectorally based, power differences must also be recognised within the sector. The extent to which external relationships or interventions re-inforce or subvert these internal differentials is the ultimate political question in community development practice.

In both Kildare and Kapane, the role of elected and official government personnel in the community development process raised a number of important issues. In both case studies, the disposition of the elected representatives towards the participatory process integral to both initiatives was remarkably similar. Generally three kinds of reaction were evoked:

- Antagonistic
- Opportunistic
- Enthusiastic

Explicit antagonism was rarely manifested. Representative politicians, even where they may not welcome the "intrusion" of participatory processes and structures are more likely to seek opportunities for self-advancement from such processes than risk the revenge of the participants by open hostility. This is the group which we refer to as opportunistic. There was also, however, a category of reaction which was supportive and enthusiastic where considerations of personal political advancement were not manifestly primary. In a sense, however, this discussion is not about the disposition, whether favourable or unfavourable, on the part of the elected representatives or officials towards participatory processes. Rather it draws attention to the tensions between representative and participative models of development and governance.

Adult and Community Education in Ireland is somewhat contemptuous of representative processes. In a Third World situation, however, the vulnerability of democratic institutions makes one less cavalier in one's critique and more prudent in one's approach. This is even more true when considering the role of governmental and statutory officials in community development. The tendency of donor agencies to bypass indigenous agencies and government structures in favour of NGO's can prove wasteful, disruptive of indigenous planning processes and both irritating and offensive to frequently over-stretched and under-resourced statutory personnel.

Considerations such as these are rarely paramount in community development activity in Ireland. The relatively well resourced nature of the statutory bodies in Ireland by comparison with the community sector tends to give rise to a degree of suspicion - if not always a deep sense of powerlessness - on the part of the community sector towards the statutory one. In Kildare, the state bodies were generally happy enough to go along

with the process of local consultation. However, where such consultation gave rise to or implied a criticism of the work of any such body, it invariably embarked on a strong counter-offensive.

The task of building institutions then is different in both case studies. In Zimbabwe it seemed important to ensure that in supporting the indigenous non-governmental sector that one would be equally mindful of the task of building the institutional capacity of the statutory sector and of the local, regional and central government. In Ireland, the statutory sector held most of the aces. While it was generally supportive and courteous in the dealings with the community sector, it was a support which it bestowed at its own discretion and which it actively withheld when confronted with a less than compliant situation.

Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the themes of power and exclusion in two vastly different contexts. In doing so, the paper draws attention to a number of issues but perhaps most significantly to differential access to scarce resources within communities. The paper considers the role of community participating in overcoming the barrier to accessing such resources and makes the case for strategies on the part of the agent or agency implementing the initiatives that are explicitly inclusive. In addition, the paper highlights the role played by external interventions with regard to sustaining or undermining prevailing patterns of community stratification.

The logic of these considerations for community development practice is to emphasise the centrality of political awareness as the starting out point in local development activity. It is from within a framework of such awareness that the subtleties and nuances in which power differentials gain their expression in the routine daily life within a community can be derived. The challenge of the practice from this perspective is one of confronting such differentials.

Dr. Tom Collins is Director of the Centre for Adult and Community Education at NUI Maynooth.

Dr. Anne Ryan is Lecturer at the Centre for Adult and Community Education at NUI Maynooth.

References

Action Aid, 1997, *REFLECT*, (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), Action Aid, Ireland.

Boal, A. 1979 *Theatre of the Oppressed* Urizen Books, New York.

Brookfield, S.D. 1990. *The Skillful Teacher*, Jossey Bass, Oxford.

Chambers, R. 1997 *Whose Reality Counts*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.

Collins, T. and Ryan, A. 1995. *A Framework for the Social and Economic Development of North Kildare*, Centre for Adult and Community Education, Maynooth College.

Hope, A. and Timmel, S. 1995. *Training for Transformation*, Mambo Press, Zimbabwe.

Mezirow, J. 1990, *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood*, Jossey Bass, Oxford.

Ryan, A. and Collins, T. 1996. *Community Development Zimbabwe: A Case Study*, Centre for Adult and Community Education, Maynooth College.

A New Deal Through Saol

Seasamhact. Ábaltacht. Obair. Léann

Kathleen Forde, Joan Byrne, Cathleen O'Neill

> *SAOL is for people who want to change their life, and it has changed my life very much. I was on heroin a very long time...but I was only throwing my life away...I know I put my kids through hell...but I am trying to make it up to them now. (Catherine Rooney)*

Living as we do in the age of information technology and mass media, it is becoming increasingly difficult to shock us. The most horrendous images of global destruction and human suffering are beamed into our living rooms many times a day on TV. Newspapers dwell on the graphic details of the latest murders and sex crimes. With so much harsh reality impinging on our consciousness, day in and day out, it is any wonder that increasing numbers of people are lured into that the false haven of escape promised by drugs, especially heroin. It is often the most vulnerable members of society who fall victim to these dangers lurking in our impoverished inner cities.

While there is no such person as the "typical" drug addict, they do share a common background: sub-standard housing, ill health, dependence on Social Welfare, early school leaver, young mother, lone parent, deserted wife. This spiral of disadvantage and deprivation continues to grow, thereby making drug addicts even more marginalised, until ultimately they are at the very fringes of mainstream society: alienated and socially excluded from an early age.

Efforts by the health authorities to deal with the extent of the heroin problem in Dublin's North Inner City have been based on a medical treatment model . Drug users are treated in the City Clinic where they are de-toxed, that is, weaned off heroin and put on methadone as a heroin substitute. This methadone maintenance can last from months to years, to a life-time.

The outward success of people on a methadone maintenance programme masks the inner vacuum created by their withdrawal from heroin. Being a heroin addict is a type of career, like being on a constant roller-coaster ride throughout life; the highs are so mind-boggling that it's worth paying the price of the lows. And what a price this entails in the sheer effort and ingenuity needed to procure the vast sums of money needed to support one's habit! As well as trying to stay off heroin, gone also is the anticipation of the next fix, no more highs, no job, no interests or outlets in life. How easy to relapse on to heroin.

The vacuum created in the lives of people on methadone maintenance needed to be filled with some relevant programme.

What is the SAOL Project?

The Mission Statement is as follows:

> *"The SAOL Project is a two-year pilot programme for former and stable women drug users whose purpose is to move through development work and capacity building, from addiction and dependency to self-direction and self-reliance. It operates on the basis of social justice, adult education and community development principles, and focuses on re-integration into the community."*

All the women who have been selected for the programme are registered drug addicts, and are/were currently on the methadone maintenance programme in the City Clinic. The project is the first of its kind in Ireland which is specifically targeting women drug-users. It came about largely as a result of a partnership response by community organisations, the Eastern Health Board and FAS to the expressed needs of women drug users who took part in a research project carried out by Carmel Dunne from the Eastern Health Board. This research identified a critical unmet need for drug stabilisation, along with intensive long-term rehabilitation, education and support programmes.

The Adult Education Model

> *"The group in SAOL showed me that I had a meaning in life... SAOL showed me it is alright to be down, but not to stay down, to get up and pick up the pieces and get on with it" (Noreen Flood)*

Education, linked as it is with the development of the person, is a slower programme than drug treatment, but has far greater short and long-term results for the participants. .SAOL is a development project with the overall aim of integrating and stabilising group of ex drug-addicts into their community. The 17 women chosen for the project have the opportunity to explore their own potential over a two-year period through a participative style of adult learning which involves vocational as well as practical skills training In addition, the project incorporates art therapy as integral to part of the development process for these women.

Participants are encouraged not only to have a sense of ownership in regard to the project but also to become involved in regular reviews of course design, delivery and management. The project is designed to be both flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the women and structured enough to ensure that the training is properly focused.

Within the overall context of bridging the gap between drug-use and mainstream training/education, SAOL provides the opportunity for seventeen women drug-users to explore their future in terms of training education and employment through involvement in a participative style of adult learning. They have access to art skills in a way that demonstrates how the arts can be used as a major tool in participation and relationship based work. Training is provided in practical skills in a variety of appropriate fields relating to the local employment market as well as an introduction to new technology. Despite an addiction to drugs, SAOL aims to demonstrate that this group of women can commit themselves to participation in education and training on a regular basis, thereby laying the foundation for the transferability of this comprehensive type of rehabilitation to other areas within Ireland. A unique aspect of SAOL is the 'advocacy' role it plays in relation to the medical and business establishments.

Management Funding

> *"I really need this project because I think by now I'd be back in prison or back in the gutter... I hope that nothing ever happens to this project because I will snap altogether. So, please God, we will all be strong and united to hold our head up and fuck the begrudgers and get on in life" (Sharon Ryan)*

The project has been established as a partnership between the Eastern Health Board, the Inner City Renewal Group (a community development voluntary organisation), other local voluntary agencies working in the drug field and FÁS. There are four full-time staff employed, that is, Manager, Administrator and two Development Workers. In addition, session workers are contracted in for specific pieces of work. The project currently operates on an annual grant from the Eastern Health Board, funding from FÁS. in the form of a Special Community Employment Scheme and some private collections and donations (notably from Poetry Ireland Ltd.). In addition, the project has successfully applied for European funding under the Social Exclusion Budget to enhance the basic work programme.

Staffing

The staff on the programme all come from a working class background and are able to identify with the cultural values of the participants. A knowledge of addiction was less important for the staff than congruence of background from which springs a greater empathy with the women. The staff still remember the nightmare they had at the beginning, as they gradually became aware of the very serious health problems from which the women were suffering, from being in a general run-down condition to being prone to various infections and on to having hepatitis and being HIV positive. Efforts were made to gradually get the women off their dependence on anti-depressants, tranquillisers and sleeping tablets. This was done through an

educational process, as well as women wanting to cut down on drugs, including methadone.

They also remember being humbled at how well the women coped with the multitude of crises that beset them. As Joan Byrne, the Manager of the programme, expressed most eloquently in her introduction to a collection of the women's writings:

> *They are a wonderful group of women – still full of hope for the future, despite the cards that the past has dealt them. You will see from this collection that these women are dealing themselves new cards. They are playing from a new deck and are aspiring to holding the trump card – the one that will allow them to win back their dignity, self-esteem and confidence, and will enable their abilities, talents and qualities to shine through.*

Specific Training Modules

Starting with an emphasis on Personal Development and Communication Skills, the women are brought through a series of learning processes that include both developmental and practical modules, the former consisting of Parenting Skills, Social Analysis and Group Dynamics and the latter dealing with Art Therapy, English, Maths., Computers and Catering.

The project has links with the National Council for Vocational Awards and it is intended to have the Personal Development, Communication, Art and English modules accredited through this institution. Five women will do the Junior Cert. English exam and two will do Leaving Cert. in June 1997. All others will receive an N.C.V.A. Diploma.

Due to the high level of literacy and numeracy difficulties in the group, the development worker had to use all of her inventiveness in structuring a class of mixed ability people to achieve results and to maintain the dignity of the least able in that regard. Rather than confront the situation too directly, she used an oral and aural approach, as well as dialogue. In any good pedagogical approach, one must start at the point where people need help. So in some English classes one person 'talked' a story, others role played it and others wrote it down. This ensured that the material being used arose from the actual experiences of the learners and was, therefore, relevant to their lives and educational needs.

Holistic Approach

A holistic approach is taken at all times, to cater to mind, soul and body and combining academic and practical learning with visits to other community projects, life and social skills, family planning, money advice and debt management, as well as outdoor pursuits. There is also attention to information on diet, nutrition and other aspects of health including their

childrens needs. In fact the women cited their children as the most important reason why they are remaining stable on the methadone programme. The mothers are extremely anxious that their children should have a better future and, for this reason, the area of parenting and involvement of the children in appropriate activities is seen as crucial to the successful outcome of this project.

The group has published two collections of writings: "Resolute Women Recite" and "Powerful Women Recite." Both of these collections represent a group of people whose voices are being heard for the first time, in all their frankness and freshness of imagery. One of the women describes the drastic changes in her life style that have occurred:

> *"If I had not got this job (a place on SAOL) I might still be on the gear and the kids would not be looked after either, I would not have met Denis and I would not have my new baby. Now the kids and myself can wake up in the morning and we are very happy because they don't have to watch their mother going to buy drugs". (Antoinette Hopkins).*

In Conclusion

In SAOL the staff tackle both internal and external factors, the former by supporting the women in their treatment programme and the latter by encouraging them to participate in activities. They also constantly mirror back inappropriate or addictive behaviour. Challenges are made on several levels and this is done more and more by the group themselves. The women also receive endless support, advice and encouragement from the staff who also respond to numerous crises. Coming off drugs presents the individual with layers of crises, both psychological and societal, all of which need to be tackled. This is why the staff at SAOL know that it is vitally important to have social analysis in their work, and also to network with local community organisations and agencies.

