



Educational Centres Association

2009 - 10

Annual Report and Accounts



90 Years of Supporting Adult Learning 1920 - 2010

Annual Report 2009-2010



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President Vacancy
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Vice Chairman Chris Minter*

Hon Secretary Vacancy
Treasurer Naomi Godding*

Regional Executive Members

Eastern Barbara Isherwood*
Judith Robinson*
North Walt Crowson*
West Paul Olver*
Christianne Wakeham*
South Vacancy

Co-opted Helene Rinaldo* (from February 2010)
Alex Withnall* (from February 2010)

Advisory Mark Walton (from February 2010)

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Letter from the Chair



I headed our 2000 Annual Report 'Same Core Values - Moving with the Times'. In the intervening decade we have remained dedicated to these same ideals. I am now pleased to report on the work of the Educational Centres Association for the financial year 2009-2010.

The year in question was marked by the progress of the Learning Revolution and the associated Transformation Fund with which many of our members were actively engaged. Following participation at the earlier launch event for the associated White Paper, the ECA continued to contribute at the policy level and was engaged in Ministerial meetings.

Similarly the legacy from the environmentally focused Every Action Counts project was celebrated at a Ministerial event where the ECA took a high profile stand. I am delighted to say that through this initiative we have been able to strengthen the Association's Board with additional members who have great expertise in this field.

Beyond that the work which took most time in the period relates to our ongoing interest in staff development activities. The focus on the validation of competences amongst senior adult educators is a logical progression from our earlier work and the associated Flexi-Path project has received strong endorsement from within our immediate circle and more widely across Europe thanks to board support and the contribution of the whole staff team.

As will be seen from this report other aspects of our work from previous years also continue to bear fruit. Whether it is intergenerational learning, citizenship, work with older learners or wellbeing, the foundations established through our earlier projects remain firm and will guide our future work.

I should like to pay particular thanks and credit to Karen Read for being my right hand over 4 years of demanding project work. Deepest thanks also to Naomi as the Treasurer and the Association's greatest supporter, for her tireless efforts in supporting all aspects of our work over a dozen years or more.

My own good fortune in receiving a national award during the year has relied on the strength of such support from across the Association and is greatly appreciated by me.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard Godding".

Bernard Godding MBE, Chair & CEO





The Association is committed to the provision and support of personal and community development through informal adult learning.

It is founded on principles of inclusion and partnership working at every level of its own organisation and operations. It further works to foster such approaches in all its relationships with member organisations and through them out into the wider community.

It therefore champions openness and democratic processes in its own operations and supports a range of local and national initiatives and approaches to citizenship and democratic processes.

Over the 90 years of the Association a distinctive aspect has always been the emphasis placed on the development of the 'Learning Community' which recognises the two-way processes between those who teach and learn as adults. Attention is also paid to the continuity of engagement in the learning process as a key element in the student's personal development.

The Association recognises that adult learning and skills are vital in a diverse and complex world where personal aspiration conflicts with the availability of sustainable natural resources. It is committed to: -

- developing leadership learning in all areas of public life
- maintaining high quality opportunities for personal development and fulfilment through participation in adult community learning
- engaging learners in the development of programmes of study
- recognising, engaging with and creating objects and materials that have personal and public meaning

Structure, Governance and Management



The Educational Centres Association is an adult education and intergenerational learning Charity which was founded in 1920 as the Educational Settlements Association.

It is a membership body governed by a written constitution that was amended at a Special General Meeting in September 2008 following consultations with the Charity Commission. This document prescribes the form of the National Executive Committee (NEC) whose members have Trustee status. The NEC met 4 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, relating to the conduct of the charity's business and employment of staff.

Policy statements have been agreed and are periodically reviewed.

The work of the charity is undertaken by volunteers from the NEC and part-time administrative staff together with project staff employed on short term contracts to: -

- Undertake specific project activities
- Develop the work of the Association and secure additional funding
- Assist in the financial management of the Association
- Maintain contact with members
- Assist with administrative duties within the office

A website with the designation www.e-c-a.ac.uk is hosted by internet service provider Paston Chase and managed through the National Office. The site was re-launched with additional functionality in 2007 and the content has since been considerable expanded.

The Association is a member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), and Voluntary Norfolk, as well as in reciprocal membership with the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and it retains links with the North Sea Commission. Membership of the Community Sector Coalition (CSC) has led to an active role in supporting The Learning Revolution.



