



Adults Learning Mathematics - a Research Forum

Please reply to:

ALM TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT YEAR: (1999/2000)

*From the Chair, John O'Donoghue*

The millennium year 2000 marks a most important milestone in the short history of ALM. During this term ALM made the transition from voluntary association to incorporated charity. ALM is now an international incorporated charity: a Company Limited by Guarantee under English and Welsh law, and registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. My fellow trustees deserve our praise and thanks for undertaking and completing this rigorous and onerous task.

While this new status brings with it new obligations under law, the considered view of the trustees and members who contributed at previous annual meetings is that these are outweighed by new opportunities to pursue the objects of ALM. As one would expect, the transition also provides motivation and reason to consider future directions. This debate has been initiated at trustee level and in the newsletter, and is set to continue at this year's AGM.

Meanwhile, the trustees have been busy complying with our new obligations and conducting the ordinary business of ALM. The trustees have directed effort and resources towards improving the quality of services available to members and the public. Publications and communications always occupy a significant portion of trustees' effort. The newsletter continues to improve and we acknowledge the editorial team's excellent work. Issues surrounding the publication of conference proceedings (ALM-6) were resolved to the trustees' satisfaction by moving to a new publisher. ALM-6 conference proceedings were published by the Continuing Education Press (CEP) at the University of Nottingham, U.K. We apologise to members for the delay with ALM-6 proceedings but wish to assure members that we have worked hard to avoid such problems in the future.

This year is also notable for another reason. ALM made another important transition- from webpage to its own website, <http://www.euronet.nl/-groenest/alm/index.htm>. This project was initiated at last year's AGM and progressed by our colleague, Mieke van Groenestijn. Since presence on the Web is likely to become more central to ALM's mission in the future a separate report is included below.

Preparations for our annual international conference consume a great deal of trustees' time and effort in any year. I am happy to report the successful conclusion of preparations for ALM-7 at Tufts University, Medford, Mass. U.S.A. I think you will agree that the work of the local organisers, Mary Jane Schmitt and her team, laid the foundations for an excellent conference.

I am grateful to all the trustees and ordinary members for their support and work on behalf of ALM during this last year. I am confident we are now in a better position to face the challenges in adults' mathematics education and I am enthusiastic for ALM'S future.

*Company Secretary, Dhamma Colwell*

Company and charitable status

For several years the forum has had an intention to adopt a more formal status, in order to financially safeguard members of the Steering Group from the effect of accidental errors or events, to facilitate international transactions by being able to accept credit card payments, and to enhance our status with other organisations.

We are very pleased to report that we have achieved both company and charitable status this year, following the adoption of the new Memorandum and Articles of Association at last year's Annual General Meeting in Sheffield. We were incorporated as a company limited by guarantee by the Registrar of Companies of England and Wales on the 30th December 1999 and we were registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as a national and overseas charity on the 18th February 2000. This means we are under the jurisdiction of the High Court for England and Wales, but can operate internationally.

To achieve this formal status we had to ground ourselves geographically somewhere and we chose England and Wales because the forum started there and the majority of our members live there. It does mean that half the trustees, including the Company Secretary, have to be resident in England and Wales. However our intention is not to focus the activity of the forum on England and Wales but to continue to operate as internationally as possible. Currently six of the trustees are resident in Austria, Brazil, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, and the USA.

We also had to make changes to names and objects. We are now entitled Adults Learning Mathematics - a Research Forum (not 'Maths') and the Steering Group is now called 'the Trustees'. Our objects are now 'the advancement of public education by the establishment and development of an international research forum in the life-long learning of mathematics and numeracy by adults by:

- i) encouraging research into adults learning mathematics at all levels and disseminating the results of this research for the public benefit;
- ii) promoting and sharing knowledge, awareness and understanding of adults learning mathematics at all levels, to encourage the development of the teaching of mathematics to adults at all levels, for the public benefit.'

None of these changes affects the nature of the organisation. But what has been difficult for the Trustees is to adopt the more formal methods of decision-making required by the law, while retaining the friendly and informal relationships we already had. Using email for meetings does not lend itself to this formality and in any case has no legal status, but it has to be our main method of communication, scattered as we are over the globe. We are still in the process of developing feasible methods of working.

Having a more formal status has already paid off in our relationships with other organisations. We have been invited to send an observer to attend meetings of the Joint Mathematics Council, which is the major council for mathematics education for England and Wales, with the possibility of being accepted as a full member in future. We have also been invited to send a representative to the UK NGO Education Forum which has an international focus.

*Administrative Secretary, Pat Brake*

1. The Trustees have met as follows:
  - i) 2 face-to-face meetings, in Sheffield and in London;
  - ii) 1 'virtual' meeting, conducted by email in November-December 1999.
  - iii) permanent email discussion.
2. The main business has been in relation to:
  - i) becoming a company limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales ( No. 3901346), and a Registered Charity (No. 1079462). The registered office is 56B Hanley Road London N4 3DR
  - ii) conferences - follow-up from ALM-6; organisation of ALM-7 ; dates for future conferences; iii) publications - Newsletter  
Conference Proceedings;  
ideas for future developments.

