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## Chapter 7

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### A HISTORY OF ILEA OUTREACH WORK AND ITS PRECURSORS

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#### I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO 1970

##### *The Early Years 1820s –1903*

The first adult education initiatives in London started through voluntary efforts. The London Mechanics Institute was set up in 1823. There was a steady expansion of this voluntary effort throughout the middle of the century until the formation of the School Board for London in 1870. Prior to that date there had been some central government supervision and finance for the voluntary “night schools” for adults. Until its functions were taken over by the Education Committee of the LCC, the London School Board built up a substantial provision of evening education for young people and adults. In 1882 there were 83 evening schools with 9,000 students; by 1902 this had grown to 376 evening schools with 127,000 students who attended 75% of sessions. The School Board’s aim was to provide the widest possible curriculum with the lowest possible fees or no fees at all. In 1903 20% of evening schools charged no fees. For attempting to do this the School Board was taken to court on a number of occasions. The period was marked by a deliberate policy of what would now be termed “positive discrimination”.

“from the beginning the Board only imposed fees because it would have been illegal not to have done so, and as it was they took every opportunity to secure exemptions for special circumstances and generally regarded fees as a hindrance to the attendance of the people who most needed the service ...” (W. Devereux “Adult Education in London 1870–1980”).

The effect of low or nil fees on student enrolment in adult education can be seen as early as 1898 for in that year fees for evening schools were abolished and the number of students doubled.

Although the curriculum in the 1890’s was widened considerably to include such subjects as art, german, laundrywork, life and duties of the citizen, physical education and vocal music. Technical education as such was outside the remit of the London School Board and was provided by the LCC’s Technical Education Board following the 1888 Technical Instruction Act.

The 1890s were also marked by a large increase in women attending evening schools. The curriculum for women included:

“needlework, dress cutting, gymnastics, cookery, laundry work, singing, reading, home nursing, writing, composition...” (W. Devereux). In one of the free evening schools for men that were set up in the poorer districts the curriculum was:

“gymnastics, swimming, history, geography, drawing, first aid, metalwork, elementary science, reading, writing and arithmetic...” (W. Devereux).

The working class were well represented. A list of male occupations of students included:

“labourers, stablemen, costermongers, bricklayers, watermen, car men, milk boys, street orderly boys, boys employed in telegraph works, soap works and candle works, boys on barges and errand boys”

and women’s occupations included:

“cap making and packing, card, fancy and tie box making, machining blouses, trousers and buttonholes, envelope folding and stamping, paper bag making, sock making, sewing and folding, cigar making, cigarette packing, show card making, carpet sewing, toy making, packing perfumery and washing perfumery bottles, sieve making, feather curling and making umbrellas”.

For men these represented the casual labour which was a very large portion of working class employment in London at this time. For women the occupations mentioned were typical of the sweated trades.

The interventionist nature of London adult education is seen even then from a couple of reports from HMIs; one on male evening school refers to “the admirable conduct of this difficult school and the undoubted highly beneficial influence on the students”. The other report on a women’s evening school says “that the marked feature in this school is the improvement in the behaviour and appearance of the very rough class of girls that attend it”. This concern with working class adult education and particularly with the poorest sections of this class was a marked feature of the London Service right up to the end of World War II.

### ***The LCC 1904–1939***

In 1904 the LCC took over from the London School Board and found a very well developed system of education for adults. By 1910–11 there were 25,000 evening students in polytechnics, 10,000 in technical and art schools, 30,000 in commercial centres, 100,000 in evening schools and 30,000 in other institutions such as Morley College, the Working Men’s College. In 1913 evening education was re-organised. Important features of this re-organisation were to last until the re-organisation of London adult education in 1957 and the distinction between vocational and non-vocational education persists to this day in London.

The 1913 re-organisation set up 30 Womens’ Institutes with a curriculum of domestic economy – cookery, laundrywork and housewifery, health education – first aid, home nursing, infant care and needlework. Men were catered for in 50 junior commercial Institutes, 27 neighbourhood senior commercial Institutes, 22 junior technical Institutes, 40 general Institutes, 25 free and 12 non-vocational Institutes. The Womens’ Institutes were encouraged to develop the social side of their work. Canteens, libraries, reading and homework rooms were set aside. The larger Institutes had a full time “responsible teacher”. Overall in the Service 100 teachers were employed to spend half their time in dayschools and half in the evening school to enable the evening schools to pick up school-leavers and visit employers. The Service at this point combined features which are now split between adult education, further education and the Youth Service. The unified nature of the Service then was important in recruiting working class students to adult education. In 1914 the non-vocational Institutes were designated literary Institutes and a number of the free Institutes became fee paying, although fees remained low. Remission of fees was available in all Institutes.