The Association exists to promote the **informal and non-formal education of adults and intergenerational learning**. 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 citizenship through 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 and providing training and consultation events for staff and learners in the sector
5. organising conferences and publishing material about and in support of their work
6. undertaking educational experiments and projects, especially relating to sustainability, citizenship and intergenerational learning
7. pursuing research and enquiry into the education of adults and intergenerational learning

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

- * Continuing to maintain a lively and informative website
- * Playing an active role in the promoting Adult Learning within the Community Sector Coalition
- * Organising a conference on Adult Learning at The Resource Centre, London, in connection with the AGM
- * Contributing to the Government's Informal Adult Learning advisory and communications Group and engaging in consultations on the 'Open Spaces' initiative
- * Dissemination of best practice in intergenerational learning using the Teddybear project via –
 - a. Article in LLinE publication
 - b. Presentation at Grundtvig 10th Anniversary conference
- * Maintaining contact with the work of a number of adult learning agencies in the West Midlands
- * Working with other European agencies concerned with citizenship education, learning for sustainable living and participative approaches in adult education
- * Continuation of collaborative activities relating to equalities and citizenship education for adults in Leicester
- * Organisation of a family learning event to coincide with Family Learning Week and the Learning Revolution Festival
- * Individually and collectively engaging the Ministers and officials at DIUS on issues relating to adult learners and the frameworks for educational provision
- * Continuing to play a significant role in the participative methods of the TEACH adult learning for citizenship project through the lead tutor who has now contributed to these courses across Europe
- * Maintained our links with environmental organisations and contributed to a range of initiatives by associated bodies
- * Expanded our links to Higher Education
- * Promoting and maintaining effective communication; in the case of the Flexi-Path Project team through advocating the use of voice over internet (Skype) to maintain contacts within that partnership
- * Developing a framework for recognition of competences of senior adult education practitioners based on extensive research and the experience of members



Promoting and Protecting Adult Learning in the Policy Arena

The Learning Revolution

Bernard Godding has represented the ECA and the Community Sector Coalition (CSC) at the National Advisory Forum on Informal Adult Learning chaired by the then Minister for Lifelong Learning & Skills, Kevin Brennan.

The Forum was established by The Learning Revolution (TLR) White Paper to advise and steer the strategy's future development. Bernard joined representatives of Government departments, national adult learning organisations and non-departmental public bodies to act as a sounding board for Ministers. He was also part of the communications group, a subset of the forum that advises on how best to communicate ideas set out within the 'Learning Revolution'. As part of this group the Association has co-ordinated the responses to a TLR communications survey from 23 member organisations of the CSC.

Charity Pooled Funds consultation

Concerns raised by the ECA led to the Charity pooled funds consultation by H M Treasury, Office of the Third Sector and the Charity Commission. The Association expressed its concerns around the long term security of pooled funds, deposit funds and trustee liability where investment strategies are deemed to be flawed. The consultation focused on the future regulation of common investment funds (CIF) and common deposit funds (CDF's) and questioned whether these should be moved from the Charity Commission and brought more fully under the Financial Services Authority (FSA). A summary of responses was published in December 2009.

Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning

Bernard Godding attended the launch of 'Learning through Life' the main report of the NIACE sponsored Independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning in London on the 17th September 2009.

The Inquiry brought together experts from government, academia, business, public service, providers, trade unions, and the voluntary and community sector, as well as learners to identify a consensus for the future for lifelong learning in the UK. The ECA had previously submitted evidence to the Inquiry on the identified theme of lifelong learning and sustainable development.

Building Learning Communities

The Association has a 90 year history of supporting adult learning and a learning culture in local communities and was therefore especially pleased to be invited to the launch of 'Building Learning Communities' a joint publication by the Local Government Association

and the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA). The publication which looks at Informal Adult Learning in museums, libraries and archives specifically focuses on supporting communities through the effects of the recession. The LGA Notes of Guidance concerning the proposed Lead Accountable Bodies (LABs) that were intended to replace the funding arrangements, currently with the LSC, was also launched at the event. The ECA feels that it is important to continue to work, in collaboration with others across this broad compass, to support adult learners and learning in all its diversity.

Advocacy

Although the Association is apolitical it does benefit from opportunities to meet senior civil servants and politicians. During the last year the ECA has met with Barbara Follet MP who at the time was Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, as well as representatives from Defra. The Association took part in the Community Sector Coalitions Fringe Event at the Conservative Party's conference in February 2010 in Brighton.

It also took part in a number of meetings and initiatives as part of the working group 'Democracy Matters'.

European Projects and Initiatives for Adult Learning

Flexi-Path - Validating Staff Competences

The ECA has continued to play a key role as the UK partner in the European project Flexi-Path. Funded by Leonardo, part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, it brought us together with partners from Estonia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Romania. The project, ran until autumn 2010, and created a portfolio framework which can be used to assess the skills and experience equal to EQF levels 6 & 7 that adult educators have developed during their careers.