*Membership Secretary, Sue Elliott*

ALM's new status as a national and overseas charity has necessitated some changes in our membership processes. New membership forms have been produced giving details of how to apply for membership of ALM. The Trustees have to formally approve each applicant as a member. Institutions must resolve to apply for membership of ALM at a formal meeting of the Institution and nominate two named representatives. The individuals and institutions who apply to join must agree to be bound by the memorandum and Articles of association and to make a guarantee payment (not exceeding £1) if the company is wound up.

To facilitate the smooth running of the new membership processes the Trustees have agreed that ALM should operate a membership year from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July. Those interested in joining ALM can apply for membership at any time of the year but the renewal date for all members will be 1<sup>st</sup> August. In future years, those who are approved as members in the period 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> January will renew their membership on the next 1<sup>st</sup> August. Those who are approved as members in the period 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> July will renew their membership on 1<sup>st</sup> August of the following year. Payment of the appropriate membership subscription entitles an individual member to one copy, and an institution to two copies, of the proceedings from one conference.

These formal requirements, however, do not affect our wish to encourage all those interested to become members. We are keen to increase our membership numbers and participation

*Newsletter/Website editor, Mieke van Groenestijn*

Newsletter

Since the start of ALM in 1994 the newsletter is an important communication means for ALM members. The newsletter reflects events and developments in mathematics education for adults. At ALM-6 in 1999 it was decided to publish the newsletter three times a year, in Winter, Spring and Summer. The current editorial team set a few goals to work on and have been trying to actualize these:

- 1) The newsletter should reflect the developments in ALM and keep members informed about membership issues. Announcements and reports will be done about the annual ALM conference and other events and developments within the ALM organization.
- 2) The newsletter should actualize the goals of ALM as an organization where researchers and practitioners can meet and discuss. This should be recognizable in the kind of articles published in the newsletter. Each issue should have brief articles about research and good practice in adult education.
- 3) The newsletter should reflect all fields of adults learning mathematics. Adult mathematics/numeracy education may vary from all types of unofficial, volunteers education projects to official, subsidized and institutionalized education, from adult basic education to university and higher professional education, and from general education to specific vocational and professional education for adults.
- 4) The newsletter should reflect the international face of ALM. It should show the international character of ALM by publishing articles that describe developments in adult mathematics and numeracy education across the world.
- 5) The newsletter should inform members about meetings, conferences, publications and other relevant topics and events.

In 1999/2000 articles were published coming from the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, US, Austria and Brazil. Each issue of the newsletter contained 8 pages.

In addition to paper copies all newsletters have been published on the ALM-website. For coming year new ideas and possibilities will be presented and discussed at the AGM.

The editorial committee for 1999/2000 is:

Mieke van Groenestijn, Netherlands  
Dave Tout, Australia Brian Cann,  
Germany

ALM website

At the ALM 6 Conference in Sheffield, July 1999, it was decided to start an experimental ALM website. Since this was only a first experiment this site started as a link to a personal Internet account of one of the ALM trustees. The goal of this site is to create more and better access to ALM for members and non-members; more access to information about ALM and to developments in adult mathematics/numeracy education.

The site shows information about ALM as an organization, information about the annual ALM conference and its communication and discussion list. It also publishes the ALM newsletter. For the coming year new goals may be needed e.g. an ALM Internet account. This may depend on costs.

*Treasurer, Sylvia Johnson*

The transition to company limited by guarantee and the acquisition of charitable status have had some impact upon our accounting procedures. We have nominated 1 June 2000 as the start of our accounting year and have effectively traded between the date of incorporation until 1 June as the old ALM. From 1 June we will have a new bank account and cheques etc. All monies will be transferred to the new account.

We are required to make an annual return to Companies House and the Charity Commission according to a particular format. As treasurer I have taken advice upon this and the trustees agreed to the appointment of an accountant to provide an independent inspection of the accounts next year and to set up the report format in the appropriate manner.

In addition to the treasurer keeping good records, it will become vital that the Conference Organiser provides detailed accounts of the conference income and expenditure for scrutiny by the independent examiner. Conference income counts as ALM income even though most of it disappears in expenditure. This means that ALM annual income is in excess of £10 000 annually.

The ALM 6 conference generated a substantial profit of the order of £4000 ( before proceedings have been paid for) which has alleviated the financial crisis that was looming at the AGM last year. We do not have a very significant 'float' however, and it is crucial that the annual conference does not make a loss. Given the low level of surplus, there is also a limitation on the activity that ALM can support. Currently some travel is being found by individuals from their own sources for example.

I would like to propose that ALM membership considers an increase in the annual subscription to £20 as from June 1 2001.

Brief Statement of Conference ( ALM 6 ) accounts:

<i>Total income for conference</i>		<i>£11394.72</i>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>£768.40</i>	
<i>Bill for food and accommodation</i>	<i><u>£6222.75</u></i>	
<i>Total expenses</i>		<i><u>£6,991.15</u></i>
<i>Balance of income from conference</i>		<i><u>£4,403.57</u></i>

A summary of the accounts and a financial statement will be presented at the AGM separately once the accounts for the year have been inspected and the new account has been opened with transfer of funds.