
Learner Voice in AONTAS

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In this session:

- About AONTAS
- AONTAS' Theory of Learner Voice
- Learner Voice in Practice
- Q&A



AONTAS IS IRELAND'S National Adult Learning Organisation

We have a vibrant and growing membership of 500 organisations and people committed to lifelong learning

We collaborate with members to create conditions in which all adult learners can succeed

We are experts in:

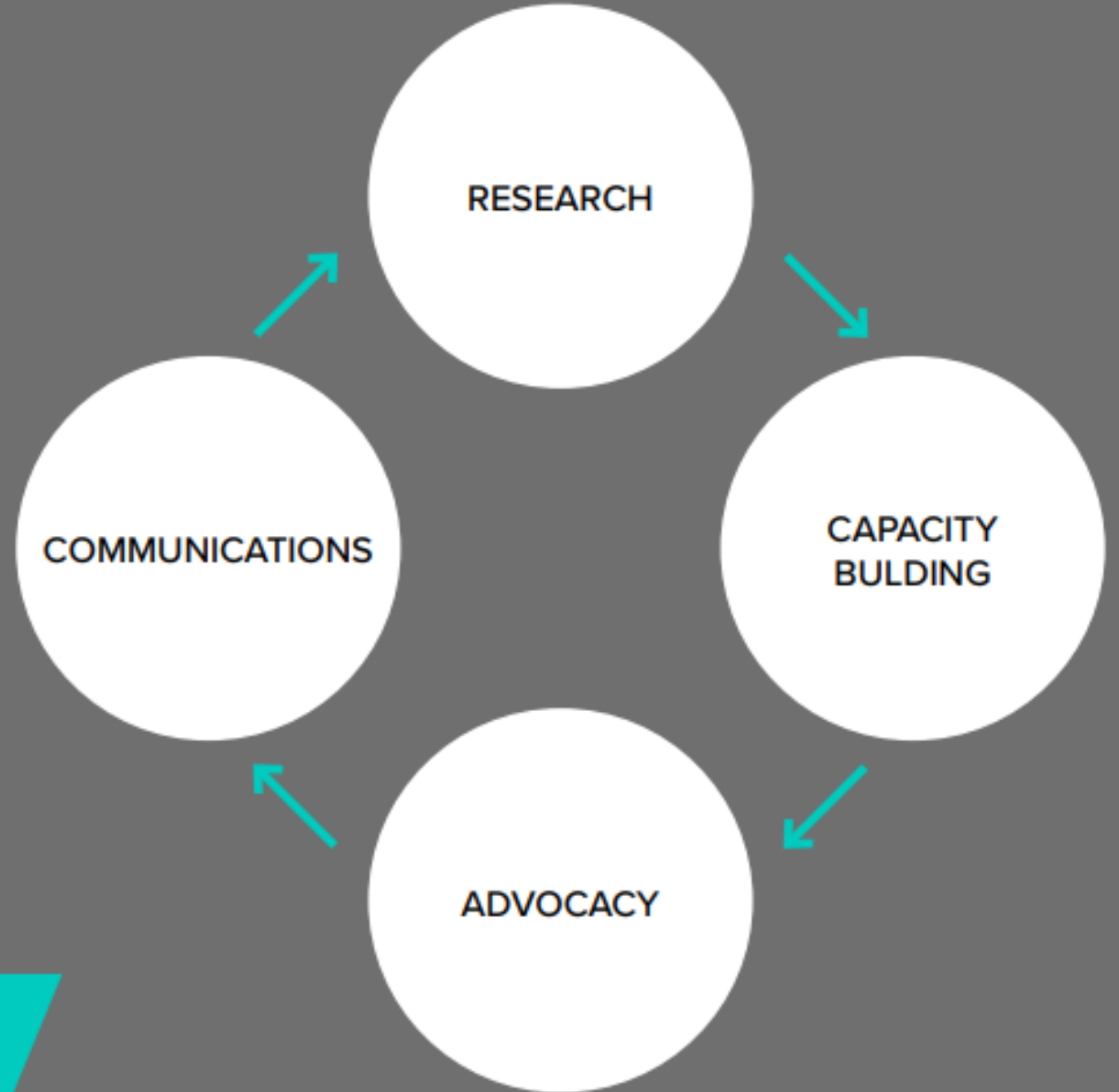
- 1. Community education**
- 2. Supporting learners to share their voice**
- 3. Advocating for educational equality for adults across the lifelong learning spectrum**

We have developed networks at regional, national, European and International level, to share knowledge and address the issues faced by our members

Our Goals:



How We Deliver our Goals



What is Learner Voice?

Learner Voice is a Process

Learner voice is about empowering learners by providing appropriate ways of listening to their concerns, interests and needs in order to develop educational experiences better suited to those individuals.

(Walker and Logan 2008)

“Learning is a Dialogue, an exchange that allows interaction and growth”

- Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary, ETBI

- Adult learners bring knowledge & experience to the encounter, they are equal partners in their learning
- Education is better when learners are involved in decision-making processes

What is the Value of Learner Voice?

