

# NALA Student Development Fund

## Annual report 2019

An overview of how the fund was used and responses from learners on a number of important topics

**SOLAS**

An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna  
Further Education and Training Authority



**National Adult Literacy Agency**  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **About this report**

This report gives an overview of the NALA Student Development Fund in 2019 and includes information on:

1. how the fund was used;
2. responses from learners on topics such as what tuition hours per week they would realistically do and how they went about finding a course; and
3. the impact of the fund.

The aim of this report is to share feedback from adult literacy and numeracy learners. NALA does this so we and other organisations can respond appropriately to the needs of learners and to continually improve the quality of our work.

This report is for anyone interested or involved in adult literacy and numeracy provision and adult education in general. The NALA Student Fund is financed by SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority of Ireland. Adult Literacy is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014 – 2020.

### **Acronyms used in this report:**

ALOA - Adult Literacy Organisers Association

CTC - Community Training Centre

DLS – NALA's Distance Learning Service (includes tuition by telephone and "Learn with NALA" website).

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

ETB - Education and Training Board

FET – Further Education and Training

NALA - National Adult Literacy Agency

NLN - National Learning Network

VTOS - Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

In this report the term “learner” and “student” are used interchangeably. This is to describe adults and younger people who are doing literacy, numeracy, everyday technology or are ESOL learners (learning English) in an adult literacy centre or as part of a programme.

## **Background and context**

Since 1980, NALA has ensured the views and experiences of adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties guide and inform the quality of our work, and are heard and taken into account by stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> We do this work through:

- student members on our Board;
- a Student Subcommittee;
- a Student Development Fund;
- annual Student Days, and
- by ensuring student advocacy is a key element in our strategic plans.

Each year NALA uses the Student Development Fund to support extra-curricular activity that encourages student empowerment and enjoyment of learning in the community. We also use the Fund to gather and share students’ views.

SOLAS<sup>2</sup> plans for a vibrant, clearly structured and accessible post-secondary education system or tertiary education. In their strategy<sup>3</sup> the purpose of tertiary education is to build students’ skills, create pathways for learning and include people. Literacy and numeracy support will be integrated across courses.

Developments will be learner and performance centred. There is a focus on quality staffing, good buildings and use of technology and blended learning. The National FET Learner Forums organised by AONTAS will continue. There is a commitment to develop learner surveys. There will be a focus on learners participating in strategic

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<sup>1</sup> [Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work](#), National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> SOLAS is the state agency that manages further education and training.

<sup>3</sup> 2020 – 2024 Future FET Transforming Learning, The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy, SOLAS (draft strategy), 2020.

and decision-making structures in FET and a dedicated budget for this. The strategy recognises the need to build capacity amongst learners to articulate their views. NALA's work over many years has provided opportunities for learners to explore their views (adult literacy students and students doing literacy as part of another programme and ESOL learners). Student views have informed NALA's work and we have shared them with stakeholders. NALA's current strategic plan continues this tradition <sup>4</sup>: "We will support learner independence by facilitating learner-directed events and activities and gather and share learner feedback to help inform governance and decision making in the FET sector."

## **Overview of the 2019 Student Development Fund**

NALA's Student Development Fund provides a grant, of up to €650, to adult education centres where literacy, numeracy, using everyday technology and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tuition takes place. The grant is available to NALA organisation members along with other benefits.<sup>5</sup>

The fund is for a **non-tuition group activity outside the classroom**. It will not necessarily cover all the costs of the activity undertaken by the centre (it is a subsidy).

### **Who are the beneficiaries?**

The fund is for adults and young people who are improving their literacy and numeracy skills in a centre or on a programme. The fund must be used for students who are improving their literacy and numeracy skills on courses that are pitched at up to and including Level 4 (not beyond Level 4) on the [QQI Framework of Qualifications](#). Students may be in one-to-one or group tuition. They may be improving their literacy as part of another programme. For example, on a Return to Education, family learning, health and well-being, community education, Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE), VTOS or Youthreach programme.

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<sup>4</sup> [NALA Strategic Plan 2020-2022](#).

<sup>5</sup> See become a member on [NALA's website](#).

Activities give students the chance to do something new and share experiences with fellow learners. **Centres who receive the fund agree to gather student feedback** for NALA.

### **In 2019, 88 adult education centres benefited from the fund**

This was a similar number of centres benefitting from the Fund as happened in 2018. 1,969 students took part in activities (119 more students than in 2018). 86% of students (similar to 2018), who took part in the activities, also gave feedback.<sup>6</sup>

### **Types of activity funded**

The fund was spent on student trips to places of interest, events and workshops. Examples include a visit to Lismore Heritage Centre, a camping trip to Inis Owey in Donegal and a trip to Bord Gais theatre to see “Grease”. Most centres carried out the activity in May and June 2019. Appendix 1 has a list of all activity carried out in 2019.

### **Funding allocated**

Centres received funding ranging from €265 to €650. Most centres received €550. The total spending in 2019 was €47,026.

**Table 1. Number of centres and students who benefit from the fund in 2019 (and showing the ETB managed centres)**

<b>Successful centres by type</b>	<b>Number of centres</b>	<b>Number of students involved</b>
Adult Literacy Service (ETB)	47	1,217
Youthreach (ETB)	15	265
Community Training Centre (ETB)	5	66
National Learning Network	5	160
VTOS (ETB)	7	98
Other	9	163
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1,969</b>

Table 1 shows that most students (83%) who benefited from the 2019 Fund were adults in Education and Training Board (ETB) managed services.

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<sup>6</sup> 1,689 students gave feedback. 57% of students taking part were female and 43% male.

