

## England and New Zealand: Two National Contexts for Adult Education

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the development and current context for adult education in two case-study countries – England and Aotearoa New Zealand. Although separated by a distance of over 12,000 miles, and marked by geographical, demographic and cultural differences, England and New Zealand share aspects of a common heritage as a result of migration, colonisation and the continuing flow of people and ideas between the two countries (Bowl and Tobias 2012). They also share more recent experience of the zealous application of neo-liberal ideas to all aspects of education (Gordon and Whitty 1997), including post-compulsory education. While the impact of neoliberalism has been powerful in both countries, the specifics of demography, history and culture may also shape the possibilities for action suggesting differences as well as convergences in education policy and practice (McLean 1992; Phillips and Schweisfurth 2008). The chapter begins with a description of the demographic and historical contexts for adult education in both countries. It then goes on to discuss the development of policy around adult and community education in recent times and considers how policy changes are being played out in practice.

## NEW ZEALAND AND ENGLAND: A BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC SKETCH

The majority of Aotearoa New Zealand's population of just over four million resides in 16 urban centres on New Zealand's North or South Islands, with over half the population located in six cities: Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Tauranga and Wellington (the capital). Away from these urban centres New Zealand is sparsely populated and largely rural. This relatively small population enables social networks to flourish, in spite of geographical differences. Its economy is based on agriculture, tourism and small- to medium-sized industries. Māori, the earliest inhabitants, make up just under 15% of the population; people of European (Pākehā) heritage make up the majority at around 70%. New Zealand's ethnic make-up is increasingly diverse, however, and people of Pacific Island (Pasifika) and East Asian heritage make up sizeable minorities. New Zealand today is officially a bicultural and bilingual state in which Māori, Pākehā and new migrants from across the globe coexist within the context of the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>1</sup> (Ministry of Education 2008; Statistics New Zealand 2013).

England – along with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – has been a member of the European Union since 1973, and therefore party to EU policies and initiatives around adult education and lifelong learning. However, within the United Kingdom in recent years the devolution of many government functions (including education) to its constituent countries – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – has led to a divergence in national adult education policies. England is the most highly populated of the four countries of the United Kingdom. Its population (around 53 million) is much larger than that of New Zealand. Like New Zealand, it is ethnically diverse. According to the ethnic classifications of the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics (2016) the population includes around 80% white British inhabitants with minority populations of South Asian, African Caribbean and African heritage (totalling around 11%) and other ethnic backgrounds, including European and East Asian. Compared with New Zealand, England is highly urbanised as a consequence of its industrial past. Heavy industry has been in decline for a number of years; its economy is now based on a mix which includes manufacturing, chemical and pharmaceutical, finance, service and agricultural industries. At

the time of writing (April 2016), the official unemployment rates in both England and New Zealand were on a downward trajectory, with England's rate at 5.0%, and that of New Zealand at 5.4%.

## TWO HISTORICAL CONTEXTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

A number of writers (King 2003; Tobias 1994, 2004; Walker 1990) have explored the pre-colonial and pre-capitalist history of education in New Zealand. Prior to European settlement, Māori kinship-based social and organisational arrangements were central to the passing on of knowledge, understanding and skills within and across generations. While European settlement from the 1700s initially resulted in a two-way flow of knowledge between indigenous and newcomer populations, the incorporation of New Zealand into the British colonial political economy in the nineteenth century established a new hegemony (Walker 1990). The development of educational institutions on a British model was integral to colonial strategies for extending British influence. Today, adult and community education (ACE) largely reflects this colonial past. But colonisation and its impact did not go uncontested; the current structure and discourse of adult and community education (ACE) in New Zealand also reflect the 'military, political, economic and ideological' struggles (Tobias 2004: 570) of and between Māori and Pākehā (Tobias 2004; Bowl and Tobias 2012). A key moment in those struggles was the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 which officially established a formal partnership between the country's indigenous people and its colonial settlers. However, it did not put an end to the appropriation of Māori land, or to the suppression of Māori language, culture and ways of knowing – which Māori continued to resist. Nevertheless, the Treaty of Waitangi still defines the relationship between Māori and non-Māori within the parameters of a bicultural state in which the values, language and world view of both should be respected.