Work carried out this year included the development of a common competency profile, a set of skills, knowledge and competence statements against which to measure qualifications of adult educators in Europe at EQF level 7 (UK Masters equivalent). The work on the competency profile began at the ECA hosted partner meeting in Norwich, UK during September 2009. To assist the development of the profile we carried out interviews with a sample of people who fulfil roles within adult education which could be judged as equivalent to Level 7. The competency profile was essential for the project's final phase, in which the ECA took a lead role, designing a toolkit defining Level 6 & 7 competences



Flexi-Path meeting, Norwich

that adult educators will have gained through experience. The end result is a handbook which can be used to record and document acquired formal and non-formal competences that can be used by adult educators and adult education and training institutions. It will be useful for general and specific roles, for example specialists in adult learning, heads of department, curriculum developers and researchers.

On 3rd March Bernard Godding visited Zurich as the guest of project partner SVEB, the Swiss umbrella organisation for training together with colleagues from the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) to review the Swiss national frameworks for staff accreditation.

Trish Kreft, a learning and development consultant, was employed by the ECA as a researcher on this project. At the beginning of 2010 she was joined in this role by the ECA's administrator Karen Read as a co-researcher in the run up to the final project phase.

TEACH - Active Citizenship

Trustee Judith Robinson continues to play a major role in TEACH the European active citizenship courses organised by the project partner from Finland. The course was developed between 2004-2005 by partners from across Europe, including the ECA. The course has now been running since 2006. As a TEACH tutor Judy trains those who are involved in teaching active citizenship in non-formal education. The course aims to help people understand how to relate to community and society, how their belonging gives them both rights and duties and how to take citizenship from a personal to local, national and global levels.



Teddybear - Intergenerational Learning

The work carried out by the ECA and their partners in the European intergenerational project Teddybear, which brought together senior citizens and young people in learning situations, continues to be recognised as an example of outstanding practice.

The European journal LLinE (Lifelong Learning in Europe) asked the ECA to submit an article on the project for their 'Learning Generations' edition published in December 2009 (LLinE Volume XIV Issue 4/2009).

The article was co-authored by Bernard Godding and Paul Olver from the ECA with Fabio de la Pietra of Co-operative Italia, the ECA's Italian partner in the project. The piece allowed them to revisit the methods and results of Teddybear and it disseminates these and lessons learned during the project to adult learning practitioners and researchers

throughout Europe. The article can be read on the ECA website at http://www.e-ca.ac.uk/media/uploaded_files/LLINE Dec 2009 - Teddy Bear Article0001.pdf

The Association was invited to showcase Teddybear at the 10th Anniversary celebrations of Grundtvig in Brussels on the 26-28 January 2010. The event marked 10 years of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning programme which offers funding to support European cooperation in education and training. It featured workshops focusing on key issues that have been identified and prioritised over the decade. Bernard Godding presented Teddybear as part of a workshop focusing on senior citizens and adult education and was able to disseminate the knowledge gained from the project to adult learning practitioners, policy makers and experts from within Europe. The PowerPoint from Bernard's presentation can be seen at



Teddybear participants

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/conf10/w6/bear.pdf>

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

The ECA continues to be a member of EAEA, a European NGO whose membership consists of organisations who work in the field of adult learning and represent over 60 million European learners.

Bernard and Naomi Godding attended the EAEA General Assembly in Bonn on 22nd June.

In the build up to the Assembly the ECA acted as co-ordinator for the on-line climate change thematic group to discuss approaches to addressing this topic through adult learning initiatives .

The event led to a letter being produced, at the suggestion of Bernard, stating the need to address issues around environmental sustainability through adult learning, which could be presented at Confintea VI, the sixth international conference on adult education, later in the year in advance of the UN Climate Change Conference.

DVV International

The event also marked the 40th Anniversary of the German Folk Highschool Association's International Division DVV.

The Goddings also attended this International conference which profiled previous successes and also focused on Financing Adult Education for Development.

European Funding

Bernard Godding has attended two European funding events.

He joined over 300 delegates at the Cooperation Fair for the INTERREG IVA 2 Mers Seas Zeeën Cross-border Cooperation Programme which took place on the 19th and 20th October 2009 in Ostend. At the event he sought partners to help build on the ECA's successful work on the Teddy Bear project, Every Action Counts and our leading role in Informal Adult Learning for the community sector.

The ECA is keen to carry on its work around learning for sustainability so attended the LIFE+ event which took place in Cambridge on 1st July 2009. The LIFE+ programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment which contributes to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation by co-financing pilot or demonstration projects.

Following the unanimous wish of the ECA Annual General Meeting, held in London on 17th October 2009, the ECA has continued to seek ways in which to continue its Europe focused work.