**Chart 1: Types of centre using the fund in 2019**

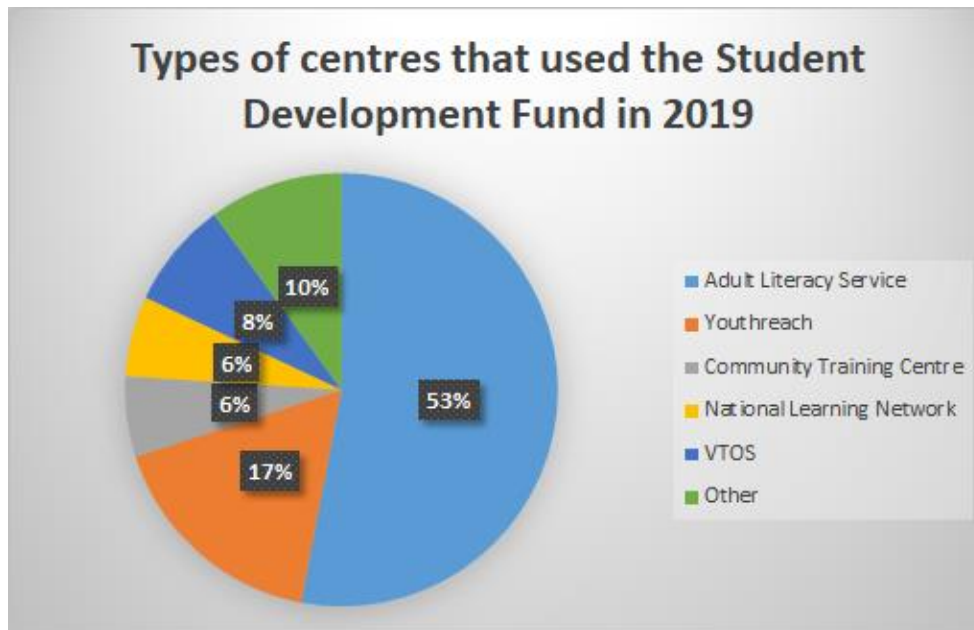


Chart 1 shows that over half the students who benefitted from the 2019 Student Development Fund were in adult literacy centres. The next biggest group of students were in Youthreach centres.

## Feedback from learners

When applying for the fund centres agreed to provide student feedback to NALA on topics set by NALA.<sup>7</sup> In most cases tutors, Adult Literacy Organisers or Co-ordinators facilitated the feedback session.<sup>8</sup>

The topic for feedback in 2019 was “Expand your learning”. We choose this topic for both the Fund in 2019 and NALA Student Days in 2019.<sup>9</sup> We had workshops at the student days on using the distance learning service, using apps for learning and other opportunities for learning in the community. Through the fund in 2019 we asked for feedback on:

1. Tuition hours per week students would realistically do and intensive courses;
2. Before they went back to learning, how they knew what they needed to learn;
3. Other information about how they went about learning;
4. Current gaps in provision.

We believe this feedback will be of interest to providers and all involved in adult education. NALA will use the feedback to inform the development of an online skills checker. We hope the skills checker will help students see where they are with learning and decide their next steps.<sup>10</sup>

The nature of the student feedback received by NALA is that one centre could give a short answer and another a long answer to open questions. We have done our best to analyse the feedback and represent it as fully and honestly as possible here.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> When notifying centres that their application was successful, we sent a document “Gathering student feedback” with the questions to ask. We also sent the link to the online report they would fill in.

<sup>8</sup> Students did facilitate the sessions as well, mostly with tutors (36 times with tutors and four times students themselves). Tutors mostly took the notes.

<sup>9</sup> See [NALA Student Day – annual report 2019](#).

<sup>10</sup> Currently called “Check In, Take Off” (or CITO project) this is part of an Upskilling Pathways EU member states initiative, to give people a second chance to learn basic skills. It is about recognising prior learning (RPL). Adults will self-assess their basic skills and be directed to learning opportunities.

<sup>11</sup> In the few instances where we felt the feedback was given by tutors, rather than students, or where feedback was too general, we asked the centre to gather student feedback again and send it to us.



## Views on tuition hours per week and intensive courses

NALA has frequently heard from students that they need more tuition hours.<sup>12</sup> We wanted to explore this further with a larger group and see how widespread that was.

### **First, a question looking for a yes, or no answer, about whether or not you would do more tuition hours**

91% of students (1,538 students) answered a yes or no question - "Would you do more hours of tuition each week to improve your literacy and numeracy skills?".

- 70% said yes, they would like more hours of tuition each week
- 21% said no

The answers for the yes or no question were broken down into ESOL students and non-ESOL students. Of the 70% who said they would do more tuition hours per week, 28% were ESOL students and 42% were non-ESOL (Irish) students.

However:

- 84% of ESOL students said they would do more tuition hours.<sup>13</sup>
- 73% of all non-ESOL students said they would do more tuition hours.

To conclude a large percentage (70%) of all students said they would do more tuition hours per week. More ESOL students (11% more) than Irish students said they would realistically do more tuition hours.

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<sup>12</sup> Page 3 of the Report on NALA Student Days 2016 shows that this was raised by students in six out of nine years between 2007 and 2015. It was also raised at the 2017 and 2018 NALA Student Days.

<sup>13</sup> This echoes feedback from 595 learners who took part in the National FET Learner Forum and regional events organised by AONTAS in 2018. See page 31 of the "[National FET Learner Forum Annual Synthesis Report 2018](#)". Learners consistently requested extended course hours for English language support.

**Second, we asked what number of tuition hours per week is realistic and whether students would do an intensive course**

We gave people four options of hours tuition a week and a fifth option of an intensive course. We also asked them to let us know what they meant by intensive.<sup>14</sup> Two centres gave descriptions of what they meant by intensive.<sup>15</sup>

**Chart 2: All centres: “What is the realistic number of hours you would do per week and would you do an intensive course?”**

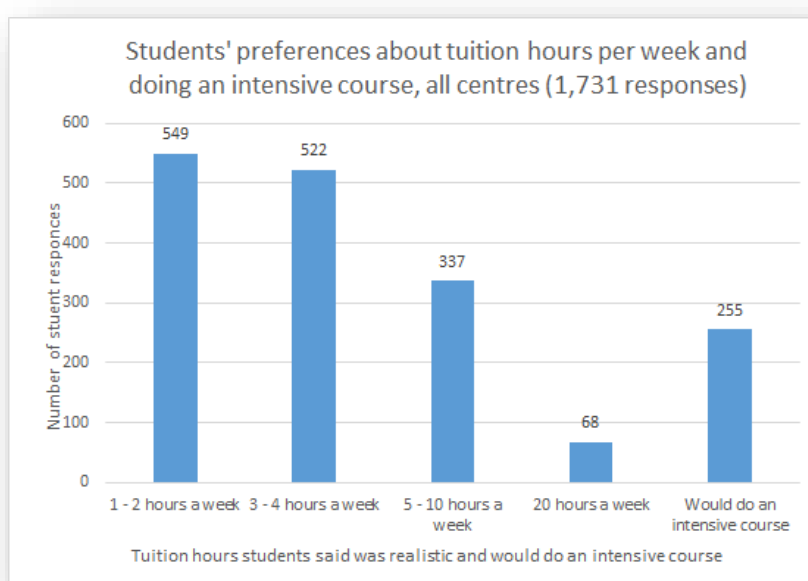


Chart 2 shows 62% of all students said that between one to four hours per week was realistic for them. A further 19% said five to ten hours a week was realistic. 15% said they would do an intensive course.

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<sup>14</sup> Limitations of the data: 1,689 students in total gave feedback. Some students gave more than one answer (as there were 1,731 answers in all) and not all students in each centre answered each question. See Appendix 2 for a breakdown by centres.

<sup>15</sup> The two centres gave the following descriptions: morning tuition; a year-long course; blocks of a 10-week course commitment; and attending every day for three months.

