

Review

Our year and our work, 2012

Policy Our work aims to influence national policy by lobbying for appropriate actions to improve literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland. **Practice** Together with our education partners, we develop new approaches that improve teaching and learning practices in adult basic education. **Access** We work to make it easier for people with literacy difficulties to take up learning opportunities and use public services.

Summary Annual Report 2012



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



Literacy and numeracy difficulties prevent people from carrying out everyday activities that many of us take for granted. In 2012, we worked with a range of organisations to make them more accessible through using plain English.

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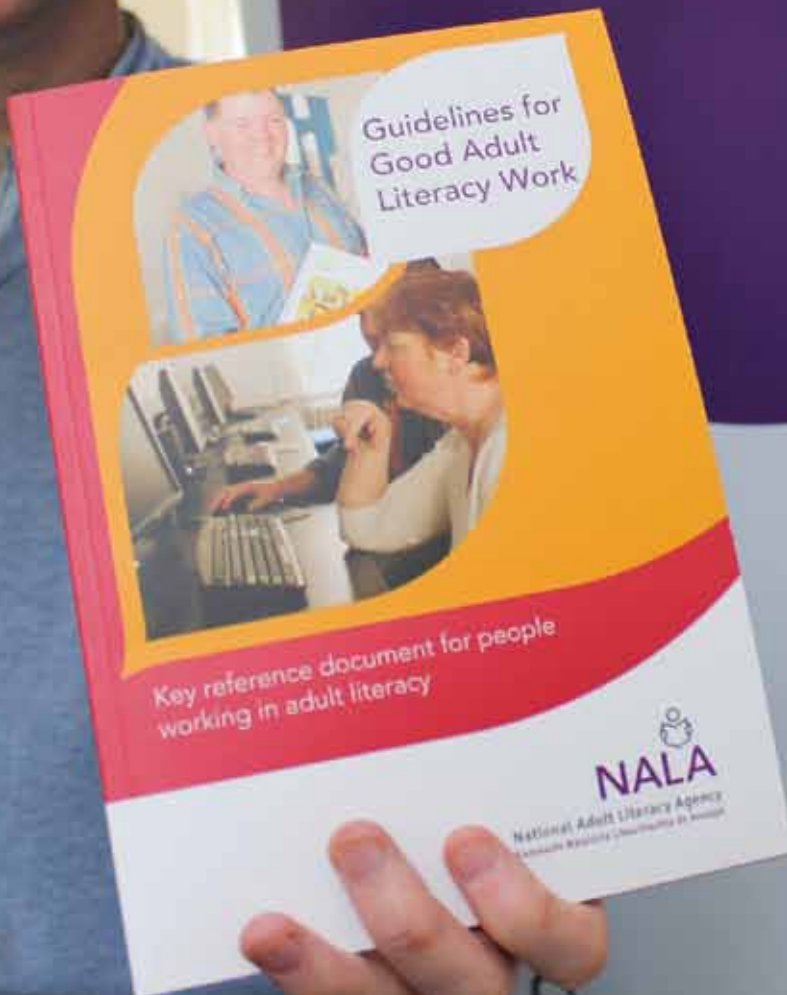
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Looking ahead
to 2013

Fergus Dolan, Literacies Development Worker, NALA holds a copy of our new Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work. The Guidelines provide the rationale as to why we do literacy work the way we do, particularly in the new further education and training environment.

www.nala.ie



About NALA

NALA stands for the National Adult Literacy Agency. We are an independent charity committed to making sure that people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can:

- play a full part in society; and
- access learning opportunities that meet their needs.

According to the latest international survey, one in four – about half a million Irish adults – have problems with reading.

Since volunteers set NALA up in 1980, we have been a leading campaigning and lobbying group on adult literacy issues. We have been involved with:

- developing teaching materials;
- distance education services;
- policy-making;
- research;
- campaigns to raise awareness about adult literacy difficulties in Ireland; and
- tutor training.

Many people and organisations have given a lot to adult literacy work in Ireland. For our part, we have put literacy on the political agenda and secured funding to provide adult literacy services. Currently, 55,000 adults are attending adult literacy and numeracy courses run by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) across Ireland.

About this review

This review tells you about the work we did during 2012. The sections follow the same order as our Strategic Plan 2011-2013. You can read and download information about our strategic plan, accounts and publications at www.nala.ie. On page 52 some acronyms in this review are explained.

A message from our chairperson



Dear NALA members,

Once again we navigate the pages of the Annual Review with a mixture of pride and satisfaction at the nature and volume of work undertaken by NALA during the course of the past year. This was achieved despite a decrease in the budget allocated for 2012 and was brought about by the determination of the

staff who used their formidable expertise to bring an impressive workload to fruition in line with the strategic plan.

As chairperson, it has been my responsibility and my privilege, along with my colleagues on the Executive Committee to ensure that the mission, ethos and values, on which the organisation has been founded, are safeguarded. Towards that end my priority has been to concentrate on bringing the organisation into compliance with the Code of Governance for Voluntary Organisations. I am delighted to inform you that due to the commitment, dedication and hard work of the Executive Committee, underpinned by unwavering staff support, we can now proudly declare ourselves to be among an elite group of organisations which are compliant with the Code. This is a progressive and welcome development. It will further enhance our status and credibility with funders, sponsors and stakeholders and maintain our reputation into the future.

Compliance with this Code is crucially important given the intense competition for a diminishing pool of public resources. Adopting the Code means that members and funders can be reassured that the organisation is being run in an effective, ethical and financially sound manner where good governance is a priority and where roles, duties and responsibilities of all Executive members are clear.

Among the many controls verified or put in place has been that of compiling a Risk Register. This register identifies and analyses potential risks to the organisation from a governance, operational, financial and environmental perspective. Further controls are then put in place to mitigate that risk. This is an impressive body of work carried out by the Audit sub-group and the register will be regularly reviewed by the Executive.

The Student sub-committee under the chairmanship of Michael Power has had an active and productive year. It continues to feed an account of its activities and ideas into the Executive while remaining a rich source for consultation. One of the highlights of the year was Olive Phelan's (an adult literacy student) presentation to the Oireachtas Committee on the need for learner representation on the soon to be established Education and Training Boards. Choosing Olive was an inspired choice and strategy which may yet copper-fasten our efforts for an adult learner voice on the Boards.

In order to advance our campaign for growing the membership of the organisation and so expand our lobbying power a plan has been developed and put in place, elements of which will be put to our members at the AGM for ratification.

Members can rest easy in the knowledge that during my tenure as chairperson, with the support of a skilled executive and a talented and expert staff, I will strive to ensure that you and all our stakeholders continue to be served by an organisation which is progressive, innovative, true to its values and a source of pride to us all.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continued valuable and valued support of NALA, which works tirelessly on your behalf to counteract social inequality and enhance the lives of those for whom literacy acquisition is a stepping stone to improved life prospects.