Learning for Environmental Sustainability

Every Action Counts

Bernard and Naomi Godding represented the Association at the celebration event for Every Action Counts (EAC), the environmental sustainability initiative which ran from March 2006 to March 2009. The event took place in London 6th May 2009.

The EAC consortium partners, which included the ECA, helped over 2000 community groups to take steps to reduce their environmental impact during the project's lifetime. 800 Community Champions, volunteers who were trained to help community groups plan what actions they wanted to take, were also recruited.

The Secretary of State, praised the work carried out by the ECA and Helene Rinaldo, an ECA recruited Community Champion, spoke as a member of the event's panel.



Members of EAC Consortium with Hilary Benn MP. Bernard Godding and Helene Rinaldo second and third from right

The Every Action Counts short film which features Helene and Susie White of the ECA was premiered at the event and can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAwk0weDIPE>



Older People - Greener Wiser

Bernard Godding was invited to represent the Association at the launch by the Green Alliance of this report which indicated the extent to which older people are able and willing to adopt lower impact lifestyles.

Shaping Our Future

Bernard Godding attended the launch of 'Shaping Our Future' the report from the joint ministerial and third sector Task Force on climate change, the environment and sustainable development.

The report aimed to develop a vision of third sector action on climate change, the environment and sustainable development. It identified the roles of government and third sector organisations in achieving this and develops a partnership action plan to make this vision a reality. This builds on the work carried out by the Every Action Counts Consortium in engaging the third sector to take action to become more environmentally sustainable.

Ministers at the event signed a statement of support for the 'Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change' the pledge that came out of Every Action Counts and to which the ECA is a signatory.

Gardening with Wildlife in Mind Forum

Bernard and Naomi Godding attended the annual meeting of the Forum for Gardening with Wildlife in Mind of which the ECA are members.

The event, which took place at RHS Wisley on 27th November 2009 was attended by a wide range of agencies in the environmental sector and the ECA's perspectives concerning adult learning were recognised as being significant.

The Committee on Climate Change

Bernard Godding along with representatives from the Community Sector Coalition met with the Committee on Climate Change an independent body established under the Climate Change Act which advises the UK Government on setting carbon budgets, and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The meeting revealed a lack of connection between the knowledge and skills agenda and the wider thinking about sustainability at the heart of government.

Bernard also attended a workshop held by UKCIP to demonstrate and disseminate tools for use by community groups to access and interpret newly available web based material on climate change.



Focus on...Environmental Sustainability

The ECA is committed to promoting environmental sustainability. We believe in the importance of learning about sustainability both formally and informally and feel that sustainability should be embedded throughout different areas of education.

Work we have carried out over the past few years includes organising a conference in Westminster entitled 'The Environment as an Adult Learning Issue' featuring speakers from organisations such as the BBC, Women's Institute and the WEA with Lifelong Learning Minister David Lammy MP as the keynote speaker. As well as submitting evidence to inquiries focusing on learning and sustainability we have attended meetings of the BBC Breathing Places advisory group on community engagement and the Forum for Gardening with Wildlife in Mind.

The Association was part of the Every Action Counts Consortium, which encouraged third sector organisations to take action to become more environmentally sustainable. As part of this work the ECA developed a Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) to help guide the ways in which we work and reduce the environmental impact of our activities. We are also signatories to the 'Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change' a commitment to reducing our environmental impact and encouraging others to do the same and contributed to the publication 'Every Action Counts for our board – a guide to smart and sustainable governance'.

As promoters of sustainability the ECA feels that is important to lead by example. Some examples of sustainability that are embedded in our organisation can be found below.

In the office

- * We identify opportunities to reduce and recycle waste produced where possible.
- * Use of double sided printing to cut down on paper usage.
- * Limited print runs and use of electronic communication as an alternative to printing.
- * Fair trade beverages used by staff.
- * Skype and teleconferencing used to reduce the amount of travel especially in regard to European project work.

Out of the office

- * Public transport, walking or cycling used to attend meetings, conferences or project work apart from when this is impractical.
- * Reduction of staff travel by allowing an element of home working
- * Locations for our events to be accessible by public transport with details of public transport available on publicity brochures
- * Catering at events to be local and fair-trade if possible and reusable crockery, glassware, cutlery, tablecloths to be used where possible



Transformation Fund

The ECA submitted a bid to the Transformation Fund during July 2009. The ECA led bid brought in a range of partners including British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), British Association of Settlements & Social Action Centres (bassac), Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and the Community Development Foundation (CDF).

The project aimed to initiate discussion and further research on environmental topics in local communities. It aimed to provide a supported environment for self organised groups to set up Learning Clubs focussing on environmental awareness based on the Scandinavian Study Circle method. A network of trained Study Circle facilitators was to be established along with web based resources to support the groups. The bid was unsuccessful but we are still keen to do something in this area of developmental activity.

