

Overview

Adult Learners' Forum of Ireland (ALFI)

Following on from the first meeting of the ALFI in 2010, AONTAS is bringing learners together to see how we can build a grassroots learner voice that will support a sustainable national voice. At present there is a highly successful learners' forum in Limerick City and we have been working with them to develop a toolkit to support and encourage other learners to develop their own local structures.

What will this meeting aim to do?

1. Update learners on the work of AONTAS since the last meeting
2. Introduce the idea of local learner forums
3. Give learners the information they need to start setting up their own local learner forum and launch the toolkit "Hearing Adult Learners' Voices"
4. Inspire learners that local forums can and do work
5. See the developments in Ireland as part of a Global Vision for Learners' Voices
6. See the value of participation and the strength of a collective voice in Irish society
7. Hear the views of learners in relation to local learner forums
8. Set out what needs to happen, from a learner perspective and from the perspective of AONTAS, for learner forums to be the Voice of Adult Learners

Who is this meeting for?

Any adult learner who is interested in seeing how their voice can be heard and are looking for ways to organize locally to build a local learner voice. Learners from all backgrounds, involved in any form of adult and community education are welcome to attend (but spaces are limited).

Why attend?

- Hear about adult learners' forums
- Learn about what a forum does from the Limerick City Adult Learners' Forum
- Meet and learn from other learners from across the country
- Learn from an international expert on Learner Forums and one of the founders of the Global Learners Network, John Gates
- Learn about the AONTAS toolkit to develop Learner Forums
- Hear about participation in society from John Lonergan, former Governor of Mountjoy Prison

Agenda

9.30 Registration

10.00 Introduction

- Una Buckley, Learner Ambassador, Global Learners' Network.
- Berni Brady, Director, AONTAS

10.15 How Learner Forums come together: the AONTAS toolkit - Damien Walshe, AONTAS

10.25 Why Learner Forums? What a local learner forum does and how it works: Limerick City Adult Learners' Forum

10.35 Keynote Speaker: John Gates, Adult Learner from the Welsh Adult Learners' Forum and Global Learner Network

11.05 Coffee break

11:25 Discussion session

Responding to the inputs and discussing the concept of Local Learner Forums and what needs to happen next to develop learner voices across the country

12:45 Feedback

1:35 Keynote Address: Active Participation and the learner voice: John Lonergan

2.00 Close and Lunch

Date: October 26th 2011
Venue: Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8
Time: 9:30 - 2pm

Speaker Biographies



John Lonergan

John Lonergan spent 42 years in the Irish Prison Service and 24 as the Governor of Mountjoy Prison. Since his retirement from his position in 2010, John has published a best-selling account of his life, "The Governor" and as a highly regarded public speaker he has spoken widely across the country on social justice issues, making a difference to others and the importance of community.



John Gates

John left school with no qualifications and went to work in the local coal mine as a trainee collier but returned to education, firstly literacy classes, which led to a degree through the Open University. After being made redundant John continued his education and has spoken across the world about adult education and Learner voices. John has been involved in the Global Adult Learners' Network since its beginning and the development of an International Learners' Charter and has spent the last 2 years supporting the development of Local Learner Forums in Wales.



Una Buckley

Una is an adult learner having undertaken an NUI Certificate in Adult and Community Education and literacy training. As a strong advocate for the right of adult learners to quality education she served as a member of the AONTAS Executive Committee and learner network steering group. At international level she represented Irish learners at the International Adult Learners' Conference in Scotland (2008) and at CONFINTEA VI (2009) and spoke at the 2010 ALFI meeting.

Limerick City Adult Learners' Forum

Limerick City Adult Learners' Forum is Learner-led and started in 2005. Since then it has grown to 10 members representing adult learners across Limerick City. Their role is to be a voice for learners and represents Learners on Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN). They organise events and publish a newsletter.

For more information about this event contact Dympna Larkin at 01 4068220 or dlarkin@aontas.com. To register for this event [click here](#) to fill out the booking form.