Gretta Vaughan

Chairperson

National Adult Literacy Agency

An overview from our director



As part of an ambitious and radical reform of the education and training sector, the Government published draft legislation on the setting up of Education and Training Boards (new local education authorities) and SOLAS (the new further education and training authority) in 2012. The debate around these documents and related consultative forum provided NALA with the main opportunity during the year for the advancement of adult literacy

priorities. Politicians and policy makers were lobbied for changes in the legislation that would increase the availability of quality learning opportunities for people wishing to develop their literacy and numeracy. To strengthen our case, we convinced key policy influencers representing employers, trade unions and the community and voluntary sector to incorporate adult literacy into their macro level policy positions. Our key messages were underpinned by new research we commissioned from the ESRI into the impact of literacy for both the employed and unemployed.

Working alongside the IVEA, the Agency continued to work for the adoption of an integrated approach to literacy in all further education and training. As well as adopting the policy to underpin this approach, work was also progressed on how to bring this VEC sector development into consideration with the wider reform agenda noted above. Development work with Community Training Centres funded by FÁS also continued apace.

NALA put a particular emphasis on numeracy during the year, carrying out an internal audit of our offering in this area and devising an action plan which will see numeracy featuring equally alongside literacy in all our work going forward. Research into the training needs of numeracy tutors was undertaken in collaboration with Institute of Technology Tallaght.

Other research included a study of teaching practices in six adult literacy and numeracy centres around the country with Waterford Institute of Technology. We also published a comparative survey of adult literacy learners in three different learning settings in December. Our research findings were brought out to audiences who gathered for professional development events we organised throughout the year.

Family literacy was advanced with the creation of www.helpmykidlearn.ie which supports parents to get involved in their child's learning from birth. This work involved the development of new relationships with around 40 stakeholders concerned with the literacy and numeracy development of children, creating a stronger relationship between adult and child literacy.

We continued to expand the accredited learning offerings on www.writeon.ie and substantially grew the number of people using the system. A second series of *A story with me in it* was broadcast on RTÉ ONE at 7.30pm and has concluded our illustration of adult literacy through the writing of personal stories.

Awareness Week, International Literacy Day and a new An Post advertising campaign were just some of the promotional activity during the year which aimed to raise awareness of adult literacy as well as encourage more people to take up learning opportunities. Our Freephone service was kept busy throughout the year dealing with thousands of calls and texts, with similarly busy activity on the revamped www.nala.ie. Our Student Committee was particularly active in recruitment at the National Ploughing Championships as well as leading on student development in an EU funded project.

On the health literacy front we continued our partnership with MSD on the Crystal Clear Awards which rewards those who are striving to communicate more clearly with patients and assist them develop their health literacy competence. With the results from Ireland's first health literacy survey, NALA with partners in the health sector made submissions to the Department of Health about the need to recognise and strengthen health literacy in Ireland.

In our efforts to make it easier for people with literacy difficulties to use services aimed at the public, we continued to support a range of public and private sector organisations through our plain English service. In addition, with funding from the Wheel, we provided training to a range of community and voluntary organisations on how to build plain English into all their communications.

Throughout the year we worked hard and smart to achieve our objectives, cooperating with a wide array of individuals and groups from the local to the international, both old and new. We used research evidence and persuasion to advance the cause of adult literacy as set out in our strategic plan. We were supported to do this by funding from the Further Education section of the Department of Education and Skills to whom we are most grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inez Bailey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Inez Bailey

Director

National Adult Literacy Agency

Our Vision

We want Ireland to be a place where adult literacy is a valued right and where everyone can develop their literacy and take part more fully in society.

Our key achievements

Policy

Meeting politicians

We had over 20 meetings with politicians and key stakeholders to influence policy in the further education and training sector.

Integrating literacy

We worked with VECs and the IVEA to integrate literacy in further education and training programmes.

Representing students

We campaigned to ensure that adult literacy students get representation on the new Education and Training Boards.

Practice

Providing training

We organised workshops for 81 education and training practitioners on integrating literacy and numeracy in their work.

Researching best practice

We carried out research to help inform and improve adult literacy and numeracy teaching and learning.

Delivering accreditation and online learning

We carried out three rounds of accreditation, delivering over 4,000 FETAC awards to 1,000 students and increased the numbers using www.writeon.ie by 9,000 people.

Access

Reducing stigma

We reduced the stigma of having a literacy difficulty through our TV series which was watched by 164,000 people every night.

Raising awareness

We raised awareness of adult literacy services by talking to the media and recorded over 170 mentions of literacy in national and regional newspapers.

Supporting people

We responded to over 5,500 calls and 1,000 texts, answering questions and supporting people who were considering returning to adult basic education.

Working with stakeholders

We worked with stakeholders and special interest groups to increase the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices.

Researching literacy and labour

We commissioned new research to support people with literacy and or numeracy difficulties who are unemployed or in the workplace.

Supporting tutors and students

We organised five professional development events for 480 literacy and numeracy tutors and held development days in Dublin and Waterford for 160 students.

Resourcing parents

We developed a new website for parents to help them support their children's literacy and numeracy development.

Promoting plain English

We helped 50 organisations to make their written information easier to understand through our plain English service and we also made submissions to ensure health literacy is taken into account when health policy is being developed.

Providing training

We delivered 22 plain English training events to 300 participants in public and private organisations and companies and to over 120 staff and volunteers from the community and voluntary sector.

Policy

Raising literacy and numeracy levels is vital for Ireland's economic and social development. Our work aims to influence national policy by lobbying for appropriate actions to improve literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland.

In 2011, we:

- had over 20 meetings with politicians and key stakeholders to influence policy in the further education and training sector;
- worked with VECs and the IVEA to integrate literacy in further education and training programmes;
- campaigned for an amendment to the legislation that will set up Education and Training Boards to ensure that adult students are represented;
- worked with stakeholders to increase the number of organisations advocating on adult literacy policy;
- worked with special interest groups to increase the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices;
- commissioned new research to support people with literacy and or numeracy difficulties who are unemployed or in the workplace; and
- met AONTAS, the national adult learning organisation, to share information and work together on specific areas.

“ Raising literacy levels is vital for Ireland’s economic and social development. ”



Dr Marie Griffin, CEO County Dublin VEC and Minister Ciarán Cannon at the launch of our second ESRI report 'Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties in the Irish Workplace'.

Influencing policy in further education and training

We believe a National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy will help to effectively tackle low literacy and numeracy levels in Irish society. In 2012, we continued to gain support for the development of this strategy. On January 25, The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, TD, responded to the Joint Committee on Jobs, Social Protection and Education's recommendation that an adult literacy and numeracy strategy "should be developed and published as a matter of top priority." The Minister advised that the development of a strategy would come under the remit of SOLAS, the new further education and training authority which will be set up in 2013.