In England, prior to industrialisation, adult education and learning were largely informally organised and religious and vocational in nature. Formally organised adult education arose in the wake of nineteenth century industrial and imperial expansion, urbanisation, technological advance and, crucially, the growth of an organised working class (Williams 1961a; Simon 1965, 1990; E.P. Thompson 1980; Fieldhouse 1996; Field 2000). It was driven by a number of sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory motives. First, the explosion in scientific and technical knowledge was accompanied by a growing interest on the part of working- and middle-class

people to understand the many developments which were impacting on their lives. Second, there was a desire on the part of some employers for a more skilled workforce to facilitate capitalist competition with an industrialising Europe and North America. Third, there was concern among liberal elites, municipal authorities and central government to manage some of the problems arising from urbanisation – including poor economic and social conditions, and the social unrest which accompanied them. Fourth, as working people became more self-organised there was a growth in autonomous educational associations, often linked to radical or socialist political aspirations (Simon 1965, 1990; Fieldhouse 1996). From its early origins, therefore, adult education in England was driven by diverse aims – instrumental, liberal and radical – and organised by diverse actors – industrialists, religious organisations and workers – either separately or in alliance.

Many of the educational organisations formed in the United Kingdom during the nineteenth century were short-lived and localised. However, some, like the Mechanics' Institutes and the university extension movement persisted into the twentieth century. Fieldhouse (1996) provides a detailed history of the development of these organisations in the United Kingdom. He describes the impetus behind Mechanics' Institutes as being: 'A mixture of autonomous working-class enterprise and paternalistic middle-class provision' (ibid: 23) whose classes on topics of scientific and cultural interest were directed primarily towards skilled working- and lower middle-class men, rather than the unemployed or unskilled worker. The WEA, which was formed in 1903, linked organised labour and the universities and aimed to provide manual labourers with access to university education and knowledge (Roberts 2003). Again, however, it was an alliance between middle-class liberal intellectuals and working-class organisations, rather than an independent workers' movement. And the focus of these organisations was primarily, though not exclusively, male (Purvis 1989; Martin 2010). Although adult education initiatives tended to focus on men, and although women tended to be excluded from higher level education, this is not to say that women were not active in their own right. Jane Martin (2010) for example, describes the life and work of Mary Bridges Adams, one of the female campaigners for working-class education whose contribution has been neglected, while Robert Tobias (1994) describes the various female-led organisations which grew up in New Zealand, among whose aims were the extension of educational opportunities to women.

These organisations along with libraries for working men and Christian and temperance organisations were among those imported from Britain to New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to cater for the needs of European migrants and to regulate male settler social life. As in England, the motivations for their importation were diverse and included social control as well as educational emancipation. The Mechanics' Institutes (Hudson 1851; Sims 2010) were relatively short lived, but in New Zealand as well as in England, the WEA has continued to provide adult education opportunities. The nature of these opportunities has varied from place to place, depending on the local context and funding available. In New Zealand the focus has been on political and cultural education. In England in recent years WEA provision has increasingly been tied in with accreditation and government funding priorities. In both countries the tension between middle-class and working-class interests has been a feature of the internal debates of these organisations (Simon 1990; Tobias 1994; Fieldhouse 1996).

One of these debates in the struggles for working-class and radical education, which remains relevant today (CCCS 1981), is over the extent to which popular adult education should be developed independently of state and philanthropic intervention (substitutional strategies) and the extent to which the efforts of those advocating for adult education should be directed towards securing publicly funded provision (statist strategies). And linked to this has been the debate around the forms of knowledge and understanding which should be fostered. In this context 'Really Useful Knowledge' – practical political knowledge of the economy, social sciences and politics which provides adults with the means to understand and change society (Johnson 1979) – was advocated, in opposition to 'merely' useful knowledge which was seen as being imposed by middle-class interests in an attempt to neutralise self-organised and more politically challenging working-class adult educational projects. These debates are echoed in contemporary struggles over the funding and purposes of adult education (Mayo and Thompson 1995; Thompson 1997; Foley 1999).