Active Citizenship, Empowerment and Equality

Good Relations - Leicester Community Network

May 2009 saw the completion of The Leicester Community Network (LC Network) project which was set up in June 2008.

The project was funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and created a framework for exchanging information, views and sharing experiences. Its aim was to strengthen the relationships between the broad community, equality groups, the media, training and educational organisations in Leicester, Britain's most culturally diverse city.

“We'd seen this place but we'd never have thought to come inside. We're glad we did, and we'd like to talk some more about how creative people here could help us get across what we're trying to do.”

P.T. service user at Network for Change.

The ECA Locality Worker George Ballentyne made contact with a range of community groups, media and educational bodies and arranged opportunities for the groups to come together in community venues in the city. The last of these visits took place in April 2009 at the Leicester Council of Faiths.

By the end of the project the network consisted of 59 participant organisations with the email exchange group consisting of 63 contacts. The overall feedback for the project was positive with community representatives valuing an opportunity to close the gap between their realities and others perceptions of their communities

The success of the project led to the Association submitting a further bid to EHRC in partnership with Keystone Development Trust, a charitable trust delivering social projects

within Norfolk and Suffolk, for a Norfolk based project.

The 'Community Bridges' project aimed to reduce tensions, make connections, promote learning and build relationships in the town of Thetford. Project activities would have increased understanding between groups and communities that do not ordinarily mix or where particular tensions exist, such as young people and senior citizens and the migrant and indigenous populations. The activities would include providing community groups with skills and leadership training to improve participation and promote good relations. The outline proposal was accepted and the second stage application submitted in October 2009. Sadly the bid did not go further than this stage.

Learning and 'Liberating Leadership'

The Association continued to lend its support to 'Liberating Leadership' the Community Sector Coalition's (CSC) leadership programme funded as part of Change Up. Liberating Leadership takes a practical approach to help recognition and support for leadership in groups and collective community activities. The model aims to describe the reality of leadership in a small community group and is 'a process of inspiring, supporting, working with and influencing others in a group, team, organisation or community, based on an agreed set of principles, to achieve common goals and social change'.

Bernard Godding was a member of the Project Group that advised the authors on approaches to the construction of the published Toolkit, drawing on the experience of his role in the earlier 'Take Part' active citizenship initiative.

Hazel Capper, the Leadership and Governance Programme Manager at CSC who led the project, spoke at the ECA's annual conference in October 2009 to update delegates on the programme's progress.



*Hazel Capper, ECA AGM
2009*

Learning to drive; community cohesion

Bernard Godding and ECA Vice Chair Chris Minter both made presentations in the joint NIACE and Leicester City Council's seminar 'Learning to drive: community cohesion'. The Chairman drew on his personal experience in the city to illustrate the long-term success of approaches adopted to maintain harmony in the culturally diverse communities. The event which took place in Leicester on 1st December 2009 was aimed at practitioners and policy makers and offered participants the opportunity to see community cohesion in practice and different approaches to learning and skills.

Learning for Effective Campaigning

Bernard Godding attended the launch of 'Campaigning is OK, they may not like it but it

Focus on...Active Citizenship

The ECA has a long history of work around active citizenship. This can be traced back to the roots of the Association which was formed in 1920 as the Educational Settlements Association (ESA) to support the growing number of settlements.

The idea that lay at the heart of the first settlement was that 'all should share in community action' and this idea still holds strong today. The Association believes that active citizenship is vital to today's society and that learning, which empowers and encourages people to become active in their communities, has positive effects on both the individual and the community.

This belief and experience has led to our contribution to the formation of Take Part, the national learning framework for active learning for active citizenship. The framework provides a manual for learning providers, enabling the development of programmes of citizenship learning, to help adults gain knowledge, skills and confidence so they can become empowered as members of their communities.

The ECA's 2008 'Leadership in the Round' conference responded to the 'Communities in Control: real people, real power' White Paper focusing on empowerment. The event looked at ways in which third sector and adult learning organisations could integrate citizenship into their work.

In recent years the ECA has moved into delivering informal adult learning projects and active citizenship forms the basis for many of these. These include: -

* TEACH - The Association joined with partners from across Europe to develop a course for those who teach active citizenship in informal adult education. The course addresses competencies and aptitudes such as self-expression, intercultural dialogue, negotiation, belonging, inclusion, attentiveness & sensitivity, openness, externalisation, empowerment, knowledge, values & attitudes and explores their relation to active participation in society and methods for teaching these competencies.