Joan Byrne, the Manager of the programme sums up her view of the staff's role:

> *"We attempt to provide whatever support is needed at the time that it is needed. That could be something as simple as lending an ear or a shoulder to someone who is finding it difficult to cope, or as difficult as advocating within the social services on behalf of a woman in crisis. In other words, whatever it takes to enable that individual to gain back her self-respect and become a full and valuable member of society - that is what SAOL attempts to provide."*

Kathleen Forde is Adult Education Organiser, City of Dublin VEC
Joan Byrne is Project Manager, SAOL
Cathleen O'Neill is a Project Worker, SAOL

Adult Learning in a Cape Town Squatter Camp

Mike Parker

Khayelitsha (which means house in Xhosa) is a large squatter camp that clings to the wind blown Cape Flats and is sandwiched between sea, motorway, crime and poverty: a whole community that went aground in the Apartheid era. In summer the place sweltered beneath the clear cape sky. Piles of rotting garbage gave a home to families of flies. In winter, the northerly winds brought rain, winds and fog which made the whole place disappear, much to the relief of the other part of Cape Town to which Khayelitsha had grafted itself.

At night from my two storey tin shack, the only 'high-rise' for miles, I would peer through the gloom of smoke coughed up from rubber burning fires, toward the sparks of light that flickered beneath the dark etched outline of Table Mountain. Walking around Khayelitsha at night, bathed as it was in the eerie phosphorescent glow of sulphur lights, could spell death from any number of gangs and political organisations and, of course, the Police who would thunder into Khayelitsha on their herd of caspers, menacing metal monsters, huge and dusty brown: rogue elephants, ridden by khaki clad, gun wielding jockeys.

And yet in our two storey 'high-rise' that doubled as a class-room and living quarters, it was as if we were cocooned in a world of language acquisition, suspended between heaven and earth. Our class was a mix of ages and abilities, from 0 to 60. They were all there, babies, children, teenagers, parents, grand-parents and me. We numbered between 50 and 70 and yet in the seeming confusion (my confusion) things were done. Chairs were put in place and tables erected, pencils and paper distributed and chalk thrust into my hand, all of this followed by the usual refrain of, 'mamela' (silence) and 'salapanzi' (sit) whilst every one waited for the 'Fundi' or Teacher to pronounce on things. I was staggered at the kindness afforded to me - a complete unknown. All the insults that people in Khayelitsha had to shoulder, the deaths, the killings, the poverty, the neglect and yet here I was, welcomed and honoured!

Nature and Aims

The Khaytlitsha Project was started by Laura Haas of St. James' Church in Claremont, Cape Town back in 1986 at the height of the conflict between the government and youth and was an attempt to give a few of the youth an opportunity to continue with some form of education. The main hope was that in working with the youth in this way, they might be drawn away from

violence. This of course represented a distinct threat to both sides involved in the conflict. The Pan-African Congress (PAC), resented the churches message of "Brotherly Love," for they saw this as a way to move out of the "Laager of Lies" that they had constructed to keep people apart.

The Khayelitsha Project was kept alive by the faith of a very small group of people (mainly women) and the fact that through the whole conflict they managed to operate a creche and small school, supplying hot meals, clothing and books is testimony to their resilience in the face of constant intimidation from both sides. At certain times it was only with the assistance of the African National Congress Youth League acting as "bodyguards" that the work was able to continue at all.

At the time of my joining in 1991, the project was in the process of expanding, having created a voluntary part-time teaching post to address the needs of small groups of children finishing their Secondary School Certificates, especially in English. But such was the community involvement in the Khayelitsha Project that most of the lessons included a much wider cross-section of people. This meant that more time was spent on oral exercises. Writing and reading exercises were usually done outside the scheduled teaching hours and with small groups of five to six students.

The aims of the project were "... to identify and assist students in areas of weakness relating specifically to the English Language in the context of the students whole curriculum...", i.e. if a student had a problem in say, Maths, it might well be to do with their inability to decipher the language of the question and not the question itself.

General principles governing this project aimed to ensure that it was open to all, offering (as far as possible) similar quality education to that available elsewhere. It would seek to empower individuals to further their aims, would be learner focussed, recognise cultural and religious diversity and the learning would be acknowledged as accredited with the potential to enhance a person's economic and social well being. More specifically, it aimed at providing a language learning environment which would be participatory, enjoyable, experiential, relevant to learners' needs, concentrating on listening and speaking skills with meaningful use of language and offering different models of English speaking.

To gain access to the community, the church entered into negotiations with parties, such as ANC and the immediate community, to explain what was being proposed. It was also hoped that this project would become self-reliant and to this end a charge of .25 cents per lesson was levied with all materials supplied. This was to cover the projected cost based on an ingredients basis, i.e. calculating all the resource inputs needed for an activity gives an estimate of the cost of the activity so that by the end of the first quarter the actual running costs might be easier to estimate.

Methodology and desired outcomes

Many of the earlier lessons were teacher led until the students and in particular the adults, started to take a more assertive role. The programme that I had tried to design was closely related to TEFL teaching as this was my only experience and so probably precluded the students from knowing other styles of teaching. The method used such activities as storytelling, games and songs and the use of repetition tables.

The lesson had Opening Activity - **Presentation**, followed by a Middle Activity either in pairs or groups - **Practice** and finally, the Closing Activity or **Production** stage. Usually writing and reading took place after this part of the lesson was conducted in small groups of 5 and 6.

Correction was performed by peers and I only stepped in when errors of meaning took place. My approach was based on relevant publications from The Open Learning System Education Trust (OLSET) and Longman Publishing as well as the Council of Culture Syllabus which I gratefully acknowledge.

We started out with greetings and never looked back. Slowly, a class dynamic developed. Parents helped children, children helped parents. An important feature was having the parents assume roles similar to mine and splitting this large group into smaller groups which became the norm for this situation as the parents were very happy to be included in teaching their children.

There is a very high rate of unemployment in South Africa, something like 45%. Coming to the classes hopefully gave adults feelings of self worth and they were pleased that they were helping their children. Because the adults had taken up positions of co-educators, they spent a great deal of time making sure that they knew specific language items and passed this onto the others. "Success" was measured by the students being able to meet some of the criteria laid down in the Council of Europe syllabus, e.g. directions, giving and receiving.

The month in which I left, the class gave me a name - Sipho, the Xhos word for 'gift'

Mike Parker, now based in Lesotho, is a Development Worker with APSO

The Essential Vocabulary of the PAD

Ad Hock

The PAD in question is the Postmodern AdEd Director. As you are well aware, one of my more important contributions over the years has been to keep the BAD - Busy AdEd Director - informed and updated with the most recent buzzwords and current cliches for our times. Since I last addressed you on this topic, the PAD has superseded the MAD - Modern AdEd Director. Read the following carefully and thus ensure that you are no longer a CAD - Confused AdEd Director.

Building Buzzwords

What kind of doors are we pushing?	*Closed*
What kind of windows now exist?	*Of Opportunity*
What kind of ceilings?	*Glass*
What kind of people work here?	*Slates loose*
What kind of pitches do we need?	*Playing*
And what kind of playing pitches?	*Level*
What ground should we always seek?	*The moral high*
And what have we perhaps reached?	*An alltime low*
And where should we cultivate friends?	*In high places*
What kind of picture should we look at?	*The big*
What kind of plans should we draw?	*Careful*
And.....?	*Concise*
And especially.....?	*Costed*
What is always limited?	*Access*
What have we in abundance?	*Excess*
And what we do not want at all at all?	*Bad cess*

The Marine Metaphors

How are we sailing?	*Close to the wind*
And coming home?	*With a wet sail*
What eye should be kept open?	*The weather one*
What is it that's looming?	*A storm*
Where?	*On the horizon*
What do we share with fisherfolk?	*Networking*
What are we in the small pond?	*Small fry*
What are we in the big pond?	*Small fry*
By what are we engulfed?	*A tidal wave*
A tidal wave of what?	*Emotion*
What have in common with sinking ships?	*Lists*
What are we doing with lists?	*Trawling*

And for information?	*Fishing*
Why do the seagulls follow the trawler?	Ask Eric Cantona

Aviation Analogies

What are we doing in the face of adversity?	*Flying*
What kind of programmes are running?	*Pilot*
How do we advertise them?	*Fliers*

All purpose Analogies

What kind of problems do we face?	*Pressing*
How should we be dealing with them?	*Addressing*
And with needs?	*Assessing*
And with funds?	*Accessing*
We must never be?	*Digressing*
How do you find all this?	*Depressing*
With what must we now proceed?	*Optimism*
But with what kind of optimism?	*Cautious*
More in what than confidence?	*Hope*
What do we need more than ever?	*Vision*
Vision that must not be?	*Blinkered*
Or?	*Tunnel*
What vision is competing for our attention?	*Tele*
Our approach must always be?	*Outgoing*
While assessment must always be?	*Ongoing*
And now I must be?	*Going*

At the time of going to press, Ad Hock is considering standing as a candidate in the general election. This follows representations from nobody. If he does stand, it will be as a Dependent Candidate and his manifesto will be published under the title The Prefabricated Society.

Adult Education & Cultural Empowerment

Fred Powell

There is a widespread acknowledgement that the 'struggle for recognition' is becoming the paradigmatic form of social action in contemporary political discourse. Class struggle, which dominated modern society, characterised by manufacturing industries and unionised labour, has been replaced by identity politics, based upon ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality and age in the fragmented and atomised social conditions of postmodernity. In this reconstituted reality, cultural domination has challenged economic exploitation as the fundamental social injustice. Concomitantly, cultural recognition rivals, and arguably is displacing socio-economic redistribution as the remedy for injustice and the primary objective of 'struggle'. However, material inequality remains fundamentally linked with cultural disempowerment (Fraser 1995, pp 68-69). At the core of the debate on social justice in postmodern society is the question of access to knowledge as the key to empowerment and democratic participation.

The purpose of this paper is to examine:

(i) the relationship between modernisation, social exclusion and cultural disempowerment, and

(ii) the connection between community development and cultural empowerment in terms of opening up access, and affirmative and transformative initiatives geared towards enhancing educational participation for adults in working-class communities.

The paper will draw upon the experience of the Cork Northside Education Initiative (1991-1996), established as an action-research project, targeted at tackling educational deprivation and based upon community development principles. The Cork Northside Education Initiative was based on a local partnership between the community, local government and education providers.

Modernisation, Social Exclusion and Cultural Disempowerment

It is a paradox that Ireland is modernising in a postmodern world characterised by fragmentation and polarisation. The term modernisation is generally associated with the transformation in Western society wrought by the industrial revolution and emergence of welfare states over several centuries. This process, called 'modernity', involved a fracture with the

traditional feudal social order amounting to a fundamental transformation of society leading to standardisation, uniformity and universalism.

Postmodernity, at the advent of the twenty first century, on the other hand, is characterised by fragmentation, diversity and the affirmation of difference (Crook et al, 1992, pp.1-2; Beck et al, 1994,p.6). Ireland, which belatedly adopted a modernisation project in the 1960s, has had to overcome an economic and cultural gap at a point when the rest of the developed world is moving on to new forms of social organisation. Yet the pace and scale of development, which promised to overtake the United Kingdom by the year 2,000, placed Ireland in a barometric position in terms of postmodernity.

Bauman in a comment on the transformation that is being experienced by society at the end of twentieth century, has observed: "Postmodernity is marked by a view of the human world as irreducibly and irrevocably pluralistic, split into a multitude of sovereign units and sites of authority, with no horizontal or vertical order" (Bauman, 1992).

In contemporary Ireland, on the eve of the new millennium, the paradoxes of modernisation have acquired increasingly extreme forms. Greater wealth stands in marked contrast to endemic poverty. Substantially increased diversity and choice in terms of 'lifestyle politics' has been accompanied by more fragmentation and polarisation. As rural life has declined in response to the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation, inner city ghettos characterised by poverty, drugs and crime, have come to dominate the social landscape. Cultural and political life is no longer organised in terms of traditional identities and shared values, partly because contemporary inequalities of income, wealth and power do not produce the homogenised classes, such as business, small farmers and workers that shape the social and political geography of traditional Ireland. Instead new social movements have organised around issues as diverse as gender, environment, urban inequalities, traveller issues, social amenities, service charges and so on. In this transformed political environment, social conflicts have become more pluralistic, representing a much wider variety of interests, and involve a different set of targets, including the Welfare State.

Economic and social trends in recent years have significantly increased the numbers of those marginalised or excluded from the mainstream of society at local level. Unemployment has broken the link for many with the external world of work. A lack of childcare facilities makes it difficult for many women to participate in the labour force in the first instance. These problems are compounded in certain areas, such as peripheral housing estates, where disadvantaged groups are concentrated and where physical isolation and the sparseness of community facilities reinforces social exclusion.

What is meant by the term social exclusion? The association of poverty with a more divided society has led to the broader concept of social

exclusion, which refers not only to material deprivation but to the inability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights as citizens. The concept of social exclusion has become particularly influential in European Union policy circles, so that, for example, the 1993 Green Paper on Social Policy argues that "social exclusion ... by highlighting the flaws in the social fabric .... suggests something more than social inequality, and, concomitantly, carries with it the risk of a dual and fragmented society" (EU Green Paper, 1993).