The early history of adult education in England and New Zealand demonstrates the way in which industrialisation and colonial expansion aided the development and dissemination of adult educational ideas and organisations. This aspect of their shared history has led to some continuity between the two countries' adult education traditions, which reflect a mix of motivations – conservative, liberal, humanist and radical. However, in New Zealand the influence of Māori culture, language and

organisation is significant and the struggles of Māori to challenge hegemonic educational ideas and structures (Walker 1990) have been and remain important in claiming and maintaining space in New Zealand for education with social and cultural aims.

### ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND THE RISE OF THE WELFARE STATE

Throughout the nineteenth century in both England and New Zealand the state's role in adult education was negligible. However, in spite of economic booms and busts and the losses and disruptions caused by two World Wars, the first half of the twentieth century was marked by increased state interest in the education of adults. In England the 1902 Education Act saw the creation of Local Education Authorities which became responsible for adult, as well as elementary and some secondary education (Fieldhouse 1996). Similarly, in New Zealand state subsidies began to be made available for the provision of technical and other forms of adult education (Tobias 1994), though equivalent local government structures were not developed to administer and fund education, and this remains the case (Gordon and Whitty 1997).

In England after the 1914–1918 World War there was high-level support for the idea of adult education becoming available to the mass of the people. The argument was made for adult education's social purpose and its contribution to building and sustaining participatory democracy. This support was expressed through the Smith Report (Ministry of Reconstruction 1919) which was commissioned by the UK government as part of its planning for post-war reconstruction. Local education authorities and some of the larger voluntary organisations (including the WEA and the universities) were designated as 'responsible bodies' in respect of adult education and charged with providing both long and shorter courses of non-accredited adult education from 1924. This set the pattern for funding for many years to come – a mix of local and central government subsidy to public and voluntary bodies working independently of one another. Through and between both World Wars adult education in England continued to survive, addressing a range of purposes, reflecting the perceived needs of the times but subject to the vicissitudes of the economic climate.

A similar picture was discernible in New Zealand. For example, the depression of the early 1930s saw widespread cuts in state expenditure on public services including adult education. However, as Tobias (1994)

points out, even in periods of economic stringency independent popular study groups continued to thrive in New Zealand as working people engaged in political action and debate. As the national economy began to recover, and with the election of a Labour Government in 1935, funding was restored to some organisations and new adult and community education initiatives also began to spring up. The 1938 Education Amendment Act led to the establishment of a centralised National Council for Adult Education which assumed responsibility for advising on adult education and distributing funds to adult education organisations. At the same time, in the late 1930s and early 1940s a number of Young Māori Leaders' Conferences were held which debated issues faced by Māori, especially in view of rapid urbanisation (Thompson 1945; Walker 1990; Tobias 1994; Bowl and Tobias 2012). These conferences reflected the continuing struggle for self-determination and for a future for Māori which went beyond the Labour government's aspiration for socio-economic equalisation in the context of the Welfare State. And they also encompassed struggles in relation to education, language and culture which continue to be reflected in debates around adult education policy (Hill 2004).

While the engagement of England and New Zealand in the 1939 to 1945 war diverted resources and political attention away from educational developments in the civilian realm, adult education activity was sustained (Tobias 1994; Fieldhouse 1996). Furthermore educational provision for those serving in the armed forces was established in both countries from the early 1940s. Its purposes were diverse and embraced general interest education, preparation for re-entry into civilian life and citizenship and social and political education. The latter was sometimes seen as controversial however, particularly when it was offered by non-Forces organisations and, as Fieldhouse reports in relation to England, it rarely went uncensored.