We looked at the data broken down for the different centre types. Key points arising:

The majority of students want 1-4 hours tuition:

- 60% of students in ETB Adult Literacy Service (26% 3-4 and 34% 1-2 hours).
- 77% of Youthreach students.
- 62% of CTC students.
- 99% of NLN students.
- 70% of students in nine other centres.

VTOS students' preference is for 20 hours per week.

- 67% of VTOS students said either 20 hours or an intensive course was realistic for them.

**Chart 3: Percentage of students in the different types of centres who said they would do an intensive course**

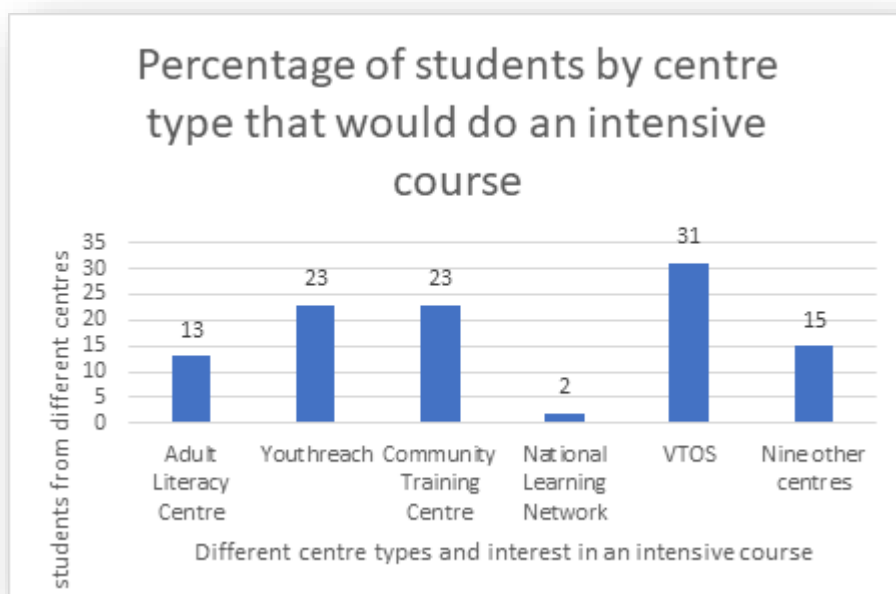


Chart 3 above shows that 31% of VTOS students said they would do an intensive course. VTOS is usually 28 hours per week. VTOS can be considered intensive, certainly compared to two hours tuition a week say for example in an adult literacy centre.

A high percentage in Youthreach and Community Training Centres<sup>16</sup> - 23% - said they would like to do an intensive course. It is likely that students from these three centres - VTOS, Youthreach and CTCs - have overcome barriers other students might have to doing intensive courses.

Students in National Learning Networks were the only group of students who had virtually no interest in intensive courses. In each other centre, 13% of students were interested in doing an intensive course.

To conclude, 13% of Adult Literacy Centre students, is a high number (from a good sample size of 1,197 students) who said they would do an intensive course. This seems to indicate an interest in more intensive literacy courses. However, without a description given by students about what they meant by intensive it is possible they could have been talking about different things. Therefore, before further action on this there would need to be a kind of national conversation with students about what an intensive course means. In tandem, adventurous providers could try different models of more intensive courses and share evaluations nationally with others.

We asked centres if there was any other information, they felt NALA should know about. Broadly what they raised can be grouped under the headings below:

- Great interest in technology and online learning.
- ESOL students need more intensive tuition to learn English.
- Some younger students want more tuition hours.
- Some students do not want to do more tuition hours.

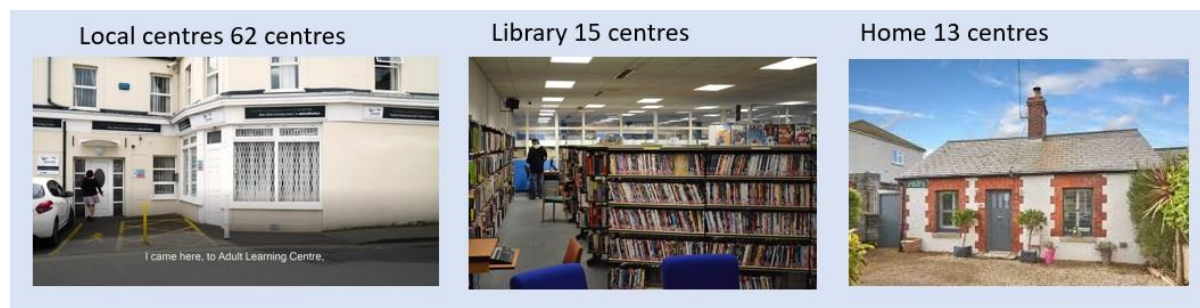
See Appendix 2 for more information on this feedback.

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<sup>16</sup> CTCs are part of Youthreach which is the main response of Central Government to the needs of young people who leave school before completing the Leaving Certificate. Generally, Youthreach is a full-time course (part time courses can be arranged).

## Where they would ideally like to learn

Centres asked students “In an ideal world, where would you like to learn?” and recorded their answers.



The image above shows that students in 62 centres said they liked learning in their local centre. They said the friendliness of staff and how different it is from school made it a great place to learn.<sup>17</sup> The library was the second most frequently said place, by students from 15 centres. Thirdly students from 13 centres said they would like to learn from home. Some students specified that home would not work for them, as there were too many distractions. Others wanted to get out of the house.

Also, students from six centres said they wanted to learn through field trips. Students from five centres said they wanted to learn in community centres and five said they would like to learn online. Learning in their child’s school was said by students from four centres. Students from three centres said their preference was workplace learning and learning in other colleges (Institutes of Technologies and further education colleges). Students from three centres said their centre buildings needed to be upgraded.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Learners who took part in national and regional FET learner forums also said tutors created a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. See page 26 of the AONTAS “National FET Learner Forum Annual Synthesis Report 2018”.

<sup>18</sup> This echoes learner feedback outlined in the above AONTAS, see page 32 about FET facilities.

## How people decided what they needed to learn before starting

Students answered the question “How did you know or decide what you needed to learn – before you started?”

The most frequently given answers are listed below, with the number of different centres where students said this in brackets:

- Knew themselves that they **struggled with everyday situations** both at home and socially (37 centres).
- Were **referred** by supervisors, tutors and guidance councillors (30 centres).
- Driven to improve their **job opportunities** or **college** prospects (29 centres).
- Knew themselves they struggled with **computers and technology** (22 centres).
- Wanted to help their **children learn and family** (14 centres).
- Wanted to **improve English** to integrate more in society or improve their communication (14 centres).
- Wanted to **follow their own interests** and hobbies (11 centres).

