

Educational Centres Association

a decade of



Enterprise Challenge & Achievement



2007 - 2008

Annual Report & Accounts

Mission of Organisation

Provide opportunities for people in local areas to learn together in enjoyable ways that develop individuals & strengthen communities. Assist in the development of local centres for this purpose, especially those promoting adult learning where local people contribute to the ethos & management. To advise & support such local centres & other groups in effective engagement of all ages & sectors of society & to promote sustainable behaviours & community cohesion.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity was founded in 1920 as the Educational Settlements Association. It is a membership body governed by a written Constitution, last amended in 2006, which prescribes the form of the National Executive Committee (NEC) whose members have Trustee status. It was substantially reconstituted in 1994 and there was a complete change of leadership in 1998. The NEC met five times during the year covered by this report.

The officers of the Charity are elected at periodic intervals by open meeting, based on nominations from amongst all registered members.

Regional members of the NEC are elected by postal ballot of members in the designated area.

Notice of nominations and details of elections are circulated in line with the Constitution. Where specific expertise or experience is sought this is identified in the supporting documents and may result in targeted recruitment to co-opted positions. The NEC may establish Thematic or Regional Committees which have sub-committee status.

Policy statements on Equal Opportunities and Sustainability have been agreed and are periodically reviewed. A “Lone Worker” policy has been adopted in recognition of new staff working practices.

The work of the charity is undertaken by volunteers from the NEC and regional contacts, supported by part-time administrative and project staff. Project workers have been employed on short term contracts to: -

1. deliver our sustainability activities under “Every Action Counts”; a DEFRA funded project delivered by a Consortium of which the Association is an active member.
2. enhance our communications capability and in particular the website

In addition a freelance Projects Officer works on behalf of the Association under contract to the Finnish lead partner, as part of a team delivering training developed within our joint Grundtvig project for facilitators of European citizenship education.

A website with a designation [.ac.uk](http://www.ac.uk) is hosted by internet service provider Paston Chase and managed through the National Office. The site was re-launched with additional functionality during the year and the content considerably expanded.

The Association is a member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and the Community Sector Coalition (CSC), as well as in reciprocal membership with the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). During the year the Association signed the Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change and the Wildlife Gardening Manifesto.

Objectives and Activities 2007/08

The Association exists to promote the education of adults.

In particular it seeks to encourage the development of **centres of adult learning** 'Educational Centres' through: -

1. enabling them to work in partnership
2. promoting active involvement of students and staff in their management
3. advocating that suitably equipped and sustainably managed buildings are provided
4. encouraging the exchange of information & providing training and consultation events for the sector
5. organising conferences and publishing material about and in support of their work
6. undertaking educational experiments and projects, especially relating to citizenship and intergenerational learning
7. pursuing research and enquiry into the education of adults

In the period in question this has been achieved through: -

1. Continuing responsibility for coordination of the work of a number of agencies in the West Midlands and maintaining collaboration with colleagues in Finland, Italy & Slovenia.

Working with representatives of six other European agencies concerned with citizenship education and participative approaches in adult education.

Initiating collaborative activities relating to citizenship education in Leicester.

2. Continuing to engage the Ministers and officials at DIUS on issues relating to adult learners and the frameworks for educational provision in which they are participating or wish to take part.

Stressing to Lifelong Learning UK the importance of adult education tutor training, both in enabling teaching staff to contribute to the setting of institutional agendas and also their critical role in acting as the bridge between the institution and its learners.

Continuing to play a significant role in the participative methods of the TEACH project through the lead tutor who has now contributed to these courses across Europe.

3. Identifying good practice in sustainable management of learning environments while continuing to note the progressive loss of facilities for locally based, accessible opportunities for adult learning supported by the LSC.

4. Contributing to the work of Lifelong Learning UK through participation in the Community Development Learning working group.

Playing an active role in the Every Action Counts Consortium promoting sustainability in local communities

Providing further training for tutors in European citizenship education through contributions to TEACH courses.

Maintaining effective communication; in the case of the Teddy Bear Project team through the use of voice over internet (Skype) both to maintain contacts within that partnership and to develop a further project proposal for submission to the European Commission.

Promoting active links to the national 'Take Part' active citizenship training network.

5. Continuing to publish a lively and informative newsletter; here we recognise the work of members of the staff team in the National Office who have maintained the extremely high standards of previous editions.

Publishing a tribute by the late Ronnie Wilson to Mancunian Fabian, Dame Mabel Tylecote which was sent to incoming Education Ministers.

Organising conferences at: -

1. Lucton, Herefordshire at the conclusion of the Teddy Bear Project

2. the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, in connection with the AGM.

6. Collaboration with colleagues in schools and settings for older people in the West Midlands which was assisted greatly by the WRVS in Herefordshire. The event was concluded with an event for older adults and the children from the partner schools. A full report is in process of preparation.

7. Attending the Ministerial launch and following up the consultation on 'Informal Adult Learning' and preparing a response to the Government's enquiry.