In February, we made a strong submission to the Department of Education and Skills as part of the consultation process on SOLAS. We advocated that SOLAS:

- develop a national strategy for literacy and numeracy;
- provide for greater access and more flexible literacy and numeracy provision, including blended learning (blended learning combines different approaches to teaching and learning, for example class based tuition with computer aided learning);
- embed literacy and numeracy learning across all further education and training programmes; and
- increase its understanding of the relevance of adult literacy development to social and economic progress through participation on '*Wider Benefits of Learning*', an advisory group soon to be set up by the Department of Education and Skills.

We will work to ensure that the above priorities are implemented when SOLAS is established.

Throughout the year, NALA discussed adult literacy policy with key stakeholders including the:

- Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, TD;
- Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon, TD;
- FÁS (now SOLAS);
- The Department of Social Protection;
- The Irish Vocational Educational Association (IVEA); and
- The Adult Literacy Organisers' Association (ALOA).

An example of the focus on adult literacy policy was the way the Department of Education and Skills protected the adult literacy budget from a significant cut in the current economic climate. NALA also participated in a review of the Department of Education and Skills funded 'Adult Literacy provision'.

Integrating literacy and numeracy in further education and training

We enhanced our relationship with VECs and the IVEA through regular meetings and working groups, particularly in the area of integrating literacy and numeracy into further education and training. This work aims to support literacy and numeracy development in all VEC programmes at FETAC levels 4-6. We were delighted that the cooperative approach led to the VEC sector adopting a policy paper on integrating literacy across VEC programmes in February. This was due to strong support from Sean Conlon, Padraig Kirk, Anne O'Keefe, Pat O'Mahony and David Tracey (all IVEA representatives on the working group). In November, we also submitted a joint proposal with the IVEA to SOLAS on how to advance a national integrating literacy and numeracy approach in all further education and training.

Supporting student representation

In 2012, we campaigned to amend draft legislation on the new Education and Training Boards (ETBs) so that an adult learner is included on the new board. The ETBs are new local education authorities that will combine VEC and FÁS services in 16 regions, to be established in 2013. We met and received support from all political parties, both in the Dáil and the Seanad, for a dedicated adult learner to sit on the boards. A highlight of the campaign was when Olive Phelan, from our Student Subcommittee, led a NALA presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection. Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD, Vice Chair of this Joint Committee, has tabled an amendment to include an adult learner on the ETBs, and we expect this to be passed in early 2013.

The Mayor for South Dublin, Cathál King, launched a short report outlining the approach and lessons from South Dublin County Council's Literacy Audit with Inez Bailey, Director, NALA during National Adult Literacy Awareness Week.



Working with stakeholders - 'Realising our Potential' Campaign

The aim of this campaign is to highlight what adult literacy means for wider social and economic development in Ireland. It also aims to persuade policy makers to invest adequate resources in literacy development.

In 2012, our work on this campaign set out to:

- increase the number of organisations that advocate on adult literacy policy, and
- support organisations to become more accessible to people with literacy difficulties.

Increasing the number of organisations that advocate for adult literacy

Throughout the year we worked with many organisations to encourage and support them to take account of adult literacy issues in their policy submissions and publications. They included:

- The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC);
- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU);
- Social Justice Ireland (SJI);
- European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN); and
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP).

We can see the impact of this work in the following:

- The call for greater resourcing of adult literacy in the 2012 - 2013 pre-budget submissions by a number of organisations including SJI and TASC. TASC is an independent think-tank dedicated to addressing Ireland's high level of economic inequality and ensuring equality in public policy.
- The literacy focus in the EAPN Ireland's contribution to a Europe wide report on National Reform Programmes (July). This report welcomed the current reforms in Further Education and Training, but emphasised the importance of ensuring 'that sufficient programmes and supports are put in place to ensure all adults can have literacy and numeracy levels which enable them to participate fully in society and access the labour market'.

- The EAPN Ireland and Europe 2020 Working Group Submission to the Troika Quarterly Review in July called for specific attention to those with literacy difficulties in the new Irish activation policy.
- Stakeholders such as IBEC in its SOLAS submission stressed that 'Raising the literacy and numeracy skills of Irish adults should be an urgent priority for employers, Government and society given that economic recovery in part depends on capitalising on the full potential of the people living and working in Ireland'.
- Labour Youth, supported by NALA, presented a petition calling on the government to develop a plain English policy. This was presented to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD, in June.

Increasing the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices

We continued work, begun in 2011, with organisations such as IBEC and ICTU to progress their commitment to becoming more literacy-friendly. This means organisations take account of literacy in all aspects of their work including their policies, communications and staff development and training. In particular, we worked with ICTU to develop an organisational policy and a set of guidelines to support the implementation of the policy.

We also developed new partnerships to demonstrate a five step approach to becoming literacy-friendly, using NALA's resource 'Right from the Start'. We worked with South Dublin County Council (SDCC) and STEP (a service working with people with intellectual disabilities and part of the St John of Gods Organisation). The work included completing literacy audits and literacy action plans. In the audits we reviewed policies, communications and staff development and training. This identified what the organisations were already doing to support people who have literacy difficulties and what could be done to improve this. The action plans set out specific steps which the organisations will take to become more literacy-friendly.

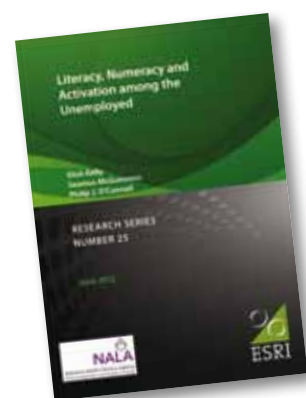
This work resulted in:

- ICTU adopting a literacy policy and developing guidelines to member unions; and
- SDCC, the first local authority and STEP, the first disability organisation adopting a 'literacy-friendly' approach. We will promote the approach to other local authorities and disability organisations in 2013.

Supporting policy development through research

NALA believes evidenced based research is vital to the development of literacy policy and practice in Ireland. This year we commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to carry out two studies to help us learn more about people with literacy and numeracy difficulties. This work arose from meetings with the ESRI which took place in 2011.

Our first report, 'Literacy, Numeracy and Activation among the Unemployed' looked at access, participation and the impact of training for people who are unemployed and who reported that they had literacy and or numeracy difficulties. It put a spotlight on literacy and numeracy as an issue in the context of unemployment and confirmed our view that literacy and numeracy needs are not taken into consideration in a systematic way.



We made several recommendations based on the findings of the study.