Egalitarian theorists in modern society sought to conceptualise social injustice in purely economic terms. These theoretical frameworks include Karl Marx's theory of capitalist exploitation, John Rawls' account of justice as fairness in the distribution of 'primary goods', Amartya Sen's concept that justice requires that people have equal 'capabilities to function' and Ronald Dworkin's argument that it necessitates 'equality of resources'. (Marx 1967; Rawls 1971; Sen 1985; Dworkin 1981).

At the end of the twentieth century, the culture-blindness of a purely economic paradigm has become increasingly obvious. The decline of social democracy and the collapse of the Soviet Union is symptomatic of its limitations in postmodern society, where the politics of redistribution is being challenged by cultural politics based on class, gender, race, age, disability and sexual orientation, that reflects the fractured nature of social identity. The replacement of 'poverty' in the vernacular of social science by the more widely encompassing concept of 'social exclusion' further illustrates the process of discursive change. Social exclusion represents a qualitative restructuring, change in the way people related to each other, manifested by ever widening inequalities, spiralling levels of violence and a breakdown in social solidarity.

In this context a new paradigm of injustice has emerged, which analyses social justice in cultural and symbolic terms. It is grounded in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Fraser cites several examples of cultural and symbolic injustice:

- *Cultural domination:* being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own

- *Non-recognition:* being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communication and interpretative practices of one's culture

- *Cultural disrespect:* being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or everyday interaction (Fraser, 1995, p 71).

Manifestly, in postmodern society neither an economic nor a cultural paradigm is in itself adequate in terms of explaining injustice. Social justice must be pursued at both economic and cultural levels, simultaneously augmenting redistribution and recognition in society. However, education, which operates primarily in the cultural rather than the economic domain of society, has much to contribute in the promotion of remedies to injustice based upon cultural respect and social recognition. Arguably, in postmodern conditions, social citizenship is increasingly dependent upon an education participation policy strategy that empowers.

Cultural Empowerment and Adult Education

For poor communities, such as the Cork Northside community, excluded from commodity consumption, political participation and cultural capital, education services are of particular importance. Yet, paradoxically, education services are most constrained in disadvantaged communities and the routes to progression, (i.e. education opportunities) are least available. If the Cork Northside Education Initiative was to succeed, it needed to contribute to tackling this gross inequality in educational opportunity by breaking the cycle of education disadvantage, which means that 45% of Northsiders leave school early, compared with 26.7% of the City of Cork population as a whole (Forde, 1996, p.ix).

Education meets the liberating needs of the socially excluded through the process of empowerment. Empowerment is per se the antidote to social exclusion. Empowerment has four basic characteristics according to O'Sullivan:

- ***Instrumental:*** knowledge, communication and literacy skills
- ***Expressive:*** confidence, assertiveness, freedom from dependency
- ***Critique:*** the capacity to question the society in which one lives and engage in a critical reading of reality
- ***Activist:*** the motivation to take action to change society in the light of critical awareness (O'Sullivan, 1993 pp. 195-6).

The Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Friere, sees what he calls "conscientisation" as residing at the heart of the empowerment process. He defines "conscientisation" as an activity through which people develop critical consciousness, expose the myths and ideologies disempowering them and act according to their own new awareness so that they can attain their rightful positions in a world from which they have been excluded. Conscientisation and empowerment are, therefore, essentially one and the same thing (Friere, 1972). However, it is a complex process as Drudy and Lynch (1993) have noted:

> *The empowerment of oppressed groups, however, is not by adult educators to those who are oppressed. Rather, it is a more subtle, and*

> *indeed slower, process whereby people come to an awareness of their own oppression and develop the ability to do something about it.... All that an adult education process can do is to give people the opportunity to develop the critical capacity that generates empowerment (p.272).*

Empowerment-based education initiatives are not new. They have been practised throughout the century. Key examples are the Antigonish Community in Canada and the Highlander Project in the USA that played an influential role in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Several of the earliest community development workers in Ireland were trained at the Antigonish community. Empowerment is the desired outcome of the Cork Northside Education Initiative in terms of equal opportunities.

Equality of Opportunity & Community Development

Equality is more important than ever today in our relatively affluent society. In the globalized economy, equality of opportunity is also the key to economic prosperity. Why? Because we are in a rapidly changing information-based economy, dominated by knowledge acquisition, skill development and adaptability in the workplace. As Parkin (1982), puts it:

> *In modern capitalist society the two main exclusionary devices by which the bourgeoisie contracts and maintains itself as a class are, first, those surrounding the institution of property; and second, academic and professional qualifications and credentials. (p.78)*

Arguably the defining characteristic of the post-industrial economy is less the individual's ability to gain access to capital and far more his or her ability to gain access to knowledge and to use it creatively in the pursuit of prosperity (Bourdieu, 1986). Market zealots have tended to argue that economic progress depends on liberty, which in effect means the acceptance of inequalities in society. In reality, the converse is true. Liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity are mutually reinforcing. In fact, the greater the equality of opportunity, the greater the liberty in society, which lies at the root of cultural empowerment. In postmodern conditions a maximalist approach to equality of opportunity is arguably both essential and desirable.

The maximalist concept of equality of opportunity is not the traditional liberal equality of opportunity, the once-off, past-fail education chance until 15 or 16 at school, that if lost means a lifetime consigned to failure. Rather it means an equality of opportunity that is recurrent, lifelong and comprehensive: political, cultural, social and economic opportunities for all, regardless of class, gender, race or age. It envisages far more than a reluctant invitation to participate in the knowledge that circumstances will prevent people from attending college.

So how does a maximalist concept of equality of opportunity differ from equality of outcome?

In essence, the former rejects the imposition of standardised outcomes and allows for individual potential. The task is to positively affirm the individuals' capacity to bridge the gap between what they are and what potential they have to become. This is the essence of empowerment. It is ultimately experienced at a personal level by the individual, enabling them to transcend the cultural context that causes disempowerment. Access is fundamental to the achievement of equality of educational opportunity and empowerment.

There has been a long-standing pessimism amongst the Northside community in Cork regarding education access. It is clearly a correct reading of reality. The access deficit for working-class people is one of the biggest challenges facing Irish education at the end of the twentieth century. (Kelly 1994, p.7) However, the pessimism of the North side community does not fully take account of the changing pattern of education participation. As we move into the twenty-first century, education is becoming a life-long pursuit. A revolution is occurring in the third level education system, opening it up to mature learners throughout Europe and ending the elitism 'finishing school' ethos that has dominated university life since the Middle Ages.

A sceptic might very well ask - what has this got to do with Ireland? Is is not public knowledge that disadvantaged people do not go to College in this country? Could anybody seriously advance the proposition that second chance education can significantly reverse educational disadvantage in Ireland? On the basis of existing education policy and practice, the sceptic would be absolutely correct. Ireland has a dismal record on mature student participation in third level education. However, it is also true that Ireland is in the middle of a historic transformation and is on a path to convergence with the most developed European societies aided by EU structural funds and the underlying policy strategies, based on social cohesion, which inform them.

Let us examine the facts, projections and problems before making up our minds. The facts about mature student participation in Ireland today are incontestably damning. The Higher Education Authority Steering Committee on the Future of Higher Education acknowledged this fact in a Report published in June, 1995. The report revealed the full extent of the problem without any garnishing of the scale of the inequalities involved. Its findings included the following:

- There were about 1,000 mature full-time students in the State-aided higher education in 1993/94 representing 3.4% of all full-time entrants. Taking State-aided and non-aided institutions into account, the figure rose to 5.4% (or 1,697).

- Comparison with other EU member states such as Britain, Sweden and Germany, indicates that this is a very low participation rate for

mature students. Mature student participation rates in Ireland also compare unfavourably with Australia and the USA.

- While the higher level of school leavers may partly be due to the relatively young population in this country, "there is manifestly a historical deficit which has to be overcome at present".

- The historical deficit is compounded by the fact that mature students are currently predominantly middle-class, especially lower-middle class. A minority of mature students come from the lowest socio-economic groups; the rate of representation of working-class students is not significantly better than it is among non-mature students.

- The dearth of pro-active policies within the higher education sector itself, including: adequate financial support for part-time study; creche facilities and financial support for child minding; flexible modes of delivery and assessment procedures and adequate support and guidance services, has made it extremely difficult for economically and socially disadvantaged mature learners to enter and succeed (HEA, 1995, pp.80-85).

These are the facts and they undeniably give cause for concern. They reveal a scale of exclusion from third level education, probably without parallel in Europe and the developed world. In the era when free third level education has been introduced the challenge is obvious for all to see. Radical solutions are required to tackle the historic deficit in access to third level education, which is ultimately the biggest barrier to equality of opportunity in this country.

So what is on offer?

Lets start by looking at the proposal of the H.E.A. Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education. Their fundamental recommendation is a major increase in third-level provision for mature students to 6.20% by 2000 and subsequently to 16% by 2010 (HEA, 1995 p.60).

However, the H.E.A. Committee frankly acknowledged " this level of mature students would still remain quite modest by international standards" (HEA, 1995 paragraph 10). Moreover, by the H.E.A. Committee's own reckoning only a tiny portion of these mature entrants are likely to be from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. We must, therefore, conclude in terms of the relationship between education expansion and equality, that equalisation of access does not follow the expansion of places automatically. Targeted initiatives are essential, such as the Cork Northside Education Initiative.

So what has the Cork Northside Education Initiative been doing to tackle access to third level education and equality of opportunity? The answer is

that the Cork Northside Education Initiative has been reflexively pursuing the dual policy of consultation with the city's Northside community and a programme for educational action based upon an action-research model grounded in community development principles. Clearly, these dual policy components in the programme have needed to be interactive. The strategy for educational action had to address directly the concerns of the Northside community through a research process based upon dialogue, action and critical reflection. The product of this dialogue has now been passed to the local partnership company in keeping with the Operational Programme 1994-99, laid down by the European Union and Irish Government. (Government of Ireland/European Union, 1995)

Significant progress is being made by third level institutions in Cork in terms of mature students access for Northside residents but from a baseline that was so low that any improvement would appear dramatic. (see Forde, 1996) This progress will have to be maintained and developed over many years if the access deficit is to be meaningfully addressed for residents for the Cork Northside community. Moreover, access initiatives are open to the criticism of being essentially affirmative remedies, targeted at disadvantaged communities, which seek to tackle end-state maldistribution, while leaving intact much of the underlying political and economic structure. (Drudy & Lynch 1993, p. 267) It is reasonable to argue that access initiatives can increase the educational consumption share of the socially excluded, without necessarily directly tackling social exclusion in marginalised communities, since its recipients may simply relocate to more affluent areas and lifestyles. However, access initiatives are also a transformative activity, which addresses the core issues of inequality, cultural misrecognition and disempowerment, primarily through the social science discourse that informs most adult education initiatives. As such, they envisage a project of deconstruction, aimed at a deep restructuring of the relations of recognition. Ultimately, the cause of social justice will be served only when the maldistribution of resources and opportunities is explicitly connected to cultural misrecognition through access to knowledge. In Foucault's famous dictum "Knowledge is Power/Power is knowledge" (Foucault, 1980)

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ireland is a country with a very poor record on access to third level education for marginalised groups, including school leavers and mature students. In the age of information technology and mass third level education, this cycle of educational disadvantage must be broken. Without knowledge and skills, marginalised people will face spiralling disadvantage and further exclusion in a society where their claims on citizenship will be become more and more tenuous. Alienation will be compounded and society will be diminished through the loss of human potential and dignity. Government is challenged, as never before, by the task of lifelong learning. It demands a generative policy strategy, based upon equality of educational

opportunity, geared towards empowerment and transformative activity in marginalised communities.