Participating in two European consultations, one the General Assembly of the EAEA and the other a Grundtvig contact seminar; both in Riga, Latvia. The Chair and Hon Treasurer also made a private visit to the 50th Salzburg Talks at which the debt of gratitude of the Austrian Association to the late Ronnie Wilson was acknowledged in a moving ceremony.

Achievements and Performance

Explanation

This section of the report is necessarily brief due to the requirement to submit a final bid to the Big Lottery Fund by the end of October against the Outline Approval for our 'Green Family Learning' project. This links our themes of sustainability and intergenerational learning and will contribute to family learning programmes in Herefordshire, Leicester & Norfolk. In the interim copies of newsletters published during the year contain factual accounts and there is further material on the website.

Every Action Counts

Susie White and Karen Read have supported this project and the Association has surpassed its target recruitment of community groups to the initiative by 175%.

Eastern Empowerment Partnership

BG is the Vice Chair of this regional group. The Empowerment Partnerships are under the auspices of Communities and Local Government (CLG) funded through the Community Development Foundation.

CLG Roadshows

The ECA are, with partners, delivering an event in Leicester with the aim of bringing East Midlands Third Sector organisations together around the issues of advocacy and campaigning.

Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

This project is located in Leicester and associated with the City Council's Community Journalism course and a similar course run by the Council for Voluntary Services. Jude Walsh has been appointed by the ECA to broker the relationships between diversity groups, the City Council and community/voluntary sector leaders.

Capacity Global

This is Every Action Counts legacy work and seeks to look at issues of diversity in sustainability programmes.

Green Family Learning Project

This is a proposed £500,000 project working with 3 local authorities in Leicester, Norfolk and Herefordshire. The project aims to bring families together learning about sustainable and healthy living. A bid is being prepared for submission to the Big Lottery Family Learning Fund.

European Qualification Project

This project is led by German partners, with a planned initial meeting in December in Bonn.

The ECA has signed up as partners to a second German international project which is pending a funding decision.

Community Sector Coalition

The ECA continues to play an active part in this Coalition, having been one of the founding organisations.

Take Part

BG has been asked to prepare a paper concerning citizenship education for the East of England as part of the legacy of ALAC.

Regional Groups

BG expressed thanks to Christianne Wakeham and Paul Olver for their work with the constituted West Midland regional group, which is going very well. It is hoped that this experience can be built on with similar groups constituted elsewhere.

Financial Review

Policy on Reserves

The Trustees seek to maintain a balance of £25K as a reserve. Reserves are held on deposit with the COIF Charities Deposit Fund.

Trustees' Expenses

Expenses were only paid to Trustees during the year to reimburse them for travel and subsistence in connection with and purchases made on behalf of the charity.

Trustees' Indemnity Insurance

No charitable funds have been used to purchase insurance to indemnify the Trustees against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part.

Accounting Policies

The Educational Centres Association is a registered charity and as such is governed by the Charities Act 2006. Under this Act and the Charities (Accounts

and Reports) Regulations 2005, it is classified as a small charity since it has gross income or total expenditure of not more than £100,000 per annum. The Act therefore entitles this charity to take advantage of the more limited and simplified presentation of its financial statements. As a result of this and to be consistent with prior years, only a Receipts and Payments Account has been prepared and presented. Meetings have taken place with a 3rd sector consultancy and a business strategist resulting in a parallel electronic accountancy record, established prior to implementation of full computerised accounting in 2008.

Regional Accounts

The one subsidiary account, for the South and East Region was closed during the year.

Sustainability

We are using the tools made available through Every Action Counts to review our own practices and have planned certain changes in our procedures that were indicated.

Where travel is undertaken on behalf of the Association every effort is made to book multiple engagements. Rail is the preferred mode of travel with advanced booking encouraged, to take account of any discounts.

Funding from DEFRA

Bids under “Every Action Counts”, the sustainability project managed by the Community Development Foundation, have progressively strengthened the Association’s financial position.

Grundtvig Funding from the European Commission

The Association maintained responsibility for coordinating the Teddy Bear project at the request of the Herefordshire Council. This gave rise to additional financial commitments which were partly underwritten by DfES as an element of annual grant.

The accounts with reference to the TEACH project, submitted in time in the previous year, had still not been approved by the end of the year. However the lead partner Vastra Nylands Folk High school, Finland has subsequently paid the outstanding grant following approval of the final report by the Commission.

Further Financial Review Details

The principal sources of funding are Membership subscriptions, contract payments for the Local Area Support Fund of Every Action Counts and the annual grant from DfES (which became DIUS during the year) Following further review by NIACE on behalf of this Department, there was again an above inflation increase in the Department’s grant; this was in excess of 26% rising to £17,700.

The overall trend of Membership subscriptions continues downwards due to the closure of or financial threat to former members.

Support for Key Objectives

The move towards project type activity and reduction in the number of conferences offered reflects in part the fact that the Association is becoming better known and has a higher profile in its chosen fields. It also reflects the changing nature of the grants from DfES/DIUS to the National Associations. The NEC therefore decided that externally funded project activity would be its preferred option. Key areas for our engagement are; staff development, citizenship, inter-generational learning (including family learning), adult learning

in culture, creativity and the arts, sustainability and the uses of ICT related to the foregoing.