TEACH participants

* The 'Liberating Leadership' programme to help recognise and support leadership in groups and collective community activities. The programme has resulted in a training programme for development workers and a toolkit for community groups to help unlock their hidden 'people power' and work more effectively together.



gets things done', a short guide to help community and voluntary organisations develop skills and support for effective campaigning, at the House of Commons Grand Committee Room in July 2009.

The publication, prepared by Titus Alexander of Novas Scarman, was based on 9 regional events on support for campaigning in which 600 people took part. The ECA was centrally involved in organising the East Midlands event at the end of 2008 and in April 2009. Bernard met other organisers in Sheffield to share their findings and help edit the publication.

Take Part Pathfinders Programme

The ECA were partners in a bid led by National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to the Take Part Pathfinder Programme. The other partners in the bid were Community Sector Coalition (CSC), Citizenship Foundation (CF), Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) and Manchester Metropolitan University, Community Audit and Evaluation Centre (CAEC) / working with Community Pride Salford Take Part Pathfinder.

The tender was to develop and provide a national 'Train the Take Part Trainers' course which would build the skills and confidence of the Take Part Trainers and allow them to support and encourage people to make an active contribution to their community and influence public policies and services. The partnership was invited to present its proposal to the fund holders but unfortunately the bid proved unsuccessful.

Foresight - Mental Capital and Wellbeing

The board of the European journal LInE held an event in Finland which took as its theme Lifelong Learning and Wellbeing Across Europe with a keynote speech by Sir David Watson.

The ECA was able to provide the organisers with copies of the UK Foresight Project comprehensive CD of its findings to which ECA past-presidents John Field and Brian Groombridge had contributed. Brian was himself present at the Tuusula event and gave a paper on the related theme of cultural engagement by older people.

Family Learning

Family Fun with Autumn Fruits

'Family Fun with Autumn Fruits' was a family learning event organised jointly by the ECA and the West Norwich Partnership as part of the Family Learning Festival and the Learning Revolution Festival. The event was supported by Family First and partly funded

through the Campaign for Learning. It was held at the Fourways Community Centre in Norwich on October 29th 2009.

The day, which attracted 35 participants from the local community, was based around using seasonal fruit and vegetables to create simple meals and snacks with cookery demonstrations given throughout the day by a professional chef. Other activities on offer included 'blind tasting' using fresh and dried fruit, a pomegranate challenge, making grape animals and a herb smell-a-thon.



Family Fun with Autumn Fruits participants

Information about further learning was provided by Norfolk Guidance Service and a representative from a local community allotment project was on hand to give advice on growing vegetables. Positive feedback about the event was given by all who attended.

Regional Initiatives

Eastern Region

COVER - Community and Voluntary Forum: Eastern Region

Hazel Dunn continues to lead in our relationship with COVER which acts as an information resource and broker for third sector bodies in the region.

Inspire East Regional Empowerment Partnership

In the East of England where the ECA has a significant presence in local communities the opportunity was taken to reinforce the adult learning aspects of a forum feeding to the regional body and serviced by its staff members. The ECA was able to make a significant contribution to initiatives that fed directly to staff working at the grass roots.

Tolerance

Trustee Barbara Isherwood, the representative for the Eastern region, represented both the ECA and Bassingbourn Village College in June 2009 when visiting a Grundtvig project called 'Tolerance' in Poland. The project was half-way through the two year period and was looking for more people to take part, to inform and join in the working process. She was among representatives from Poland, UK, Austria, France, Germany and Italy who visited the project, which looks at the values of religion (mostly Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Muslim) and what may unite or separate us and how this can influence our decisions in adult education, both as a learner and as a provider.



West of England Region

West of England Regional meeting

A West of England Regional meeting was held on 18th June 2009 at the new Kindle Centre in Hereford. The meeting featured guest speaker Penny Harding from the Herefordshire Women's Project in June together with Dave Tristram (Herefordshire Council) providing his regular and very welcome update on funding opportunities for third sector organisations. With the demise of the Learning Partnership, the ECA Regional Group provides a valuable forum for a wide range of organisations to meet together, exchange information and good practice, and identify partnership opportunities.

Earthwatch

The Earthwatch event in Hereford was coordinated by NEC member Christianne Wakeham – continuing the involvement of ECA Trustees in environmentally orientated activities.

Partnerships

Community Sector Coalition

The ECA has continued in active membership of the Community Sector Coalition (CSC) and as such has engaged in national coordination meetings and worked with the CEO & core staff to develop agendas relating to adult learning and VCS infrastructure.

It represented the Coalition's interests at the Learning Revolution Advisory Forum.

“The ECA has been at the forefront of the CSC throughout the last decade actively participating in a range of events and programmes that have generated substantial impacts and synergies across the wider community and public sectors” *Matthew Scott, Director CSC*

Other Areas

Archives

The archive for the Educational Centres Association / Educational Settlements Association was moved on a temporary basis to the Institute of Education, London to be studied by Dr. Mark Freeman as part of his ongoing research into the history of the movement and related agencies through the first half of the twentieth century.