Professor Fred Powell is Head of the Department of Applied Social Studies at UCC. He is the author of The Politics of Irish Social Policy 1600-1990, *Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1992.*

Bibliography

Ardagh, J. (1994)	*Ireland: Portrait of a Changing Society*, London
Bauman, Z. (1992)	*Intimations of Postmodernity*, London, Routledge
Beck, U. (1992)	*The Risk Society*, London, Sage.
Beck, U. (1992)	*Reflexive Modernization*, Oxford, Polity.
Bourdieu, P. (1986)	The forms of capital in J. Richardson (ed) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York, Greenwood.
Bradley, H. (1996)	*Fractured Identities*, Oxford, polity.
Crook, S. et al (1992)	*Postmodernization*, London, Sage.
Drudy, S. & Lynch, K. (1993)	*Schools & Society in Ireland*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan.
Dworkin, R. (1982)	*Taking Rights Seriously*, London, Duckworth.
European Union (1993)	*Green Paper: European Social Policy* - Options for Union, Com. (93) 55,1.
Frazer, N. (1995)	From Redistribution to Recognition: Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age, *New Left Review* (212) July/August.
Forde, C. (1996)	*Making Education Work in Cork's Northside: A Strategy Statement, Northside Education Initiative*, 1996.
Foucault, M. (1980)	*Power/Knowledge*, Sussex, Harvester.
Friere, P. (1972)	*Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Penguin, Harmondsworth.
Giddens, A. (1990)	*The Consequences of Modernity*, Oxford, Polity Press.
Giddens, A. (1991)	*Modernity & Self-Identity*, Oxford, Polity Press.
Giddens, A. (1993)	*Beyond Left and Right*, Oxford, Polity.
Government of Ireland/ European Union (1995)	*Operational Programme: Local Urban & Rural Development 1994-1999. Stationary Office*, Dublin.
HEA (1995)	*Report of the Steering Committee on the Future of Higher Education*, HEA, Dublin.
Kelly, M. (1994)	*Can You Credit It?*, Dublin, Combat Poverty.
Jordan, B. (1996)	*A Theory of Poverty & Social Exclusion*, Oxford, Polity.
Keane, J. (1988)	*Democracy & Civil Society*, London, Verso.

Kramer, R.M. (1981)	*Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
Landry, C. & Mulgan G. (1994)	*The Future of Charities & The Voluntary Sector*, London, Demos.
Marx, K. (1986)	*Das Kapital* (Volume 1).
O'Sullivan, D. (1993)	*Commitment, Educative Action & Adults*, Aldershot, Avebury.
Parkin, F. (1982)	Social Closure & Class Formation in A. Giddens & D. Held (eds). *Classes, Power & Conflict*, London, Macmillan.
Powell, F.W. (1992)	*The Politics of Irish Social Policy*, Edwin Mellen Press, New York.
Putnam, R. (1993)	*Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
Rawls, J. (1991)	*A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Mass.

The Arusha Experience

Tony Downes, Paddy Reilly

As we began a course in "Adult Education" many of the course participants openly wondered: "Why?" and "What has a course on adult learning got to do with us, who are concerned with community development projects?"

For the past two years (1995/96 and 1996/97) the Development Studies Centre at Kimmage Manor has been involved in running an education and training programme (certified by the NCEA) for Programme Officers from developing countries whose work involves direct engagement with the socially, economically and politically excluded who form the substantial majority in African societies. Our purpose is to outline briefly our work as facilitators of the adult education module in this programme - to give an account of how we responded to the challenge posed by such questions - and reflect on this experience in the hope that it may be of interest to adult educators in Ireland.

The course entitled "Management of Community Development Programmes" involved some twenty African participants taking up residence at the (Danish) purpose built Training Centre for Development Co-operation (TCDC) at Usa River, near Arusha, Tanzania. They came for one month in every three throughout the year for intensive input. They then returned to their communities or workplaces to apply in their own work situation the principles, theories and practices studied.

Participants

The job descriptions of the participants indicates the diversity of the group. These included Projects Managers, Social Workers, Women's Group Co-ordinators, School Principals, Community Leaders, Lawyers, Department of Education Inspectors, Administrators, Women Activists, Health Workers, Street Children Workers and so forth. In general they would be regarded as middle management personnel in their respective (predominantly) non-governmental organisations with responsibility for supervising/developing field programmes and projects. All participants were funded either by their employers and/or sponsored by aid agencies. Their educational backgrounds varied from basic second level to a few who had studied at third level. Most were fluent in English, at least verbally. Course inputs were provided by visiting tutors/facilitators from the Kimmage Development Studies Centre and local African resource personnel mainly employed by TCDC. Planned field trips to remote village communities were also an important feature of the programme. The overall course objective was to "train the trainers".

The adult education module at the start of the course was designed to lay sound foundations of theory and practice to underpin the entire course and to highlight its relevance as an instrument of community self-development. This was particularly necessary since the majority of participants perceived adult education as mainly identified with adult literacy for citizenship. We saw as one of our key tasks to seek to broaden this perception in line with former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere's famous Dar-es-Salaam Declaration that,

> *"...development is for Man, by Man and of Man. The same is true of education. Its purpose is the liberation of Man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. Education has to increase men's physical and mental freedom - to increase their control over themselves, their own lives, and the environment in which they live. The ideas imparted by education, or released in the mind through education, should, therefore, be liberating ideas. Nothing else can properly be called education." (Nyerere, 1976 pp 9-10)*

In setting ourselves this task we were placing the role of adult education centre stage in community development. As Lalage Bown points out (in Tight,1983, pp 38-49) in the developed world, adult education is seen as a strictly apolitical activity, with a clearly adult population in mind and preoccupied with either vocational preparation, personal development courses or leisure interests. In the Third World, it often has had a clear political dimension. It has been tied in to the development strategies of developing countries, whenever resources permitted and usually aimed at a wide age range of participants and within large literacy campaigns. In other words, it has been associated with 'state-building' i.e. the education of citizens of the state. This provided a receptive context for our role as adult education facilitators.

We decided at the outset that our methods would seek to minimise didacticism and maximise participatory dialogue through focused discussion with small group topics, role play and educationally relevant games as well as carefully prepared formal inputs. Throughout the programme we sought to affirm, encourage, sensitively challenge and sometimes provoke participants' contributions, assumptions and attitudes. Our objective was together (participants/tutors) to clarify our thinking, critically reflect on our assumptions, challenge our prejudices in order to encourage confidence in the learners own intuition, instincts, ideas and competence to address the multiple challenges of their own work situation and society. The animated discussions among participants both in the sessions themselves, during the breaks and even at mealtimes gave us as facilitators a real sense of the engagement, even excitement of the participants in response to the inputs which is difficult to convey in cold print. On many occasions in the full group sessions, we as facilitators were happily sidelined as various participants took over the group to argue their position, to enlighten us all on the constraints and pressures of traditional culture in various life situations as

they critically reflected on questions of power, oppression and gender. In these ways, participants were gradually encouraged to see themselves as rich learning resources for the group as a whole and encouraged to transfer this perception to the groups they were working with in real life. It was particularly gratifying to see the women participants - who comprised 50% of the group - increasingly participating in and contributing to the dialogue, thus disputing the prevalent cultural norms whereby patriarchy reigns supreme!

Course Outline

Course content can be summarised by focusing on the *"4 P's" - "People, Principles, Philosophy, and Praxis."* Our aim was to stimulate the thinking of the participants, to encourage them to make personal choices of theories and methods suited to their realities *(people);* to clarify and exemplify the key *principles* underpinning good adult education practice; to establish some familiarity with the principal adult education traditions and theorists *(philosophy)* and to gradually and experientially hand over power to the participants to take increasing control over their own learning as their self-confidence increased *(praxis).*

Following an introductory session which dealt with the expectations of the participants and our own, we began with an exploration of what it means to learn as an adult. We drew specifically on participants' own experiences of learning and related these to some theories of learning. We then moved on to examine some different styles of learning, reflecting on what implications these might have for an adult educator with a mixed group of adult learners. Bearing in mind that most of the participants did not see themselves as adult educators, we moved the discussion onto an area where they obviously did feel more at home, namely that of *leadership.* Different styles of leadership were contrasted - again drawing upon the experience and creativity of the group who acted out some of the implications of one style or another in role plays based on real life situations. The questions we were asking were - which style of leadership is most appropriate in terms of enabling learning to take place and with what implications for methodology?

We continued with an examination of the basic philosophy behind adult education and from this, some of the key traditions, theorists and models that have shaped adult education practice this century. Using a participatory discussion and debate exercise, the group self-selected what they felt were the most relevant ideas for their situations. This became a highly-charged part of the module when certain implications of each choice were unfolded. Some participants were jolted by the implication that adopting a particular mode of adult education would do nothing but reinforce the norms and values of the predominant political and social system - the status quo which all agreed was not serving them well. Participants were invited to argue the case for the tradition of their choice and to seek to persuade others to join them. The liveliness of the debates forced participants to think through their

ideological standpoints. It stimulated a high degree of critical reflection on the central issue that all adult education approaches are not the same - and that choosing one rather than another does indeed carry certain implications - political and pedagogical.

Critical Thinking: Theory and Practice

The second half of the course concentrated on *naming* what we had been *doing* from the beginning. As a group we looked at the notions of Power and Oppression and shared our differing perceptions on these concepts. Did we see power as only something one exercises over another? If so, where did this leave the notion of 'empowering' those who are oppressed? We then examined some of the theory behind critical thinking - looking in particular at the ideas of Paulo Freire, Jack Mezirow and Stephen Brookfield - and how this is related to particular approaches within adult education that seek to 'transfer power to learners', 'transform the way people see their lives', 'liberate people from their oppression', and so on - depending upon the ends of one's visions for each approach.

Returning to our introduction to learning theories at the beginning of the course - in which we concluded - drawing from Honey and Mumfort (1992) - that essentially, learning may be said to consist of just two elements, *thinking* and *doing* - we sought in this section to place much emphasis on the *doing side* of the 'learning circle'. Much time was devoted to the participants themselves preparing and presenting their own reflections on how they, as Programme Officers, would plan for, present and facilitate the learning of typical groups of adults they would be expected to work with. These sessions included a structured feedback process which enabled presenters, remaining participants and facilitators to constructively affirm and critique each presentation in an atmosphere of trust and respect in the interests of refining participants' practical skills. They provided a stimulating example of adult education in action which confirmed our own and participants' conviction of the value of really applying the principle of the adult learners as rich learning resources. In these final few days of the course we facilitators took an ever increasing back seat in the proceedings.

Reflections

What was learnt from this experience in Arusha? Perhaps from the point of view of the participants, at the least, they learned that adult education was about much more than literacy provision. This was indicated by their statements at the end of the module such as, "You really made us think." and "Now I know that adult education means much more than literacy ...it's about changing peoples' lives." and "What I have learned will help me to help my people."

We, the tutors, could see from the experiences of those around us that adult education is always a political activity and not merely a marginalised activity

concerned only with those pursuing 'second-chance education', leisure learning and personal development courses. The Arusha Experience reminded us that adult education should be an inclusive opportunity for all to participate in recurrent learning activities that challenge us *to think*, to respond to questions about the way we see our lives, and to be encouraged *to act* constructively, and, as productive participating citizens, to free ourselves from the slavery of accepted customs, thoughts and habits. Above all, it prompted us to reflect that, cultural differences aside, people who are *excluded* - whether they live in Masailand or in Mulhuddart - are fundamentally the same everywhere. The main lessons of this course in Tanzania are not earth shattering, mind-boggling or even that new. They are, quite simply, firstly, of the need to provide people with the space to reflect in safety, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, upon their own knowledge, experiences and values and to have their knowledge, own ideas and sense of self-worth affirmed. Secondly, that this will then enable new and traditional ideas, approaches and methods to be critically tested, then embraced or discarded, depending upon the appropriateness to their situations. Finally, that the quest for leadership inherent in this adult education course is also one of seeking self-determination for each and every learner. We wonder what, if anything, does this tell us about the experience of adult education here at home?

Tony Downes is Adult Education Organiser, Co. Dublin VEC

Paddy Reilly is Director of the Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor, Dublin

Travellers, Inclusion and Adult Education

Aileen Walsh

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to answer the following questions:

- Is one always a traveller, despite being settled for a number of years?
- What does 'inclusion' mean for travellers?
- What are the issues for travellers about inclusion and settlement?
- What is the role of adult education vis-a-vis travellers?

Answers to the questions are based on insights gained from the literature relating to travellers and from seeking and listening to the views of travellers themselves. The approach to answering the questions is influenced by my personal experience of working with travellers in the education/training field in the mainstream and non-mainstream sectors.

Being a Traveller

The first question posed, "Is one always a traveller, despite being settled for a number of years?" seems to draw a distinction between being a traveller and being settled, implying that it is the travelling or non-settlement that makes the traveller. The literature on traveller culture indicates how simplistic and inadequate it would be to simply equate being a traveller with whether one is settled or non-settled. Any attempt to answer the question should be based on an understanding of who exactly the traveller is.

The traveller population in Ireland is estimated to be just over 20,000, representing a community that has a value system that differs from the dominant culture within this country. Travellers identify the love of family as being at the very root of their culture, with children in the community being trained to see themselves not as individuals but as part of the family network. In order to preserve this most important structure in their lives and nurture the bond between families, travellers' main focus in life is on maintaining the extended family network. Nomadism is the mechanism whereby survival is sought. Within the nomadism is found an attitude to time that is present-orientated. This facilitates the need to be in control of time which is used primarily for building and bonding family relationships.

Traveller culture is also distinguished by its own distinctive economy, defined by The Task Force report on the Travelling Community as one which is characterized by "nomadism with focus on income generation rather than job

creation; a home base where work and living space are one; self-employment, re-cycling, horse dealing and flexibility in moving from one activity to another." Traditionally travellers were self-sufficient and tended to be an inward-looking people who kept to themselves, finding within their own community many of the support systems they might need throughout their lives. Literacy and numeracy were considered by them to be of limited benefit, particularly in pre-industrial Ireland, with a corresponding view that education was of little benefit. However, with the increase in the number of settled urban-based travellers, their diminishing capacity to be economically self-sufficient, as well as a recognition of the need to survive within our ever increasing print dominated society, education has become a bigger issue.

It would be a mistake to assume or imagine that being settled would make the traveller cease to be a traveller or less a traveller. The Kerry Travellers Development Project, 1996 questions the assumption that to settle travellers in housing *"would eliminate their 'problems' and therefore erase their way of life."*

Being settled will not diminish the love of family and the impetus to nomadism in order to nurture that love and maintain the bonds that keep it alive.

The views of a group of fourteen settled travellers, which were sought in relation to the question posed above, seem to endorse the literature findings. For most of the group being a traveller involved:

> *"being aware of your history, knowing who you are...living in a house doesn't mean you are not a traveller...No matter where you go, where you live, you remain a traveller."*

Generally the group felt comfortable with being travellers, liked and were proud of being travellers, and would not wish to change. The view was also expressed by some members of the group that one should choose "how much you wanted to think of yourself as a traveller and how integrated you want to be within your own housing estate or local community"

Life as a Traveller

The question, "What does 'inclusion' mean for travellers?" and how does it affect their lives is perhaps best answered by focussing on the exclusion experienced in the everyday lives of these people.

As a minority group, travellers tend to live on the margins of society, generally continuing to be discriminated against at an individual, cultural, and institutional level. The literature identifies discrimination as occurring mainly in relation to the following aspects of travellers' lives: access to training and work experience, to employment, and to shops and leisure activities. The perception is that the root of this discrimination arises from an attitude on the

part of the settled community wherein travellers are perceived to be *"deviants whose way of life is a derogation from normal standards."*

The group involved in this study articulated what discrimination or lack of inclusion means for them in terms of their everyday lives: being refused access to pubs, hotels, discos/night clubs, hairdressing salons; being watched in shops; the provision of segregated pre-schooling facilities; traveller children being relegated to special classes or the back of the class simply because they are travellers; being made to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable when they join clubs such as local sports clubs and the reluctance on the part of employers to give them jobs.

In noting and identifying these experiences, the group accepts that travellers as well as the settled community are involved in creating the exclusion barriers. They perceive traveller culpability to involve the following:

- Anti -social behaviour
- A bad appearance, both on a personal level and where their houses/surroundings are concerned;
- Having a 'want, want, want' mentality i.e. always looking for hand-outs from the state and not being seen to contribute to society
- A tendency to seek compensation at every opportunity

In identifying the above, the group felt that it is a minority of travellers who engage in such behaviour. The unfairness and injustice for them are in the fact that they all tend to be *tarred with the same brush*. They particularly instance the tendency of the media to focus on bad news stories about travellers.

In more general terms, the group felt that an overall barrier to travellers' inclusion in society is their lack of literacy skills which means that they very often miss out on a lot of information. The younger members of the group have great sympathy for older travellers in this regard. In the same context, they also identified lack of education as a barrier to travellers' ability to obtain employment in the mainstream labour force, should this be their choice.

Whilst feeling that travellers were discriminated against, as identified above, within the wider community, all of the group felt that they are accepted within the immediate area in which they live. They tend to get on well with their neighbours from the settled community, visiting their houses and going to bingo with them. Three of the group felt they are very integrated into society and attribute this to having been educated with settled people, living alongside them and also working in jobs with them.

Based on what we learn from the literature and from travellers themselves, it would appear that there are many areas where travellers do not experience the inclusion they would like. Some of the problems are of their own

making but many are not. It is interesting to note that the experience of the group involved in this study is that they tend to be included and accepted in their own immediate communities where they are known. It raises the question whether the exclusion or discrimination is based on lack of knowledge and/or ignorance of the traveller way of life by the settled community. It also raises the issue of the apportioning of blame to a whole community for the wrong-doing of a few within that community.

Issues about Inclusion and Settlement

In answering the question "What are the issues for travellers about inclusion and settlement?" the literature helps to identify and highlight the major issues. Regarding the whole concept of settlement, the Kerry Travellers Development Project raises the issue of the motivation and thinking behind the concept:

> *Since the 1930's in Ireland a policy of assimilation has been practised by many local authorities. Travellers are viewed as a sub-culture of poverty, the assumption being that to settle them in housing would eliminate their 'problem' and therefore erase their way of life. (Towards Inclusion, 1996).*

To expect to change travellers by settlement is to show a lack of awareness and understanding of their culture. So perhaps the first issue that arises is the apparent need for the settled community, and particularly those empowered to make changes, to inform themselves of just what exactly is involved in any attempts at change. A starting point in this process is suggested by the Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group which is based on the principle that change in the travellers' situation can only occur if they themselves are involved in the decision making about change.

Perhaps the biggest issue for travellers in relation to inclusion relates to the area of education. A changing world has meant major changes in terms of the ability of the traveller economy to adequately sustain its people and enable them to be self-sufficient. This change is not matched by their becoming more involved in the mainstream labour force. Current statistics indicate that approximately 90% of travellers receive social welfare payments. It is not unreasonable to assume that many travellers are living in poverty. One of the main factors related to traveller exclusion from the labour force is the lack of educational qualifications and this raises many issues.

Firstly, it is of note that of the estimated 4,400 traveller children who avail of primary schooling only a small minority, estimated at 10%, transfer annually to second-level schools. Of these, most leave after only one or two years. Traveller parents want the best for their children and the issue arises around how to include traveller children in education to the extent that they will attain educational qualifications and have the option of aspiring to that better life their parents would wish for them.

The literature indicates that travellers within the education system cause problems for themselves and for the educators. The problems seem to centre around the concepts of relevance and accessibility. Accessibility involves the need to become settled to the extent of adopting a lifestyle that becomes less present-orientated and more committed to remaining in one area on a long-term basis. Relevance has been highlighted within the literature as being related to many areas. An INTO, 1992 report found that: *"Subjects are taught from the perspective of the dominant culture group which leaves travellers feeling isolated and confused."* (Travellers in Education)

Kenny. (1992) highlights another aspect:

> *"Being assigned to the rear of the class has a negative impact on the quality of learning, on the morale and motivation of travellers, and on their decision to remain within school." (DTEDG File: Irish Travellers; New analysis and New Initiatives).*

The travellers in this study have also instanced this practice as problem for them: *"We were sent to school because it was the law, often just to be left at the back of the class."*

Questions seem to arise as to how relevant not only travellers perceive education to be for themselves but also how relevant educators perceive education to be for travellers. The issue would appear to be how can education become relevant to travellers from both points of view. The Task Force on the Travelling Community, (1995) is specific in its suggestions:

> *Schools should adopt an inclustve, inter-cultural approach to curriculum development so as to ensure that their school plan, class programmes and teaching materials reflect a positive attitude towards the special customs, traditions and lifestyle of minority groups, including the children of travellers.*

O'Connell, (1987) is also specific regarding what is required:

> *It is not enough to expand various types of provision and to bend structures to meet the needs of the traveller. Teachers and the system must also be informed by clear analysis of the situation, and provided with culturally, respectful ways of teaching about nomads, (Working with Irish Travellers, DTEDG File).*

The Role of Adult Education

Urbanisation and settlement, the decreasing sustaining ability of the traveller economy and the increasing print domination of our society all point to an urgent need to ensure that travellers become empowered through education to adapt to the changes in their lives. The Adult Education Organiser of Co.

Galway VEC recognises the power of education to enable people to achieve a better lifestyle and sees the education/training process as *"a crucial integral part of travellers' integration with the settled community."* He feels it is *incumbent on adult education providers* to redress a situation wherein, relating to travellers, *"little formal education and an early drop-out rate are very much the norm."* The question is, what, specifically, can adult education do?

Desirable outcomes of education for travellers have been identified both by the travellers themselves and also within the literature. The provision of literacy classes and training opportunities where travellers can attain qualifications with currency in the labour market are obvious possibilities. Another desirable outcome would be opportunities for travellers to obtain the type of training that would enable them to become leaders/role models within their own community. In this regard, the literature specifically identifies the need for travellers to become teachers and trainers themselves.

If adult education is to be really innovative in its role vis-a-vis travellers, it can look to providing not merely for educational outcomes but to adapting a more holistic approach to the process of traveller education. The literature suggests starting points for such a process. For instance, within educational research the evidence suggests the benefits involved in mothers educating mothers within the travelling community. This could also facilitate an intervention in the inter-generational cycle of disadvantage. The words of a mother involved in this study, now herself engaged in formal education, perhaps answers the question: *"I always said I would give my kids the help and encouragement they needed (to get an education) and make sure that they would not experience the feeling I grew up with."* She identified that feeling of isolation and of losing out because of not having a formal educational qualification. Other mothers in the group, also currently involved in formal education, see their experience as having positive repercussions for their children's education.

Within this context, another innovative adult education approach suggests itself when we consider the limited, or total lack of, experience traveller parents generally have of post-primary education, thereby making it difficult for them to support and understand their own children's post primary education. Can adult education provide this support through specific classes? Given the findings of the literature relating to the cultural differences that exist between the travelling and settled communities, perhaps the most crucial question for adult education, vis-a-vis travellers, is who needs the education? Kenny (1993) asks the question: *"What 'model' of travellers do we adopt?,"* model being the assumptions and beliefs we all hold regarding travellers, whether unconsciously or otherwise. Kenny believes we must examine this model. Are our assumptions and beliefs based on ignorance and lack of understanding of traveller culture? If so, is there a role for adult

education in educating the settled community about travellers, their way of life, and their culture?

Whatever adult education perceives its role to be, the most important fact is that it should recognise itself as having a role. Perhaps the final word should be left to a seventeen year-old member of the traveller group who dropped out of initial education, *"Education to me is like a gift, unequalled in this whole existence. Being deprived of education is like being deprived of the most essential thing we need to live and survive".*

Her words must surely invoke a corresponding passion to seek to educate - in any of us who claim to be educators.

Aileen Walsh is the Manager of St. Brendan's Traveller Centre, Loughrea, Co. Galway, which is administered by Co. Galway VEC

The Kingdom in the Sky

Abigail Amos

Lesotho, the Kingdom in the Sky, is the earth's highest, Africa's coldest, and one of the smallest countries in the world. Land locked and surrounded on all sides by South Africa, it has suffered economic isolation and hardship through the years of apartheid, virtually its only export being the workforce which crosses the Border to live in the hostels and labour in the mines. It is the mountain stronghold of a happy people proudly bonded to their land and their history, people who still suffer grinding poverty.

There are several Border crossings. The one in Maputsoe has a much higher volume of traffic than that in Maseru because it is closer to the main mining areas of the Republic. Maputsoe has grown rapidly over the last few years. Labour is cheap, even cheaper than in the Republic, and labour intensive industries have moved across to take advantage. Poor pay is better than no pay and so the advantage is mutual. Over recent years retrenchment from the mines has added massive unemployment in the male population, life in the rural areas has become unsustainable for many families and it is the women who have assumed migratory tendencies, moving into Maputsoe and towns like it to work in textile and shoe industries. Maputsoe is a jumble of everything from squatters' tin-and-polythene shacks to big new factory shells. It attracts the less savoury aspects of parasitic behaviour and the best aspects of hard working small businesses, in which poor people use every skill at their disposal to remain solvent. Each evening the managerial staff of the factories head back across the Border, leaving security guards and huge dogs to patrol their premises and the streets of Maputsoe become a no-go district to all but the inebriated and the foolhardy.

Matriarchal Society

Despite cultural male dominance, Lesotho can be regarded as matriarchal. Many men, working or unemployed, spend most of their prime years away from their families, and a large proportion abandon them entirely. Women bring up their children in a predominantly female society which has its own strengths and weaknesses. They commonly assume the role of single bread-winner, with help from the extended family if they are fortunate. Eight children to a family are not remarkable and women often support unemployed adult sons and daughters -in -law. By the time a man deserts his family, there are girls old enough to take on the domestic chores. It is not unusual to see six year olds, just strong enough to carry a toddler on their backs, left with the full care of the babies throughout mother's long working day. They may complete primary school for the first time in their teens but are unlikely ever to attend. There is no money for education and the girls will always be needed either in their own home or to earn a pittance caring

for the children of neighbours. The pressures and persuasions exacted on these premature adults can well be imagined. If, at thirteen or fourteen, she can select a likely clandestine sexual partner, she will welcome pregnancy since it allows her to escape by marriage. Her future is probably a perpetuation of the vicious circle. Vocational education does not sufficiently address the problem and, since there can be no entry restrictions, those who are financially solvent are equally welcome to enrol; but the acquisition of skills makes earning power. A mother can use those skills to both save income and generate income at home, continuing to be a mother in every sense, fulfilling all her roles and responsibilities towards her family.

Maputsoe Vocational Centre

The Salesians began their Missions in Maputsoe almost twenty years ago. Together with a large church and numerous other community activities, there are two primary schools, a secondary school and the Vocational Centre. Its official title is the Saint Mary Mazzarello Vocational Training Centre but locally it is known simply as 'Mazzarello'. It began with a few adult students in 1990 and has grown to full capacity with seventy-five young women on a three year course. It is housed in a range of four spacious, crumbling, impossibly dusty rooms behind a line of shack workshops which front the main road. The Centre is fee-paying for those who can afford it but there is financial support and there are free places for those in need. The fees are about one quarter of those for parallel Ministry courses. Indefatigable fund-raising has been rewarded with adequate furniture and equipment. Independent of the Ministry, the Centre relies heavily on overseas funding, all of which must be competed for and justified. Centre fees approximate to about one third of the total needed to pay teachers' salaries and one eighth of the annual cost of running the centre. Compared locally, facilities are excellent but the fractional cost of training one student bears no relationship to costs in the industrial nations.

The course aims to train young women in a number of skills which will enable them to care for their families efficiently and make best use of even the most limited resources. It is designed to encourage a happily fulfilled work ethic and encourage community participation and awareness. The practical skills taught are domestic and industrial sewing, hand and machine knitting and a variety of textile crafts. Small business studies is taught as a high priority, the skill of pattern drafting comes a close second, while health and economy, English language and leadership training feature prominently. An attempt has been made to counteract the abysmal level of numeracy by building maths studies into several other subjects.

The education system accessible to the vast majority of young people in South Africa has suffered not only from a lack of development but from apartheid and, before that, colonialism. Criticism must be constructive and can only be made with an understanding of the enormous frustrations which

have repressed generations. Education in Lesotho has fared only a little better. Definitions and concepts which will lead to an ability to earn a reasonable income are not easy to teach to young people who, years ago, lost all confidence that school would teach them anything. Within that context, the trainers at the Centre seem all the more remarkable. Only two of the six trainers have any formal training themselves. Much of their development has taken place at the Centre where they all learn from each other. They work hard. The syllabus, designed by the team, provides not just definite guide lines but a great deal of detail, together with references which allow immediate access to very limited resource material. Teaching methods most resistant to change are under frequent formal and informal appraisal. There is enthusiastic cooperation between the trainers, especially where abilities are shared and where bi-lingual skills are at their most fruitful. They organise sessions and design their own projects to transfer skills one to another. Two of the trainers spent their formative years in remote mountain villages where cultural tradition is still rich. That background, combined with sound abilities and technical experience, enables them to bring values which strongly counteract the psychological confusion and cultural vacuum which is the background of many young people in the lowland towns.

With a staff student ratio of one to ten there are usually seventy-five students over three years, varying in age from fourteen to thirty-five. With a few exceptions, the young women come to the course without even the most rudimentary textile skills because the traditional methods of transfer have broken down. The course begins with their introduction to sewing and knitting equipment. By the end of the first year, everyone has a full comprehension of hand and machine sewing, of basic block pattern cutting, of fabrics, the use of commercial dress patterns and of hand knitting techniques.

Course Content

Once the first years have become familiar with the ordinary domestic sewing machine they may choose to buy a machine through the revolving loan fund. None of our students have a domestic power supply so it is most important that they learn all the potential of a hand-cranked machine. Used machines in a wide price range are available through the RLF. Many students take advantage of the savings scheme they run themselves by banking with the Centre, making favourable interest rates and helping to buy their sewing machine.

The second year is one of consolidation and expansion. Students become proficient in a number of skills and begin to take responsibility and initiative to work without constant instruction. They explore the creative possibilities of pattern drafting and become acquainted with the technical diversities of sewing and knitting machines. Working in groups for many activities they are learning to cooperate together, progressing towards production training.

Conversational English is encouraged. More geometry is introduced for pattern-making and scale drawing, and calculations which relate to ordering and retailing are studied. The home economy curriculum covers budgeting, savings, credit unions and burial societies and the role of consumers, especially in the areas of guarantees and rights. Small business studies continues as both a separate and an integral study, with each item produced being the subject of a costing and pricing exercise. Their hand knitting ability is extended so that they can follow complex patterns in English consistently. They work in groups to build proficiency on the knitting machines so that they can enter the third year ready to produce garments with little supervision. There are five assessments through the second year which encourage both trainers and students to constantly reappraise and evaluate and give the final Certificate more meaning. All assessments are in Sesotho.

In the third year students are encouraged to extend their English skills through conversation. Even at this stage, Sesotho is not precluded in English lessons because everyone needs to express themselves. Small Business Studies and English come together through the detailed use of the chapter exercises which characterise the module. Since those with greater ability tend to dominate discussion, role play and vocabulary games lead to greater involvement. By the beginning of the third year, the students understand and appreciate most aspects of factory procedure and can use the specialised machines with appropriate care. When their training is finished, they will be proficient in all aspects of speed production and safety and will be capable of producing a whole garment individually or working on separate tasks as part of a team. Experience of floor management at this stage allows those with ambitions to become real life factory supervisors to realise their goals early. Having made a total transition from hand crafting to industrial practice, they return to creative fashion garment making with confidence. The third years have now learnt about pattern drafting and produce African Fashion, with all its characteristic complexities, for paying customers. The Centre is open on Saturdays when they can work on their own commissions. They are encouraged to participate in running the retail outlet which sells everything produced at the Centre, including all the school uniforms,

Outcomes and future

The difference in demeanour of these young women as they move through the course is not merely an indication that they are becoming adult; they are gaining those indefinable qualities which make them so good to be with. Together with accumulating valuable social skills they have learnt about motivation, their own self esteem, their value in the community, their ability to solve problems and simply how to learn. The pressures of job seeking are so great, the competition for work almost insurmountable but they have the advantage of youth and training and the reputation of the course in their favour. Half will spend some time in factory production, adding to their experience and saving a little money. Their jobs are precarious, and this is

why fashion garment making has become a prominent part of the course. Students know that they can earn more working at home in a congenial environment, that they can adapt their abilities to the market and their conditions and that their skills will last a lifetime.

The future of the course is unclear. As national standards improve, it must inevitably move towards Ministry registration whilst protecting its own criteria. The overwhelming demand for places should stimulate expansion and diversification but in order to keep fees low and maintain some free places that would mean searching for high levels of donor capital and living with an even higher anxiety about on-going funding. In the North, we tend to take for granted that tax revenue will pay for state education. In Lesotho, where taxable status is in itself a privilege, the Ministry of Education can do little more than assist with teachers' salaries and provide limited facilities on a small scale to a favoured few.

Abigail Amos spent five years as a volunteer worker in Lesotho from 1991-1996. For two of those years she was supported by APSO. She is now living in Yorkshire.

Rural Women Co-operate for a Better Life

South West Kerry Womens' Association NOW Project

Barbara Mutschler-Hild

South West Kerry is the most westerly corner of Ireland- next stop America! It is also the most beautiful corner of Ireland and includes the Ring of Kerry, located in our project area, which is one of Europe's most breathtaking travel routes.

The South West Kerry Womens' Association is a network of 23 womens groups and it is concerned with addressing problems in the area. The main problem is underpopulation and a result of this is the lack of social services which directly affects women as the principal carers and homemakers. There is a high percentage of elderly and young people. Women aged between 21 and 56 form only one fifth of the population and this means that one fifth is caring for four fifths.

The barriers which have been identified are:

- The lack of time available for training for women who are already overburdened
- The lack of education in an area where 50.7% of the working population left school at the age of 15
- The lack of confidence and , of course, a shortage of money.

Overcoming Barriers

In an attempt to address some of these basic issues, the South Kerry Development Partnership, Co. Kerry VEC and the St. Vincent de Paul Society organised self development courses for women in 1992. These courses were provided free of charge and creche facilities were provided. The courses were hugely successful and as a result, twelve new womens groups were formed.

The following year, Combat Poverty ran a Leadership course under the Horizon programme and out of this came a one day seminar where 120 women expressed their ideas and their desire for future development in South West Kerry. These ideas form the guidelines for action for the SKWA.

Then, in 1994, an application for core funding for a network was approved by the Department of Social Welfare and so, for the first time, money was available to be used to meet needs as identified by the women participating. This was followed by an application for a NOW project (New Opportunities for Women under the European Human Resource Initiative).

The NOW Project

The NOW project aims at helping women in nine communities to identify a business idea which is suited to the area, environmentally friendly and sustainable. It should be viable all year round and capable of being managed as a co-operative venture by the women themselves, thus ensuring flexible working hours tailored to the needs of the women. With the funding available from NOW, we were able to work according to our positive experiences. We paid out care allowances and travel expenses and time, money and distance barriers were broken down.

We saw the work in the communities as key to reaching women and so we decided to undertake the training of Key Women. A training programme was designed in conjunction with UCC and was accredited as the Diploma for Women in the Community. The programme was organised as an outreach course with UCC, it was located in Waterville and fourteen women from nine communities were trained. All fourteen were conferred at UCC in July 1996.

The Role of the Key Women

In the course of training, the Key Women worked with the women in the communities. They researched their areas with a view to discovering women who wished to become involved in business ventures. The information which was gathered is available for everyone who wants to work in those communities. Core groups were formed and they have met regularly since May 1996. At the request of the core groups and the Key Women, a follow-up course was designed. The main priority of the course was to support the Key Women in their work. Course elements included training in group development and enterprise, increasing motivation, decision making, defining needs and accessing funding.

The role of the Key Women had changed from trainee to trainer and consequently, expectations were higher. More responsibility and more initiative were required and the Key Women now had to function as leaders. This particular kind of leadership - a facilitating one- was predefined and actively supported through the involvement of core group members in the general training.

The Key Women grew steadily into their new role and formed a team. The atmosphere changed from that of student group to that of a group of colleagues exchanging experiences, new information and sharing of problems arising. The success of the facilitation method in group work, as well as in a teaching process is shown through the activities in the core groups - 95 women are involved in some way in the seven core groups.

Conclusions

In November, ideas were clarified and training needs identified. Through the NOW project, negotiations with the mainstream providers of training

commenced. We were able to negotiate successfully with Co. Kerry VEC and the South Kerry Development Partnership. We proved that methods used in informal training can be successfully transferred to more formal training situations when all organisations involved are open and flexible. Likewise, we demonstrated that courses included in a project -the integrative approach- are most likely to result in an ongoing learning/working process, increase the motivation and result in inclusion for a number of women. If government and policy makers as promoters of life long learning are serious, then equality must be assured.

For barriers to be overcome successfully, there must be an increase in funding and in care allowances and travel expenses must be provided. The participatory approach is vital for success. This requires a change in the attitudes of the 'experts', which means special training for those involved in education. Finally, and this seems to represent the major difficulty for mainstream providers, there must be a realisation that one structure or one system can never suit everybody. Flexibility will ensure that courses, modules and methods can be adapted to meet the needs of participants and communities. This will require a change in the policies of mainstream providers in relation to existing funding mechanisms. There must be a more co-operative approach in dealing with groups, and with voluntary groups in particular and also an acknowledgment of the validity of positive experiences garnered from involvement in informal education.

Barbara Mutschler-Hild, a native of Germany, lives in Caberdaniel, Co. Kerry. A mother of three children, she has worked in different areas of education and training and she has been adviser, trainer and supervisor with parent-child initiatives and womens' self-help groups. She has been involved with the South West Kerry project since its inception.

Book Reviews

Poverty Amid Plenty: World and Irish Development Considered.
Peadar Kirby, Trocaire/Gill and McMillan, Dublin 1997
Trocaire World Topics Series 5, pp. 230. Price £7.50

At a giveaway price, Peadar Kirby's latest book provides both a comprehensive overview and a detailed consideration of development theory and its outcomes globally and nationally. It is a tribute to his scholarship in this field. Although primarily written for development practitioners and participants in development studies courses, it also offers much food for thought for adult educators and community workers who aim to enable people excluded from society assume greater control over their lives and communities. As indicated in the title, this work addresses the major issue of our time: the co-existing concentration of extreme wealth, economic power and luxurious life styles of the elite side by side with gross poverty, powerlessness and survival struggles of the excluded on this planet. Why this is so, how it has come to be, what theories have driven and underpinned attempts at response and with what outcomes are just some of the questions addressed.

Kirby sets out to explore, analyse and apply development theory to the global and Irish situations. Thus the book is structured in two parts with four chapters apiece linked by an 'interchapter'. It is written in an accessible style unusual in academic writing and its detailed chapter notes/references and extensive bibliography guarantee its recommendation as an essential text on all development studies courses. It also appeals to a more general readership.

Part One analyses the meaning of development and outlines the two dominant development theories of the decades between 1950-80 (chapters 1 and 2). It also examines the emergence in the 1980's of neo-classical economic monetarism and the contemporary crisis in development theory (chapter 3) before addressing the new questions posed for development by environmental and feminist critiques, by Islamic fundamentalism and grassroots movements. Part Two seeks to apply development theory to the Irish experience of development by describing the nature of post-colonial Irish development to date and asking whether Ireland can be described as a developed country (chapter 5). It continues by examining/interpreting Irish development in the light of development theory analysed in Part One (chapter 6) and examines relatively neglected aspects of our development highlighted by development theory (chapters 7 and 8).