These include the need to:

- adopt a clear policy approach to addressing the needs of unemployed people with literacy and numeracy difficulties in the context of new Further Education and Training (FET) structures and systems;
- adopt a policy to ensure scarce resources for training interventions follow those who are most likely to benefit, including people with literacy and numeracy difficulties and with low educational attainment; and
- ensure the system of eligibility is simplified by allowing anyone who is identified (through profiling) as having literacy and numeracy difficulties and low education attainment, immediate access to an education and training programme.

The report was launched by the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, in June.

Our second report, 'Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties in the Irish Workplace: Impact on Earnings and Training Expenditures,' focused on literacy and numeracy difficulties amongst people who are employed. It was launched by the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon TD, in September.

We made several **recommendations** based on the findings of the study.

- The forthcoming SOLAS Implementation Plan should outline how the literacy and numeracy needs of employees and their employers will be addressed.
- The Workplace Basic Education Fund should be maintained and developed as the key response to raising literacy and numeracy levels in the workplace, taking account of the greater vulnerability of certain groups and employment sectors.
- A dedicated awareness raising campaign involving all key stakeholders should be rolled out. This should be aimed at employees and employers and highlight the prevalence of literacy and numeracy issues in the workplace in an attempt to reduce the stigma attached to this area. This would also highlight the options and benefits of returning to learning.

In 2013, we will continue to use the findings in these reports to advocate for policies and practices which meet the needs of people with literacy and or numeracy difficulties who are unemployed or in the workplace.

Collaborating with AONTAS

During the year we met four times with AONTAS, the national adult learning organisation. During these meetings we shared information and worked on:

- SOLAS submissions;
- a joint learner event with the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon TD and representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, FÁS and the VEC as part of the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival;
- inputs into learner events in October and November; and
- a Memorandum of Understanding .

We agreed to work on the theme of 'Learner voice' in 2013.



Michael Power, NALA Student subcommittee chairperson speaks to Paul O'Toole, Director General of FÁS at the AONTAS NALA Lobby for Learning roundtable event in February.



10 students speak to Fiona Hartley, CEO of Wicklow VEC at AONTAS NALA Lobby for Learning roundtable event in February.

Practice

Good practice in adult literacy work starts with the needs and interests of individuals. Together with our education partners, we work to develop new approaches that improve teaching and learning practices in adult literacy education. In 2012, we:

- contributed to the plans of VECs and FÁS to integrate literacy with further education and training programmes;
- carried out research to help inform and improve adult literacy teaching and learning;
- carried out three rounds of accreditation, delivering over 4,000 FETAC awards to 1,000 students;
- increased the number of people using our online learning website www.writeon.ie by 9,000;
- organised five professional development events for 480 literacy tutors and organisers;
- revised 'Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work' (last reviewed in 2005);
- organised student development days in Dublin and Waterford – 160 students attended;
- had 47 successful applications for our student development fund, with over 1,200 students benefitting from it, and
- developed a new website for parents to help them support their children's literacy and numeracy development.

In the TV series, writer Kate Kerrigan helped Paula Lynch Ahearn from Tallaght write about the most important people in Paula's life, her mother and children, and how they inspire her.



Integrating literacy with further education and training

The aim of this work is to ensure that no-one is excluded from education and training programmes because they have literacy or numeracy difficulties and that everyone can take part in education and training that suits their interests, talents and goals. In our 'integrating literacy' work, we work to support education providers to build literacy development into their courses at every level.

FÁS

In 2012, we assisted FÁS to implement a strategy for integrating literacy, numeracy and vocational learning in Community Training Centres (CTCs). FÁS works in partnership with 38 CTCs to provide community based training for early school leavers as part of the national Youthreach programme. Community Training Centres are independent, community-based organisations which provide training and related supports for early school leavers.

At FÁS's request, we worked with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) to organise and support accredited training for CTC instructors and managers. Two groups undertook the NALA-NUIM Course in Integrating Literacy (Level 7), with a total of 33 participants from 16 CTCs. The participants included instructors and tutors in a range of subjects, centre managers, administration staff and a FÁS Head Office project manager. We worked closely with the NUIM tutors to support course delivery and evaluation. We liaised with the participants and their centres to provide assistance as required. The participants are now carrying out research projects in their centres and will complete the course in March 2013.

We also developed teaching and learning resources in cooperation with the National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Learning. These will be used in FÁS Functional Mathematics modules at Levels 3 and 4.

IVEA partnership

We continued our work with the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) to develop and promote a policy and strategy for integrating literacy. As part of this, the IVEA-NALA Integrating Literacy Working Group agreed a discussion document on Integrating Literacy, summary guidelines for centre management and an updated edition of the NALA Guidelines on Integrating Literacy.

Guidelines

The NALA document *Integrating Literacy: Guidelines for further education and training centres* was first published in 2002. In 2012, we updated it in the light of recent research and developments in further education and training. These guidelines aim to help education providers at all levels to build literacy support and development into their courses. We are grateful to our IVEA colleagues, on the joint Working Group on Integrating Literacy, for their cooperation in developing the draft guidelines and to the practitioners and researchers who read and gave feedback on the draft. The new edition will be published in early 2013.

NALA training

Throughout 2012, 81 education and training practitioners took part in our seminars and workshops on integrating literacy and numeracy with other teaching and learning. The participants were vocational training instructors, teachers on Post Leaving Certificate courses, international aid agency workers, and adult literacy tutors.

Fifty-seven county council staff also took part in our literacy awareness training events.

At each event, participants gave examples of 'small changes to practice' that they intend to make following the training.

Researching ways to improve teaching and learning

The aim of our research is to increase access to adult basic education and to ensure the highest quality teaching and learning for adult literacy students. In 2012, we worked in partnership with a number of organisations to help us inform new approaches to adult literacy practice. These included the Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT), Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and Limerick ESOL Partnership.

Report comparing data from different adult learning settings

This report compares, for the first time, data on adult learners across three adult learning settings. These settings were:

- NALA's distance learning service (2010);
- the VEC Adult Literacy Service through data from the Department of Education and Skills Adult Literacy Returns (2010); and
- An Cosán Adult Learning Centre (2010).

An examination of the data from these settings allowed us to look at participation in adult literacy learning and make a comparison in the profile of the students. For example, the examination highlights the predominance of women in community education settings and men in NALA's distance learning service. It also shows how younger (under 24) and older (over 65) adults are under-represented in these adult learning settings. This information will help inform policy to improve access and participation in adult literacy learning.

Survey with adult numeracy tutors: a joint initiative between NALA and ITT

This research aims to identify the training needs and requirements of tutors providing numeracy tuition to adult learners nationally. The report presents findings on numeracy tutors in terms of:

- who they are;
- experience in teaching mathematics and or numeracy;
- teaching practices;
- access to training;
- attitude to mathematics and numeracy; and
- views on FETAC.