## How they went about learning and finding a course

Centres asked students the following question “Once you decided what to learn, how do you go about learning and finding a course?”.

**Table 2. How students went about learning and finding a course**

Number of centres where students said	How students went about learning and finding a course
57	Formal referral
50	Friends, family and peers
48	Online or own research
33	Printed adverts, radio and TV
14	Previous course or job

Table 2 shows formal referrals was the most frequent way learners went about learning and finding a course. In those 57 centres students said:

- 11 referrals from social welfare;
- 10 from schools (school-going pupils being referred to Youthreach and CTCs; leaflets were handed out to parents for the Adult Literacy Service and Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators referred as did Resource Teachers to NLN courses); and
- 6 from the Adult Guidance (ETB) service.

Students in 50 centres said they heard about courses through family, friends and peers.<sup>19</sup>

Students from 48 centres found courses through their own search, including a combination of:

- Looking online for course information (students from 25 centres);
- Using Facebook and social media (students from 13 centres); and
- Attending open days or walking into centres (students from 18 centres).

Students in 33 centres found courses through radio adverts (8 centres) in newspapers (7 centres), leaflets (5 centres) and television (4 centres).<sup>20</sup> Other students in 14 centres heard about courses from their previous jobs and courses and students in six centres mentioning Community Employment Schemes.

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<sup>19</sup> This echoes what students said at the 2018 National FET Learner Forums. See page 26 of the “National FET Learner Forum Annual Synthesis Report 2018” AONTAS, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Learners also identified the need to improve advertisements of courses at the Forum as well. See page 28 of the above report.

## Knowledge about getting a certificate for learning

NALA is aware that not everyone is interested in getting a certificate for learning. We asked centres to note the number who said yes and the number who said no to the following question: “If you wanted to get a certificate for your learning, would you know how to go about that?”

**Chart 4. Whether students knew how to go get a certificate for their learning.**

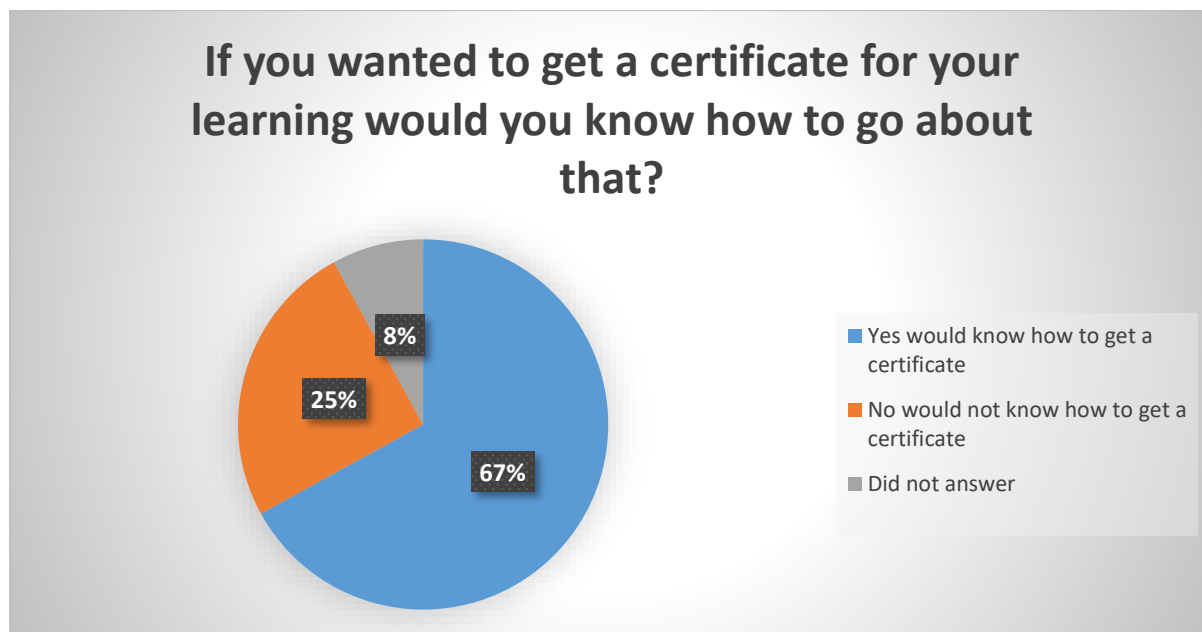


Chart 4 shows that 67% of students said they would know how to go about getting a certificate if they wanted one.

Some insight from a tutor in an adult literacy centre on certification: “The question around certification highlights that it can be very confusing for learners who just want to improve literacy. The 3 who responded they didn't know about certification are actually doing certification! This is good to know as it makes us aware that sometimes people are not entirely sure of this and we must make it clearer to learners.”



## What they needed to learn that is not available at the moment

Students were asked “If there is something you need to learn that is not available to you at the moment, please tell us what that is?”

**Table 3. What students said they needed to learn but that is not available to them at the moment**

No.	Courses not there at the moment centres
19	Information technology related (tablets, computers, social media, smartphones, publisher, intensive IT, navigate some of the websites you use in personal life that are hard to understand - applications for passports and medical cards, PowerPoint, coding and animation (NLN student) and advanced IT (adult literacy student).
18	Creative related (including writing, music, woodwork)
15	Job related, ready for work and college (including specific courses, work experience said three times, also CV, interviews)
13	Health related (including mental health and first aid)
13	Driving related (8 driver test, 5 learning to drive)
9	Everyday maths related (money, budgeting said by students in three centres, Maths Level 4)

Table 3 shows that students in 19 centres felt they did not have sufficient learning opportunities in information technology mostly for everyday use. Students in 18 centres gave examples of courses that could be broadly grouped under “creative courses” that were not available at the moment. Students in 15 centres were looking for specific work-related courses or work experience.<sup>21</sup> With unemployment rates high because of the impact of Covid 19, this issue is likely to remain and become of great importance in future. Other areas student said were not available to them were health, relating to driving and budgeting.

<sup>21</sup> Issues related to work placements were also highlighted in the AONTAS “National FET Learner Forum Annual Synthesis Report 2018”, see page 33 of that report.

Students in five different centres also said that they would like to learn the Irish language, do more ESOL and learn history.

## Use of podcasts

Students were asked “Are you using podcasts to learn?” and given a description and examples they might be familiar with. They were then asked “If you are using podcasts, are there ones they would recommend to other students?”