At the end of World War I the Report of the Reconstruction Committee on Adult Education which had been written by Bevin, Mansbridge, Tawney and Arthur Greenwood, whilst recommending the continued dominance of the Responsible Bodies' provision of adult education over local education authority provision in the rest of the country, confirmed the LCC's philosophy of wide spread working class adult education.

Until the setting up of the first Mens' Institutes on an experimental basis in 1920 there was no explicit provision of mens' non vocational education. The experiment was made permanent in 1924. These Institutes were deliberately aimed at working class men. The social side was emphasised and the curriculum included handicrafts, physical education, music and hobbies. A notable feature of mens' institutes was the high degree of self organisation of most of the activities.

"There were poultry clubs, male voice choirs, brass bands, orchestras, sketch clubs, social study circles etc. each forming the nucleus of a class held yearly in those subjects. The clubs were co-ordinated by a students' central council in each Institute, and were conducting their own affairs. It was this distinctive manifestation of democratic feeling which, encouraged by the heads of the Institutes, did more than any other single cause to promote the growth and success of the Institute"

Both the Mens' and Women's Institutes had a steady development throughout the inter-war period despite the Depression. In 1933 the LCC voted £5,000 per annum for day classes for the unemployed. The general inspection of the Walworth Mens' Institute in the mid-1930s gives the flavour of a thriving Mens Institute at the time. Enrolment had steadily grown: 371 in 1920 to 1,382 in 1935/36 which didn't include 317 unemployed men in day classes. 701 students were attending more than one class a week and 207 more than 3 a week. Students were encouraged to regard the Institute as a Club. Every class had its own committee, chairman and secretary.

"The football, cricket and table-tennis clubs were controlled by the sports club under the chairmanship of the schoolkeeper who was the club's first secretary and one of the most ardent and persistent propagandists on the Institute's behalf".

(For a fuller picture of the Institute see W. Devereux's book 'Adult Education in London 1870 - 1980', from which we have drawn extensively for the account of the pre-1957 Service.)

### ***The Retreat from Working Class Education 1940-1970***

World War II unlike World War I meant extensive disruption of adult education in London. Many Institutes closed and the opening of those remaining was often interrupted. During the Blitz Institutes took classes to the shelters where they discovered a new "captive" audience. Many people were brought into contact with adult education for the first time. Strict registration procedures which had been a bugbear of Institutes up to the War were perforce relaxed, and in this programme a precursor of outreach work can be seen.

The 1944 Education Act required local education authorities to submit a scheme of further education. The Act required:

- "(a) full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age; and
- (b) leisure time occupation in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements for any person over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose. The proposals for such provision were required to be secured in accordance with schemes of further education approved by the Minister."

The end of the War saw a resurgence of adult education. 30,000 copies of "Floodlight" were sold in 1945/46. All Institutes by this point had diversified from their original purposes. There were substantial numbers of women in men's Institutes and vice versa. There were large numbers of under 18s in men's and women's Institutes and the recreational Institutes which were replacing junior men's Institutes had large number of 18s enrolling.

The period after World War II saw a steady decline in adult education as a working class activity; a replacement of working class students by the lower middle class and most significantly of all a lack of concern at these trends. A number of reasons can be suggested for this shift:

- (i) From 1950 onwards fees steadily increased. This produced an overall decrease in the number of enrolments and almost certainly a more than proportionate decline in the number of working class students.
- (ii) The high expectations of the 1944 Act led to a belief that all people would value education and special efforts would no longer be required to recruit working class students.
- (iii) The fall in unemployment in London meant there was no longer the need for this special day provision.
- (iv) Extensive rehousing meant both the break-up of communities to which the Institutes related, and perhaps the improvements in people's living conditions meant they were content to stay at home.
- (v) The rise of television.
- (vi) Over-riding all areas of social policy including adult education, the myth of affluence meant that special programmes were no longer thought to be required.