Based on the findings from this research we will produce guidelines on the training needs of numeracy tutors in 2013.

NALA WIT research project

This report presents the findings from a study of current teaching practices in six adult literacy and numeracy centres around the country. The purpose of the research was to present case studies from these centres, detailing teaching and learning practice and examining the delivery in traditional and blended learning contexts. This information will be of interest to tutors working in the area of adult learning.

Evaluation project with Limerick ESOL Partnership

The focus of this evaluation was the use of NALA's online learning resource www.writeon.ie as part of the Limerick English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) Partnership 2012 blended learning project. The purpose of this evaluation is to document how a blended learning approach meets the needs of ESOL learners. Blended learning combines different approaches to teaching and learning, for example, class based tuition with computer aided learning. The aim is to improve teaching practice and develop guidelines and tips for organisations considering adopting blended learning approaches to tuition of ESOL and literacy learners.

Spreading the word

In 2012 we shared our research findings with other organisations through presentations at conferences, delivering lectures on adult literacy issues to DCU students and publishing our research in international journals. We have also kept our members and stakeholders informed of our research through our website, through quarterly research bulletins in NALA's e-zines and articles in Literacy Matters.

Distance Learning

NALA's Distance Learning Service is concerned with developing and delivering flexible learning options by using technology to offer accredited and non accredited learning options to adults.

Supporting learners

As a result of NALA's broadcast media work and other publicity activities, our team of 16 Distance Learning Support Workers and Tutors supported 609 distance learners over the telephone and online during 2012.

www.writeon.ie goes from strength to strength

2012 saw significant developments on our website www.writeon.ie - the only online learning resource in Ireland to offer accreditation and recognition of prior learning at FETAC Level 2 and 3.

During the year, we changed the site to reflect feedback we gathered from learners in usability testing towards the end of 2011. The site now has new videos, real audio in places and the login procedure has changed. It also features a new character called Tom who introduces the non-accredited Level 4 content. We added two new Level 3 awards in Self Advocacy and Event Participation.

By the end of the year, there were 26,768 learning accounts on the site, an increase of almost 9,000 since 2011. During 2012, 14,183 different people visited the site almost 56,000 times, spending an average of 22 minutes per visit.

Three rounds of accreditation

We carried out three rounds of FETAC accreditation during 2012, delivering 3,398 Level 2 minor awards and 962 Level 3 minor awards to almost 1,000 learners. These learners were a combination of learners working on www.writeon.ie independently and some working with our Distance Learning Tutors. However, the majority of learners seeking accreditation were also studying in local literacy centres as well, reflecting a very significant increase in the numbers of adult literacy learners studying in blended learning contexts.

More Adult Literacy Centres using www.writeon.ie for accreditation

To date, 180 different learning centres have used www.writeon.ie for accreditation. As this number has grown significantly during 2012, we will be introducing a Centre Registration process in early 2013. Centres wishing to use [writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) for accreditation from 2013 onwards will be required to formally register and attend a mandatory free regional training session.

More than 460 adults attend NALA adult literacy events

In 2012, we held five innovative events for adult literacy tutors and organisers and numeracy, ESOL and family learning tutors. The aim of each event was to highlight new initiatives and best practice in adult literacy work.

These included a:

- National forum for adult literacy tutors;
- National forum for adult literacy organisers;
- Numeracy conference;
- ESOL conference; and
- Family literacy conference.

National forum for adult literacy tutors

The title of the 2012 National Forum for Adult Literacy Tutors was 'Keeping adult literacy students actively involved in the learning process'. One hundred and twenty tutors attended. The highlight of the event for many tutors was the presentation from Olive Phelan, a student with An Cosán in Dublin, on how she works on her learning needs and goals with her tutor.

In a follow-up survey, 85% of tutors who responded to our survey stated that they learned something new at the event and 74% reported that the forum has inspired changes to their work practice.

Pat Rabbitte, TD Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Avril Bailey from An Cosán (pictured behind) spoke on the importance of literacy, communications and community at an event hosted by An Cosán in Tallaght, during National Adult Literacy Awareness Week.



National forum for adult literacy organisers

The title of the 2012 Adult Literacy Organisers' (ALOs) Forum was 'A vision of adult literacy and basic core skills provision under the new Education and Training Board structures'. The theme and programme were selected and developed by a team of ALOs and NALA staff. Sixty-five ALOs attended. ALOs and NALA had worked on the programme and a new format. ALOs facilitated workshops and made presentations on various aspects of the theme. They also published a document, 'Adult literacy and basic skills in a changing sector: 7 priorities to consider'. This publication sets out priorities for the new Education and Training Boards to consider.

In a follow-up survey, 96% of ALOs who responded to our survey stated that they learned something new at the event and 58% reported that the forum has inspired changes to their work practice.

Numeracy conference

The title of the NALA Numeracy 2012 conference was 'Building tutor confidence in teaching mathematics in adult basic education'. This event was jointly hosted by NALA and The Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT). The conference looked at a wide range of strategies for teaching mathematics. One hundred and ten numeracy tutors attended.

In a follow-up survey, 87% of tutors who responded to our survey stated that they learned something new at the event and 80% reported that the conference has inspired changes to their numeracy work practice.

ESOL Conference

The title of our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) 2012 conference was 'English for employment: Helping ESOL students prepare for work'. The event aimed to highlight the wider issues of ESOL including exploring the potential of the FETAC Employability Skills programme for ESOL learners. Sixty ESOL tutors attended. We will carry out a follow up survey in April 2013 to look at the impact of the event.

Family literacy conference

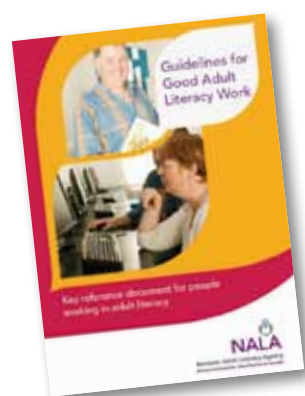
The title of the Family Literacy conference 2012 was 'Encouraging parental involvement in family learning programmes'. The key-note speakers explained how they motivate parents to participate and stay in their family learning programmes with tips, practical examples and strategies. Eighty-five family learning practitioners attended. We will carry out a follow up survey in May 2013 to look at the impact of the conference.

Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work is a key reference for people working in adult literacy and numeracy

In 2012, we revised Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work (2005). It provides a clear description of what adult literacy work is about and where it came from. It asserts the right to develop literacy skills as a fundamental human right.

In this revised edition, we drew on the knowledge and insight of experienced literacy students and practitioners. The Guidelines provide the rationale as to why we do literacy work the way we do, as well as how we put that philosophy into practice, particularly in the new further education and training environment. This provides us with the best method of ensuring a good quality teaching and learning experience and outcome for the student and the tutor.