Subsequent discussion with the archivist has led the material to being placed on long term deposit at (IoE) where it is better and more widely available than at any previous time. We look forward to further perspectives being offered by Dr Freeman in due course.



Advancing Communications

Further development on the ECA website (www.e-c-a.ac.uk) has enabled the continued growth of the number of pages and expansion of the content and helped to increase the volume of traffic to the site.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Mar 2006	98	136	712	1777	16.80 MB
Mar 2007	283	347	995	4003	123.97 MB
Mar 2008	479	930	29183	42084	386.27 MB
Mar 2009	797	1371	57023	85045	803.09 MB
Mar 2010	936	1697	84915	117290	1.74 GB

The Head Office has continued to make use of free Skype for voice over internet communications relating to national and international project work.

Staffing and Staff Development

The Head Office continued to employ 3 part-time staff to assist with the running of the office and finances during the year to which this report relates. All staff members have progressed in terms of the increased diversity of duties undertaken and the achievement of agreed goals.

The start of the year saw ECA administrator Karen Read achieve success in her OU study programme relating to fundraising activities.

Trustees

This year has seen the co-option of 2 new trustees. These are Helene Rinaldo and Alex Withnall.

Helene brings a wealth of experience in local community action relating to environmental issues and her base in Norfolk gives her ready access to the HQ team.

Alex as a former research officer for NIACE has a highly specialist knowledge of lifelong learning and at the University of Warwick specialised in work relating to aging policy and practice. She is a member of the Association for Education and Aging and retains links to the universities of Leicester and Warwick

Mark Walton, former Head of Every Action Counts, brings his knowledge and expertise to act in an advisory capacity to the Board.



Congratulations

The Association offers its congratulations to its President Emeritus Prof. Brian Groombridge and Bernard Godding, Chair & CEO.

Brian's contribution to the field of adult and continuing education was recognised in his election to the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame's Class Of 2009.

Bernard was awarded an MBE at the beginning of 2010 in recognition of his voluntary service to adult learning and the Educational Centres Association.

Future Plans

The Association will be holding a Members Forum in conjunction with the 2010 AGM. The Forum will engage with ECA members and look with them at the future direction of the Association to build on previous success and ensure continuing momentum at this time of great change and uncertainty.



Policy on Reserves

The Trustees seek to maintain a minimum balance of £15K as a reserve. Reserves are held on deposit with the COIF Charities Deposit Fund. Urgent and extensive enquiries were undertaken at the peak of the global financial crisis to ensure as far as possible that the fund managers were robust and that Government guarantees were extended in the event of a failure.

Work undertaken in conjunction with the Community Sector Coalition pressed matters with the Office of the Third Sector and the Financial Standards Agency with respect to the security of Trustee investments.

Trustees' Expenses

Expenses were 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.

Funding

The European Commission

The Association has operated with funding under the Leonardo programme as a partner in the Flexi-Path project which runs from 2008 -2010.

Family First

Community based family learning activity in the locality of the National Office was supported by local charity Family First as part of a long-term relationship recognised by the Charity Commission.

Campaign for Learning

The Association received funding from the Transformation Fund through the Campaign for Learning to hold a family learning event during Family Learning Week

Further Financial Review Details

The principal sources of funding are Membership subscriptions and the annual grant from BIS. Following a further positive review by NIACE on behalf of the Department there was an improved position regarding the Department's grant which increased by 8.5% to £23,000.

The overall trend of Membership subscriptions continues downwards due to the closure of or financial threat to former members and the consequent decision to freeze increases over a number of years.

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 via other means and has achieved a higher profile in its chosen fields. It also reflects the changing nature of the grants from BIS to the National Associations. The NEC therefore decided that externally funded project activity linked to local action would be its preferred option. Key areas for our engagement are; staff development, citizenship, intergenerational learning (including family learning), adult learning in culture, creativity and the arts and crafts, sustainability and the uses of ICT related to the foregoing.

For the future it will be exploring a wider range of funding sources across Government and in the wider funding and contracting arena.

Accommodation

The National Office is located at the private residence of two national officers. Here a rent-free room has been dedicated to the Association's business for over ten years. It is a priority to establish an independent sustainable base of operations for the charity where current staff can be conveniently housed. However in the interim, refund of expenditure associated with the effective running of the operation, including Health & Safety and energy conservation, has been approved.

Key Players

The organisation remains heavily dependent on the hard work and good will of relatively few individuals for its continuing success. The increasing strength of the head office team has resulted in considerable achievements which are widely recognised by our funding agencies and project partners. There is a broad regional spread amongst our trustees who represent us effectively in their own local communities.