Kirby poses four key questions concerning development. They focus on definition, outcomes, process and the reasons for underdevelopment. For him, development is *"a process characterised primarily by growing social*

inclusion through rising living standards, meaningful employment, active political and social participation and a satisfying cultural life extending to all sectors of society and thus widening the life choices and possibilities for the great majority". This definition does at least have the merit of excluding economic growth (GNP) as the sole arbiter of development - the underlying assumption of development initiatives and theories during the past 50 years. He proceeds to evaluate these theories against the benchmark of this definition (does any country on the globe pass this test? one is inclined to wonder) and not surprisingly finds them all wanting. Modernisation theory (dominant in the 50's and 60's) essentially seeks to refashion the Third World on the model of 'developed' Western capitalist societies and is hence inappropriate, ethnocentric and elitist. Dependency theory (dominant in the 70's) in its radical form reactively seeks to break with structural dependence on the capitalist West through socialist revolution and protectionism in order to combat the "development of underdevelopment". Dependency theory either relegates development to some vague socialist future or sees it emerging (without specifying how) from a radical redistribution of power and wealth by disconnecting it from the world economy.

A more virulent form of modernisation theory emerged in the 1980's which, as neo-classical economic monetarism (Reaganomics and Thatcherism), saw development in terms of laissez faire economics heralded by its mantras of free trade and minimal government intervention with total faith in the 'magic of the market' in Reagan's phrase. This has led to disastrous consequences for the people of the South, as their governments attempted to adjust to the global market revolution by foreign borrowing leading to massive debt accumulation and conversion to the values of privatization, free trade and fiscal austerity, i.e. the values of IMF and the World Bank. Each of the above theories of development focussed fundamentally (though in varying ways) on economic growth as the engine of development and have been proved failures at the bar of history. Theorists of sustainable development (in the 90's), no doubt influenced by the ecological concerns of the Green movement, identify this pre-occupation with growth as the core problem of development over the last half century. Their solution- 'development without growth' - while posing a fundamental challenge to the dominant (growth) paradigm and being theoretically attractive, fails to show how this can impact on people's lives on the vast scale and with the urgency required.

Kirby himself sees the best source of hope for the future in what he terms "civil society", i.e. *"the burgeoning social movements through which the poor and marginalised come together in the struggle for survival on the edge of the dominant system"* (following Friberg and Hettne). He claims not to minimise the macro structural forces at work in today's world and the 'remarkable new phenomenon' of the poor emerging as the "subjects of social change" (pure Freirean here!) is *"one of the great hopes that we may win the race against time to create a sustainable and sane society on this planet"* (shades of Robertson's "Sane, Humane, Ecological (SHE)' alternative). The unresolved

difficulties of this position include the fact that already millions of people in the 'peripheral' countries have lost and continue to lose out in this 'race against time', precisely because of the failure to fundamentally change the ethos, values, priorities and praxis of the macro (global) forces to align them with emancipatory micro (local) development initiatives. This is the core problem confronting any attempt to combat the exclusion of significant minorities in the 'developed' world and the vast majority of people in the underdeveloped world and is not, I believe, convincingly addressed by Kirby in this work. The impasse and crisis in development and societal change in favour of maximum inclusion cannot and will not be brought about by bottom up approaches alone, whether at local, national or global levels. Agents of change at all levels are required. Unless this is accepted at the theoretical level to begin with, it is likely that development initiatives will remain isolated micro-glimmers of hope in the ever-increasing contemporary darkness of exclusion and fragmentation in the Third World nearer home. Kirby seeks to address this issue when he considers the Irish experience of development. He is here, however, less than fully convincing.

In Part Two Kirby analyses Irish development in the light of development theory and again, not surprisingly, finds that it has (since independence) been essentially driven by the economic growth paradigm in keeping with the prevailing Western 'wisdom'. His analysis is interesting in highlighting the resultant social exclusion in the Irish context which he has already shown as a widely prevalent consequence in the Third World on a much vaster scale. His deconstruction of the 'Celtic Tiger' (which ends up as a somewhat 'mangy cat' in contrast to its Asian counterpart before he is finished!) is a salutary and welcome antidote to the media hype of our currently burgeoning GNP. However, his discussion of whether Ireland is a core (developed) semi-peripheral (developing) or peripheral (underdeveloped) country appears highly irrelevant and academic in the context of Third World realities. His analysis clearly reveals the timidity of successive conservative Irish Governments' failure to commit resources to strong, indigenous industrial development, relying instead on multinationals to create (often routine) jobs.

He returns once again to "civil society" or the "community sector" as a contemporary site for the launching (in Gramscian terms) of "a counter-hegemonic project" i.e. one which would challenge the prevailing paradigm. The burgeoning of the community sector during the past two decades is seen by him as offering a *"challenge to the state to transform itself into a more effective agent for national (i.e. inclusive) development"* since it seeks to develop *"a more just and equitable society through collective means... based on principles of participation and empowerment"* like similar agents for change in the Third World. He identifies manifestations of new forms of civic/social/political interaction in the Area Based Partnerships, Leader Programmes, Community Enterprise Boards, the National Economic and Social Forum, Anti-Poverty Strategy and so forth. If he is right, then we Adult Educators are at the cutting edge of the struggle

for development as defined by Kirby. If he is wrong..??? Read this book and decide for yourself!

Tony Downes,
Adult Education Organiser, Co. Dublin VEC

Radical Learning for Liberation
Eds. B. Connolly, T. Fleming, D. McCormack, A. Ryan
Maynooth Adult and Community Education Occasional Series No. 1,1997, pp. 82. Price £7.00

The past decade has seen a major expansion in adult education provision in Ireland. When I was appointed as an Adult education Organiser in Co. Kildare over 16 years ago, the only structured adult education provision was the evening class programme which consisted mainly of short term leisure related courses. At that time, the only people employed by the V.E.C. adult education service were part-time evening class tutors. Currently my V.E.C. employs over 50 full-time equivalents in a broad range of activities from adult literacy to education for the long-term unemployed. In addition, a multitude of new providers have emerged very often covering the same target groups. For example, in one town in the County there are at least 12 providers dealing with people who are unemployed.

At present adult education in Ireland is characterised by a frenzy of "doing things" and setting up structures for the disadvantaged. While many positive things have emerged from this burst of energy, there has also been a downside with a lot of duplication and wastefulness. Unfortunately, as with all education developments in Ireland, a lot of the current debate is taken up with issues of power, status and institutional rivalries. (In this regard the structural funds from Europe have been a mixed blessing). This expansion has taken place largely in a policy and ideas vacuum, the white paper on education being a major disappointment. Given such a chaotic background, this collection of articles from the Adult and Community Education Department or Maynooth College is a welcome breath of fresh air.

There are six articles in the series all of which deal in different ways with some of the key issues affecting not only adult education, but the way we organise our society:

- the nature of participatory democracy
- empowering the marginalised
- liberation
- blocks to participation.

Each of the contributors look at these issues with varied and interesting perspectives. Two of the articles are by well known international practitioners, Jack Mezirow from Columbia University New York and Jane Thompson from

Ruskin College, Oxford. Mezirow gives a very succinct introduction to his theory of Transformative Learning including the notion of collaborative discourse. Jane Thompson in her article "Really Useful Knowledge" advocates that we can only reduce inequalities in society by practicing the radical tradition in adult education which *"judges the usefulness of knowledge in relation to its contribution to assisting social and political change"*.

The articles by Ted Fleming "The Future of Adult Education: Learning Towards a New Democracy" and Brid Connolly "Community Development and Adult Education: Prospects for Change?" address some of these issues in an Irish context. In particular I liked Ted Fleming's witty and insightful critique of the White Paper on Education. His Charter of Learners' Rights, in addition to being a good starting point for Adult Education Legislation, would also be very helpful in bringing some policy and operational clarity to the current floundering action. In her article, Brid Connolly, drawing on a wide range of literature, evaluates how effective adult education is in bringing about community development which addresses issues such as poverty and exclusion. In her conclusion she suggests that *"community development for social change and adult education for personal liberation must go hand in hand if we are to create an emancipatory model of collective action"*. A pity Jane Thompson could not find this synthesis between radical adult education and personal growth.

The contribution by Tom Collins and Ann Ryan " "Participation and Rural Voluntary Organisation in Ireland: A Case Study" is an interesting examination of how one organisation - Macra na Feirme - was coping with the challenge of having more effective processes of participation. I would suggest that all educational institutions need to constantly reflect on how open they are to sharing power with everyone in the institution. The last article by Ann Murphy examines the problems of comparability and future policy development in transnational adult education research. This is strictly for Europhiles!

One of the things I found irritating about the collection is the way it was presented to us in the introduction. It states that the series is *"concerned with the theme of liberation particularly for those marginalised in our society"*. I am always nervous of people who are concerned with the liberation of others. There is that whiff of arrogance which suggests that certain people (e.g. the poor) would be better off if they were liberated like me. Being dogmatic about a good cause doesn't dilute the fact that one is still being dogmatic. Even the title "Radical Learning for Liberation" is being very directive about how we should interpret the articles. Let the reader (learner) be the judge of whether or not the ideas in this book are liberating. I can't wait for the series entitled "Conservative Learning for Bondage".

This hint of arrogance/certainty also permeates some of the contributions, in particular those of Mezirow and Thompson. In Mezirow's article he paints

two pictures of society. The first is at the beginning of the article where he gives a description of modern society which makes Dante's Inferno look like a holiday camp. In this description everything and everyone seems to be corrupt, mad or hypocritical. The second description is contained in his last paragraph where he describes a society which is full of light and humanity. And how do we go from one to the other? Yes you got it in one go - by practising Mezirow's Transformation Theories. I am inclined to heed his own warning to be wary of "messianic masters".

Unfortunately, Jane Thompson also exhibits this dogmatic certainty by rehashing the social engineering theories of Marxism i.e. if we change the political system then happiness and utopia will follow. I have no problems in accepting her view that *"taking back control and joining with others in collective action to achieve change is at the root of concepts like participation and democracy"* but to suggest that these changed political processes will automatically improve the quality of life is naively deterministic. In my experience, I have found that there are a multitude of variables which determine whether organisations are democratic and participatory. For example, I would feel that many of our educational organisations are as good as the people who run them. Give me a warm hearted conservative any day in preference to a cold hearted socialist.

Finally, I would like to return to the Introduction to the Series where it justifiably warns us to be wary of powerful elites in our society stealing concepts such as participation and empowerment and using them to maintain the status quo. Most of the articles look at ways by which we can challenge these elites and create a more egalitarian and participatory society. Unfortunately, none of the contributors "critically reflected" on how Universities have contributed to elitism in education and support a pernicious system of meritocracy in the points system, qualifications snobbery and hierarchy of titles. While appreciating fully the personal integrity of the contributors, nevertheless, there is something irritating about preaching against elites from one of the bastions of elitism.

Apart from the above criticisms this is recommended reading. Participate by reading it!.

Noel Dalton,
Adult Education Organiser, Co. Kildare V.E.C.

A Degree at Last
Compiled and edited by Margaret Martin and Cathleen O'Neill
AONTAS 1996, pp. 108. Price £4.95

There are two distinct parts to this publication. In the first part, Dr. Kathleen Lynch of the Equality Studies Centre at UCD summarises her research on mature students at third level institutions in the 1993-94 academic year. Part

two consists of a dozen short essays by current or past mature students reflecting on their college related experiences.

Dr Lynch's report, 'Mature Students in Higher Education' highlights once again that *"....those who are academically, financially, socially and culturally resourced are able to enter higher education and those who are not cannot"* (page 14). Mature students accessing colleges face the same structural economic inequalities as early school leavers. And until these inequalities are addressed, difficulties for disadvantaged adults, early school leavers and mature students will remain profound.

College admission procedures are looked at and recommendations made. The need for a well resourced adult education service to prepare adults for the challenge of college is highlighted. There is also a need for induction programmes for adult students entering college to include study skills, note taking, library research and examination systems. In relation to the issue of quotas for mature students, Dr Lynch believes that these should be targeted at the socially and economically disadvantaged and particularly at women. Support for mature students should include study skills support as well as child care and adequate financial grants.

There are some surprising findings in Dr. Lynch's study. Mature students are over five times better represented in UK colleges than those in Ireland. Six out of ten mature students in Ireland are men. Three out of four students are part time. Most mature students are salaried employees. Almost eight out of ten full time mature students have a leaving certificate, while nearly half have professional qualifications.

The second part of the book consists of accounts from mature students of their struggles in higher education and their ultimate triumph within the system. These accounts are written by a wide range of people including a former prisoner, an educational administrator, a community activist, a disabled man, a homemaker, a single parent, a VTOS graduate and a nurse.