**Chart 5: Percentage of students using podcasts in the different centres**

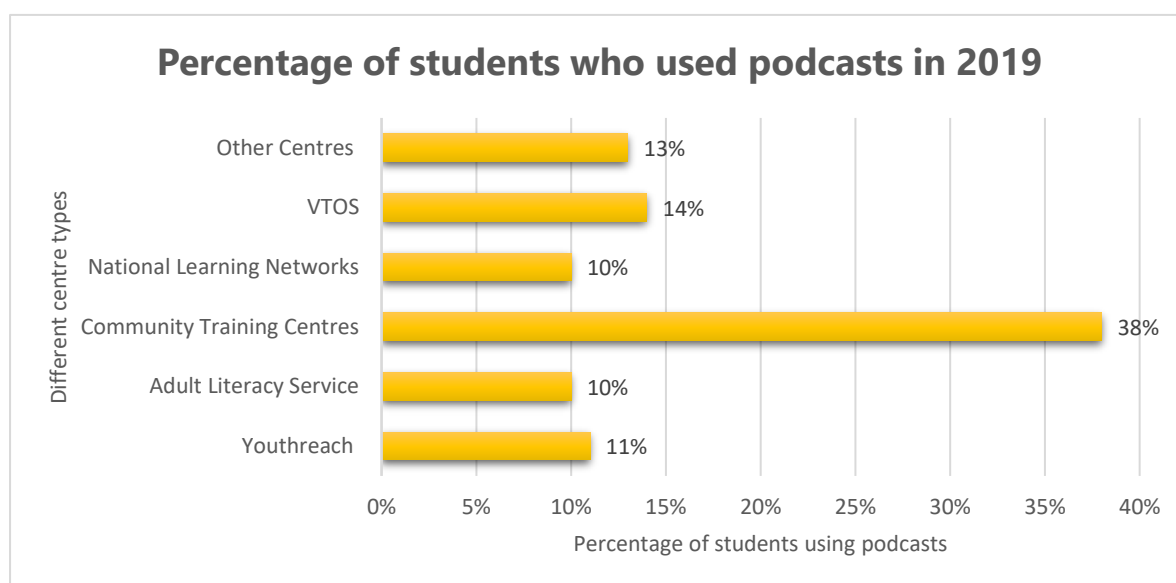


Chart 5 shows at least 10% of students in all centres are using podcasts to learn. Students in CTCs had the highest percentage of students using podcasts of all the different centres. Students recommended the following podcasts to other students:

- RTE (students from 7 centres said)
- Ted talks (7 centres)
- Other radio stations (6 centres)
- Spotify (4 centres)
- Duolingo (4 centres)
- The Joe Rogan Experience (4 centres)
- The Irish History Podcast (3 centres)

NALA will publish an A-Z list of podcasts students were listening to in 2019 in our members e-zine.

## Other ways they are learning

Centres also asked students “Are there any other ways you are learning which you want to tell NALA about?”. The following were their responses:

**Chart 6: Other ways students were learning, with the number of centres where students said this shown**

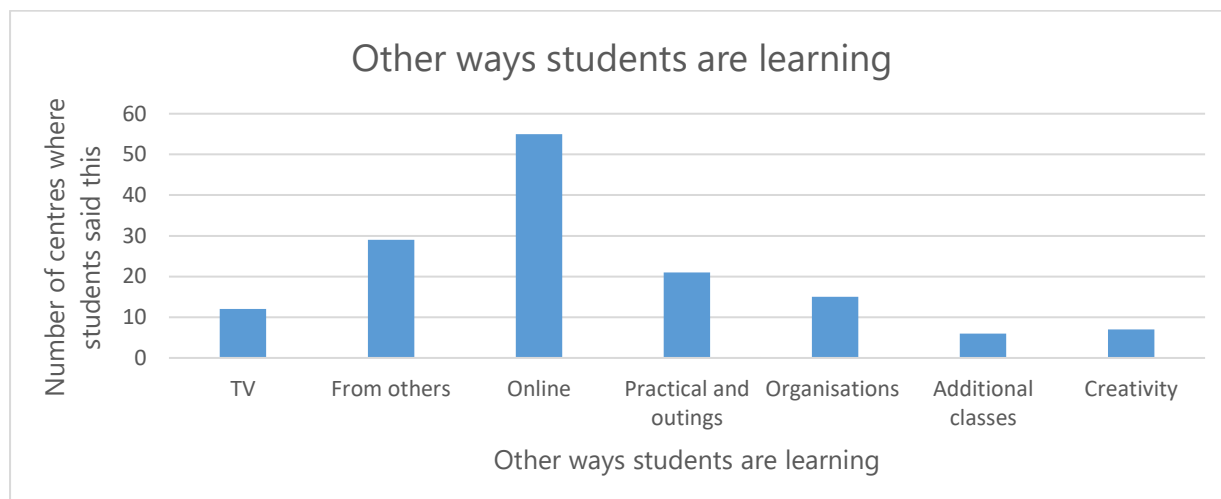


Chart 6 shows that in 55 centres students said they were learning online. Learning online with YouTube was mentioned 17 times (tutorials).<sup>22</sup> Apps were mentioned by students in eight centres. Specific websites were mentioned (Khan Academy, Basic Key Skills Builder, AutoCAD, “What’s the Story” from GRETB, Google Translate, HBR Idea Cast, Pods Google Digital Garage, Cortex, taster courses with CKLP, LEO, CES). Also, online books and reading newspapers online.

In 29 centres students said they were learning from others. This included group work and peer work<sup>23</sup>, learning from daughter, paired reading, guest speakers, group discussion, homework with children and talking to neighbours.

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<sup>22</sup> [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) was mentioned once but referred to in other ways such as: “They really like doing NALA during the week.” and “The students are happy with the online NALA programme as it lets them work away at their own pace.”

<sup>23</sup> Peer learning was highlighted by learners at the national and regional Learner FET Forums. See page 27 of the AONTAS “National FET Learner Forum Annual Synthesis Report 2018”.

In 21 centres students said they were learning from practical experiences and from outings. Students said when they do things themselves, they learn well. Also trips like those done through the NALA Student Development Fund visiting sites instils learning. As one student said: “I enjoy trips out of the class because you learn in a fun way and you don’t even realise, you’re doing it”.

In conclusion it is encouraging that many students are learning online. NALA should continue to provide easy to reach content online. However, we also know that not all students are learning this online, students in 32 centres did not mention learning online. Peer learning or learning from others was mentioned by 29 centres. NALA should continue to develop pilot peer learning projects such as recent prison work.

## **Impact and benefits of the Fund**

### **1. NALA has gathered feedback from adult literacy and ESOL students.**

This report is part of NALA’s ongoing practice of seeking out student views. These views inform our work and help keep us on the right track for new developments. In addition, we share the feedback with our stakeholders and look for their response to the feedback so as to inform their work as well.

### **2. The fund broadens some students’ experience**

The fund has broadened some students’ experiences of what is available to them in their communities, often highlighting free cultural venues like galleries and tourist sites that can be visited again with family and friends. “Although Craggaunowen is not very far from Scarriff many of our learners would not have had the finances, confidence or friends to go on a trip outside of VTOS.” - VTOS Scarriff.