Examined Accounts

The following pages contain the certified accounts. It will be noted that advanced payments and late settlements with regard to our European project work mean that year-on-year figures do not necessarily give a true picture of activity in any one year.



I report on the accounts of The Educational Centres Association for the year ended 31 March 2010 which are set out on pages 24 to 25.

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 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- 1 which gives me 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 recordshave not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

D S Yapp FCCA ACA
Sexty & Co
Chartered Certified Accountants
and Registered Auditors
124 Thorpe Road
Norwich

Date: 12th October 2010

**EDUCATIONAL CENTRES ASSOCIATION
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
For the year ended 31st March 2010**

	2010		2009	
Receipts	£	£	£	£
Voluntary Sources				
Subscriptions	1,756		2,906	
Donations	32		25	
DIUS	<u>23,000</u>	24,788	<u>21,200</u>	24,131
Conference fees - National		-		4,428
Projects - U K - Every Action Counts	-		1,500	
EAC Diversity	3,300		7,700	
EHRC Good Relations	745		6,705	
Family Learning Research	3,789		8,714	
Transformation Fund - Cfl	<u>750</u>	8,584	-	24,619
International - TEACH	-		6,440	
Flexi-path 2008-09	-		415	
2009-10	<u>-</u>	-	<u>11,239</u>	18,094
Miscellaneous				
Expenses Reclaimed	631		1,332	
PAYE Tax Refund re Prior Year	-		522	
Other	<u>20</u>	651	<u>270</u>	2,124
Investment income				
Interest received		<u>262</u>		<u>1,415</u>
Total receipts		<u>£34,285</u>		<u>£74,811</u>
Payments				
Direct charitable expenditure				
Conferences				
National	3,529		14,628	
Telephone	360		356	
Salaries/fees	6,000		5,274	
Information services	<u>1,176</u>	11,065	<u>1,165</u>	21,423
Subscriptions		336		283
Projects				
U K - Every Action Counts	-		5,616	
EAC Diversity	619		7,627	
EHRC Good Relations	3,382		6,558	
Family Learning Research	4,111		10,764	
Transformation Fund - Cfl	<u>889</u>	9,001	-	30,565
International - General	554		564	
Teddybear	747		139	
Flexi-path	<u>16,302</u>	17,603	<u>1,620</u>	2,323
Other expenditure				
Stationery and photocopying	1,450		436	
Salaries	5,000		3,244	
Postage and telephone	388		49	
Travel and subsistence	1,173		1,755	
Information services	180		172	
Meeting expenses and room hire	1,591		1,816	
Representation and consultations	2,000		-	
Insurance	209		71	
Accountancy	585		617	
Staff training	-		995	
Office equipment	686		1,034	
Currency exchange differences	<u>610</u>	<u>13,872</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,189</u>
Total payments		<u>£51,877</u>		<u>£64,783</u>
Net (payments) receipts for the year		(17,592)		10,028
Bank balances brought forward		<u>48,367</u>		<u>38,339</u>
Bank and cash balances carried forward		<u>£30,775</u>		<u>£48,367</u>

EDUCATIONAL CENTRES ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
at 31st March 2010

	31 st March 2010	31 st March 2009
	£	£
Monetary Assets		
COIF Charities deposit account	21,480	30,766
Bank balances	8,924	17,601
Cash balance	371	-
	<u>£30,775</u>	<u>£48,367</u>

Other Assets

Held for functional use by the charity

Computer equipment costing £5,268 and several small items of office equipment purchased over a number of years.

Bernard Godding (Chairman)

Date 12 October 2010

On behalf of the Trustees



What our members say

“The ECA is a great organisation for information and networking opportunities”

“It’s lovely to be a member of the ECA and to be part of a group supporting the learning community”

“The ECA has the ability to ensure that the adult learning agenda is incorporated as a key point of consideration in any activity in which it takes part”

“It is consistently punching above its weight”

“Because of its national membership it can and does lobby and influence government decision making”

“Highlights the needs of informal learners in wider arenas”

“As a County Councillor, your conference gave me a much clearer idea of what should be our adult learning policy”

The unique selling point of the Association is that it is an organisation of local and national practitioners and learners interested in the delivery and policy issues that directly affect them.

You become part of that respected voice for the active partners in adult learning -

Students, Tutors, Managers, Volunteers, Governors, Student Associations



Join Today



If you or your organisation are interested in joining the ECA, or if you have any other questions please contact: -

 Educational Centres Association, 21 Ebbisham Drive, Norwich, NR4 6HQ

 info@e-c-a.ac.uk

 08442 495594

For our current membership rates and more information about the ECA visit www.e-c-a.ac.uk