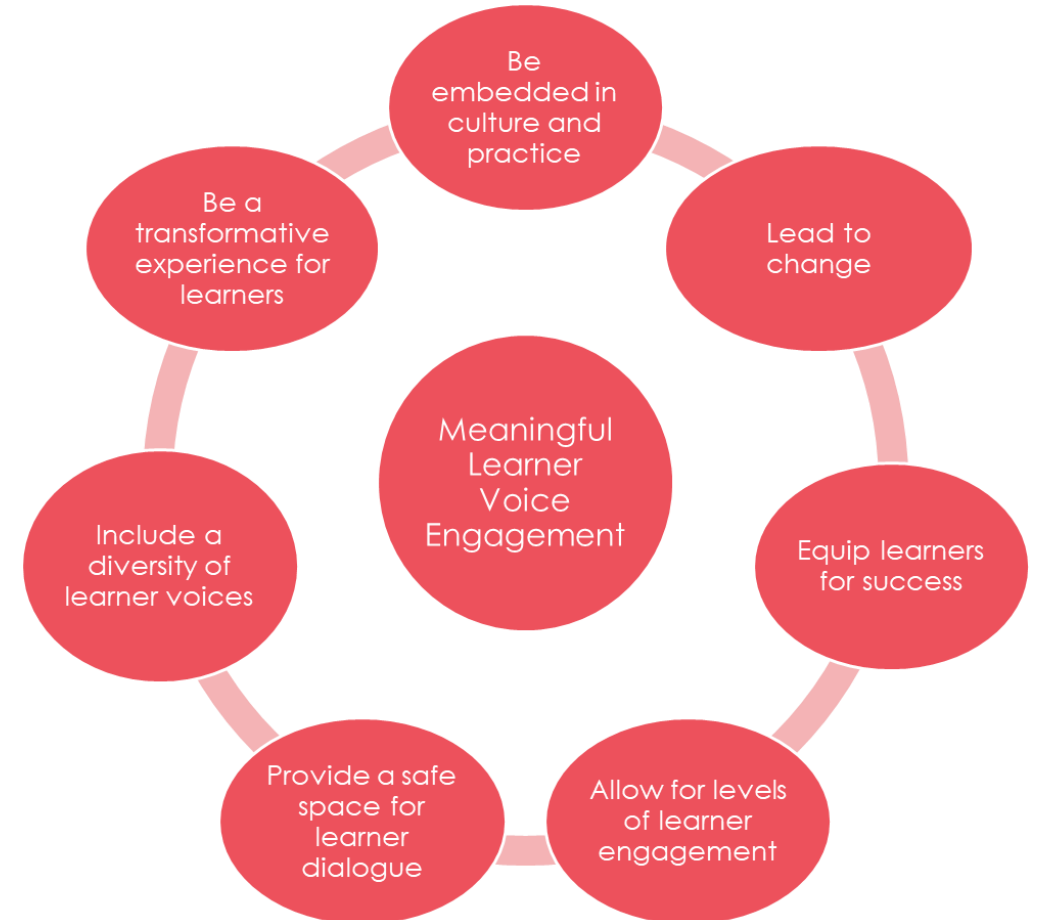
“I didn’t have a voice, full stop in my life at all, so to hear now that you have an actual learner’s voice, and that, when you speak, you can tell people about your journey through education, tell them about your journey through life to get you through education, to me, it just blows me away. You have people that will sit and listen to you, hear your ups and downs, and that there’s people in suits listening to you”