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Also in an online survey carried out by Ahead, and published in May 2020 [“Learning from Home During Covid-19: A Survey of Irish FET and HE Students with Disabilities”](#), students said they missed conversations with peers and interaction, when classes closed during the Covid 19 pandemic. Other difficulties with learning from home included having caring responsibilities, not having space to learn, sharing computers and missing supports provided for people with disabilities through courses.

### **3. The fund contributes to student empowerment and a sense of teamwork**

The fund has contributed to student empowerment. Students were involved in deciding where to go and organised trips. “Without the funding we would not have been able to give the students a new experience and team building. They enjoy being asked to give feedback and feel that their experiences and opinions are valued and heard.” – Youthreach Bandon

### **4. The type of events encourage interaction among students that can encourage progression in learning**

For some students involved, meeting other students has encouraged them to stay on in a course, and to hear about other courses. In these instances, the fund has contributed to some students having their own educational experiences expanded. “The trip provided an opportunity for learners from three schemes (Adult Literacy, BTEI and Refugee Resettlement Programme) to meet in an informal setting and discuss and share experiences that are helping to shape their learning experiences. Students encouraged each other to continue and progress learning. The trip always provides an enjoyable day out, the learners discuss it with family members, friends and neighbours and this in turn promotes the centre and the work taking place. Word of mouth and personal experiences in rural communities is the best form of advertising for the services we offer in our centre.” – Cappaquin Adult Literacy.

### **Next steps – Proposed actions arising from feedback**

In order to meet the FET Strategic Objective 3.1 ‘Respond to the needs of learners,’ it is important that all stakeholders act on the feedback received from learners. NALA will share through this report the student feedback with stakeholders.

For the purpose of this report stakeholders will include:

- NALA – Staff, Board, Subcommittees and Members;
- SOLAS;
- Education and Training boards Ireland (ETBI);
- Learner Representatives in Education and Training Boards;
- Adult Literacy Organisers Association;
- Adult Education and Guidance Initiative; and
- AONTAS.

Once we receive a response from all stakeholders, NALA will let students know the actions and outcomes through our e-zine to members and on our website.

<b>Feedback</b>	<b>NALA actions Objective 1: To work in partnership to add value to the delivery of the FET Strategy 2020-2024 as it relates to adult literacy, numeracy, and digital skills.</b>	<b>Stakeholder action</b>
Realistic tuition hours per week and intensive tuition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share findings with ETBI and pursue joint actions if agreed.</li> <li>2. NALA Practice Team discuss:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- can “Learn with NALA” be used for intensive tuition?</li> <li>- Is it timely to pilot intensive tuition programmes again? <sup>24</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
How students decided what they needed to learn and how students went about learning and finding a course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Share feedback with organisations that advise the public about courses.</li> <li>4. Use feedback to further develop CITO skills checker.</li> <li>5. Formal referral was most important for students going about learning and finding a course. NALA’s DLS will consider this feedback.</li> </ol>	
Awareness about how to get a certificate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Share feedback with the ALOA, Adult Education and</li> </ol>	

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<sup>24</sup> With partners - ETB staff and five County Councils - NALA ran a workplace learning pilot in 2000 and 2001 called the “Return to Learning Initiative”. This was later mainstreamed in other County Councils. NALA also ran a pilot intensive literacy course featured in the TV series “Written Off!” in 2008 and 2009.

	<p>Guidance Initiative and other stakeholders.</p> <p>7. Consider if information is clear on “Learn with NALA”?</p>	
<p>What students need to learn but that is not available at the moment</p>	<p>8. Share this feedback with ETBI and AONTAS. Offer to promote to literacy learners the range of available ETB and other courses (highlighting creative courses) through article in NALA’s Literacy Matters magazine or through social media.</p> <p>9. Objective 3.2b: Highlight courses available in the community to help with technology (for example Age Action courses, rural technology projects) in our ezine for members.</p> <p>10. Inform the Road Safety Authority of feedback on the Driver Theory Test.</p> <p>11. NALA Objective 1.4 Include the feedback about wanting to use every day technology in recommending a course on accessing digital supports. Also include feedback when evolving the phone service of the distance learning service.</p> <p>12. NALA Objective 1.7 work with NALA Student Subcommittee to prioritise and plan future</p>	

	<p>work to support, promote and encourage learner independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health and well-being</b> related issues possibly with “Ask me three” and “Well Now” student webinars.</li> <li>• <b>Creativity</b> for example writing weekends<sup>25</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Budgeting and money</b> for example partnering with experts in this area to develop materials or courses for learners.</li> <li>• Project to repurpose and share existing NALA material on getting <b>a job, interview skills and gaining work experience.</b></li> <li>• Project as above on existing NALA <b>numeracy resources.</b></li> <li>• <b>Podcasts:</b> Share the list of podcasts students were listening to in our members ezine. Create "How to use podcasts" for adults with literacy difficulties and identify topics for new podcasts.</li> </ul>	
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<sup>25</sup> NALA most recently held writing weekends for adult learners in 2005 and 2006.



The places students want to learn	13. NALA Objective 1.9 include student feedback on wanting to learn in the workplace, in scoping paper on workplace supports.	
Other ways students are learning	<p>14. NALA Objective 1.2a: Feedback to inform the CITO project.</p> <p>15. NALA Objective 1.4b: DLS consider the implications of the student feedback in evolving the phone service (DLS).</p> <p>16. NALA Objective 1.6b: Highlight to providers that second to online learning, students in 29 centres said learning from others was another way they are learning.</p> <p>17. Continue to support peer learning pilot projects as resources in NALA allow.</p> <p>18. Continue to consider the digital divide across all NALA work.</p>	
	<p><b>NALA actions Objective 2:</b> To create and share supports to improve literacy, numeracy and digital skills in healthcare and community development.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholder action</b></p>

The places students want to learn	<p>19. NALA Objective 3.2b: Relay feedback to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NALA library members and in our policy work with libraries.</li> <li>- TUSLA and NALA primary school members about learning in schools.</li> </ul>	
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>NALA actions Objective 3:</b> To increase literacy, numeracy and digital skills through research, innovation, and effective communication.	<b>Stakeholder action</b>
Gaps in what need to learn	20. NALA Objective 3.2b: Share good practice and promote student events, activities and learner independence.	

