

Literacy Matters

Keeping you up to date with literacy news in Ireland and informing you of the work the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is doing.



Celebrating learners
on International
Literacy Day.

Page 6

Sporting legends support literacy

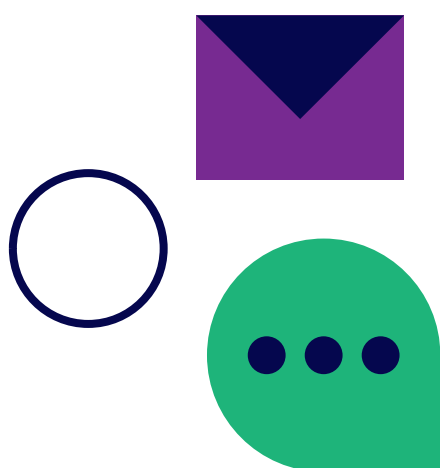
'LEGENDS' features 15 of Ireland's greatest sports stars. The book is edited by Patricia Scanlan for emerging adult readers.

Highlighting literacy, numeracy and digital literacy at the National Ploughing Championships.

New cancer health literacy course launched.

Contents

In this edition	3
Sporting legends line out to support literacy	4
Celebrating learners on International Literacy Day	6
Review of 'LEGENDS'	8
National Ploughing Championships	12
Putting pen to paper - Read Gerry's story	14
Intergenerational family learning	18
Recent research from NALA	20
Volunteers needed	21
Literacy outreach	22
Understanding literacy - A new eLearning course	24
NALA Student Development Fund	25
Health literacy and cancer care	26
Making plain language a priority	28
Watch our recent webinars	30
Dates for your diary	31



On the cover

Pictured launching the 'LEGENDS' book are rally and racing driver, Rosemary Smith, with Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board student, Maurice Sammon, and adult literacy ambassador, Michael Duffy from Cavan.

The views expressed in Literacy Matters are not necessarily the views of NALA.

In this edition

Welcome to the winter edition of Literacy Matters. In this edition we share an update on what we've been up to in the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

In September we were proud to host a very special event at the Aviva Stadium to mark International Literacy Day. This event saw the launch of our new book 'LEGENDS' featuring stories from the lives of 15 of Ireland's greatest sport stars. 'LEGENDS' is edited by Patricia Scanlan and published by New Island. Find out more on page 4. Our celebration featured learner stories and poems and a presentation ceremony of QQI Awards and Certificates to adult learners. You can read about this on page 6.

On page 14 we share the inspiring story of Gerry Daly. Gerry returned to education with Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (ETB) and has just published his own collection of poetry.

NALA has launched two new eLearning courses in recent months. On page 24, you can find out more about our Understanding Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy course on **learnwithnala.ie**. On page 26, we share information on our course on good health literacy practice in cancer care. This course was created in partnership with the Irish Cancer Society and funded by MSD Ireland.

We continue to provide support if you or anyone you know would like to brush up on reading, writing, maths or technology. Call us on **Freephone 1800 20 20 65** or text **LEARN** to **50050**.

Best wishes from all the team at NALA

Using Quick Response (QR) codes

In this edition we use QR codes to share links and further information. To open these on a smartphone:

1. Open your Camera app and point it steadily for 2-3 seconds towards the QR Code you want to scan.
2. A website link will appear. Tap on this link. This will open it on the internet browser on your phone.
3. If nothing happens, you may need to go to your Settings app and enable QR Code scanning.



Scan on your phone

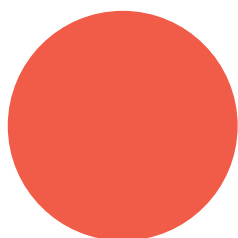
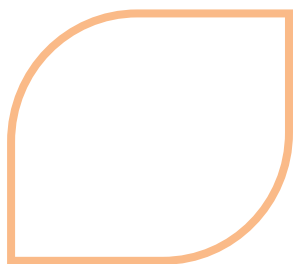


Rally and racing driver, Rosemary Smith, with Tipperary Education and Training Board student, Liam Cleere.

Sporting legends line out to support literacy.

'LEGENDS', a new book of sporting stories, was developed by NALA, Patricia Scanlan and New Island to encourage emerging readers to have a go at reading.

'LEGENDS' is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Thousands of copies of the book will be provided for free to students nationwide and will also be available to borrow from all libraries in Ireland. The book includes stories from Gavin Bazunu, Ronnie Delany, Keith Earls, A.P. McCoy, Barry McGuigan, Philly McMahon, Valerie Mulcahy, Paul O'Connell, Bonnar Ó Loingsigh, Sonia O'Sullivan, Niall Quinn, Henry Shefflin, Rosemary Smith, Cora Staunton and Katie Taylor.



Tipperary Education and Training Board student, Margaret Hanrahan, with Rosemary Smith.

The stories in 'LEGENDS' are edited in plain English to support anyone who isn't confident about reading and for some, it may be the first book they read. LEGENDS is accompanied by a free workbook - Legends Matter with reading and writing exercises, puzzles, quizzes and other learning activities.



"From my work in libraries years ago, I know there is a need for easy to read, interesting books, for adults returning to learning. We hope the 'LEGENDS' book will attract new emerging readers, who are interested in sport, and will promote and encourage reading."