The shift away from working class recruitment was accompanied by a change in curriculum towards subjects favoured by the middle class, which further accelerated the fall in working class enrolment. In the words of one Principal after the War – "less a social meeting place and more a specialist centre where students came to study a particular subject or further a special interest..."

By 1956/57 enrolment was at its lowest point for a decade, and Institutes in working class areas had suffered most.

The 1957 re-organisation of mens, womens and literary Institutes into mixed Adult Education Institutes was in part a money saving exercise, but was mainly an attempt to make the Service more efficient without a change in its objectives. Concern for the provision for working class students was not a feature of the re-organisation. The period was marked by a preoccupation with "standards". The "panel" system of tutor approval as a major control mechanism developed in the 1950s. At the same time, Principals were given more autonomy in deciding the Institutes' programme.

The 1960s saw a steady growth in resources available to adult education. 8,524 classes a week in 1960 had increased to 14,366 by 1968/69. Amongst the largest areas of growth were modern languages and arts and crafts. The only counter-veiling tendency to the growth of adult education as a leisure commodity was the development of welfare classes in homes, day centres and hospitals from the mid-1950s.

This decade saw the re-emergence of poverty and deprivation as social issues. It also saw a series of inquiries into each of the education and social services eg Crowther, Newson, Robbins, Plowden, Skeffington, Seebohm and Russell.

## II. OUTREACH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKING CLASS ADULT EDUCATION 1970–1980

In 1969 the Labour Government set up the Russell Committee to look at the English and Welsh adult education service. In setting up the Russell Committee, the Government unleashed in London among other places, a new approach to adult education – community education and education for the “disadvantaged”. Assembling its evidence for Russell gave ILEA its first overall examination of adult education since the 1957 re-organisation. In gathering evidence ILEA found that the service had become unrepresentative of the general Inner London population. The adult student population contained more women than men, that students were of a lower average age than the general population and had had longer in full time education. Crucially, of students in employment, only 4% could be described as semi-or unskilled manual workers as opposed to 31% of the general population. As the evidence puts it:

“the service exists to educate and not just to continue the education of the educated...”

and looked to

“a community field-worker approach with individuals and small groups being helped to determine and satisfy their needs...”

The evidence to Russell confirmed the growing doubts of some Labour members of ILEA about the direction of their adult education service, particularly those members who were part of, or had been heavily influenced by the “poverty lobby”. The return to power of Labour in ILEA in 1971 meant there was political concern with the relationship of adult education to the working class and the deprived for the first time since 1945.

Although the precise figures of the evidence to Russell were substantially criticised because of the mode of their collection, the general conclusions of a substantial imbalance were not brought into doubt. The evidence to Russell was the signal for much action within the adult education sector. In May 1970 the Association of Principals of AEIs expressed concern at ILEA’s findings and a Working Party was set up to investigate the social structure of the student body of AEIs. When this body reported in March 1973 it amplified the conclusions of the evidence to Russell and initiated a move towards community education.

The final Report of the Working Party set out clearly a new direction for adult education in London. It started as an investigation into why “manual workers are poorly represented among the student body”. It concluded however by seeking to “attract and serve a complete cross-section of the community without any need for special discriminatory measures...” This philosophical slippage was to be crucial in the development of “outreach”. It was to be repeated throughout the decade and become the black hole into which all radical initiatives were to disappear. The Working Party Report set out tentatively a programme for change. It realised...

“Men and women cannot reasonably be expected to respond to invitations to use educational services and become involved in society if for the greater part of their lives they have felt rejected or unwelcome”

and more positively that

“every educational establishment has to be related in some way or another to the community in which it is situated...”

It called for increased resources for adult education in terms of plant, equipment publicity and ancillary support such as creche provision. It also called for extra staff for research into the educational needs of the community; for “if we are to know more about the needs of people who are hitherto unknown to us, then there must be outreach staff”.

These were to become the main arm of this new approach to community education. If large sections of London’s population were not represented among the student body, clearly something was wrong; outreach workers would be employed to find out why and what these unmet needs of the non-users were. The history of outreach workers shows what happened when the results they produced and the remedies they prescribed became too radical for LEA adult education managers to ever hope to encompass. The inherent fault of the Report was that it set out the wrong question. It sought to find out what additional or parallel provision was required to service unmet need, not how to reform current provision for that purpose.

The use of the outreach model is of interest in itself. It seems to have first surfaced in ILEA Document 839 in February 1970. This was a proposal to merge the Authority’s adult and youth services into an integrated non-vocational service for all ages. Here it was to employ “educational community officers” who would be the main field worker and link with statutory provision, and play a major part in developing “lines reaching out into the community at field level”. The merger was dropped two years later. But both the youth service and adult education retained vestiges of this post in later developments.

The Working Party Report set the tone. It was quickly followed by the publication of the Russell Report on Adult Education, and in ILEA by the publication of “Education Service for the Whole Community” Document and Policy. Russell altered the ground again. Although the Report called for an increase in resources available to adult education, it did not address itself to the problem of working class access to adult education, but instead came up with the notion of “disadvantage”. This view of society and adult education’s role within it, saw an essentially sound status quo within which certain individuals, perhaps even classes of individuals suffer some form of disadvantage which simultaneously separated them from the “normal” population and from which adult education was to play its part in freeing them. In this philosophy the Russell Report was in the mainstream of social policy of the time eg CDPs, Poverty Programmes, EPA et al – a pathological approach (for further examination see CDP Pamphlet “Gilding the Ghetto”). From Russell paras 277–85

“the term disadvantaged should be construed to include not only the physically and mentally handicapped, but also those who on account of their limited educational background, present cultural or social environment, age, location, occupation or status cannot easily take part in adult education ... adult education should be concerned with: provision for identified groups of disadvantaged adults ... the education of the public about disadvantaged groups and their needs ... family support – that is training and orientation of those closely involved in living with the handicapped...”

Thus was born the concept of “disadvantage” which has so bedevilled the clarification of a radical theory of adult education within LEA provision. Adult Education for its part has gratefully grasped the straw of disadvantage and substituted it for any real change of direction. The concept of disadvantage of course fits a traditional model of liberal, paternal adult education far easier than the theories and practices that were being tentatively established in Liverpool by Jackson. This abandoned the exalted heights of neutrality and called on adult educationalists to enter into a dialogue with their students and potential students from a position alongside them in struggle and thus mutually interpret their learning needs in the light of the students’ values and interests – adult education for real change, change which by its very nature could not be easily controlled or directed.

Shortly after the arrival of Russell, ILEA published its policy "Education Service for the Whole Community". This dealt with the whole education service, yet for adult education it was an ambiguous document. Although it moved adult education from the wings to a place on the educational stage (albeit it in the chorus) and saw it as a part of an integrated service, the Report indicated that adult education outreach workers (along with Teacher Centre Wardens) should be key facilitators in cross-sector working. However, this came to nought. The ESWC Policy was preoccupied with institutional-based education. "Community" was seen in conventional terms and equality of communities was postulated. An extension of resources and more interconnection between different sectors of ILEA's service and voluntary agencies would reduce these differences.

The change in direction of the early '70s came from the top. Indeed given the existing structure of the service in London, it was the only place it could come from – there was as yet very little organised critical thinking at the base. But in coming from the top down, it reproduced in its initiatives the same structure. The new direction was to be undertaken by a charismatic few. Outreach workers would be placed within existing AEIs to "ginger" them internally whilst simultaneously reaching out to the localities, researching unmet needs and methods of fulfilling them. These initiatives would depend for their success on individual local management. Although Boards of Governors and Academic Boards were being set up to introduce an element of decentralisation the Working Party Report and ESWC undertook no reorganisation of management structures which would underpin these new initiatives. Consequently in most cases "outreach" experiments remained just that, experiments. The main body of the AEI's work and ILEA's bureaucratic procedures rolled on untouched.

There was also another problem. Most of the people employed as outreach workers were of a different generation to the rest of full-time adult education staff. For the most part University trained and with some semblance of an explicit educational and political philosophy they were very different. Because of this they were perceived as very threatening by many of their colleagues; this increased the isolation of individual workers.

The outreach workers had a very strange role which has persisted to the present time. They were of a comparatively low formal status within their Institutes (initially they were employed as LIs plus special responsibility allowance, rising after Houghton to LIIs). Their work was mysterious and often troublesome to the smooth running of the Institute. Yet for the Authority and for the purposes of relations between the Institutes and ILEA and other educational organisations they had a fairly high status. Alone amongst adult education lecturers they had direct access to the Assistant Education Officer. Much of their work was that to be shown to visiting educationalists and HMIs. Yet every change in procedure had to be fought for; most actions were mistrusted.

ILEA, despite nods in the Working Party Report towards substantial in-service training did not in fact initiate any such programme for either its new outreach recruits or generally for the Institutes to comprehend its new policy directions. Indeed the Inspectorate has managed to mount only two residential conferences on outreach work in 8 years. This compares for example with Fashion and Craft which had annual residential courses and an extensive-pattern of other courses throughout the year. No support system was ever created for outreach workers. The only one in existence was that created by the workers themselves. Originally it started as an informal swapping of ideas and information. As the number of outreach workers grew the Group became more formal, although its twin tasks of support and information have remained. Early in its existence it gained a form of official recognition from the Authority, and in this capacity has managed to modify some of its initiatives into ILEA practice.

This grouping was however the only substantial form of in-service training. In an LEA environment where every action has to have the right piece of paper sanctioning it the absence of clear lines of communication and information has proved a severe handicap.

The result of the welter of reports and policy documents of the early '70s had been to map out a change of direction for the Inner London Service. The original direction of the change towards

some increase in adult education for the working class had been diluted first towards somewhat woolly notions of community, and then most seriously by the pathology of disadvantage. Practically, the Authority had appointed approximately 20 outreach workers to make links with this mass of unmet need, and to try to translate it into some kind of education practice that would fit the Authority's criteria of acceptability.

But more seriously the Authority neglected to give any clear lead on the type of management structure appropriate to a policy of innovation. This left the outreach worker isolated within his/her own Institute. It also failed to inaugurate any form of in-service training either for the outreach workers themselves or on an Institute basis to try to create an understanding of their work. No monitoring of outreach work ever took place. Consequently no new criteria for evaluating work was established to replace the rather crude one of numbers; except its hardly less subtle Companion of "numbers of the disadvantaged making it to mainstream classes". Because of its origins as a policy brought in from the top "community education" failed to engage the sympathies of the majority of adult education staff. This left outreach workers isolated and marginalised. The degree to which this new policy failed for the most part to filter down the hierarchy is illustrated by the fact that some of the fiercest struggles the outreach workers had was with the Inspectorate over standards of taste. Good was the goal of the Inspectorate as defined in the most gender-stereotyped, white, middle class way as possible.

By 1974/75 the number of outreach workers had grown to its maximum. The first ad-hoc appointments had been swelled by 11 specially created posts. In an effort both to survive and to achieve some form of acceptance, these workers began to be sucked into the same pattern of working as the rest of the service. Resources, always limited for the adult education sector, became scarcer as external economic and political factors washed over the public sector.

The notion of disadvantage which had sprung from Russell was given a boost in London by the arrival of Peter Clyne as Assistant Education Officer (CEC). Clyne as research officer to the Russell Committee had been the Report's principal architect. His book "The Disadvantaged Adult" became required reading for London Adult Education Principals.

Given these pressures, outreach workers in order to gain access to precious resources resorted to special pleading. There was by and large no means of prioritising demands on ever scarcer resources. Consequently the outreach worker had to make out special cases for groups of ever more needy individuals in ever more heart-rending terms. Their attempts to produce a coherent theory was put under pressure by the tactical compromises individual workers were forced to make to secure any resources at all. They were forced into a dispiriting succession of wrangles over definitions of neediness for isolated groups. Outreach workers were forced into a position where they defacto colluded with the whole concept of disadvantage. It was easily understood by their colleagues; if it could be narrowed to definable groups, they could be counted – numbers were (and are) still ILEA's means of evaluation, some success could be demonstrated and after all it was said that *nobody actually suffered from outreach work*.

### **1976–1977**

By the mid-70s community education workers had in the main found themselves a niche within individual Institutes and in the Authority, even if on the margins. The most untenable posts where outreach workers had found outright hostility from Institute managements had been vacated and the departing workers not replaced. The major criticism of this trend was that these posts, which outreach workers themselves believed should not be refilled, were not replaced by other equivalent posts elsewhere in the service. This meant a net reduction in the number of specialist outreach workers within the Authority. There was however no mechanism set up by the ILEA for collating outreach work experience, or of drawing lessons from the success or failure of individual projects or initiatives for practice across London.



It appeared that there was a reluctance to allow the outreach experience to develop an overall critique of established adult education practice in Inner London, despite the real concern of senior ILEA officers that the outreach experiment should prosper and the prominence given to outreach when the Authority described its provision to external audiences. This is not to argue that everything that was going on in outreach was right or that everything in "mainstream" provision was wrong; but that an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of "mainstream" adult education could have been deepened to the overall benefit of the service, particularly as this was a time of growth in full-time staffing and professional expertise within the mainstream sector.

The main components of a genuine debate were present. It is worth comparing the Authority's treatment of outreach with its treatment of literacy and subsequently of ESL work. In these latter areas ILEA supplemented local initiatives with central co-ordination and support. The Authority provided the structure for the communication of experience from one locality to another and provided significant resources for in-service training. It may be that adult education could more easily cope with developments within basic education because they were situated in context that were akin to the "classrooms" and dealing with groups of students who could more easily fit into prevailing concepts of disadvantage. Essentially basic education was more acceptable to local Institute management than outreach because it dealt with a definable product to groups easily regarded as disadvantaged. It was also the type of provision which could be seen by Institutes as additional to their existing programme rather than alternative. Although competitive in terms of resources, basic education provision was essentially non-threatening in terms of how adult education could and perhaps should be organised.

By 1976 it was clear, owing to central government limitations on local education authority spending, that for the foreseeable future ILEA adult education would have a very small, if not nil, growth, even if actual cuts were avoided. This meant that any further growth of developmental work would unambiguously be at the expense of resources for "mainstream" adult education.

It is in this context that ILEA produced the paper 493 "Adult Education in Inner London", followed four months later by ILEA document 770 which developed into recommendations some of the points made in the earlier paper. The two together represented the first overall policy statement solely for adult education for some considerable time. These documents represented a defence of the status quo whilst delineating further the pathology of "disadvantage". They shied from producing any significant change in direction for the Inner London Service.

The main theme of the documents was the need for a balanced programme. Outreach was relegated to being one of a dozen items within a list of work with disadvantaged. 493 and 770 did not concern themselves with curriculum issues. They spoke about the need for Institutes to maintain a "balanced" programme. Earlier notions of "balance" had been about seeking to make student bodies a balanced cross-section of the local community. Now "balance" meant a balance between the programme for existing users and current non-users, thus preserving a similar "balance" between the student bodies and the local communities as to that outlined in the Working Party Report of 1973.

These documents showed how little the outreach experiment penetrated official ILEA policies. The small but highly significant shifts from working class to community, and from community to disadvantage, were given explicit recognition in 493 and 770. These were but passing references to unskilled manual workers and even of "community"; there was however a rag-bag of disadvantaged groups whose only unifying factor seemed that they could be collectively categorised as deserving of charity. The Authority underlined its direction by drawing a crude league table of Institutes' involvement with this ultimately vitiated definition of disadvantage. The result was that in the reallocation of resources coming from these documents Institutes that have devoted a large amount of resources to this easily administered (although often demanding to teach) classes in welfare establishments, did comparatively better than those Institutes that had attempted the more problematic community based adult education programme.

With 493 and 770 “balance” became a euphemism for parallel provision. The existing programme remained unchanged; alongside ran the provision for the unfortunate disadvantaged. A whole new and false battle opened up between mainstream and disadvantaged and between safe and problematic disadvantaged provision. This was exacerbated as limited growth became nil growth except for work with the disadvantaged. Special funds were to be clawed back from existing resources or created by central government through ALRA, Section II money and urban aid. In the allocation of the 1% clawback pool of resources the largest amount went to work in social service establishments. Principals wanting to see their empires grow had to resort to the same type of special pleading with County Hall that their outreach workers had had to employ earlier with them. The outreach workers in turn, under pressure to turn up ever more and more disadvantaged turned increasingly to other professionals who had access to untapped reservoirs of disadvantaged – social workers, health visitors, hospitals etc. The production of disadvantaged bodies would give the outreach workers internal respectability; they would be seen to succeed. Most attempts to build some coherent strategy towards meeting the needs of working class men and women were abandoned in the absence of any meaningful support vertically or horizontally in the structure. Outreach workers became fixers for ever more disparate groups.

### III. RE-ORGANISATION 1980–81

ILEA's 1957 pattern of Adult Education Institutes had been modified on an ad-hoc basis as Principals retired but there had been no major re-organisation of Institute boundaries since the mid-1960s. For over a decade all vacant Principalships had been filled. It was clear that by 1979 the Authority was beginning to look more systematically at boundaries in the light of impending retirements of Principals. They embarked on a review of boundaries in South East London as a consequence of retirement or impending retirement of 3 Principals. Other reviews were anticipated in other geographical areas as more retirements became imminent. This piecemeal process was overtaken by the decision of the Authority to reduce its expenditure for the year 1980–81. The whole review of Institute boundaries was accelerated by this cuts package.

The re-organisation of Adult Education Institutes which took place in January 1981, reduced their number from 32 to 20, and the new Institute boundaries took more into account the London borough boundaries than did those of the previous Institutes. This was the result of three main factors:

- (a) The future financial/economic crisis – adult education, given its marginality to, and low status within the educational hierarchy and most importantly its non-statutory base would be an obvious target for future cuts. A smaller number of stronger Institutes would be better able to survive the anticipated hardships.
- (b) A desire to improve the management of Institutes. Finally, taking cognisance of the changes in adult education over the previous decade, the re-organisation attempted to provide each Institute with a large enough cadre of professional full-time staff which would be able to manage resources more efficiently and improve academic performance.
- (c) The massive decline in the Inner London population.

Of these 3 grounds it was apparent that the first was predominant. The educational grounds for re-organisation were not presented until late in the whole process and there was continual controversy over the effectiveness of larger as against smaller more localised Institutes in relating to local communities.

A key feature of re-organisation was the recognition that within Institutes two alternative patterns of staffing had evolved. The first of these was centre based. This meant in practice that

a full-time member of staff acted as a full-time Tutor-in-Charge; although this role might significantly extend beyond that of the usual part-time TIC. The other approach was to have subject-based specialists.

Outreach workers were slightly separate from these two approaches. They were not subject based but were involved in curriculum across a wide range of the Institute's work; and although not always site-based they had extensive links with the fabric of the local community.

Re-organisation sought to enhance the role of the Heads of Centre and increased their numbers. A significant role was given to them in developing local community liaison though the mechanism for achieving this was not made clear. Whilst this new approach if achieved could increase the responsiveness of an Institute to local communities, the danger is that the overall commitment to community education has been reduced. This has happened before the alternative model using Heads of Centre has been properly made effective. Indeed reorganisation has reduced the actual numbers of outreach workers on the ground.

Outreach workers will still be required in the long term for both the specialist input they can make into the process of curriculum development, and because they represent a flexible resource for Institutes to develop current priorities.

Some outreach workers have transferred through re-organisation to posts as Heads of Centre. It remains to be seen if their previous experience as outreach workers is allowed to redefine the mainstream priorities of the centres for which they have become responsible.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The history of working class adult education in London falls into three distinct phases. In the period up to the end of World War II a major emphasis was placed on this work, as there was no system of school education to take the working class beyond the most elementary levels of instruction. Thus adult education encompassed social activities, recreational learning and pre-vocational training for young people as well as adults. After World War II social changes as outlined above and optimism about the school system meant that an expectation that problems would solve themselves and that special initiatives were unnecessary. Consequently, adult education sought merely to maximise its enrolment without questioning who it was serving. This can be seen in the way the curriculum changes in the 50s to latch onto perceptions of middle class interests. Since 1970 adult education has asked itself, and has been asked many more questions about its aims. It has prioritised responses to groups within the community who have ceased to use adult education, but the Authority was unwilling to articulate its policy in class terms.

The overwhelming dominance of "mainstream" programme and the pedagogic approach as its medium of delivery of that programme should be seen as the accidental product of a temporary retreat from the interventionist tradition of adult education in London; the result of retrenchment in the 50s and unplanned growth in the 60s. Community adult education should be seen as a return to the heritage of the London Service.

In looking back the development of the Authority and its predecessors' response to working class adult education, there seems to be a gap in the research so far produced about the political process at member level in determining the attitudes to adult education; and also as to whether there was any organised pressure from trade unions, local political parties or voluntary organisations for a particular form of adult education.

The history so far written is in terms of initiative from educators or educational administrators seemingly unrelated to external pressures. Adult Education after the 1980 re-organisation is at the crossroads.

If community based adult education is to consolidate the progress it made in the 70s and establish itself as the main model for adult education in the future, (a comparable position to the pre World War II period) then the Authority will need the political will and the practical resources to support such a programme.