## Appendix 1: What students did with the fund in 2019

Adult Literacy Centres	Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019
Adult Education Service, Cabra	Horticulture group visited Airfield Estate and ESOL students visited Dublin Castle
Adult Learning Centre, Dundalk	Intercultural Day at Centre in Dundalk opened to learners and their friends and families.
Adult Literacy New Ross & Bunclody	New Ross and Bunclody Services together visited the National Stud and Japanese Gardens in Co. Kildare.
Adult Literacy Service Tipperary (North)	Visited Seamus Heaney Exhibition in Dublin, had a meal and did the student consultation in the hotel.
Ballymun Adult Read & Write Scheme	Trip to the National Stud and the Japanese Gardens Co. Kildare
Baltinglass FETC	With Blessington Centre (FETC) visited the Irish Emigration Museum (EPIC) in Dublin.
Blessington FETC	With Baltinglass visited the Irish Emigration Museum (EPIC) in Dublin.
Bray Adult Learning Centre	With Wicklow Centre visited the museum at Collins Barracks, Dublin, followed by lunch.
Caherciveen ABE	Visit a group in Killarney, trip to Kells Bay Gardens and had a talk on nutrition.
Cavan Monaghan ETB	Ran an art exhibition in Monaghan Library that showcased 38 learners' work (more than half the learners had learning disabilities). Some of the learners visited the National Gallery in Dublin.
CDETB Adult Education Service, Finglas	Three groups of students (English language and literacy, mainstream literacy and students studying history) visited Newgrange, Co. Meath.
CETB Cork South West Adult Literacy Service	Students from Carrigaline, Macroom and Ballincollig went to Collins Barracks, Dublin for a guided tour of the Military Museum.
Clare Family Learning Project	Syrian Refugees and a group of asylum seekers from the Direct Provision Centre visited Killarney.

Coolock Darndale Adult Literacy Service	Visited the Epic Museum in CHQ building, Dublin followed by lunch.
Cork ETB Mitcehelstown Adult Literacy	Trip to Lismore Castle Gardens and Gallery guided tour, Waterford.
Dingle FET	Trip around Dingle Harbour in two boats to see Fungie and the coast of West Kerry. Lunch in Benner's Hotel.
Donegal ETB, Finn Valley Centre, Stranorlar.	Visited Oakfield Park in Raphoe, Co. Donegal, refreshments and activities within the park.
Dublin 8	Visited Bloom Show.
Dunmanway Further Education and Training Centre	Visited Charles Fort in Kinsale, the largest military fort in the country. Lunch and discussion in the Blue Haven, Kinsale.
East Cork FE and Youthreach Centre, Youghal, Cork ETB	Students from three different towns visited the Rock of Cashel and did a guided tour, then went to Clonmel.
Fermoy and Mallow Adult Education Centres	Fermoy students visited Fota House and kitchen gardens. Mallow, Millstreet and Newmarket students visited Fota Wildlife Park. The two groups met in Cobh for small group discussions and lunch.
Further Education & Training Centre, Maynooth	Learners wrote, drew or painted something for a centre publication.
GRETB Castlerea/Ballaghaderreen/Boyle	Visited the National Irish Stud Farm, Newbridge Silverware Museum, Kildare Village and Athlone Springs Hotel.
Inishowen Learning for Living	Visited Oakfield Park in Raphoe where we met with our colleagues from Finn Valley.
Ionad Oideachais Aosaigh Ghort a' Choirce	Visited the Training Centre in Letterkenny and toured Oakfield Park gardens with a talk from the head gardener.
Kenmare Adult Basic Education	Trip to Killarney including visit to Muckcross Traditional Farms and Killarney House.
Kildare Town Adult Literacy & Basic Education	Visited Collins Barracks and Kilmainham Gaol lunch together.

Kilkenny Adult Learning Centre KCETB	Visited the Dunbrody Famine Ship in New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Killarney Adult Literacy & Basic Education	Hosted Cahersiveen adult basic education students to come to Killarney to Killarney centre and take tour of Killarney House and Gardens including the interactive exhibition at the house and had lunch afterwards.
Killorglin Adult Literacy Basic Education	Visited Listry Creamery, Killarney House & Gardens, Lunch in International Hotel.
KLEAR Adult Education Centre Literacy Service	Coach trip with information talk on route to Emo Court for guided tour of the mansion, walk through woodland and wild-flower meadows, 11's and lunch.
Letterkenny Learning for Living	Tour of Glenveagh castle and gardens.
Listowel & Castleisland ABE group	Visited historical place and went on a lake cruise in Killarney, Co. Kerry. We also enjoyed a light lunch.
Millstreet Adult Learning Centre	Visited Kerry County Museum and a Historical exhibition at the same venue.
Moycullen Adult Learning Centre	Visited Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh - Pearse Cottage Cultural Centre.
Naas Further Education and Training Centre	Word Processing QQI Level 3 group went on a guided historical tour of Kilmainham Gaol.
Newbridge Further Education and Training Centre	Communications group attended the Japanese Gardens and Irish National Stud and took a guided tour of the grounds and museum.
South Donegal Learning for Living Programme	With Gortahorke group, visited and had a tour of the Letterkenny Training Centre and visited Oakfield Park.
South Inner-City Adult Education Service CDET B	Visited Bloom Show.
Tuam and Headford Adult Literacy Agency	Visited Bridget's Garden, an open-air museum dedicated to nature, Celtic calendar and wildlife.
Wicklow Adult Learning Centre	Visited Museum of Decorative Arts (Collins Barracks). Met students from another centre. Lunch together.
WWETB Adult Literacy, Gorey, Co. Wexford	Trip to the Dunbrody Emigrant Ship and the National 1798 Rebellion Centre.

WWETB Cappoquin Adult Education Centre	Visited the Titanic Experience, Cobh.
<b>Youthreach centres</b>	<b>Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019</b>
Ballyshannon Youthreach	Visited Dublin on the train, did a bus tour and went to the theatre to see "The Snapper".
Youthreach Mahon	Visited Fota Wildlife Park, Cork.
Tralee Youthreach	Visited Fota Wildlife Park, Cork.
Drogheda Youthreach	Ran a First Aid course in the Centre for 10 students as part of summer programme and work experience preparation.
Youthreach Bandon	Outdoor activity team building day.
Listowel Youthreach	Trip to Tayto Park.
West Wicklow Youthreach	Trip to Tayto Park and took part in an Animal Conservation Tour. Lunch for all learners.
Shanagolden Youthreach	Boat trip on Shannon Ferries boat on the River Shannon and visited a monastic settlement called Scattery Island. After visited the Irish Whale and Dolphin group in Kilrush, Co. Clare.
Youthreach Gortahork	We went to Inis Owey on a camping expedition.
Macroom Youthreach Centre	Hosted an event to welcome Asylum seekers to our Town and compiled an information Booklet of beneficial local services. Trip to Collins Barracks.
Letterkenny Youthreach	Workshops, visited a charity, held a coffee morning and special screening of a film during summer programme in June on the theme of homelessness.
Youthreach Blanchardstown	Visited Go Quest and took part in teamwork games.
Mid Clare Youthreach	Three-day trip to Belfast visiting Ulster Museum, Crumlin Gaol and the Titanic Exhibition.
Youthreach Ballincollig	Day trip to Spike Island, Cobh.
Waterford Youth Training and Education Centre (WYTEC)	Visited Sheilbaggan Outdoor Adventure Centre as start of year activity to welcome new trainees to our centre.

<b>NLNs</b>		<b>Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019</b>
NLN, Clonmel (An Caire)		Viking Splash Tour of Dublin and the Dublin Zoo. Also visited Forbidden Planet, the comic book store.
NLN, Blyry and Belhavel and Rehab Care		Students from three training and care centres around Athlone met and had a BBQ and sports day in the Blyry centre.
NLN, Sligo		Visit to Croke Park and split it two. One group went on the Skyline Tour and other went on Stadium Tour.
NLN, Wexford		Visited the Irish National Heritage Park in Wexford. Taken back 9,000 years on journey of Irish History.
NLN, Kilkenny		Trip to Hook Head and Loftus Hall in Wexford.
<b>VTOS</b>		<b>Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019</b>
VTOS Gortahork		Team building day in Gartan outdoor centre and day out in Tropical World, Letterkenny followed by lunch.
VTOS Scarriff, County Clare		Went to Craggaunoun and food after in Bunratty Castle.
VTOS Shanagolden		Trip to The Titanic Experience, Cobh. Took ferry to Spike Island for guided tour of historic buildings and prison. Also visited Cobh Cathedral.
VTOS Sligo		Mindfulness and meditation retreat to Jampa Ling, the Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Co. Cavan.
VTOS Tullamore		Visited the National Museum of Ireland and visited The Guinness Store House.
VTOS Kilkenny		Trip to Dublin to visit Farmleigh House, The Guinness Brewery and to see a play "The Glass Menagerie" in the Gate Theatre.
VTOS Nenagh (Teach an Leinn)		Visited Glasnevin Cemetery and The Botanical Gardens.
<b>CTCs</b>		<b>Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019</b>
Stoneybatter CTC		Group activity to The Escape Room in Dublin.

Galway CTC	Visited the Pony Show at Maam Cross.
Cherry Orchard CTC	Visited Explorium, the science and sports Interactive exhibition in South Dublin.
Kylemore CTC	Trip to the Belfast Titanic Museum with a fantastic coach driver who studied history at Trinity and took the group on a short political tour in Belfast.
Tuam CTC	Group of over 18-year-old males visited the Epic Museum, Dublin to learn about our history and our ancestor's past.
<b>Nine other centres</b>	<b>Activity undertaken with funding from NALA in 2019</b>
Anne Le Roy Centre	Visited Lismore Heritage Centre, virtual reality tour of castle, learned history and some of the group tried on clothing from the 1930's.
Candle Community Trust	Visited Explorium Centre in Dundrum. Young people experienced a new fun and interactive learning environment.
Cork Simon Employment and Training	Visited Ballymaloe Gardens and did a tour with Jamie Allen.
Dundalk Drop-in Centre Louth Leader Partnership	Visited Carlingford and did a guided mountain trek.
Exchange House Ireland National Traveller Service	Paintballing and had lunch as a group.
Rehabilitative Training Unit	Enjoy Tennis Programme with Tennis Ireland for trainees who are recovering from brain injuries.
SOS Kilkenny Clg	Drama group visited Bord Gais Theatre to see "Grease". They experienced first-hand the scale of a professional production ahead of putting on their own show.
Spirasi	Day Trip to Glendalough for a day trip
Drop-In Intercultural Centre, Tallaght	Visited the Dail and Chirstchurch Cathedral (two events).



## **Appendix 2: Comments when discussing tuition hours**

Centres were asked to record any comments they felt NALA should know about, after discussing the hours tuition and intensive courses. We have grouped the responses by themes that came up most frequently. The number of centres that raised the themes is in brackets after the theme below:

### **Great interest in technology and online learning (8 centres)**

Some students would like intensive IT courses. Others would prefer short classes as to catch up with technology changes once a month while continuing literacy each week. Some students want more computer classes. Many would like computer courses that include overall spelling and grammar. Not technical computer courses such as spreadsheets, payroll or bookkeeping. There was an interest in online based courses tailored to their needs. More distance learning opportunities to expand on what is covered in class. Many students are savvy and enjoy online learning. Some centres are interested in new resources and suggested NALA develop apps.

### **ESOL students would like more intensive courses (4 centres)**

Asylum seekers would welcome a more intensive approach and want to integrate and learn as much and as fast as possible. Sometimes ESOL students are progressed onto a certified course when they could do with a more intensive, lengthier basic course. ESOL learners want language skills to be able to use their trades and prior learning in their new country. More thematic based classes. Many students, for example from Syria, with little or no English need a lot of English language support. They need help for everyday living.

### **Some younger students want more tuition hours (3 centres)**

Students in two community training centres and one Youthreach centre said they would like more hours for literacy and numeracy.

### **Some students do not want to do more tuition hours (4 centres)**

Many students said they were very happy with the learning in the centre and with the number of hours they were doing. Students also said they felt comfortable with small

numbers in the class and the one to one provision. They were also happy that it was not a school setting. Traveller students said that while literacy was very important but they felt that shorter sessions suited them better. Students from a centre in Donegal said that if classes are too long, they find it hard to concentrate. Some students with disabilities said they would not be able to focus for a long period of time if they did an intensive course. Another centre only had volunteer tutors and were not able to offer more than 1 to 2 hours tuition for a student per week.

### **Appendix 3: Other issues raised by centres**

On the report to NALA we asked “Are there any other issues you want to use this opportunity to tell NALA about?” Many centres took the opportunity to thank NALA for the funding. They said they could see on the ground the difference events make. Other issues raised related to:

#### **ESOL pressures (3 centres)**

Two centres said there can be pressure to get certification and not all students are able to achieve certificates. One Youthreach centre said that schools were not equipped to deal with ESOL students. The schools were then recommending students to Youthreach. Also, students can be put under pressure from Seetec or Social Welfare to enrol on courses to keep benefits. One centre said “Often courses are way beyond their capabilities even with really good support from our service.” More support is needed.

#### **Continuous professional development (CPD) (3 centres)**

More students are enrolling who have very low literacy levels in their own languages. Also, some students have special educational needs. There needs to be further support and training for our tutors who are working hard to support ESOL students. One CTC had a tutor who was previously a secondary school teacher but was looking for help with students at Level 3. One centre was looking for CPD outside of the usual tuition hours.

#### **Two other issues were raised by (2 centres)**

Interest expressed in exploring climate change and the need to simplify the Driver Theory Test.

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An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna  
Further Education and Training Authority



**National Adult Literacy Agency**  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



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