As World War Two drew to a close in England the 1944 Education Act heralded the introduction of more egalitarian principles to the educational sphere. Among the Act's provisions was support for post-compulsory education for a range of purposes, including cultural enrichment and recreation (Fieldhouse 1996) and part-time continuing education for young workers (Tinkler 2001). Local Education Authorities were charged with providing full- and part-time post-compulsory educational opportunities, in consultation with other providers, including local universities and voluntary bodies. Evening classes and university extra-mural provision

expanded. But a plan by the Ministry of Education to develop further education colleges as the hub for vocational and non-vocational adult education throughout the country, supported by networks of more localised centres, did not materialise, due to a combination of lack of political will and lack of finance. As a result further education colleges focused primarily on vocational training, while local education authority evening institutes, community centres and voluntary sector organisations focused on non-vocational adult education, reinforcing a tacit demarcation between adult (non-vocational) and further (vocational) education which, as Fieldhouse suggests, had already been mooted by the 1919 Smith Report. The key post-war development in New Zealand adult education was the 1947 Adult Education Act which established the National Council of Adult Education, along with regional councils (based in the universities). During this period too, schools-based adult education expanded considerably and, until relatively recently, schools remained the major providers of non-vocational, non-accredited adult education for local individuals and communities.

The development of the Welfare State in both countries brought with it a measure of expansion in community-based adult education, and laid the funding foundations for some of the institutions which have hosted adult and community education activity from then to the present day. However, the main educational focus was secondary schooling. Although there were plans in both countries for more comprehensive development of a system of adult education these rarely came to full fruition, but were limited by lack of investment and uneven political will. Also discernible in both countries is the ongoing tension around the purposes of adult education, the extent to which it should be socially and politically engaged and the division between vocational and non-vocational purposes (Williams 1961a).

### THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES: RADICAL INFLUENCES AND EDUCATIONAL IDEALISM

The processes of decolonisation stimulated radical thinking worldwide (Freire 1972; Illich 1973; Nyerere 1976) and ushered in a period of optimism about possibilities for adult education. The May 1968 uprisings of students and workers in France also brought to the fore issues around the relationship between intellectuals and the workers movement.



Moreover, global social movements – anti-apartheid, anti-nuclear, environmentalist, indigenous and feminist – also gave practical meaning to learning through struggle outside state funding and control.

At the same time growing international interest in lifelong education, sponsored through UNESCO and the OECD (Lengrand 1970; Faure 1972; Dave 1976), provided a counterbalance to the historical emphasis on formal schooling. This too influenced adult educators' ideas about the possibilities of non-formal approaches to education (Tobias 2004; Jarvis 2011). As discussed in Chapter 2 these developments were international in scale but also significant in their impact on national contexts for adult education. Radical political and educational ideas stimulated popular education movements; they also influenced publicly funded adult educators who were employed in the developing adult and community education field. And in the early 1970s government policy also began to reflect a socially oriented view of adult education's purpose.

In England radical ideas were influential in the work of adult and community educators appointed to the Inner London (ILEA) and other Local Education Authorities. The ILEA replaced the London County Council in 1965. It assumed responsibility for the network of adult education institutes which existed around London and which engaged in educational work with local communities, in literacy education and teaching English as a foreign language as well as in the provision of more traditional evening classes. And while relationships between the young, radically influenced (and usually part-time) adult education workers and the more bureaucratic outlook of Local Education Authorities was at times somewhat fraught, it was a time when, viewed in retrospect, a hundred adult and community education flowers seemed to bloom. In the policy arena, the Russell Committee was appointed to advise the government on policies for adult education. The consequent report (DES 1973) supported the creation of a number of agencies to promote specific types of provision including the Adult Literacy Resources Agency and The National Institute for Adult Education (NIACE) as well as supporting residential adult education. The intention behind the report was to lay out a plan for adult education within the context of a national education system and it appeared at the time to presage further development. The report recommended the expansion of non-vocational adult education as a vehicle for helping adults to adjust to rapidly changing times. However, this promise was never fully realised as economic crises

and rising unemployment turned government attention increasingly towards vocational education and training and on preparing young people for work (Callaghan 1976), rather than education for broader social purposes (Field 2000). Humanistic ideals were overtaken by an instrumentalist policy approach which has virtually eradicated liberal humanistic policy discourses.

In New Zealand under the 1972–1975 Labour administration adult and community education also gained momentum with the expansion of government supported adult education for non-vocational and social ends which raised the status of adult education and heralded increased participation (Tobias 2004). Among the initiatives funded by government and which employed adult and community educators were community colleges, adult literacy projects and Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAPs). From 1979, 13 REAPs were established with the aim of improving educational services across the board in rural areas. Community adult educators employed by REAPs, along with school-based adult education coordinators, thus became the bedrock of national organisations which represented the interests of adult education.

At the same time, and outside the confines of policy-driven adult education in New Zealand, many informal adult education activities accompanied various political movements – for peace, anti-nuclear armament and for women’s and Māori rights (Locke 1992). Walker (1990) points to the Māori renaissance from the late 1970s and the work of the Māori Women’s Welfare League and Ngā Tamatoa (the young warriors) in promoting the resurgence of Māori language. From the 1970s there was also rapid growth in the teaching of Māori in schools and the community (Bowl and Tobias 2012). A key moment in the recent history of political action in New Zealand was the 1981 South African Rugby tour of New Zealand which sparked a massive resistance movement and divided national opinion. Thousands of people were involved in protests everywhere matches were held, and Beyer (1981) describes some of the informal learning from such campaigns to demonstrate the power of popular education outside the control of the state. However, a crisis in capitalism, mounting unemployment and the growing influence of neoliberalising ideologies brought adult education expansion to a halt in both countries, and the late 1970s and early 1980s marked a retreat from the post-war welfare consensus which progressively impacted on adult education and which continues to the present.

## STRUGGLES WITH NEOLIBERALISM

Since the early 1980s both England and New Zealand have experienced the aggressive implementation of neoliberal policy which has impacted on education across the board (Gordon and Whitty 1997). The key features of this shift have been the pulling back of the state from large parts of public sector, a diminution of concern with social relations and a reliance on the ‘market’ to deliver national economic prosperity. For adult and community education, whose position has been historically marginal and vulnerable, the impact has been particularly stark. While there have been some differences in pace and detail, ‘user pays’ and training for skills, employment and employability have become the policy mantra in both countries and there have been remarkable similarities in policy statements and funding priorities.

### *England and the Legacy of Thatcherism*

In England, from the early 1980s a Conservative government under the Prime Ministership of Margaret Thatcher asserted a strongly instrumentalist and individualised vision for education and training. This view persisted through the term of the Labour Government from 1997 to 2010, notwithstanding the administration’s policy rhetoric around life-long learning (DfEE 1998) and into the present under two Conservative-led governments. It was a view which was also reflected beyond the United Kingdom and across the European Union as a whole (CEC 1993). Adult educators’ practice shifted increasingly towards training for employment. An element of compulsion was also introduced into training for the unemployed. Of particular significance for adult educators’ work was the government’s attack on local authorities. The 1988 Education Reform Act reduced the power of, and hence the funding available to, local education authorities; the Inner London Education Authority was abolished. Community-based adult education was much diminished. Following this, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act took further education colleges out of local authority control, establishing them as corporate bodies within a developing education market. Further education colleges were charged with responsibility for vocational education and training, basic skills, education for people with learning difficulties and access to higher education programmes. While further education expanded, adult and community education increasingly became residual. Local education

authorities and the private and voluntary sector were left to manage Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL), with shrinking resources and shrinking policy support (Osborne and Sankey 2009).

One area of adult education which did not decline during this period and which was enthusiastically embraced by further education colleges, local education authorities and some voluntary adult and community organisations, was adult access to higher education provision (more commonly known as Access Courses). Access Courses were an educational response to rising adult unemployment but also grew out of a movement among adult educators and others to open up routes to higher level educational opportunities, particularly for women and ethnic minorities who had earlier been excluded from these. Increasingly, however, Access Courses have become bound into formal accreditation and quality control systems and geared towards access to vocational study – nursing, health and social care being the most popular pathways (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2011). As Benn and Burton (1995) have suggested, this has presented a dilemma for adult educators engaged in work which began with a socially transformative purpose and has been reshaped to individual and instrumentalist ends.

Policies of instrumentalism, vocationalism and accreditation were further cemented by the implementation of the recommendations of the Leitch Review (2006). The Review's recommendations aimed to make the United Kingdom a world leader in skills as a means to enable it to compete in the global economy. Along with the White Paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES 2006) it established skills for work, minimum levels of accredited attainment and individuals' responsibility for investment in their own education and training as the dominant discourse for adult education. Despite the White Paper's acknowledgement of the desirability of an educational agenda which goes wider than skills training, the government was explicit about its intention not to fund it:

There will increasingly be an expectation that individuals should pay for this kind of provision where they can afford to do so. (DfES (Department for Education and Skills) 2006: 31)

A further development which has impacted on the flexibility and responsiveness of organised adult education has been the policy focus on 'quality' and 'standards' and 'outcomes' defined by government (LSC 2000;

Ofsted 2013). Regimes of inspection now extend to all providers of adult education, from large further education colleges to community-based, voluntary and local authority organisations. At the same time adult educators have been expected to meet centrally defined expectations in relation to their own qualifications and continuing professional development (DfES 2004); from 2007 until 2012 all entrants to employment in adult education were required to gain qualified teacher status.

There has been limited resistance. Until early 2016, NIACE (The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) sought to advocate on behalf of adult learners in England and Wales. However, its membership was relatively small (NIACE 2010a), its advocacy role was one of ‘critical friendship’ with government (NIACE 2010b) and it was also a contractor of work for government, which arguably compromised its ability to campaign against the impact of cuts in the sector. In July 2015, NIACE announced its intention to merge with another non-government organisation – the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion. The title of the organisation formed from this alliance – *The Learning and Work Institute* – signals the shift in focus away from adult education and towards learning for work as well as a further weakening of the organisation’s campaigning stance.

In 2008 *The Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning (CALL)*, a loose alliance of trade unions, student groups and adult education providers came together to lobby for the maintenance of support for adult education for personal wellbeing and development as well as instrumental ends. The Alliance was relatively short-lived, though the Workers’ Educational Association has continued attempts to sustain a *Save Adult Education Campaign*, through activities focused primarily on parliamentary lobbying. Finally, *Action for ESOL* has mobilised learners, teachers and trade unions and has had some success in lobbying to stem the tide of cutbacks in educational provision for migrants and refugees. The advocacy and campaigning work of these organisations will be discussed in Chapter 9. Overall however, reduced subsidies, instrumentalist agendas, accreditation regimes and ‘quality’ controls have decimated English community-based adult education, while college-based adult education, which has been subject to severe government funding cuts since 2010, is tied into vocational training and certification (Skills Funding Agency 2016), and universities have all but lost the fight for liberal adult education. The bulk of paid adult education work is now confined to literacy, ESOL and vocational training.

### *New Zealand and the Neoliberal Experiment*

It has been argued (Tobias 2004; Zepke 2009) that 1987 marked the point at which policy in New Zealand, under a succession of governments, but beginning with a Labour government, became dominated by neoliberal ideas. The 1989 Education Act created the Tertiary Education Commission and, important for adult education, it also ushered in open entry to tertiary education for adults over 20 years of age, regardless of their prior qualifications. Open access for mature students has been a unique, but increasingly controversial aspect of education policy, particularly since 2009, as government has capped university numbers and penalised universities with low retention rates (Healy and Gunby 2012). The 1989 Act also formally recognised Wānanga – public tertiary institutions providing education in a specifically Māori cultural context (Walker 1990). The 1990 Education Amendment Act saw the restructuring of post-compulsory education and established a largely demand-led framework for tertiary education, which Tobias (2004: 576) describes as a compromise between competing ideologies, with some resultant contradictions:

On the one hand, it went some way toward breaking down institutional barriers to learning and allowed for the possibility of a more diverse curriculum; on the other hand, it endorsed a highly individualized and consumerist notion of lifelong learning and a managerialist approach to problem solving. It appeared to allow little space for the development of radical or critical engagements based on the collective interests of groups and movements in society.

The election of a National Party government in 1990 was to further worsen the position of adult education (Benseman 2005) and bring about drastic funding cuts, the removal of government advisory support which in turn precipitated a fall in membership of *ACE Aotearoa* (the national umbrella organisation) and a decline in morale and activity.

Tobias (2004) however, describes how some practitioners kept the vision of a progressive future alive through the 1990s with little state funding or recognition. Adult educators continued to organise nationally, while maintaining international engagement through UNESCO. Walker (1990) also describes the activities of Māori organisations during this time, in particular the 1984 Māori Educational Development Conference and its radical influence in advancing Māori education. ACE Aotearoa national

conferences featured speeches which contested the assumptions of neoliberalism and highlighted the radicalism of adult education manifested through struggles around Māori language education and culture and the Treaty of Waitangi. Although the history of ACE in New Zealand during the 1980s and 1990s may appear a story of defeat, there was some continuity of progressive thought and action informed by radical education ideas and traditions. The momentum of protest over economic and social policy changes grew through the late 1980s and early 1990s and contributed to a change in government and a degree of change in policy direction in 1999.

The 1999 Labour Alliance government (Codd 2002; Zepke 2009) pursued a *Third Way* (Giddens 1998, 2000, 2001) in politics, seeking to reconcile neoliberal and social democratic ideologies and create a socialised market economy. For adult educators this brief period was one of increased optimism. The government established the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) which, in 2003, became the Tertiary Education Commission. The TEC assumed responsibility for policy and funding in the whole post-compulsory education sector. This, in theory, gave ACE equal standing alongside polytechnics, universities, industrial training organisations and other educational organisations. The government acknowledged adult and community education as a public and private good and advocated a collaborative approach to rebuilding the ACE sector. An Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party was set up to consult with the ACE sector. The result of the working party's considerations was *Koia! Koia! Towards a Learning Society* (TEC 2001) which defined ACE and outlined a vision for its future. The sector was charged with focusing on five priorities which reflected a range of aims, individual and social, compensatory and liberal:

- Targeting learners whose initial learning was not successful
- Raising foundation skills
- Encouraging lifelong learning
- Strengthening communities
- Strengthening social cohesion

Central to policy at this point was an understanding that the ACE sector should take 'ownership' of its defined role and accompanying responsibilities. The promise of funding was used as an incentive to encourage the sector to work collaboratively through regional networks to

coordinate provision to meet local needs, and implement quality systems and professional development plans. Meanwhile Māori and Pasifika organisations laid out their own ACE agenda based on self-determination, self-organisation and distinctive conceptions of knowledge, learning and teaching (Irwin 2008; Morrison and Vaoleti 2008). It seemed that the place of non-accredited education within tertiary education had been publicly recognised.

However, over time, the Labour coalition's interest in ACE appeared to wane, and the global drive for education and training for the knowledge economy became more influential. This is reflected in the decreased prominence of ACE within the government's Tertiary Education Strategy (TEC 2007) which devoted just six lines to ACE. Hopes for increased, secure and equitable funding were not realised and the government's aspirations to meet industry's needs through training, to link research to economic opportunities and to improve workforce literacy and numeracy took precedence over funding for more general, community-based purposes.

A change of government and an economic downturn signalled renewed problems for ACE in New Zealand from the 2008 general election when the Labour-led coalition was replaced by a centre-right coalition led by the National Party. One of the new government's first acts was to cut staffing in the Tertiary Education Commission and funding for ACE. Funding to schools-based adult education was slashed and support for university- and polytechnic-based community education was phased out from 2011. General interest, non-accredited liberal education (characterised by the then Minister of Education as 'hobby classes') was the first to be targeted. School and university adult educators, along with community educators in REAPs had been the main recipients of funded provision, and therefore the most active in regional and national organisations representing adult and community education. Funding cutbacks resulted in the loss of many of these practitioners and thereby the capacity for organised opposition. The New Zealand government's Tertiary Education Strategy for 2010–2015 (TEC 2010a) revealed the nature of the policy shift as the five priorities for ACE were replaced by three target groups and was clearly individual, compensatory and instrumental in tone:

- To serve learners whose first learning experience was unsuccessful
- To assist those seeking pathways into tertiary education
- To assist people who lack literacy, language and numeracy skills for work and further study



The government's view of the contribution of liberal education was clarified further in its guidance to ACE organisations:

Organisations are welcome to continue to deliver hobby and personal interest courses; however as these are not TEC funded please do not include them in your completed template. (TEC 2010b)

The fragile certainties of the previous 10 years were rapidly undermined, and although a spirited defence was mounted against the cuts (Fordyce and Papa 2009; Tully 2009), it did not prevent their implementation. The marginalisation of adult education is underlined by the New Zealand government's most recent tertiary education strategy document from which specific reference to adult and community education has been removed and replaced by one brief and somewhat vague reference to community education which 'provides informal learning that reflects a diverse range of community interests and needs' (New Zealand Government 2014: 22). In New Zealand, as well as in England, adult and community education has been absorbed into a tertiary education policy regime that focuses on formal qualifications and learning for work.

## 2016: WHERE ARE THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATORS?

In the past 10 years there have been, in both countries, further reductions in publicly funded adult education provision and jobs. Those who remain in employment are likely to have experienced job insecurity and reductions in classes taught and hours of work. The move towards marketisation has shifted some adult educators towards the private sector and others out of employment (Table 3.1).

In England, the decline in adult education has been unrelenting since the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979. There was no revival under the 1997–2010 Labour Governments such as was seen in New Zealand under a Labour-led coalition from 1999 to 2008. While in New Zealand non-accredited education is still a feature of the ACE landscape, adult education practitioners in both countries are now subject to more targeted, competitive approaches and tighter accountability regimes. The post-war welfare consensus which countenanced the funding of adult education for a broad range of purposes has been all but swept away. State funded adult education is increasingly

**Table 3.1** Where are the adult and community educators?

<i>England</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>
– University continuing education departments	– University continuing education departments
– Further education and sixth form colleges	– Wānanga
– Local education authorities and other public sector organisations	– Polytechnics/technical institutions
– National and local non-profit organisations	– Schools
– Work-based training organisations	– Rural Education Activities Providers
– Trade unions	– Iwi-based (Māori tribal) groups
	– National and local non-profit organisations
– Penal institutions	– Work-based training organisations
– Private training providers	– Penal institutions
– Informal organisations and campaigning groups	– Private training providers
	– Informal organisations and campaigning groups

confined to a narrow range of purposes. Nevertheless adult educators in both countries, whether paid or unpaid, continue to practice in diverse contexts across the public, voluntary and private sectors. The implications of these changes for their work and how they view their purposes, their practice and their prospects in the current policy climate will be explored in Section II.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has described the history and development of adult education in England and New Zealand. Historically, the influence of British colonialism on adult education in New Zealand has been substantial. Many of the adult education activities and organisations which exist there today reflect the past and continuing relationship between the two countries. However, there are differences as well as similarities between the two countries. Foremost among these is the fact that New Zealand is a bicultural state. Its indigenous Māori citizens have continued to assert the importance of a Māori world view, Māori language and Māori values around education and community. The struggle for rights and recognition by Māori has influenced all aspects of policy and practice in New Zealand, including adult education. The chapter also reveals that education has been central to struggles between competing conceptions of what

constitutes a ‘good society’ (Carr and Hartnett 1996). In particular, issues of whose interests should be served by education, what should be taught and learned for what purpose and who should have the right to participate have been integral to the question of what kind of social economic order is seen as desirable. In the past 30 years, neoliberal ideology and policies have impacted forcefully on both countries. As a result, adult educators in England and New Zealand face similar questions around the purposes of their work, the way it is organised and the extent to which it is regarded as a public good or a market commodity. They have also had cause to question their role and status as educators in an increasingly hostile political climate.

#### NOTE

1. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 by representatives of the British Government and a number of chiefs of Māori tribes, established British governorship in Aotearoa New Zealand, while also recognising, inter alia, Māori rights to land and property ownership. Today, the Treaty is an important document which underpins the bicultural status of Aotearoa New Zealand and relationships between Māori and Pākehā (those of European settler heritage).