Settlements and adult education

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Ask about settlements and adult education provision, and the most likely response will be in terms of the classes and structured programmes on offer. But settlements are often not what they seem. As Samuel Barnett once wrote of Toynbee Hall:

> [It] seems to be a centre of education, a mission, a polytechnic, another example of philanthropic machinery; it is really a club and the various activities have their root and their life in the individuality of its members. (Barnett 1898, p.20)

In this chapter I want to look to the life of settlements and social action centres - and make sense of them not just as providers of educational courses and programmes for adults, but also as centres of social pedagogy, animation and association. The 'life' of the association - the friendship and community involved, and the commitment to learning for all - is the central characteristic of the 'settlement approach'.

The chapter is based on an analysis of the activities of a number of agencies within the field. Material has been gained from recent settlement reports and publications, a general review of the literature, and conversations with workers over a significant period of time. My focus is on the work of British settlements, but I have also attended to the considerable contribution of North American experience to the development of adult education in settlements. I have not sought to quantify the work, but as Sarah Banks suggests elsewhere in this collection, the overall balance of residential settlement (but not necessarily educational and social action centre) activity is probably towards children and young people.

Adult education

Just how we define 'adult education' is a matter of some debate. Courtney (1989, pp.17-23) suggests we can approach the notion from five basic and

overlapping perspectives. Each of these has some resonance with the work of settlements and social action centres. Adult education can be seen as:

- *the work of certain institutions and organizations*. What we know as adult education has been shaped by the activities of key organizations. Adult education is simply what organizations such as the Workers Educational Association (WEA) or university continuing education departments do.

- *a special kind of relationship*. Adult education can be contrasted with the sort of learning that we engage in as part of everyday living. Adult education can then be seen as, for example, the process of managing the external conditions that facilitate in adults the internal change called learning (see Brookfield 1986, p.46). In other words, it is a relationship that involves a conscious effort to learn something.

- *a profession or scientific discipline*. Here the focus has been on two attributes of professions: an emphasis on training or preparation, and the notion of a specialized body of knowledge underpinning training and preparation. According to this view 'the way in which adults are encouraged to learn and aided in that learning is the single most significant ingredient of adult education as a profession' (Courtney 1989, p.20).

- *stemming from a historical identification with spontaneous social movements*. Adult education can be approached as a quality emerging through the developing activities of unionism, political parties and social movements such as the women's movement and anti-colonial movements (see Lovett 1988).

- *distinct from other kinds of education by its goals and functions*. This is arguably the most common way of demarcating adult education from other forms of education. For example, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982, p.9) argue that it is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully. If there is an overarching function, it is 'to assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions, in their social roles (worker, parent, retiree, etc.), to help them gain greater fulfilment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems' (*op. cit*.). Approached

via an interest in goals, 'adult' education could involve work with children so that they may become adult. As Lindeman (1926, p.4) put it: 'This new venture is called *adult education* not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity, defines its limits'.

This leaves us with questions around the various meanings given to 'adult'. We might approach this notion, for example, as a biological (post-puberty), legal, psychological state; or as a form of behaviour (adulthood as being in touch with one's capacities whatever the context); or as a set of social roles. Different societies and cultures will have contrasting understandings. 'Adult' can be set against 'child'. In between adult and child (or more accurately, overlapping) there may be an idea of 'youth'. At base adults are older than children and with this comes a set of expectations. They are not necessarily mature. 'But they are supposed to be mature, and it is on this necessary supposition that their adulthood justifiably rests' (Paterson 1979, p.13).

Most current texts seem to approach adult education via the adult status of students, and a concern with education (creating enlivening environments for learning). Adult education is work with adults, to promote learning. Or as Merriam and Brockett put it, adult education is: 'activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults' (1996, p.8). We will follow this definition in our exploration here.

The nature of adult education in settlements

From their inception residential settlements looked to an appealing mix of courses, discussions and social engagement. Not surprisingly, given their orientation, this and their associational nature mirrored the experience of adult schools - the forerunners of educational settlements (Rowntree and Binns 1903). Both had 'wide ideals' as educational and social centres and, like Toynbee Hall, many looked to education for life, not for a living (Pimlott 1935, pp.142-143). Furthermore, G. M. Trevelyan's description of process at the Working Men's College, London as 'friends educating each other' (quoted in Yeaxlee 1925, p.157) could be applied equally to the aspirations of many early settlers. Contemporary practice still bears the imprint of these concerns.

experience

First, 'experience' remains central to the way settlement and social action workers generally describe their educational approach. To some extent this may well have come through the influence of American educators. Certainly Jane Addams looked to it. She sought to 'work out a method and an ideal adapted to the immediate situation' (Addams 1910, p.436) and to educate 'through use of the current event' (Addams 1930, pp.380-413). In this she was influenced by her friend John Dewey and his belief that the 'business' of education could be defined as 'an emancipation and enlargement of experience' (Dewey 1933, p.340). This is alive today in the common way of describing practice as 'learning from experience'. Workers frequently allude to Kolb's (1984) famous circle of experience, reflection, abstraction and application (Smith 1994, pp.29-31). With this often comes an interest in opening up and widening experience, deepening understanding and encouraging people not to be unnecessarily constrained by what has gone before.

informality

Second, there is a consistent interest in the informal. Much of the learning involved with settlement and centre programmes is deliberate and purposeful 'in that the adults concerned are seeking to acquire knowledge and skills' (Brookfield 1983, p.15). However this may not involve closely specified goals.

Learning may be apparently haphazard and therefore unsuccessful at times. A tenants group faced with a massive increase in rents may spend much time engaged in unprofitable and inappropriate enquiries as they are initially unable to specify the terminal skills and knowledge they require to achieve their broad objective. (*ibid*.)

In this respect, a lot of the educational work of settlements can be described as informal. Some of the time work has a clear objective -perhaps around the development of reading. At other times work 'goes with the flow'. Outside the provision of courses lies a wide range of educational activity that is not curriculum-based. The direction it takes depends on the conversations that people have (Jeffs and Smith 1999). In this there is the chance, for example, to connect with the questions, issues and feelings that are important to people, rather than what workers think might be significant. There is

some evidence that Addams, again, approached the settlement as a process: 'a stage for social interaction that presented a unique opportunity to link Dewey's educational theory and James's pragmatism to transform traditional ideas of social service' (Carson 1990, p.107).

the range of settings

Third, the work of educators associated with settlements can take place anywhere. While settlement buildings offer the chance both for more formal teaching and the sorts of social setting that make for conversation, those committed to community development and social action are likely to undertake much of their work elsewhere. They are not dependent on classrooms or specialized settings, but are able to make use of everyday settings to build an atmosphere or grab an opportunity, so that they may engage with others and teach. Thus a considerable amount of work sponsored by settlements and social action centres takes place in social areas and beyond the building, in people's homes, local shopping areas, and in cafés.

a concern with community and the whole person

Fourth, there is a concern to build the sorts of communities and relationships in which people can be happy and fulfilled. It is possible to find quite a lot of talk of working with the 'whole person', and of seeking to enhance 'community'. Certain values appear and reappear. These include commitments to: work for the well-being of all; respect for the unique value and dignity of each human being; dialogue; equality and justice; and democracy and the active involvement of people in the issues that affect their lives.

la vie associative

Last, there remains a considerable emphasis on animating group and club life - *la vie associative.* In many respects 'the club' came to represent settlement life. As Robert Woods used to argue, the settlements' true mission lay in fostering 'every helpful form of association, from neighbourhood improvement groups to labour unions, that would strengthen their tendencies toward co-operation and mutual tolerance' (quoted in Carson 1990, p.118; also Carson in this collection). It was also a force with those with a more philanthropic orientation:

> To woman the enjoyment of University life brought home a
> knowledge of the infinite power and force that lie in the idea
> of association... [of] fellowship with those associated with us in study,
> but differing from us in experience, in the object of their work, and in
> the destinies that await them. If this fellowship were of value in a life
> of study, would it not be of infinite service in social work, in the
> efforts directed towards making society a better society, and
> especially in that particular effort of Settlement work - to raise the
> standards of social work among the poor (Ethel Hubbard, Principal of
> Bedford College, London, quoted in Vicinus 1985, p.221)

The political and educative power of association has been a longstanding strand in adult education thinking and practice. For example, one of the pioneers of the Mechanics Institutes and, incidentally, one of the first English writers to discuss social education, James Hole (1860) explored the 'educative tendency' of associations. The landmark *1919 Report* on adult education looked to the educative power of social movements and voluntary associations.
The Committee saw the value of 'the imponderable influences which spring from association in study' and the significance of 'the informal educations which come from sharing in a common life' (Ministry of Reconstruction 1956, p.76). More recently Konrad Elsdon and his colleagues demonstrated empirically the educative potential of voluntary groups. They comment on:

> ... the great range of learning, change and satisfaction over and
> above those which are deliberate, inherent in the
> organization's objectives, and expected by their members. The one
> which was given priority almost universally, and reported as being of
> greater importance than the content objective of the organization,
> is quite simply growth in confidence, and its ramifications
> and secondary effects of self-discovery, freedom in forging
> relationships and undertaking tasks, belief in oneself and in
> one's potential as a human being and an agent, and ability to learn
> and change both in the context of the organization's
> objectives *and* in others. (Elsdon 1995, p.47)

Groups, of whatever nature, can become, in Knowles' words, 'laboratories of democracy' - places where people can have the experience of learning to live

co-operatively. 'Attitudes and opinions', he wrote, 'are formed primarily in the study groups, work groups and play groups with which adults affiliate voluntarily'. He went on, 'These groups are the foundation stones of our democracy. Their goals largely determine the goals of our society' (Knowles 1950: p.9).

In some respects, this tradition of thinking has been more fully formed in relation to adult education in France. *La vie associative* is, according to Toynbee (1985, p.33), a difficult term to translate into English - the 'life of the associations' or the 'associative life' are inadequate translations.

> One cannot reduce adult education to a series of regular activities consisting of modules which have now become ritualized in the form of courses. The very participation in the life of an association, being conscious of what one is doing there (such as the running of a centre) is, in itself, a form of education. And the life of the association sometimes constitutes a springboard for taking on other responsibilities at a local or national level. (Ormessano, quoted in Toynbee 1985, p.10)

One of the striking features of current work in settlements and social action centres is the continuing emphasis on the club, group and association - and this runs through the various areas of work they are involved in. Indeed, at least two of the old educational settlements -Percival Guildhouse and Bristol Folk House - have strengthened their associational nature. Following the removal of local authority money for wardens, the latter, for example, has been run by a co-operative, formed of tutors and students (Bristol Folk House 1998).

Current practice

The five elements outlined above can be found in different ways in many of the education programmes, action research and developmental projects hosted by British settlements and social action centres. It may have been fortunate that Barnett's vision of Toynbee Hall as a university college was never realized, as 'the result would have been the loss of an invaluable spontaneity and capacity for experiment' (Pimlott 1935, p.144). Significantly, that spirit is still abroad today. An inspection report dealing with Blackfriars Education Centre could be

applied to many others: 'The centre lays greater emphasis on personal and social development than on course completion and accreditation' (Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) 1998, p.4). Similarly, Bede House attempts to design its education work around accessibility, flexibility, qualifications at people's own pace, localness, informality, and help with a particular difficulty (Annual Report 1996/7, p.7). Settlements have had to respond to the growing concern with product and accreditation within education - but there has been an attempt to safeguard a concern with process and experience.

To explore these elements I have organized the work happening in British settlements initially into four categories. The categories are:

- *liberal and basic education*. This includes basic education and literacy work, and what might be described as liberal education.

- *vocational and professional training*. Here the main focus has been on social work, community and youth work, and care training.

- *social pedagogy and casework*. Significant elements of the work are similar to what is described in Germany as social pedagogy - this includes work around health, ageing, and with those with learning difficulties. It is also possible to find examples of more educationally oriented casework.

- *animation*. This looks to an interest in promoting and enhancing people's participation in communities and their appreciation of different cultural forms.

Liberal and basic education

For many policymakers, basic education, liberal education and vocational programmes constitute 'adult education' in organizations like settlements. This is not surprising, given both the narrowness with which 'adult education' is often defined, and the contribution that settlements, and initially especially Toynbee Hall, made. The latter, for example, began by providing a wide range of evening and extension classes, and debates and discussion; as well as facilitating a significant number of cultural clubs and associations. Part of Barnett's initial vision placed the settlement as the core of an East London 'working man's university', but it was not to be. However, the work was of lasting significance,

for example, through the development of tutorial classes and the History School (under the direction of R. E. S. Hart in 1898) and the collaboration with Albert Mansbridge (a former student of Toynbee Hall) to establish and sustain the WEA (founded in 1903).

The contribution of settlements to the development of liberal, vocational and basic education is still significant. The 'rediscovery' of the need for literacy education in the 1970s was a direct consequence of work being undertaken by settlements and social action centres; and today the more associational and informal approach to liberal and vocational education in many agencies attracts students not well represented in further education.

basic education and literacy programmes

From their inception settlements and adult schools have looked to the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. Some, like Barnett, saw this as a temporary phenomenon - as public provision developed, there would be less need. Others, particularly in educational settlements, viewed basic education as a central element of their work. Following the Second World War, 'the conventional wisdom ... was that state-provided education had eliminated illiteracy from Britain' (Rochester 1989, p.35) - and little emphasis was given to basic education within settlements. Early in 1963 Cambridge House recruited a small number of volunteers to give tuition to young people on probation orders who had difficulties with reading and writing. In so doing they unearthed a significant demand from adults for provision to learn to read and write. A number of settlements (particularly in London and Liverpool) joined Cambridge House in pioneering tuition schemes. Blackfriars Settlement, for example, soon had a scheme under a full-time organizer funded by Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) - but this was later expanded considerably in association with other organizations such as Cambridge House (Barrett 1985, p.61). A moral panic concerning adult literacy began to develop, with the British Association of Settlements Right to Read Campaign in 1973 helping the 'bandwagon' to roll (Levine 1986, p.151). The result was a series of major policy initiatives around adult literacy - the impact of which is still felt today.

Many settlements have some form of basic education provision -often with a significant number of participants. Bede Education Centre, for example, had 300

students in 1996/7. Their project aimed to provide flexible learning opportunities for people over 16 who need to develop skills in an informal setting; to enable people to improve their levels of literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages, and computing skills; and to offer a supportive atmosphere, small class sizes, good access to a wide range of external accreditation and crèche support. They were also involved in some interesting approaches to learning - for example, one group organized a maths conference and worked on a maths magazine. A number of schemes use the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) quality mark for literacy and numeracy. Several agencies also have computer facilities and programmes linked to their basic education work. However, these can also be free-standing. For example, Barton Hill Settlement has a computer room with 25 to 40 courses per year. There were 400 users in 1996/7. The computer room also had separate membership (with some 200 people joining).

One of the significant aspects of programmes may well be the extent to which the localness and informality of provision attract people not normally drawn to formal educational institutions. An inspection of Blackfriars Education Centre concluded that 'the centre widens participation. It recruits many students who would not usually enrol in further education' (FEFC 1998, p.1). This included people with learning difficulties, mental health problems, refugees and students with many different mother tongues. The same report identified some weaknesses, including teaching that did not encourage students to work on their own or to take account of the range of ability. There was some comment that records showed low rates of attendance, retention and achievement on many courses. This is an inevitable consequence of the more informal approach; the narrow indicators used by inspections (centres like Blackfriars are not only concerned with qualification and accreditation but also with exploring wider issues); and the focus on groups that do not normally come into further education provision.

liberal programmes

Just what constitutes liberal education is a matter of debate - it being often defined by what it is not - it is not 'vocational'. The terms are 'imprecise, emotional and ideological' (Tight 1996, p.30): the same experience of learning could be vocational for one person and non-vocational for another. However,

Harold Wiltshire (1956) has set out some of the defining elements that proponents of liberal education call upon. These have been summarized by John Wallis. Liberal education involves:

1. A commitment to a particular curriculum - to studies that concern us as men or women, not as technicians, functionaries or examinees.

2. A concern for social studies and those aspects of other areas that look to people as social beings. It is learning as a means of understanding the great issues of life.

3. A particular student attitude (non-vocational) that deplores examinations and awards.

4. The combination of democratic notions about equality of educational opportunity with an optimism about the educability of adults that results in a resistance to student selection.

5. The adoption of the 'Socratic Method' as a characteristic form - with the use of small tutorial groups and guided discussion. (Wallis 1996, p.ix)

As we have already seen, settlements like Toynbee Hall have helped to breathe life into this particular vision of education. The development of tutorial groups, the interest in education as a means of understanding the great issues of life, and the concern for the social, have each been a prominent feature of work. In the current political context with its narrow functional and vocational emphasis, settlements and social action centres have had to fight hard to keep alive a more liberal curriculum. Some have simply given up the chase for elusive funding, others are still able to offer a fascinating range of provision. Examples of work in 1996/7 included:

- a women's history week with an exhibition and workshops at Oxford House

- a local history programme at Time and Talents. This involved a themed range of subjects, walks and talks, e.g. around the docks. This has now formed into a local history group

- environmental education, conservation and adventure education at Mansfield House's 54-acre farm at Lambourne End. This included various family projects

- wartime aviation in Warwickshire; Shakespeare: from page to stage; writing workshops; Freud's Oedipus and Literature; and Latin workshops at The Percival Guildhouse (1998/9)

- family history; wine appreciation; the trees of Britain; French conversation at Bristol Folk House (1998/9).

Some of the older educational settlements, with their long-standing involvement with older university extramural departments and the WEA commitment, have been able to sustain a liberal curriculum. The Percival Guildhouse, for example, has built up 'a strong and distinctive ethos which has influenced both the lives of its members [currently some 800] and of its community' (Stewart *et al.* 1992, p.6). However, a review of the programmes does show a number of contrasts with the activities of the early settlers and activists within the educational settlement movement. There is noticeably less emphasis on political education and upon the exploration of social issues. With the rise of television and other media forms, classic forms such as the debate and the talk have become far less common.

Vocational and professional training

Three areas of training predominate within settlements and social action centres: work skills training; volunteer development; and social work/community and youth work training.

work skills

While there was some resistance to trade instruction in some settlements, it became a key feature of many (for example, see Addams 1910, p.439). With the development of polytechnics and evening institutes in the early 1900s in London, many settlements moved away from vocational and commercial programmes. However, the focus of settlements and social action centres on the needs of different groups within their neighbourhoods has brought about a continuing concern with the vocational. Some, like Cambridge House

and Talbot, are involved in New Deal provision with local further education colleges. Current examples of programmes include the provision of:

- computer rooms and courses - for example, at Barton Hill, Bede House and Alpha Grove

- training in clothing technology (pattern cutting and textile technology to City and Guilds standard) run by the African Women's Welfare Association at Alpha Grove

- programmes of vocational rehabilitation for people who use mental health services (around 30 people each week) at Blackfriars Work Centre. This involved developing work-related skills such as time-keeping, concentration, etc. Members produce products and services, e.g. undertaking office work.

volunteer training

The current interest in volunteer development is hardly surprising, given the origins of the settlement movement. Early wardens gave a considerable amount of their time to nurturing and directing the education and work of the settlers. Alongside the chance to learn about the realities of poverty, settlement residents were offered the chance 'simultaneously to *be* and to *do*: to represent in his or her person the 'highest life of his day'... and to share that life in active and concrete ways with the less fortunate' (Carson 1990, p.8). While there was a considerable movement away from the practice of 'residence' in the 1960s, there has been a turn to the development of local volunteers. In recent years this work has been significantly augmented by a BASSAC initiative run with local agencies involving National Lottery money. Examples of work include:

- The Link Project at NU-TRAC which recruits, trains and supports a team of volunteers to work with users 'providing them with encouragement, support and information during their involvement with the organization' (NU-TRAC 1995/6, p.6). The core training programme for volunteers deals with areas such as commitment, communication, equal opportunities, boundaries and supervision and support.

- The Volunteer Training Programme at the Markfield Project which involves the use of flexible learning packages for those wishing to work

in a social care setting; on-going training for crèche and child-minding projects; and training for local authorities on formulating policies and for teams around 'putting integration into practice'. Work is undertaken in partnership with users, parents and carers, and this involves co-training on relevant events.

- Burley Lodge is working to give unemployed people in the local community a chance to get involved in voluntary work in local youth projects. Training has included a series of issue-based workshops plus support and supervision.

- The Salmon Youth Centre is currently working with residents and with local people to develop their abilities as youth workers and informal educators. This has taken the form of specially designed courses, individual supervision and support, and involvement in national programmes.

A number of these programmes can also lead to some form of qualification. For example, long term volunteers at Alpha Grove who mostly work on placement with community elders or with children are involved in an NVQ in Community Care; and some community volunteers at the Salmon Youth Centre are completing a Foundation Programme in Informal Education.

social work training

Many early residents were able to use their time in settlements as a way of accessing social work. Women's settlements in particular provided an opportunity for more structured forms of experience and training. 'The leaders of women's settlements were determined to turn philanthropy into a paid profession' (Vicinus 1985, p.227). A number of women's settlements offered one-year training courses linked to the Charity Organizations Society's School of Sociology (Harris 1989) and there is some evidence of women choosing to go to particular settlements because of the programme of study that they offered (Vicinus 1985, p.227). Settlements did open up a vocation for women - although not on the scale of the American pioneers.

Whatever may have been the class limitations of this generation of women, working during the years 1880-1920, they were extraordinarily successful in

laying the foundations for effective social welfare. While the men theorized, the women proved it could work. (Vicinus 1985, p.246)

The scale of the work was significant. The Women's University Settlement (Blackfriars) had 31 resident and 61 non-resident workers at the start of 1895 and was soon organizing training and developing programmes. It hosted the first social work training course in the United Kingdom (with the Charity Organizations Society). Later, in 1903, settlement students joined the newly formed School of Sociology (incorporated in 1912 into the London School of Economics) (Barrett 1985, p.4). More recently it hosted a student unit for the training of social workers (established there in the late 1960s and renamed the Practice Learning Centre in the 1980s). It organized a range of placements in other agencies - but closed in 1996/7 when Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) funding was withdrawn. A Practice Teaching Programme had also been developed (and is now situated at South Bank University). Several other settlements also had units or were involved in consortium - for example, Virginia House Settlement in Plymouth - but with changes in CCETSW policy these have now ceased.

A number of settlements and centres still provide placements for students on social work, community and youth and informal education programmes. For example, Charterhouse in Southwark has students on placement on child care courses in their play group, and the women's centre there has trainee therapists and social workers. Caseworkers at Evelyn 190 Centre are on placement from New Directions, a preparatory course for social workers.

Social pedagogy and casework

For many of those involved in the first wave of settlement activity, 'social work' was a far more inclusive activity than is the case today. It entailed social investigation, social education (perhaps in the form of youth work and club work), and social casework. The latter was defined by Mary Richmond as processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously effected, individual by individual, between men and women and their social environment (Richmond 1922, pp.98-9). In North America the work was classically conceived as involving social casework, community organization and groupwork. However, casework and, later, case management came to dominate training and practice

within social work. The concern with social reform evident in the earlier part of the century rather slipped away in the 1920s in favour of a more individualized treatment or containment orientation. However, within a number of settlements, more educationally or pedagogically-inclined forms of practice have continued to develop (and fall within our definition of adult education). Relatively under-theorized, perhaps the closest association is with the German tradition of social pedagogy-and this can be seen in some of the concerns of Jane Addams.

Addams looked initially to extend 'college-type of culture' (Addams 1910, p.436) to immigrants, for example, through lecture programmes and the hanging of reproduction masterpieces on the settlement walls. Such an Arnoldian vision was gradually set aside in favour of *socialized education* and a concern for democracy (Kett 1994, p.181). 'It was the function of the settlements to bring into the circle of knowledge and fuller life, men and women who might otherwise be left outside' (Addams 1930, p.404). This runs very close to early conceptions of social pedagogy (see Lorenz 1994).

The problem for Addams and others was that socialized education involved social control.

> The proposition that education ought to be used, not for the 'mere' dissemination of knowledge, but to 'adjust' men 'in healthful relations to nature and their fellow men'easily led to the conception of education as 'life adjustment' which subsequently became so popular. (Lasch 1966, pp.13-14)

There is a problem of 'adjustment' moving along conservative rather than progressive lines, that 'culture was irrelevant, or damaging, to the children of immigrants rather than to immigrants themselves' (Kett 1994, p.298). Similar concerns could be expressed about the direction of work within British settlements at the same time. Settlers, like missionaries, might place an emphasis on 'conversion' - encouraging people to change without necessarily appreciating the cultures of which they are a part. Samuel Barnett wanted to combat this, placing an emphasis on 'friendship rather than charity' and upon 'sharing with neighbours', but the suspicion of patronage remained.

In Germany the notion of social pedagogy has become associated with social work - particularly since the end of the Second World War. The fear that the educational socialization apparently implied within social pedagogy could be directed to the needs of the nation at the cost of individuals and of significant groups hung heavy during post-war reconstruction. Moves towards more individual, problem-based work seemed a safer option than the mass and group work of the then recent past. Thus, as the German social welfare system evolved, social pedagogy came to be seen as the 'third'area of welfare beside the family and school. It can be represented today as:

> ... a perspective, including social action which aims to promote human welfare through child-rearing and education practices; and to prevent or ease social problems by providing people with the means to manage their own lives, and make changes in their circumstances. (Cannan *et al.* 1992 pp.73-74)

Conceived in this way, it includes a wide range of practice including youth projects, crèches and nurseries, day-care centres, work with offenders and some areas of church work. The linkage with social problems and crisis work situates social pedagogy alongside social work. Social work in Germany is currently divided into two major branches: *Sozialarbeit* (casework) and *Sozial Pädagogik*. The former is a 'general social work service to families and other selected groups' (Cannan *et al.* 1992, p.73).

Currently we can see a substantial amount of work that can be described as social pedagogy. For example:

- Health education: At Bede House there have been recent workshops on primary health and female genital mutilation. 'One objective', they claim, 'is to foster an environment of increased self reliance' (Bede 1997/8, p. 4). Charterhouse hosts a health project specifically concerned with the needs of the local Asian population.

- Social skills training: NU-TRAC runs programmes in areas like parenting skills; assertion; self advocacy; and basic listening skills. These are run for two hours per week for eight weeks at NU-TRAC (funded by a local further education college and the WEA).

- Developmental opportunities for those with disabilities and learning difficulties: The Markfield Project provides integrated services for people and families both with and without disabilities, and a drop-in for adults with learning difficulties, with opportunities for around 30 adults to access social and educational activities. They are also currently pioneering work on raising awareness of the needs of siblings - the brothers and sisters of disabled children. The Bede Café Training Project provides a range of educational and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties in the 'realistic integrated world of a café open to the public'. Skills for employment and a concern to enable trainees to participate more independently in the activities and opportunities of society lay at the centre of their activities. Only Connect at Cambridge House and Talbot brings together a range of services for people with learning difficulties including arts-based development workshops, 19-Plus (a group promoting independent living), an integrated play group, and after-school clubs. The 'People to People' project works with people with learning difficulties to help them celebrate, explore and develop themselves by offering social education groups, events and activities, and counselling services.

- Family learning projects and support for carers: Barton Hill has a number of activities focusing on the needs of families. At Katherine Low there is a programme of groupwork providing support for mental health carers, and for carers of adults with learning difficulties.

Perhaps the strongest elements in the work reviewed in this area concerned the development of practice around the needs of people with learning difficulties, and around women's health and well-being.

Animation

Animation in France and Italy is linked to the activities of community workers, arts workers and others, for example:

- using theatre and play as means of self-expression with community groups, children and people with special learning needs (sometimes called creative-expressive animation)

- working with people and groups so that they participate in and manage the communities in which they live (sometimes called socio-cultural animation)

- developing opportunities for pre-school and school-children, such as adventure playgrounds, toy libraries, outdoor activity centres, and organized sports activities (sometimes called leisure-time animation).

A fairly standard way of approaching animation in a European context is via 'community development'. The following definition is taken from a Report of the European Cultural Foundation in 1973:

> Animation is that stimulus to the mental, physical, and emotional life of people in a given area which moves them to undertake a wider range of experiences through which they find a higher degree of self-realization, self-expression, and awareness of belonging to a community which they can influence. (quoted by Simpson 1989, p.54)

Some animators (animateurs) are less keen on an emphasis on stimulation, motivation and inspiration as it can lead to doing things *to* people, rather than working *with* them. Animators in this sense look to breathe life into situations rather than people. They help to build environments and relationships in which people can grow and have a care for each other. This idea runs quite closely to the concerns of experiential educators such as David Boud and Nod Miller. They talk of 'animating learning'. They use 'animation' because of the word's connotations:

> ... to give life to, to quicken, to vivify, to inspire. They see the function of animators to be that of 'acting with learners, or with others, in situations where learning is an aspect of what is occurring, to assist them to work with their experience' (Boud and Miller 1997, p.7).

While the notion of animation is not common among settlements and social action centres (other than with some arts workers), the practice is. Settlements have long been associated with innovations in creative-expressive.

One or two, like the Albany, have specialized in arts work; some others, like Virginia House, house autonomous arts centres or groups.

Current examples of practice include:

- The annual Somali Festival associated with Oxford House. This includes an exhibition, art workshops, a poetry and book show, concert and folklore dance, and special interest days. The aim is to help the Somali refugee community celebrate its culture and to encourage public understanding of that culture. Oxford House was host to a number of arts organizations from the 1970s on - such as Outwrite and the Half Moon Young People's Theatre. It had an artist in residence for a time (Bradley 1984).

- Craft groups at the Coppleston Centre which 'meet in a friendly atmosphere . to explore techniques of patchwork and quilting, fabric painting, embroidery, soft furnishing and herbs and scents. Outings are an integral part of the group's education to gain more experience of arts and crafts'. (Coppleston Centre 1997/8). The centre also has a 'Looking at Books' Group which follows termly themes, for example air, water and earth in 1997/8 (the latter involved reading Hardy's *The Woodlanders* and a range of poems on flowers, fruit, vegetables, animals, insects and trees).

- The community darkroom and photographic club at Barton Hill.

- The arts and craft group at Time and Talents. Recent projects have involved the making of a large ceramic mosaic and a stained glass mural depicting life on the River Thames.

Similarly, many settlements and social action centres have strong programmes of sociocultural animation (more usually described today as community development or social action). As can be seen elsewhere in this collection, there has been a long-standing concern with neighbourhood, democratic advance and working for social justice particularly within North American traditions of practice. However, with a growing focus on social action in the 1970s there were some significant developments in practice. To some extent work associated with settlements held onto a significant educational strand while practice in some other agencies shifted to more of a concern with social planning and economic development. In part this may have been due to the emphasis on association within the settlement movement. Recent and current examples of practice include:

- working with local people to develop credit unions (Community Links, Bradford and Beswick)

- developing community-based groupwork such as pensioners' action groups (Blackfriars)

- developing local community groups on estates, e.g. playgroups, parent and toddler groups, gardening group, and newsletter groups (Community Links)

- establishing a fresh food co-operative (Bradford and Beswick)

- working with local people to campaign for more imaginative services for those with disabilities or learning difficulties (Coppleston Centre).

Finally, there is a very strong interest in leisure-time animation - and again we find the same emphasis on association. A significant amount of work is undertaken with children and young people in the form of play schemes, adventure playgrounds, youth clubs and projects and various enthusiast and special interest groups. A number of settlements specialize in developing leisure opportunities for older people. A good example here can be found in Time and Talents' older people's social programme. The chief objective is to provide 'interesting, informative, creative and educational afternoons for the Over-50s' (1997, p.7). The 1998 programme included a visit to Westminster Flower Show, a tour of the Swedish church in Rotherhithe, and visits to the Museum of Childhood and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. At Fern Street we find pensioner clubs, a lunch club and a social centre for older people, and at Bath Place a women's fellowship, coffee bar and community garden.

In conclusion

Echoes of the early concerns of settlers can still be found in much of the adult education practice within settlements and social action centres today. The work undertaken does not make the same use of courses, debates and lectures as did the pioneers, but there is still significant innovation and attempts to keep alive more liberal and informal practice. Here it is perhaps worth noting some specific issues associated with this.

1. In the current narrowly vocational and product-oriented context, many settlements and centres struggle to gain funding for their work. Furthermore, they sometimes have to work hard to convince people of the worth of educational programmes and activities that are not linked to some form of accreditation.

2. The struggle to attract funding and support has not been helped by a general lack of attention to the development of theory in the area. Dominant definitions of, and practices around, curriculum, competence and process have not met with a sustained critique nor encouraged the creation of countervailing theory within settlements and social action centres. In part this is a problem of the broader field and of training - but surprisingly little has emerged since the pioneering work of Jane Mace (1979) and others associated with the literacy projects of the 1970s. The re-emergence of the notion of informal education, and renewed interest in some quarters in the practices of social pedagogy and animation, allow for some hope in this area.

3. There is a further problem within the British settlement and social action movement of a relative neglect of association. In many respects, it remains the symbolic form of the agencies involved in this review. However, it has tended to be expressed through a focus on community development and neighbourhood renewal, on organizing around 'enthusiasms' (Bishop and Hoggett 1986) and on the demand and need for social settings for informal education. The educative power of association in itself, and the contribution to democracy it holds, has not been worked through in most settlements and centres. To some extent, there is a need to reconnect more fully with the concerns of early pioneers.

4. Last, and connected with the above, a review of the practice of settlements and social action centres still leaves questions as to how strongly many workers identify with the educational traditions that have informed their practice. In the conversations of workers, and in their reports, one can find plenty of reference to learning from experience and the like -but the extent to which they take on the identity of educator or teacher in their community development activities, for example, varies considerably.

In the field of organised adult education, the activities of settlements and social action centres can go unnoticed. They are undertaking some innovative work,

and most look to more progressive purposes than do the bulk of agencies in the area. The interest in association, the emphasis on animation and the attention given to the informal hold within them considerable potential for those seeking to develop more democratic and enlivening educational practice. In part it is these fractions which can and do enable the settlements to make a unique contribution in an area of practice where conformity is being imposed with ever greater rigour by external funders.

Their history teaches the importance of integration in drawing together people and disciplines. In an era when governments are seeking once more to separate the vocational, the productive, from the simply 'enjoyable', history reminds us not only of the folly of such artificial divisions but of the gains and benefits which flow from ignoring them.

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Acknowledgement

Rugby; The Salmon Youth Centre, Bermondsey; Time and Talents Association, Rotherhithe; Virginia House Settlement, Plymouth.

Internet resource

Further material and links to some of the agencies mentioned in this piece can be found on infed.org: https://infed.org/mobi/settlements/.