We encourage adult literacy tutors to follow the Guidelines in all our conferences, publications and online activity.



160 attend our student events

Student events provide us with a valuable way of getting feedback from students about the issues that concern them. We make sure this feedback is reflected in our work and considered by politicians, policy makers and public organisations.

We held two student days in 2012, one in Dublin on 25 February and the other in Waterford on 14 April. They were organised by literacy students from the NALA Student Sub-Committee. In total, 160 students attended both events. There were two standout themes at these events:

1. Literacy learners using technology.
2. Getting literacy learners voices heard in Europe. This theme was chosen as three members of the Student Sub-Committee have been involved in a European project called Eur-Alpha which produced a European manifesto of literacy learner rights. The aim of the European workshops at our student days was to gather feedback from Irish students on the European manifesto and also share what was learned from students in other European countries.

The Student Sub-Committee organised an additional learner event this year in Dublin on 23 October. The aim was to inform students across Ireland about the changes that are happening to the Further Education and Training sector, how this will impact students and how students can influence these changes. Sixty-two students attended. They felt very strongly about the necessity of a learner's voice being heard in relation to these changes. Our Student Sub-Committee Vice Chair, Olive Phelan had the opportunity the next day to present the students opinions' to the Education Committee of the Oireachtas. There, she spoke from the heart about the need for a designated learner seat on the new Education and Training boards – see page 16.

Student development fund

In 2012, we had 47 successful applications for this fund and over 1,200 students benefited from it. The student development events funded through this fund were interesting and varied, ranging from a 'Literacy Olympics' to a week-long 'Celebrating Diversity' event. NALA has received valuable feedback from the students who participated on topics such as how literacy students are using technology and advice to SOLAS on how to work with literacy learners. This feedback will help guide NALA's work over the next year. The student committee would especially like to thank the centres that invited us to be part of their events - it is always inspiring and fun.

Supporting parents help their children learn

The national strategy 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life' (Department of Education and Skills 2011), includes a range of actions to enable parents and communities to support children's learning. As part of this strategy, we were asked to highlight the role that parents and communities can play in improving children's literacy and numeracy using media and online resources.

Following extensive research, we developed a simple website that brings together relevant information for parents called www.helpmykidlearn.ie. The aim of the website is to help parents, who are usually rushed off their feet, with practical ideas they can build into their daily routine, milestones to look out for and useful tips. It highlights the way children learn as part of their everyday lives and especially the positive things that children learn at home from their families.

The website can be used by anyone caring for children aged 0-12 years. Information is organised into age groups and five key areas of learning – talking, playing, reading, writing and counting. It also includes audio and video content to support parents with literacy difficulties and links to others websites providing more detailed information on specific topics.

Since it was launched in September by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, TD, over 10,500 people have visited the website. Most visitors have linked to it from other websites or looked up 'Help My Kid Learn' directly through a search engine. Just over a quarter of visitors made a more general search on the internet that then led them to the

website, for example, 'maths games', 'spellings' and 'literacy for children'. Interestingly, one in seven visitors viewed the website from a mobile phone.

NALA worked with 40 stakeholders to develop this website. These included organisations involved in pre-school, primary education, libraries and literacy. Stakeholders gave ideas and helped spread the word to parents about the website.

In November 2012, the Department of Education and Skills sent a mailing to 3,300 primary schools that included our promotional material for the website. In December 2012, a working group was set up of childcare organisations and NALA. Childcare organisations agreed to disseminate information to parents about the website and work on key messages and actions for the national strategy.

Cian and Sean Dolan, and Ellen Kehoe help launch our new website HelpMyKidLearn.ie at the Department of Education and Skills on the eve of International Literacy Day.



Access

There are many barriers to returning to education for people with literacy difficulties, including the stigma attached to the issue. We organise awareness campaigns to break down these barriers and help make it easier for people to take up learning opportunities.

Literacy difficulties also prevent people from carrying out everyday activities that many of us take for granted. We work with organisations to make them more accessible to people with literacy difficulties through using Plain English.

In 2012, we:

- raised awareness of literacy issues through our TV series which was watched by an average weekly audience of 164,300 people;
- spoke to journalists regularly and recorded over 170 mentions of literacy in national and regional newspapers, journals and magazines;
- answered 5,500 calls on our Freephone, a 17% increase on 2011 and responded to 1,100 texts to our Freetext service, a 700% increase on 2011;
- organised a number of events in Tallaght that highlighted how integrating literacy-friendly policies can positively affect local communities;
- helped 50 organisations to make their written information easier to understand through our plain English service;
- delivered 22 plain English training events to 300 participants in public and private organisations and companies, and to over 120 staff and volunteers from the community and voluntary sector;
- made a number of submissions to ensure health literacy is taken into account when health policy is being developed; and
- continued to offer Plain English training to health professionals in this area.



Noel Phelan from Kilkenny teamed up with writer Kate Thompson to write a powerful letter to his daughters in New Zealand in our second series of *A Story with Me in It*.

Raising awareness

We raise awareness and encourage people to return to learning through TV programmes, national advertising and talking to the media. All our promotional work directs people to ring or text us for information on VEC adult literacy services and our distance education service.

TV Series – A Story with Me in It

A Story with Me in It was our twelfth TV series about adult literacy in Ireland. It was funded under the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Broadcasting Funding Scheme (Sound and Vision II) and produced by Animo TV. It was shown on RTÉ ONE on Monday nights from 30 April to 4 June 2012 and was watched by an average weekly audience of 164,300 people, representing 13% of the viewing public.

Similar to last year, the series teamed up well known Irish writers with six adults who had struggled with literacy throughout their lives. Each programme focused on one person's story and the challenges they faced to write that story down. With the help of the writer, they looked back over their lives and learned how to turn thoughts and emotions into words on a page.

This six part series featured the following pairs of learners and authors:

- Writer Kate Thompson, once of Glenroe and Fair City, teamed up with Noel Phelan from Kilkenny to write a powerful letter to his daughters who are away in New Zealand – something he had never done before.
- Kate Kerrigan and Paula Lynch Ahearn from Tallaght wrote about the most important people in Paula's life, her mother and her children and how they inspire her.
- One of Ireland's leading writers Dermot Healy worked with Paddy Joe Donellan, a farmer in East Galway who tells the story of what it was like to grow up in rural Ireland in the 1950s.
- Colin Bateman and Larry Regan from Trim Co Meath, teamed up to remember a teacher from whom Larry found the inspiration to become the man he is today.
- Belinda McKeon, winner of the Bord Gáis Irish Book of the Year, worked with Kay Mooney to write a story about Kay's life growing up in inner city Dublin.
- Young adult writer Sarah Webb and 18 year old Nicole O'Toole from Lucan together worked on a letter to Nicole's unborn son.