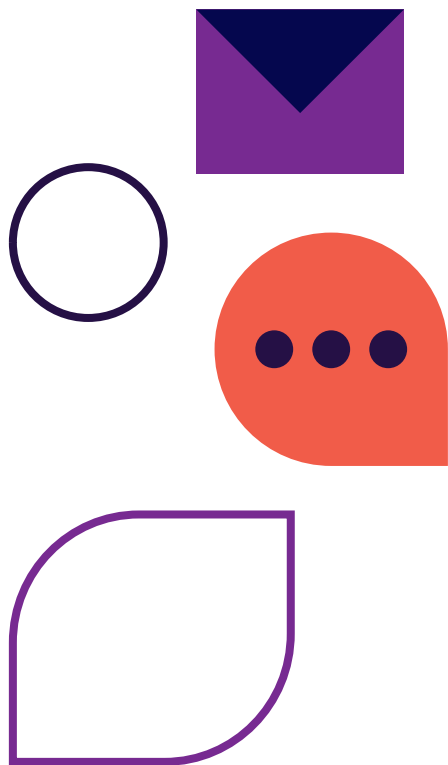
Patricia Scanlan, author and LEGENDS editor



Order 'LEGENDS'

Scan the QR code to order copies of 'LEGENDS' and Legends Matter for your centre or call us on Freephone **1 800 20 20 65**





Learner Keith McConnon receiving his certificate from SOLAS CEO, Andrew Brownlee.

Celebrating learners on International Literacy Day

NALA was proud to host a very special learner celebration event featuring a graduation ceremony, learner stories and poems.

On 8 September, to mark International Literacy Day, over 170 people joined us at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin. The event featured learner stories and poems, and culminated with a presentation ceremony of QQI Awards and Certificates to about fifty adult learners from all over Ireland. The learners received awards because they worked with NALA tutors over the phone, or used the Learn With NALA website to get their QQI Awards and Certification.



Learners from Cope Foundation celebrate with their awards.

Some learners used a combination of these services with the support of their tutor and education provider. The awards were presented by NALA CEO, Colleen Dube, with SOLAS CEO, Andrew Brownlee.



"Choosing to learn or work towards an Award or Certification has its challenges and requires great commitment and perseverance. I commend you for all you have achieved. Remember this is just the start of your educational journey and there are lots of options to continue learning if you want to."

Colleen Dube, NALA CEO

We were also proud to have learners join us to speak on day the including Michael Duffy who shared his story of returning to education with Cavan and Monaghan ETB. Maurice Sammon from Waterford and Wexford ETB and Liam Cleere from Tipperary ETB each shared a creative writing piece with the audience.

From everyone at NALA, a huge congratulations to all the learners on their achievements.

Review of 'LEGENDS'

One literacy group in the Portlaoise Prison Education Unit agreed to review the newly published 'LEGENDS' reader and 'Legends Matter' workbook and give their feedback. Here's how they got on.

About the Education Unit in Portlaoise Prison

Portlaoise Prison is a maximum security prison based in the midlands. The Education Unit supports the men in prison to return to, or continue with, their education by supporting literacy and numeracy skills, vocational skills and completing further and higher education too.

'LEGENDS' - A teacher's view

Using 'LEGENDS' helped to give students confidence, encourage reading and promote reading as a social activity, writes Shauna Gilligan from the Portlaoise Prison Education Unit.

Using 'LEGENDS' in class

Over a period of three months, integrated into English, reading, and literacy classes, we used NALA's new reader 'LEGENDS' and the accompanying workbook in the following ways:

1. One-to-one reading sessions
2. Paired reading
3. Group reading
4. Readathon

Experience of reading 'LEGENDS'

The **layout** of the text as well as the choice of subject matter appealed to the students. As we read each story at our own pace, I saw their confidence grow – confidence not only in reading but also in vocabulary, evident in the resulting discussions.



"As we read each story at our own pace, I saw their confidence grow – confidence not only in reading but also in vocabulary, evident in the resulting discussions."

Shauna Gilligan



The range of **vocabulary** in each text also worked well – from subject-specific words and phrases to everyday language – which provided a healthy mix of challenging and uncomplicated text.

The **length** of each text was key to the reading experience. When time is an issue it was great to be able to read a quarter or a half of a story or chapter in one sitting. In a paired reading session or group reading session, we often finished a whole text, which gave everyone a great sense of satisfaction.

Reading, writing and talking: Building on reading and discussions

Very often, after trying out some of the corresponding exercises in the workbook, students then wrote their own piece on the topic – for example, using A.P. McCoy's piece on The Grand National to write about horses, or The Grand National.

We participated in a Readathon where a group of students and teachers read Gavin Bazunu's "From Ringsend to Tallaght" aloud, with each person present reading a paragraph aloud, at their own pace. After doing this, students were interested in each other's experiences of reading stories from the collection. We all agreed that the Readathon gave everyone confidence, encouraged reading and promoted reading as a social activity – more than an obligation for course work, class work, or a personal goal or task to do. We plan to do a Readathon once a month and look forward to reading our way (aloud!) through more of the chapters and other Open Door books.



I asked students working with me if they would like to co-write a piece on the experience of reading 'LEGENDS' and also using the workbook. The students were very happy to give their feedback and the quotes below were given over the course of a few months.

'LEGENDS' - The student experience



"I found it to be an easy read, particularly the way it is printed on the page. I also liked the vocabulary that is used - every day words that we recognise."



"If you had any bit of reading, you'd be able to give these stories a go."



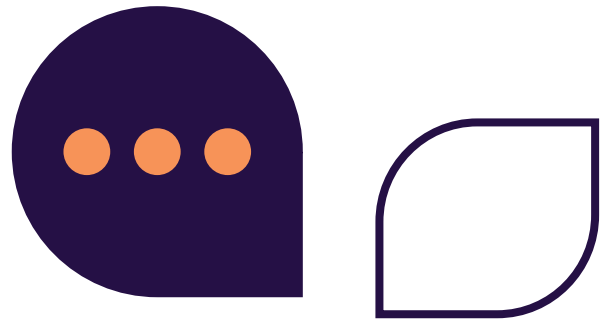
"I enjoyed reading in a group when we read Gavin Bazunu's 'From Ringsend to Tallaght' as part of Laois and Offaly ETB Inclusion Week in November 2022."