The Association awaits further developments at Government level in the post-Leitch period but notes the emphasis given to 'Infrastructure' in the January consultation document 'Informal Adult Learning – Shaping the Way Ahead' (http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/DIUS_adu_lea_bro_an_05%208.pdf). For the future it will be exploring a wider range of funding sources across Government and in the wider funding and contracting arena.

Key Players

The organisation remains heavily dependent on the hard work and good will of relatively few individuals for its continuing success.

We lament the passing of two active members.

In January long standing NEC Member and former Membership Secretary Mary Babris died. She had played a leading role in the regeneration of the Association at a key period in the mid-1990s. Mary was made a Life Member on her retirement and was herself an active learner who had also been a key figure in the Eastern Region committee.

Rob Eschle, who was also active in the same regional committee and recently served as its last Chair, died a few months later in March. Rob was Governor of one of our member colleges and through his agency we had the opportunity to meet his constituency MP, Education Minister Bill Rammell, on more informal terms.

Future Plans

Development of a formal Business Plan has commenced. This will help us to focus on key agendas, for example as noted previously there is a case for linking the work in citizenship and sustainability more explicitly.

Realising the potential of the TEACH and Teddy Bear Projects and Every Action Counts have been significant developments for us. As anticipated they have called for different patterns of accountability and it is important that we have the staffing and trustee support to manage such increasingly complex agendas.

We are adopting a new finance management structure which will require additional staffing resources and a changed pattern of accountability amongst Trustees.

We intend to work through external agencies to secure core funding which will enable the charity to grow and build on our achievements of recent years.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE EDUCATIONAL CENTRES ASSOCIATION

We report on the accounts of The Educational Centres Association for the year ended 31 March 2008 which are set out on pages 2 to 4

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 and that an independent examination is required.

It is our responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 43(3)(a) of the 1993 Act);
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

- 1 which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Acthave not been met; or
- 2 to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**124 THORPE ROAD
NORWICH
NR1 1RS**

**SEXTY & CO
CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS
AND REGISTERED AUDITORS**

DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

**EDUCATIONAL CENTRES ASSOCIATION
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
For the year ended 31st March 2008**

	£	2008	£	2007	£
Receipts					
Voluntary Sources					
Subscriptions	3,492			4,428	
Donations	25			25	
DfES/DIUS	17,700			13,000	
Miscellaneous	-		21,217	430	17,883
Conference fees					
National	130			2,000	
Regional DfES/DIUS -					
V & A	-			560	
Harlow	-		130	640	3,200
Projects					
U K - Every Action Counts	26,417			5,500	
International - General	291			4,292	
Teddybear	2,631		29,339	7,257	17,049
Investment income					
Interest received			1,957		1,411
Total receipts			£52,643		£39,543
Payments					
Direct charitable expenditure					
Conference fees					
National	1,671			1,630	
Regional DfES/DIUS -					
V & A	-			606	
Harlow	-			460	
Telephone	370			337	
Salaries/fees	5,806			4,971	
Information services	1,277		9,124	613	8,617
Projects					
U K - Every Action Counts	25,457			6,093	
International – General	529			4,426	
Teddybear	4,855		30,841	6,385	16,904
Other expenditure					
Stationery and photocopying	871			925	
Printing and publications	416			408	
Postage and telephone	942			882	
Travel and subsistence	1,957			2,428	
Information services	2,553			1,227	
Miscellaneous	-			174	
Meeting expenses and room hire	439			328	
Representation	137			192	
Insurance	339			279	
Accountancy	723			758	
Gift (from donations received)	-			130	
Staff training	422		8,799	-	7,731
Total payments			£48,764		£33,252
Net receipts for the year			3,879		6,291
Bank balances brought forward			34,460		28,169
Bank balances carried forward			£38,339		£34,460

EDUCATIONAL CENTRES ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
at 31st March 2008

	31 st March 2008		31 st March 2007	
	£	£	£	£
Monetary Assets				
COIF Charities deposit account		34,430		30,594
Bank balances - Central Office	3,909		2,948	
South and East	-	3,909	918	3,866
		<u>£38,339</u>		<u>£34,460</u>

Other Assets

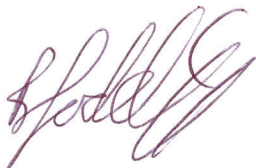
Held for functional use by the charity

Computer equipment costing £1,932 in 2007/08, £1,616 in 2006/07 and several small items of office equipment purchased over a number of years.

After date receipts/payments

£6,440 has been received after the year end in respect of the TEACH Citizenship project.

£1,671 was paid during the year relating to a conference which took place after the year end.



Bernard Godding (Chairman)

Date 4/9/08

On behalf of the Trustees

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2008

1. Accounting policies

The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis as permitted under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993.

2. Funds

Total funds are all unrestricted.