- Noeleen Watson, adult learner, I’m a FET Learner booklet, 2020

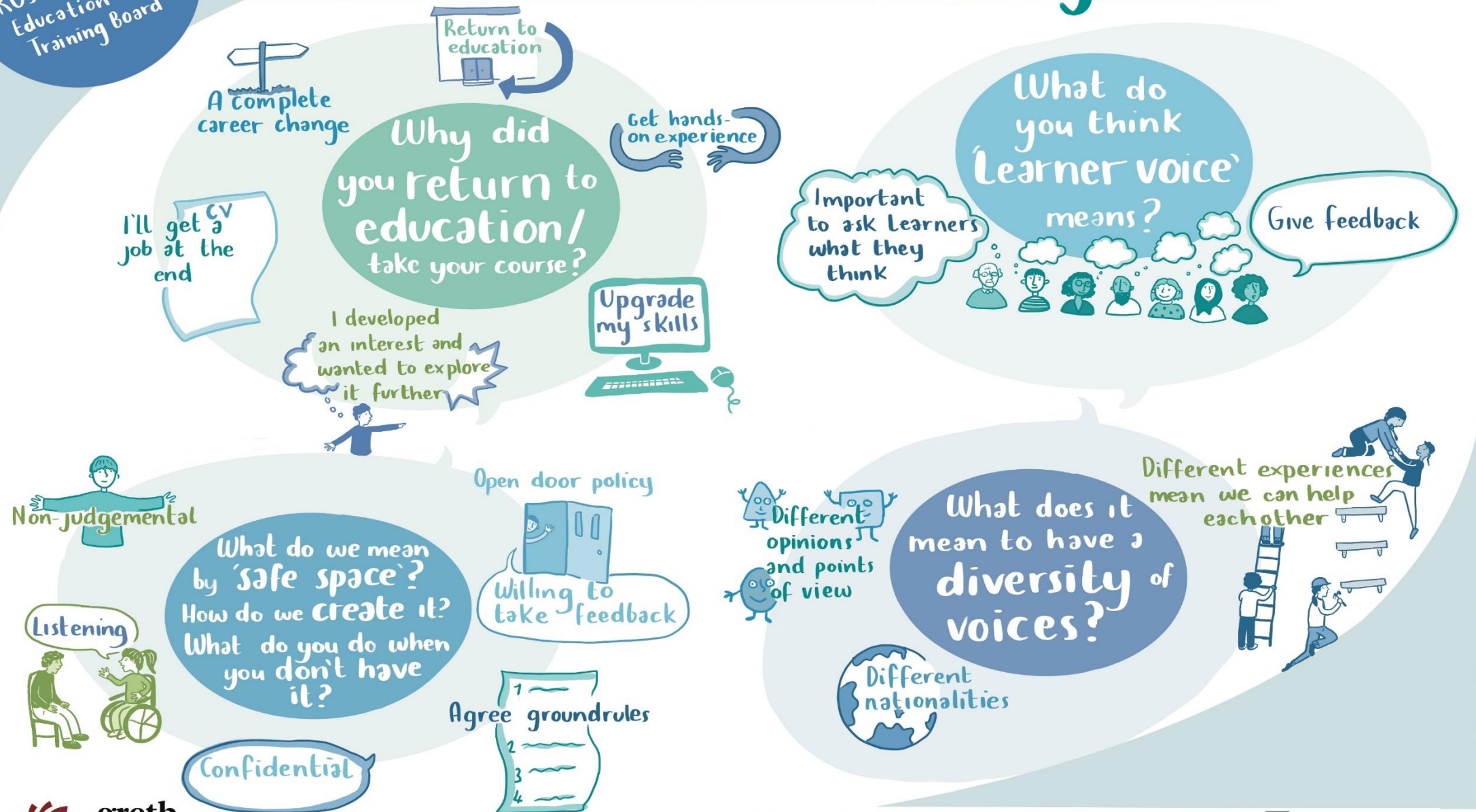


What is the Value of Learner Voice?

- AONTAS actively engages with a diverse range of adult learners to share their experiences, ensuring they are represented in policy across all forms of adult, community and tertiary learning systems.
- The experience of being listened to is empowering and supports equality in the classroom, improving the learner's educational experience
- The feedback we gather from learners supports our advocacy work



FET Learners as Leaders Programme



How do we engage with learners?

- ❑ Relationship building with our members, providers, representative groups and individual learners
- ❑ The learner voice process – maintaining relationships with learners by expanding capacities and providing opportunities



LMETB Further Education and Training
@lmetbfet



Thank you so much to [@aontas](#) and facilitators for capturing the LMETB [#learnerVoice](#) at yesterday's [#NationalFETLearnerForum](#) in Drogheda yesterday.



AONTAS @aontas · 8 Apr



50 learners joined us for the @lmetbfet [#NationalFETLearnerForum](#) yesterday in Drogheda! Thanks to all who attended & to our fantastic facilitators. It's so important to hear feedback and experiences from learners to help make [#AdultLearning](#) better for the future ⭐ [#LearnerVoice](#)



1:30 pm · 8 Apr 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

AONTAS' Learner Voice Work: National FET Learner Forum

- ❑ National-scale research project which gathers the views of thousands of adult learners annually
- ❑ Brings learners together to ask them their views on their courses – what is working well, what is not working well, what recommendations they have
- ❑ Discussion groups (qualitative) and surveys (quantitative)
- ❑ Often learners' first steps to engaging with AONTAS and other learner voice opportunities



Sharing Learner Stories

LEARNER STORY

"I found my voice because of this programme and I found that lifelong learning is really of value."

Name: Maria Shinnars

Place of Learning: Healthcare Opportunities for Women, Ballyhoura Development CLG, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board

[FULL STORY](#)



Learners as Leaders

- ❑ A programme delivered through AONTAS' project *Adult and Community Education: Supported Learner Pathways (2020-2021)*, as part of the European Agenda for Adult Learning.
- ❑ Builds and empowers the capacity of learners, develops critical thinking, communication, creative problem solving and advocacy capacity
- ❑ Projects include an advocacy programme with learners with disabilities, and a development education programme around raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals



Representational Learner Voice

- ☐ Learners given public speaking opportunities at AONTAS event
- ☐ Learners representing AONTAS at conferences
- ☐ Learners on the AONTAS board and other advisory groups
- ☐ Professional opportunities for learners – “Learners as facilitators”