Funding has been secured to develop a new TV series around the theme of Family Learning for broadcast in May 2013 on RTÉ ONE.

In February 2012, NALA's approach to using broadcast media and its Distance Learning Service was ranked one of 16 examples of best practices selected by the European Commission, the only Irish case study selected. Our work was detailed in the European Commission's document, 'Study on strategies for improving participation in and awareness of adult learning: European Guide'.

An Post national advertising campaign

An Post's TV advertising campaign has been hugely influential in encouraging thousands of people with literacy difficulties to 'take the first step' into adult education. The ads focus on the positives of returning to learning, promoting our Freephone and Freetext numbers. The message worked well this year with over 2,000 callers in January and September 2012, and more than 25% of these callers using text to get in touch. Making the first phone call is sometimes the greatest hurdle but once people get started they never look back.

Talking to the media

Throughout 2012, adult literacy students and NALA staff spoke regularly to journalists in the national and regional media. These interviews provided a valuable insight for the general public into the impact of living with a literacy difficulty in modern Ireland. They also showed, through sharing brave personal stories, how going back to adult education has a very positive effect on the individual, family and community. We know from feedback from callers to our freephone that often these stories encouraged other people to return to education. In total, we recorded over 170 mentions as follows:

- 28 articles in the national daily and Sunday papers;
- 120 articles in regional newspapers; and
- 29 articles in trade journals and magazines.

Highlights during the year included:

- Michael Power (adult learner) on RTÉ TV The Daily Show
- Olive Phelan (adult learner) on FM104 Radio Real Life Stories
- Frank Locke (adult learner) on RTÉ Radio Drivetime Programme
- Irish Country Living feature on adult literacy for The Farmers' Journal
- Feature in the Irish Examiner on National Adult Literacy Awareness Week
- NALA 5 minute promotional video on RTÉ TV Winning Streak Programme
- Kevin O'Duffy and Bridie Daly (adult learners) on Newstalk Tom Dunne Show
- Inez Bailey (NALA Director) on Today FM Radio The Last Word Show with Matt Cooper

Antoinette O'Leary and Tanya Johnson, two students from An Cosán in Tallaght, spoke passionately about going back to education and the confidence it has given them, at an event during National Adult Literacy Awareness Week.



National Adult Literacy Awareness Week 2012

There's no doubt that Tallaght stole the show during National Adult Literacy Awareness Week 2012 with a number of events that highlighted how integrating literacy-friendly policies can positively affect a local community.

On Monday 24 September, the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon, TD started the week at an event hosted by County Dublin VEC. He launched the new ESRI NALA research report on the impact of literacy difficulties in the Irish workplace and heard about best practice from the Skills for Work initiative in Tallaght. Many people travelled to the event as it focused on the training needs of people in employment who have literacy and numeracy difficulties and what is needed to support their progression.

On Wednesday 26 September, Pat Rabbitte, TD Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources spoke about the importance of literacy and communications at an event hosted by An Cosán. He said he wasn't surprised Tallaght was chosen to highlight how integrating literacy-friendly policies can positively affect local communities as there was so much great work being done in the area. Antoinette O'Leary and Tanya Johnson, two students from An Cosán, also spoke passionately about going back to education and the confidence it has given them to try new things.

On Thursday 27 September, the new Mayor for South Dublin, Cathál King launched a short report outlining the approach and lessons from South Dublin County Council's (SDCC) Literacy Audit. SDCC is the first Irish local authority to set out to become 'literacy friendly' using NALA's Right from the Start approach.

And on Friday 28 September, NALA, the Institute of Technology Tallaght and South Dublin County Council held a 'Maths Eyes' trail for parents and children in Sean Walshe Park. During the trail, participants tried to develop their 'Maths eyes' by seeing shapes, patterns, numbers and angles that they came across. A Maths trail is a bit like a treasure hunt, but all the questions are connected to patterns, shapes, numbers, counting, measurements and drawing.

Increase in calls to our Freephone and Freetext service

This year we received 5,500 calls to our Freephone, a 17% increase on 2011. We also received 1,100 texts to our Freetext service, a 700% increase on 2011.

The following is a sample of the type of callers and their needs to our Freephone:

- A male caller always wanted to improve his reading and writing and tried a class a few years ago but gave up. He now has three children in school and wants to understand what they are doing and to make sure the same thing doesn't happen to them. He wants them to see learning is a good thing to do.
- A mother rang for her son who is in his late 40s. He is a very good talker and works helping other people. She knows he has problems writing and he is avoiding promotion and volunteering for positions of responsibility.
- A caller has been ill and can't get out to a class. He misses the interest and help it gave him. He was delighted to learn about Distance Learning and has signed up to use the service.
- A caller is training to be a carer and needs to be able to write and spell better for shopping lists and collecting things from the chemist for people.
- A woman caller is trying to do a FETAC Level 5 course. She can understand the course but is struggling with writing reports and spelling. She finds the www.writeon.ie site really helpful.

Plain English Service: making progress through editing, training, presentations and website

By using plain English, organisations can reach more people – in particular those with literacy difficulties – and enable them to fulfil their potential, access entitlements and better use services.

In 2012, the plain English service helped a range of organisations to make their written information easier to understand. Our clients included:

- hospitals and other bodies under the Health Service Executive such as the National Cancer Screening Service;
- public sector bodies such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Equality Authority and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland;
- voluntary organisations such as the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Irish Cancer Society; and
- private companies such as MSD, Electric Ireland and Abbott Pharmaceuticals.

Training, editing and presentations

- We edited and reviewed documents for 50 organisations.
- We delivered 22 plain English training events to organisations such as AIB, Canada Life, Electric Ireland, Excellence Ireland Quality Association and ChildMinding Ireland (300 participants in all).
- We trained nine new editors for our plain English editor panel.
- We provided two one-day open courses (30 participants).
- We presented to the Directors and Experts of Better Regulation, IBEC's Diversity Forum, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, the Irish Hospice Foundation and South Dublin County – Inter Agency Traveller Strategy.

Training for staff and volunteers in the community and voluntary sector

Thanks to funding from The Wheel's Training Links Grant programme, we delivered plain English training to over 120 staff and volunteers from the this sector. We delivered specialist training to communication, HR and web staff and general training for other staff and volunteers.

We also developed a new publication on letters, reports and forms.

Developing our plain English website www.simplyput.ie

This website is a means of presenting all information on plain English in one place. This year 5,000 people visited the site (this compares with 3,000 people last year).

We look forward to continuing to raise awareness of plain English in 2013.

Our Plain English website,
www.simplyput.ie



Improving health literacy policy and practice

We made a number of submissions in 2012 to ensure health literacy is taken into account when health policy is being developed. These included a:

- Review of Nursing and Midwifery Degree Programmes (Feb), and
- National Consent Advisory Group on Draft Consent Policy (June).