There are a number of issues common to almost all the student contributions. The vast majority had financial difficulties. Often there were conflicting demands on limited family budgets. Frequently partners had to be convinced of the value of education before significant resources could be invested. Some students managed to gain financial assistance from work or through some form of scholarship. One student wisely advises that "....it will probably cost more than you bargained for".

These student accounts are full of practical advice. Many refer to the need for good time management. One student suggests looking at previous examination papers early in the year to avoid becoming too frightened as the exams approach. Another advises mature students to cut back on extraneous

reading, while one contributor recommends getting a counsellor, even if that is your spouse or partner.

While some mature students were initially intimidated by the age difference between themselves and the other students, there were some advantages in being older. Mature students have more life experience, a major advantage in most courses. A number of mature students had additional skills from the workplace. One woman, for example, had excellent secretarial skills which meant that her essay presentation was better than many of the regular students.

While this book gives twelve useful accounts of adult experiences as mature students, I found myself wanting to know more about how people had funded their third level education. Every week someone asks me to assist them with funding for third level. This book introduces us to the ones who have made it into the system and secured funding from grants, agencies or family. There are many other interesting stories to be told of those who struggled to gain access but who failed because the barriers were too high. One student sums it up, "It is especially debilitating to invest so much money and personal effort at a time when day students are going free to college."

This is a useful book for anyone, mature or less mature, considering becoming a third level student. Adult students on the VTOS programme will find much of interest here, as will any adults returning to full time education. The book is particularly valuable as it recounts practical grassroots experiences of adults in their struggles to achieve that elusive third level qualification. Basically this is a very encouraging series of accounts, a triumph of the human spirit. Here are people who took their courage in their hands and risked going where they would not have dreamed at an earlier stage.

Dr. Sean Conlan,
Adult Education Organiser, Co. Clare VEC

Information Pack for Day-time Voluntary Adult Education Groups.
Prepared by Kay Bailey, Cris Mulvey, Christine Murray and Aileen Ryan.
Published by AONTAS, 1996. Price £10

There has been a dramatic rise over the past decade in the number of day-time adult education roups operating in Ireland. They have grown up with little state support but in response to genuinely felt local needs for education, development and solidarity. This information pack has been developed out of the wealth of experience and expertise in the community education world and reflects the growing level of professionalism now emerging within this sector.

This most attractively presented publication is a really excellent practical guide for anyone involved in day-time adult education or indeed any form of adult education. As an experienced practitioner within the adult education

field, I read most of this publication with great interest. The pack contains sections on running courses, premises, funding, publicity, networking, the education system and political lobbying. These and other topics are well researched, accurate, creatively presented and easily accessible.

Some of the problems which day-time adult education providers experience come from the fact that adult education still has a low status within the education system. The pack accurately describes adult education as *"...a sub-section within a sub-section of a Section of the Department of Education...some indication of the priority attached by Irish Governments to adult education."*

The environment in which day-time groups operate has changed significantly in the last decade. There are now many more funding sources, new development agencies have appeared and mainstream educational opportunities have improved. Operating in this context brings new challenges. Groups now need to be better informed about opportunities, certification and funding sources. They need improved writing, presentation and lobbying skills if a funding application is to be successful. And good inter-personal and group facilitation skills are necessary if group cohesion is to be maintained while the development work is forging ahead.

I wish I had had the "Starting Out" section before I embarked on a number of group projects. The *"informal structure works well until the group gets public funding, becomes bigger and becomes involved in more activities, takes on employees or until disagreements emerge, as can happen in any group."* In this context, the pack underlines the need to consider, from an early stage, proper organisational structures.

The funding section contains good information on the main sources of funds for voluntary groups. VEC's, FÁS. , CPA, Teagasc, the Health Boards, the Department of Social Welfare are all here, as well as sensible guide-lines for making funding applications. Despite all these funding agencies the conclusion is still that the current situation *"... remains ad hoc, piecemeal and insecure in nature."*

This information pack is very clear that it is built on the expertise of existing groups. The rationale is to learn from what has already been done and to disseminate good practice. The need for evaluation, an often forgotten aspect of the work, is highlighted again and again in the interest of establishing and recognising good practice.

The practicalities are well handled here also. Suitable premises are essential both for classes and creche. Proper insurance cover, again often forgotten in the early enthusiasm, is critical. The responsibilities of becoming an employer, health and safety issues, how to get publicity, accreditation matters, the importance of networking for support and knowing what is going on are all covered in the various parts of the pack. The pack also

contains an invaluable reference section with current names of useful people and publications throughout the country.

There is so much of value in this pack that it seems petty to be critical in any way. However, I would have liked to see more on group facilitation skills, operating a group in a rural area, or dealing with disagreements when it is not possible to bring in an outside facilitator.

It is encouraging to see a publication concerning the day-time voluntary sector which is not a shoe string job. Layout, colour coding and artwork are excellent. Each section is entirely separate which makes for easy photocopying by groups for training purposes. AONTAS are to be commended for the NOW project which made this pack possible.

Dr. Sean Conlan,
Adult Education Organiser, Co. Clare VEC

Learning in Practice
A resource pack of training ideas for inservice development with students and tutors in literacy.
National Adult Literacy Agency, 76 Lr. Gardiner St., Dublin 1.
Price £5

Learning in Practice is a resource pack of training ideas developed in response to requests from adult literacy trainers for 'guide-lines on understanding the learning process'. As the introduction points out, *"Students and tutors share an experience of learning which is derived from a school based approach where the curriculum controlled what was learnt and the focus was mainly on an ability to pass formal and competitive tests/examinations."* The sessions outlined in this pack are intended to help tutors and students to examine where they are coming from in terms of their previous learning experiences and then to explore ways of further developing their identity as learners. By becoming more familiar with how we learn, explains the author, and by increasing our understanding of what helps or hinders our own learning processes, we will be better able to learn more easily and more effectively.

The pack is divided into three main sections, with each section containing a variety of sample sessions developed from pilot work carried out over the last three years. The section on *Returning to Learning* looks at experiences and expectations of learning, barriers to learning and building confidence. The sessions in *Understand How We Learn* explore the different ingredients involved in learning, including sensory processes, learning styles, different intelligences, memory and motivation. Topics in the final section, *Effective Learning Practice*, focus on learning management skills such as planning lessons, organising materials, choosing the right tools for learning, and developing strategies for assessment and reviews.

The aims of each session are introduced in a brief explanatory note at the beginning of the session and the activities that follow are clearly presented. A variety of methodologies are suggested to stimulate interest and encourage group involvement, e.g. brainstorming, case studies, games, visualisation and ranking exercises.

Photocopiable handouts and worksheets included in the pack have been carefully designed with useful diagrams, a thoughtful print size and font and good spacing to avoid too much print on each page.

The author emphasises that the sessions are intended for groupwork between students and tutors to *"allow for joint exploration on an equal basis of the processes involved in learning and the development of a shared understanding of the many different approaches to learning"*. However, the recommended number of 20 participants seems a bit high at least for some of the smaller rural schemes. It would seem that the sessions could work with smaller groups and that there is also potential for developing some of the sessions for us in a 1-1 context between tutor and student.

Not all of the material included in this pack is new. Some topics, such as *Exploring Barriers to Learning* (p.7) and *Building Confidence* (p.11) are standard issues for discussion in initial training courses, while others, e.g. *Different Intelligences* (p.35) and *New Technology, Computers and Learning* (p.93), have been developed with this publication in mind. It is, nevertheless, refreshing to see all these sessions compiled into a resource pack which makes a clear statement about the importance of addressing the shift from curriculum-centred to student-centred learning approaches, something which despite being commonly assumed in adult education is perhaps not always so easily practised.

Overall, the sample sessions provided in this resource pack are intended to offer only a 'taste' of the ideas that can be explored within each topic and the author recommends that schemes consider accessing further specialist inputs on some of the topics. The author also notes that, while the sessions are organised in a particular sequence, they are flexible enough to be used in pick n' mix fashion depending on the needs and interests of a particular group. At the end of the publication, a helpful list of additional resources and further reading is included for schemes interested in follow up work.

I expect that this resource pack will be welcomed by literacy organisers, tutors and students. Moreover, while *Learning in Practice* may have been developed with the needs and interests of literacy workers and students in mind, it is flexible enough to be useful for any adult learning group interested in reflecting on the learning process. Trainers involved in VTOS classes, in-service training workshops for general adult education tutors and family learning courses will find that this resource pack provided opportunities to explore a variety of "learning ingredients" which, when combined in a way to

suit individual needs and styles, will equip people with the confidence and skills to approach further learning opportunities within and beyond adult literacy.

Maura Greene,
Adult Literacy Co-ordinator, Ennis, Co. Clare

Second Chance
Patricia Scanlan, Dublin Poolbeg Press 1996, pp.62, Price £3.99

Patricia Scanlan has become a household name in Ireland over the past few years as a best-selling novelist. But before this period in her life, she worked in the library in Finglas, Dublin, where she became keenly aware, at that time, of the lack of materials suitable for adult reading, in comparison with children.

Even after she had become famous with her best selling novels and had given up her library job, she still nourished a desire to write a book suitable for use in literacy schemes. So, in consultation with Frances and other members of the scheme, the book *Second Chance* was launched in Finglas last autumn and has proved a "best seller" of another type, that is, among adults in Basic English classes. The story line and characters are easy to identify with, are adult-based and yet the choice of language suits the target group as can be seen from the following reviews.

A review by Betty
Basic English class, Finglas Adult Reading & Writing Scheme.

From the very first sentence on page one of *Second Chance,* the author has a us interested in the story.

Tony O'Neill says, *"I'm going",* as he slams the door. His wife, Jean, replies, *"And don't bother to come back".* Patricia Scanlan, the writer of this short story, immediately has you wanting to read on and find out why are this young couple arguing.

Tony loses his job and gets very depressed. The first morning he has to sign on, he feels worthless. Having to give up their flat and move in with the mother-law doesn't help. He tells of writing over 50 letters looking for employment and the endless waiting for the postman to bring replies. Many unemployed people will understand Tony's feelings.

It is interesting to read about places you know, such as the FÁS. Centre and Post Office in Finglas Village, the Apartments at Cross Guns Bridge, Phibsboro, also O'Connell Street and Moore Street in Dublin. A very good description is given on all the things that are available in public libraries.

All the characters become very real to us. With Sara we visit Roches Stores and Marks & Spencers. We stop for coffee at Cleary's tea-rooms, where you can enjoy the treat of being served by a waitress. We read about 'Dave', who had been the pride of his family back home in Sligo, but through pressures at work began taking drugs. He falls so low, he mugs an old lady.

The book is very much an account of true-to-life happenings in to-day's world; unemployment, drugs and muggings but everything comes right in the end with the story ending happily.

The short sentences and size of print make the book suitable for those who don't read on a regular basis. The fact that it has been written by an Irish author about Irish people makes it different to the other reading books in our resource room. I enjoy reading this book and would consider it a welcome addition to all adult reading and writing schemes.

A review by Billy
Finglas Adult Reading & Writing Scheme.

The toil of a student is long and hard
And some books are boring too
Is there nobody out there with inspiration
A spark, a glimmer, a hint of a tale
Something to enliven the mind

At last a light does shine
A book with an interesting tale
Oh I must be dreaming
This book I have just read
Oh characters I feel I know quite well,
Places and names are familiar to me
It has its despair, its pain and grief
It has its dreams, it has its hopes
With a happy ending too

Any student would agree
Oh what a joy to read
A tale of familiar places
And familiar type people
Now Patricia, who wrote this book for us
Really doesn't know
Of the thousands of people she will help
With a book called 'Second Chance'
A reader's confidence will grow

"This world of women's education is an 'unofficial' place, on the margins of the margin, one where women are playing an invaluable role in combating educational and social disadvantage by providing learning opportunities that are accessible, relevant and empowering."

This edition of the adult Learner takes as its theme Adult Education and Social Exclusion. The topic is examined from the twin perspectives of the theoretical and the practical.

"Being marginalised in a community is to be excluded from the communication routeways or to be included in them only on terms more or less dictated by the dominant gatekeepers - be they local or agency based".

Education, it is claimed, is an important weapon in the fight against social exclusion. What is the evidence to substantiate this claim? In what ways can adult education make an effective contribution?

"Ireland is a country with a very poor record on access to third level education for marginalised groups, including school leavers and mature students. In the age of information technology and mass third level education, this cycle of educational disadvantage must be broken."

This edition also includes examples and critical appraisals of education and development programmes being run in Africa, where exclusion is experienced both internally and in the wider international context.

"The Arusha Experience reminded us that adult education should be an inclusive opportunity for all to participate in recurrent learning activities that challenge us to think, to respond to questions about the way we see our lives and to be encouraged to act constructively."

AONTAS

ADULT
EDUCATION
ORGANISERS
ASSOCIATION