"The writing is good on the page. It's nice to read."



"It was an enjoyable and light read. There is something for everyone in this collection of stories - whether you're into GAA, Boxing, Football - there is a story for you."



Legends Matter workbook - The student experience



"I enjoyed the code-breaking exercise after reading A.P. McCoy's memoir. It was good to go over the order of the alphabet again."



"Some of the exercises seem simple but are actually difficult."



"I liked the word searches, they helped me learn new words."



"Some of the exercises are difficult or impossible to do without the internet. For example, the exercise on page 57 about interesting facts about cities and countries. Without the internet, we tried to link this exercise to the corresponding text but it was hard!"



Share your feedback

Have you used 'LEGENDS' or the Legends Matter workbook? Let us know how you got on by emailing Helen at hyran@nala.ie



National Ploughing Championships

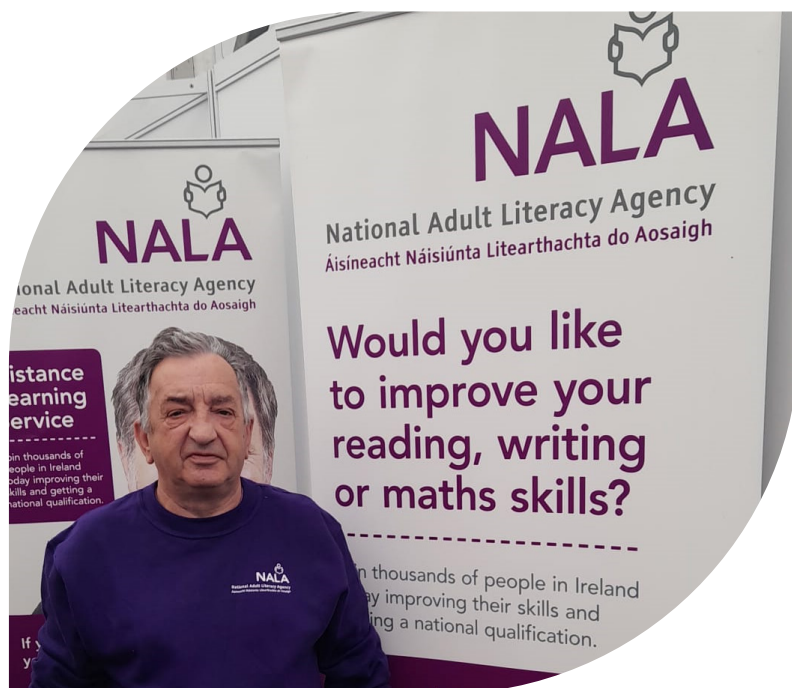
In September, a team of NALA student ambassadors and staff headed down to the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, County Laois to share information on literacy, numeracy and digital literacy supports.

We were delighted to be back at the National Ploughing Championships this year. For the three days of the event, students and NALA staff distributed merchandise, resources and referrals to Education and Training Boards and other relevant organisations. Huge thank you to students who joined us on the day and shared their story at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science stand. Speaking at the Ploughing adult literacy ambassador, Kevin O'Duffy, said: "Crossing the door of the centre was very nerve-racking. But it also was a huge weight off my shoulders and I've never looked back."



"I want to tell other people in the farming community who may have problems with writing or using the computer that there's nothing to be worried about."

Kevin O'Duffy



Kevin O'Duffy

"That's why I'm here today, at the NALA stand at the National Ploughing Championships," said Kevin. "I want to tell other people in the farming community who may have problems writing or using the computer that there's nothing to be worried about."

Highlighting literacy, numeracy and digital needs

We also held an anonymous survey with attendees at the Ploughing Championships to get a better understanding of the public's confidence with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

Using technology

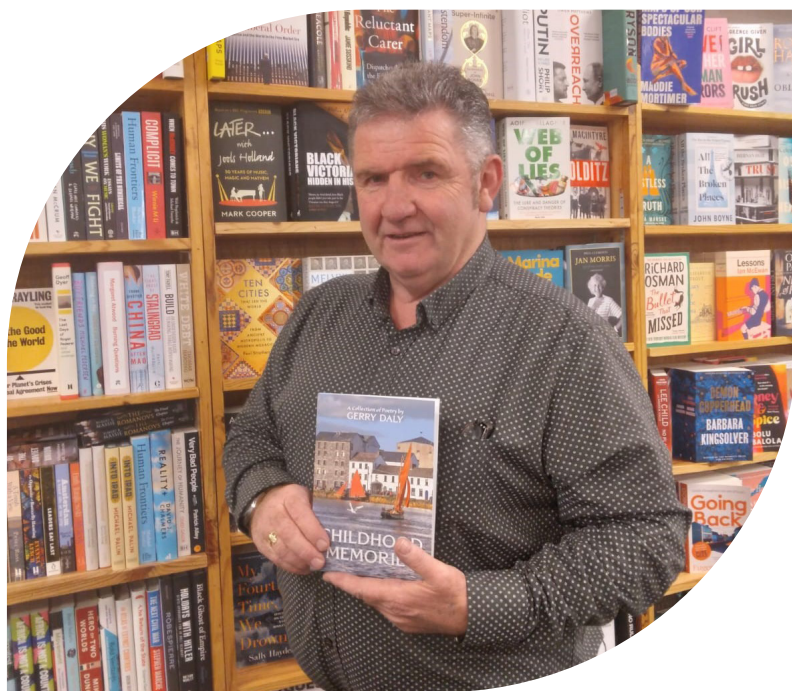
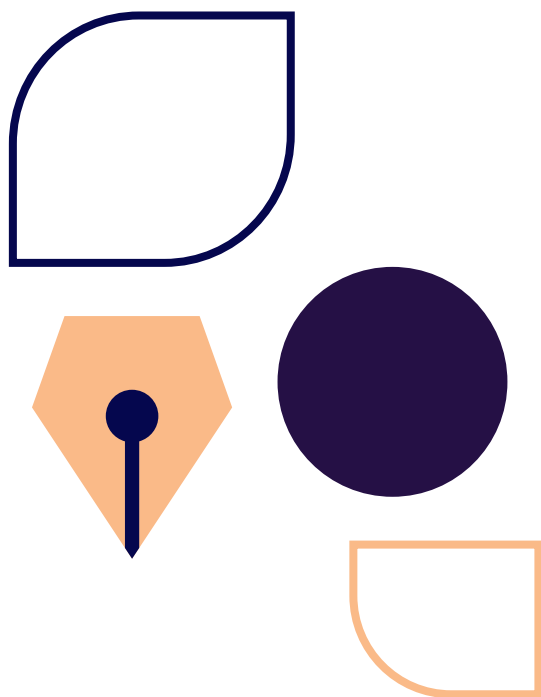
74% of people surveyed said that either they or their family and friends have difficulty using technology, for example using the internet to find information or use services.

Reading and writing

45% of people surveyed said that either they or their family and friends have difficulty reading, writing or spelling, for example filling in forms or understanding information.

Math

38% of people surveyed said that either they or their family and friends have difficulty doing math or numeracy, for example, adding up prices, working out medicine dosage or measuring quantities.



Gerry Daly with his new poetry book, *Childhood Memories* in Charlie Byrne's bookshop, Galway.

Putting pen to paper

Gerry Daly returned to education with Galway Adult Basic Education Service. He has just launched his first book, *Childhood Memories*, a collection of poetry that reflects on his life growing up in Galway, and the characters he met along the way.

"I'm an employee of Galway City Council, so maybe 12 years ago Brendan Fox who worked in the City Council rang me one day and informed me that he was looking for a group of people to go back on a course. It was with a man by the name of Tony Sweeney in relation to going back to further education.

"I was lucky in some regards, I never had a difficulty in reading but I had serious trouble, to this day even, with spelling. Needless to say I put my name down and we met with Tony. Tony had a lovely mannerism about him, very gentle spoken, complete and utter opposite to how I was taught as a child."

"I would have been from a family of 14 in Galway. When I was in school back in the 60s and 70s it was a completely different Ireland than what it is now. Back when I was in school it wasn't a very nice place. I was always being branded as stupid. I made the decision one day, I went back up to my mother in the summer holidays and I said I'm not going back up to school. I was 12 I think at the time.

"Through my whole life then I just continued working, one job to another job to another job. The thing is, it was always there and it always sticks with you, that fear.

"I'm 61 years of age. I spent all my life playing League of Ireland football. I was captain of Galway United when I was 19. I always loved sport. I could play on a pitch in front of 20,000 people no problem, but if you asked me tomorrow to meet with you in an office with three other people. We sit down at a desk and you give me a biro I'd completely freeze. It goes down through your body...if I make a mistake, will I be called stupid? It's a frightening experience to try and get across to people."



"I spent all my life playing football. I could play on a pitch in front of 20,000 people but if you asked me to sit down at a desk and give me a biro, I'd completely freeze."

Gerry Daly

Having returned to education with Galway Adult Basic Education Service, part of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (ETB), Gerry's tutor Tony encouraged him to keep going.

"Tony in his clever little way encouraged myself and maybe 2 or 3 more to continue with the course and then came to me then one day and asked me would I be interested in going back and sitting my Junior Cert in English. We used to go down every Tuesday night with Breda and then during the week we'd do our own bits. So I did my Junior Cert after that year. I sat the exam in Moneenageisha School in Galway with a lot of teenagers, 15, 16, 17 year olds and I was in my 50's!

"So then after that Tony approached me again and asked me would I be interested in doing my Leaving Cert in English. Now this was a bigger step as you can imagine because coming from maybe 40 years of doing nothing with books and studying and then all of a sudden in two years being asked to do this. I decided I'll do it, so I went back and I did my other year of study with Brendan and I sat my Leaving Cert."

Gerry describes the impact his tutors had and how their belief helped him to keep going.

"If I hadn't met Tony Sweeney there's no doubt in my mind or life that I would not ever have even considered doing what I did. When I met Tony for the first time it wasn't just a handshake, it was a smile, it was 'how are ya?'. He'd a great persuasive way about him and he'd encourage you. He wouldn't tell you what he thought, he'd be asking you. It's like any walk of life, sometimes it's very important to meet the right person at the right time. And not just Tony. Breda the that taught me my Junior Cert, Brendan that taught me the Leaving. I personally don't think they acknowledge the gifts that they're giving to people.

"Tony said to me, 'How would you describe the teaching of today to the teaching of when you were in school in the 60's and 70's?'. I said, 'If 10 people look at a tree in a field, 10 people will see the same tree, but 10 people will have a different opinion or view of that tree. The teacher that taught us only taught us what he saw, but never asked us what we saw'."



I want people that went through what I went through, to read my book and be able to say, I'm going to try and go back and do something."

Gerry Daly

Gerry says that, in the years that followed, he began to develop a passion for writing and poetry and how it led him to publish his first book of poetry 'Childhood Memories'.

"I always had a passion for words and my head was always full of stories. I used to always write bits of poetry but I'd be embarrassed to show them to people. Marguerite Tonery in Tribes Press had read a poem of mine in the local paper and she rang me to ask me about it and she asked, 'Do you have any more poems?'. She said could you get them up to me, and I did.

"I want people that went through what I went through, to read my book, one line in one poem, and be able to say, I'm going to try and go back and do something. If it can help one person that has adult literacy problems that would do me. I will never ever be ashamed to say I have difficulty in spelling because I have. If I'd a broken leg I'd be asking people to sign my cast. I would love the book to go to classes to see, look it, this is what a guy in Galway did.

"Somebody asked me weeks back about the poems. I said, 'Look, they're not the best poems in the world, they're not the worst poems in the world, but they're my poems'. They come from me, from the heart, from the brain and from my little right hand with a biro and that's the main thing."

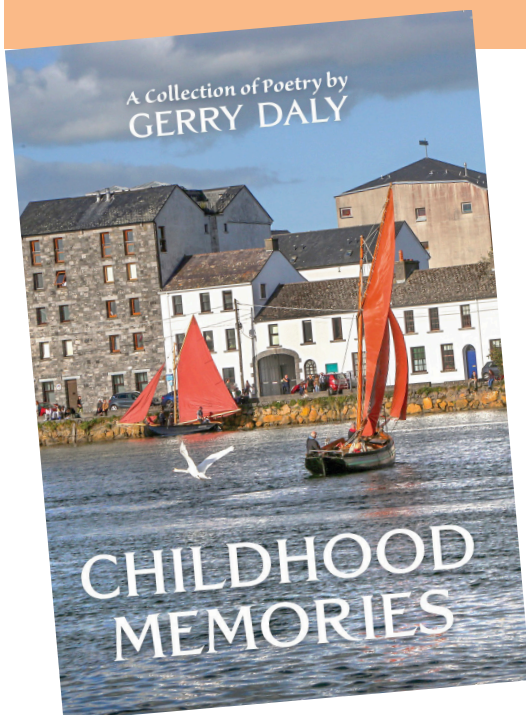
The Classroom

By Gerry Daly

I stare at the clock all morning,
Not interested in learning.
With each tick, I urge the hands forward.
Only occasional outbursts of,
"Are you paying attention at the back?"
Force my frightened eyes to smile,
The false smile.
His black suit and six-foot stance
Demands respect.
A cane rests on the desk ready at
Will to inflict pain.
I stare at the clock.

Like grinding teeth, chalk is slowly
Moving across the blackboard.
An uneasy silence fills the classroom.
These four grey walls echo the fears
Of many before me.

I feel their pain,
An address, a scar for life
I stare at the clock.
Time and tide have left me in their stride
And now seeking peace in forced sleep.
My dreams are of days of yore.
The classroom, the blackboard, the clock.



Scan the QR code to
purchase a copy of
Childhood Memories or
visit **tribespress.com**





Intergenerational family learning

Parents, grandparents and children joined forces as part of an innovative family learning programme, writes Carmel O'Neill, Family Learning tutor and Programme Coordinator, and Rachel White, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Family Learning tutor, with Kilkenny and Carlow ETB.

At the beginning of June, Kilkenny Adult Education Service, part of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, began an Intergenerational Family Learning programme in Newpark Family Resource Centre. This programme ran for eight weeks with the aim to create an opportunity for parents, grandparents, and children to come together to improve their conversational English and to help parents settle into and become familiar with their new surroundings while getting to know other people in their community.

'Sirko' - A Ukrainian story of friendship

The theme of the programme was based on the book 'Sirko' which is a famous Ukrainian folktale. The book we used was retold and illustrated by Olha Tkachenko. It is illustrated in bright colours and is fantastic resource for generating classroom discussion and creativity. 'Sirko' tells the story of the beautiful friendship between a dog and a wolf, where the dog and the wolf become friends and come to rely on each other. It is a story that celebrates kindness, honesty, and bravery.

All programme participants were familiar with the story of 'Sirko'. This presented as an opportunity for learners to share their memories of hearing the story for the first time. We looked at the cartoon version of 'Sirko' on YouTube as this was the most familiar medium for learners. We then studied each page of the book in detail. This book is rich with conversational opportunities for ESOL learners to share their own experiences. This involved discussion on the history of folktales, famous folktales in Ireland and Ukraine and how certain animals are depicted in these tales. We explored farming life in Ireland and Ukraine, traditional dress and dance, geography, national foods, wedding customs in both countries and cultural symbols.

Sharing skills from home

During the second part of this eight-week programme participants made the characters from the story of 'Sirko'. Learners went to great lengths to create beautifully stuffed animals to depict Sirko and the wolf along with other props that featured in the book. This was a great way for learners to share the skills and knowledge they had used in their home country, skills which have been passed on through generations. Everyone found a craft to suit their strength and ability whether that was knitting, sewing, painting, literacy, or digital skills. These activities generated plenty of discussion and lots of opportunities for learners to practise English speaking.

Once the project was completed, we were warmly welcomed to 'showcase' it in Kilkenny City library. On the evening the story of 'Sirko' was read in both Ukrainian and English and it gave the public a chance to enjoy the folktale and see the beautifully handcrafted characters. This was a wonderful evening of celebration for all involved and a way of appreciating and recognising the work of all involved.

Following on from this event the library is going to use this resource in December for a story telling event for primary school children. 'Sirko' also has plans to travel to the many Kilkenny Adult Learning Service outreach centres and primary schools around the county, so that children and parents can enjoy the benefits of this intergenerational project.

Recent research from NALA

NALA recently launched two new research reports on family literacy provision and defining numeracy.

Family literacy provision

NALA's report examined family literacy provision outside of Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Ireland. The research identified some specific support needs for groups (for example, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Travellers) and preferences for resources (creation of a central repository) and professional development (face to face, networking and webinars). It also highlighted substantial expertise that could be harnessed in the future.

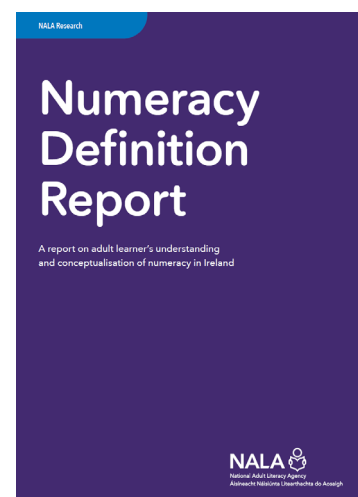
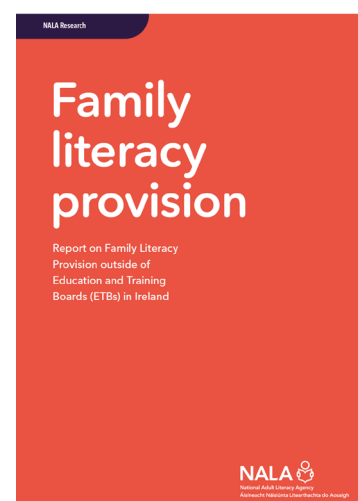
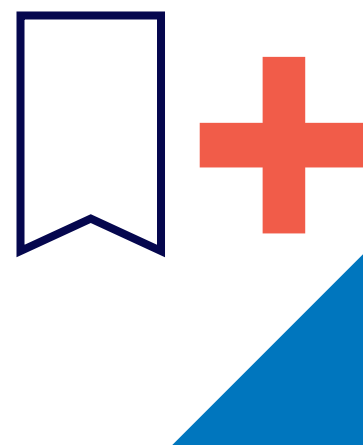
Numeracy Definition Report

The Numeracy Definition Report was written to support the development of a working definition for numeracy in Ireland. The report showed that:

- People associate numeracy with mathematics, a subject which many had a poor experience of in school.
- People underestimate their numeracy skills.
- The Common European Numeracy Framework (CENF) could be a good fit for understanding and defining numeracy in adult education.



View our recent research on the NALA website: nala.ie/research





Volunteers needed

Are you based in Dublin and interested in becoming an Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor?

City of Dublin Education and Training Board is running a volunteer tutor training course for anyone living and or working in Dublin 2, 4, 6, 6W, 8, 10 and 12. The course will run from January to May 2023 on Monday evenings, from 7pm to 9.30pm. All applicants will be interviewed before the course starts

For further details and to register your interest, please contact the following Adult Literacy Organisers with your name and number and they will be in touch.



Catherine Twomey - Dublin 10 - catherine.twomey@aes.cdetb.ie

Denise Shannon - Dublin 2, 4, 6, 8 - denise.shannon@aes.cdetb.ie

Marie Reilly - Dublin 6W, 8, 12 - marie.reilly@aes.cdetb.ie



Derv Ryan, Literacy Development and Outreach Worker with NALA.

Literacy outreach

Meet Derv Ryan, who recently joined NALA as our Literacy Development and Outreach Worker.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your experience before you joined NALA?

"My background is in Community Development and supporting marginalised communities to campaign for their rights. I've been lucky enough to work with some brilliant communities and organisations. They taught me a lot about fairness, social justice and equality. I campaigned for rights with migrant workers working in care work, restaurants, fishing and sex work. I also worked with an environmental organisation and taught English to international students."

What is the Literacy Development and Outreach Worker role?

"My role is to find ways of making sure everyone knows about adult literacy classes and supports and feel comfortable to go. Many people don't get information online, on TV or in newspapers. They get information through word of mouth from their friends, family or other people they trust."

"I need to learn about all the places and spaces in communities where people share information by talking to different organisations and groups. I hope to also work with current and former adult literacy students to help spread the word in communities across the country. The best outreach is done by people who have the most experience."

How does this role tie in the with Adult Literacy for Life Strategy?

"The Adult Literacy for Life Strategy is the Government's 10-year Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to get more people into adult literacy classes and supports. It also aims to make Ireland more literacy-friendly. This means making sure all people can access public services and get information no matter what their needs are. There are 12 priority groups named in the strategy. We want to make sure people in these groups know what classes and supports are available and feel comfortable accessing them if they want to."

Older Adults (55+)	Members of the Traveller Community	Person's with Disabilities	Migrants
Low-paid workers	Carers	One-parent households	International Protection Applicants
Incarcerated Persons and Ex Offenders	Persons Recovering from Addiction	Long-term Unemployed	People with Language Needs

How have you been getting on in the role so far?

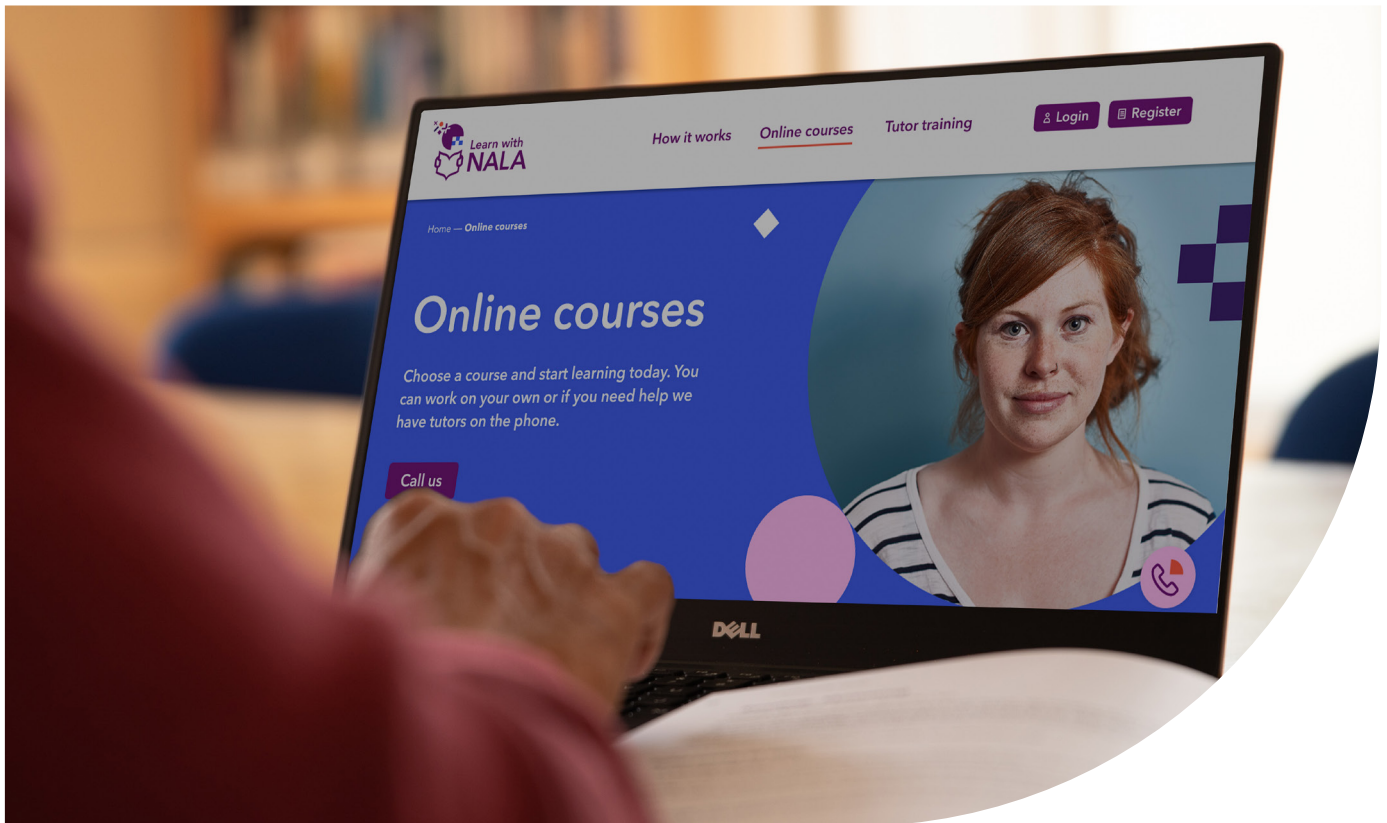
"Great! The students, staff and board in NALA have taught me so much already. I am learning all the time. I am meeting some great organisations who are supporting people and communities across Ireland. They are supporting people who are having a tough time, whether that's settling into Ireland as a refugee, going through recovery from addiction or not being treated properly in their job. I am also learning a lot about the great work done by tutors in the Education and Training Board Adult Literacy Services and in community-based education programmes."

How can organisations or groups get in touch?

"I would like to hear from any organisation working with people who may have unmet needs when it comes to reading, writing and everyday maths. This could be organisations supporting people in any of the priority groups. It would be great to hear from organisations supporting people with a first language other than English who have unmet literacy needs. I am also keen to hear from organisations supporting people in recovery. I want to learn more about people's experiences, the barriers they face and any gaps in the supports available."



You can get in touch by emailing dryan@nala.ie or phoning **01 255 1868**.



Understanding literacy

NALA have just launched a new eLearning course on learnwithnala.ie on understanding adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

NALA hopes this online course will give a better understanding of adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs. The course has three sections:

1. Literacy, numeracy and digital literacy
2. Scale, causes and effects
3. Literacy for life

During this course, you will hear from literacy students and ambassadors about their learning experiences and journeys. We thank the students and others who were interviewed for this course and shared their stories.



Sign up: learnwithnala.ie/product?catalog=Understanding-adult-literacy

NALA Student Development Fund

We were delighted to see so many student activities taking place all over Ireland this year thanks to our Student Development Fund. This is a grant funded by SOLAS for centres to pay for a group activity for students outside the classroom.

Kildare and Wicklow ETB



English language students from Kildare, Further Education and Training Centre, Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (ETB), enjoyed a trip to the Irish National Stud and Gardens.

West Donegal ETB



Students from Learning for Living Donegal ETB (Gortahork), Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) visited Oakfield Park estate and gardens.

Care and Love for People



Love and Care for People used the fund to purchase computers for their Youth Club.

Tipperary ETB



Students from Nenagh Lifelong Learning Service, Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB), visited Fota Wildlife Park.



Find out more about our student work: nala.ie/student-advocacy

Health literacy and cancer care

The Irish Cancer Society and NALA recently joined forces to launch a short eLearning course for healthcare professionals that explores good health literacy practice in cancer care. The course was funded by MSD Ireland. It takes about 20 minutes to do the course and it is a mixture of video and text with some interactive exercises.

Health literacy is an essential part of quality, patient-centred care, with important implications for patients' experiences and outcomes. Ireland's recent Health Literacy Survey shows that nearly 1 in 3 people in Ireland have limited health literacy. This means a large number of patients may struggle with reading, understanding and using health information to manage their treatment and care. Cancer health literacy poses a particular set of challenges compared to other types of health literacy. Cancer patients' decisions and treatment schedules are often complex and timely decision-making can be critical. The distress associated with a cancer diagnosis can further impact patients' ability to remember, understand and apply information they need to effectively manage their treatment and care.


In 2021, Irish Cancer Society Support Line and Daffodil Centre nurses received almost 7,500 enquiries relating to cancer treatments and side-effects. These included over 4,000 on managing symptoms and 1,600 on prognosis (likely or expected development of an illness).

Promoting health literacy-friendly practice

The new NALA and Irish Cancer Society self-directed eLearning course aims to:

- Raise awareness of how health literacy issues can affect cancer patients
- Give an overview of health literacy-friendly communication approaches and tips. These include the universal precautions approach to health literacy, teachback and tips for writing plain language patient information.

From the feedback received so far, 100% of respondents said they found it useful and 78% saying they learned something new, with 89% saying they would recommend it to a colleague.



Cancer Health Literacy

This eLearning resource is for healthcare professionals working with cancer patients.

Course duration: 20 minutes Audio is included

Start >



Course feedback - One small change

teach back questions
 literacy needs information
 daily practice questions
 sheet from the patients
 medication labels family member
 literacy friendly information sheet current practice
patients Ask
 Practice training with GPs
 language lay mans
 open questions
 communication skills



"I learned always get patients to repeat to you what you have said, to ensure they have taken in the information."

Course participant



Find out more

Visit the NALA website to find out more and take part in the course:

nala.ie/cancer-health-literacy-elearning-course/

How to make plain language a strategic priority in your organisation

Sarah Slabbert

PLAINlanguage
institute_{cc}

© Plain Language Institute



Making plain language a priority

Sarah Slabbert of the Plain Language Institute in South Africa recently joined Sean Driver, NALA's Plain English Editor and Trainer, for a webinar on how to make plain language a strategic priority in your organisation.

Across the world governments, businesses and third sector organisations are looking to embed a culture of plain language in their work. The benefits are clear with using plain language. It can help save time, money, resources and improve outcomes for services users and staff alike. Whether it's making sure your website is easy to read, your reports are accessible to people who use your services, or having policies and procedures that staff can easily follow, plain language has an essential role in any organisation.

NALA recently held a webinar for members of the NALA Plain English LinkedIn Network and other organisations with Sarah Slabbert of the Plain Language Institute.

Over 80 attendees from across public and private sectors joined us to learn from Sarah's experience working with clients in South Africa and internationally. Sarah presented practical steps you can take to make plain language a strategic priority in your organisation.

These included:

- Start with a Plain Language Strategy
- Align Plain Language with your organisation's values and core purpose
- Understand the trends and make the business case
- Look for commitment rather than buy-in: Encourage others to take responsibility
- Establish a governance structure and baseline
- Market the value of Plain Language and create a Plain Language culture
- Demonstrate a Return on Investment



"How you apply the Plain Language strategy will depend on your organisation's needs and the resources that you have. But it will always entail upskilling teams."

Sarah Slabbert

No one size fits all

"What we have learned is that organisations are unique," said Sarah. "There is no one size fits all. How you apply the Plain Language strategy will depend on your organisation's needs and the resources that you have available. But it will always entail upskilling teams. Plain Language in this context and applying the ISO (International Standards Organisation) Plain Language standard is multidisciplinary. So you need skills in information design and you need to know what the legal requirements of your country are. You need to know the trends, business trends especially. Content development on digital platforms, how does it work? You must be able to do user research. This process is essentially a change management process and that's why we included change management into our training programme."



Watch back

Scan the QR code to watch back the webinar or visit our website to learn more:

nala.ie/plain-english



Watch our recent webinars

NALA has hosted a range of webinars over the last few months that you might find useful.

September webinar series

To mark International Literacy Day in September, NALA hosted a series of webinars under the UNESCO theme Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces.

The theme highlighted how literacy learning occurs beyond traditional 'education' spaces such as in libraries, community, family and workplaces.

Our webinars included:

- Addressing health literacy needs;
- Literacy for liberation;
- Family learning in Ireland; and
- Libraries supporting adult literacy.

Maths Week series

In October for Maths Week 2022, our webinar series covered topics and advice that are useful in maths teaching. These included strategic approaches to teaching algebra and how we use numeracy in our everyday lives.

Family learning series

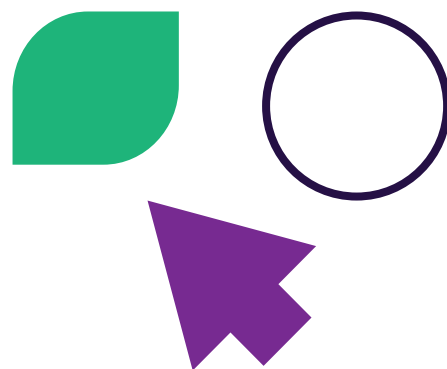
In November, a Family Learning webinar series was held for adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy tutors. The webinars covered family literacy practices and ideas and 'Sirko', a Ukrainian folktale and a storysack.



All webinars are available to watch back on the NALA YouTube channel: youtube.com/nalaireland



Dates for your diary



Upcoming NALA events and online training



Tips and hints to be more literacy friendly

13 December 2022

This webinar for the community and voluntary sector will share hints and tips on how to be more literacy-friendly.



National Tutor's Forum

28 January 2023

Meet tutors from around Ireland at our National Tutor's Forum! Visit our website or contact Fergus at fdolan@nala.ie for more information.



Online Plain English Training

8 February 2023

Do you want to communicate as clearly and effectively as possible? Join our next open plain English training in the new year.

Find out more on our website: nala.ie/news-and-events

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We work to support adults with unmet literacy and numeracy needs to take part fully in society and to have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA does this by raising awareness of the importance of literacy, doing research and sharing good practice, providing online learning courses, providing a tutoring service and by lobbying for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

Message for NALA Members

If you have any queries about your membership or would like to update how you hear from us, please contact Michelle Reade, Governance and Compliance Officer, by email at membership@nala.ie or by telephone on **01 255 1870**.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh, Dublin 6
D06 YF65

Phone: 01 412 7900

Freephone: 1 800 20 20 65

Registered Charity Number: 20020965

Charity Number: 8506

Company Number: 342807

Websites:

nala.ie
learnwithnala.ie

Email: info@nala.ie

f [nalairland](https://www.facebook.com/nalairland)

t [@nalairland](https://twitter.com/nalairland)

NALA 
National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Có-mhainithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union

SOLAS
learning works

Adult Literacy is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Social Fund.