We continued to liaise with the Department of Health and relevant Ministers. We met Minister Roisín Shortall in relation to the Primary Care Strategy which led to our working with the HSE on a plain English version of the Medical and GP visit card Application Form. We are also liaising with officials working on the development of the new population health strategy as a follow up to the submission we made in 2011.

Promoting Health Literacy

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Student Health Centre was amongst the winners at the 2012 Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards in Dublin. DIT won first place in the category, 'Best Project in General Practice' for developing a simple but effective campaign to reassure students that Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) testing is simple and easier than ever before. Four other organisations were also recognised for their efforts to communicate health information more clearly to the public. These organisations are the National Cancer Control Programme, Arthritis Ireland, the National Cancer Screening Service and RTÉ Radio 1.

Building Capacity of Health Professionals

We continued to offer inputs and training to health professionals to raise awareness of health literacy and also to develop skills in the use of plain English. We did this in a number of ways. For example, we partnered with Merck Sharpe and Dome (MSD) to deliver a series of seminars held around the country and which included presentations on the results of the European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU) and presentations on plain English. We also delivered training for HSE communications staff and for health professionals in Tallaght, as part of National Adult Literacy Awareness Week.

Supporting and Commissioning Research

As in all areas of our work, we believe that securing an evidence base to strengthen our influence is very important. In 2012 we worked on a number of research projects to support our work in the area of health literacy.

- 'European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU) Executive Summary'
In April we co-published an Executive Summary of the European Health Literacy Survey. This survey had been carried out by UCD and the results were launched in November 2011. NALA was a member of the Advisory Committee. The Summary is now used as a tool to increase awareness of health literacy and to influence health policy and practitioners.
- The HLS-EU won an award at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG). The EHFG is the most important conference on health care policy in the European Union. Winning the award in this context places a very important spotlight on health literacy.
- 'Health Literacy in Ireland: Benchmarking the Present State of the Art and Examining Future Challenges and Opportunities' (2012). We also commissioned Dr Tom O'Connor to carry out research which outlines the development of health literacy in Ireland. The report summarises the work done to date by NALA and others. It gives an up to date assessment of the current state of play and points to future directions. This will help inform NALA's future work in Health Literacy.

Secretariat to National Health Literacy Advisory Panel

This panel has grown from the Advisory Committee set up to guide the HLS-EU and is now known as the National Health Literacy Advisory Panel. The members agreed that the role of the Panel is to:

- publicise the Irish findings of the European survey;
- develop strategies to implement Health Literacy in relevant political and social contexts; and
- make recommendations for action such as publicity campaigns.

The membership includes representatives from voluntary and statutory organisations and serves as a useful mechanism for sharing relevant information. It has made a number of submissions to the Consent Policy and to a Population Health Strategy. NALA acts as Secretariat to the Panel. The first meeting of the Panel under this Secretariat took place in September 2012.

Other Health Literacy Work

We also gave an input into International Perspectives on Health Literacy in New York.

We made an application for funding for a European partnership project under the Grundtvig Programme. This aimed to:

- identify examples of good practice in lifelong learning of health literacy skills;
- develop systems of dissemination of information about the courses and materials identified; and
- identify areas in need of further development and research.

The application while well received was not successful this time. We will resubmit it in 2013.

Strengthening our effectiveness as an organisation

Communications

In 2012, we concentrated on improving our communications to members, educational partners and the general public. We did this through our website www.nala.ie, Facebook and Twitter accounts, regular e-zines and our newsletter.

We improved our website, www.nala.ie, so that it is more user focused and allows people to better interact with us and for us to communicate with them. This resulted in more than 56,000 people visiting our website in 2012, which is a 9% increase on 2011 visits. Over a third of these people were returning visitors to the website.

We continued to build our Facebook and Twitter presence. We posted news, questions and comments two or three times a week. Judging by the feedback, social media has proved a very effective way to communicate with people interested in literacy. We now have 1,050 'likes' on our Facebook page, a 50% increase from 2011. We have 710 followers on our Twitter account, an 87% increase from 2011.

Also in 2012, we provided our members with 18 ezines and two Literacy Matters newsletters.

Administration

Our administration team were a great support to us in 2012. Over the year, they:

- dealt with more than 6,960 telephone queries, of which 5,573 came through our Freephone;
- directly dealt with 41 customers seeking information and resource material;
- processed 240 orders for resources;
- provided administration support for 32 events and training programmes, catering for 1,148 people; and
- processed membership forms for 514 NALA members.

Membership

NALA ended 2012 with 514 members. 2012 has seen an increase in our student membership, due to the increased contact that the student sub-committee has had with local VEC centres and the additional event the committee hosted this year that informed literacy learners about the changes in the Further Education Sector.

Update on the new NALA membership offer

Throughout 2012, NALA reviewed our member services. Guided by the question 'what does NALA membership do for me?' we researched what:

- our current members wanted from NALA;
- reasons lapsed members gave for not renewing their membership; and
- similar organisations were offering their members including price structures.

We have core membership benefits such as voting rights and discounts on events. Improved membership offerings, including a new pricing structure will be presented at the NALA AGM in March 2013 and, if agreed, will immediately be launched.

We appreciate the support of our members and will continue to ask for their opinions on NALA membership. We aim to increase our membership numbers in 2013 and continue to reflect the voice of adult literacy learners and the views of our other members.

Structure and funding

Our membership is open to all people and organisations interested in or involved in adult literacy development. At our annual general meeting, members elect an executive committee, which makes sure that our aims are put into practice. The executive committee includes students and tutors, adult literacy organisers and people involved in adult and further education and training.

We are a registered company with limited and charitable status. We receive a grant from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) that enables us to staff a national and a regional office in Cork.

You can view or download a copy of our full audited accounts, details of our organisation's structure, staff and executive committee and all our publications from www.nala.ie.

Some acronyms explained

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALOA	Adult Literacy Organisers' Association
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair – the former national training and employment authority – now SOLAS
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education Training Awards Council
HSE	Health Service Executive
ITT	Institute of Technology Tallaght
IVEA	Irish Vocational Education Association – an organisation representing Vocational Education Committees (VECs)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
MSD	Merck Sharp & Dohme Ireland (Human Health) Ltd
SOLAS	The new authority for further education and training (replacing FÁS)
VEC	Vocational Education Committee – a committee that manages adult and further education at city and county level
WIT	Waterford Institute of Training

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What's next

Looking ahead to 2013

Policy Achieving the integration of literacy and numeracy across further education and training. **Participation** Delivering a campaign highlighting the important role of parents in their child's literacy and numeracy development. **Practice** Supporting practitioners deliver high quality literacy and numeracy teaching. **Access** Working with local authorities and others to improve their information services through using plain English.



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh