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ABSTRACT
                A framework for the development of adult education
within the community development process is presented, based on a
three-year project in England that experimented with a number of
approaches. The network system suggested involves: (1) an
organizational model for adult education provision in a community
development setting which may be adopted elsewhere; (2) a definition
of roles for adult education in community development projects; and
(3) an attempt to define more precisely the relationship between
adult education and community development. The roles in a community
adult education network are: (1) network agent--makes contact with
the informal groups in his area, becomes fully aware of the problems,
needs and interests in the area, and identifying those that are
explicitly educational and recognizing those that would benefit from
some form of adult education; (2) resources agent--sets up a network
of contacts with organizations that can provide educational resources
for the groups with whom he has established contact; (3) educational
guide--acts as educational adviser for peer group learning
situations, and helping interested individuals undertake more formal
education leading to qualifications; and (4) teachers--persons with
special knowledge of a particular subject of interest to the
students. In this network, personal relationships with members of the
community are all-important. The network is flexible and offers an
opportunity for local control. (KM)

ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -

A NETWORK APPROACH

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ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -

A NETWORK APPROACH

(A longer version of a paper given to the International
Conference on "Adult Education and Community Development"
at Liverpool University 5th - 9th June, 1972)

The Relationship between Adult Education and

Community Development

In recent years adult educationalists have become increasingly
interested in the role of adult education in the field of community
development. Although adult education is no stranger to the process of
community development in underdeveloped countries only quite lately have
adult educationalists turned their attention to the process as it has
developed in the U.S.A. and more recently in Britain.(1)

In Britain the establishment of action/research projects in designated
Educational Priority Areas and Home Office Community Development Projects;
the profusion of community action groups; the increased interest in
community participation; the deliberations of the Russell Committee on
Adult Education in England and Wales have all created an atmosphere in
which traditional ideas on the role of adult education are under searching
scrutiny. Adult education is felt by many to be on the threshold of major
decisions about its future structure and organisation. Hopes are expressed
that it may now be possible to show that adult education has an important
role to play in a period of rapid social, economic and political change.
The prospect of adult education breaking away from its mainly middle class
image and catering for the needs of the working class is viewed with a
certain amount of optimism.(2)

The Need for Practical Research

A great deal of this optimism may be misplaced and hopes exaggerated.
However, community development exercises have certainly shown that, given
new structures and approaches, it is possible to engage working class
communities in a variety of what some adult educationalists regard as
"learning situations".(3) But, with a few exceptions, little systematic
analysis has taken place on the relationship between adult education and
community development and the role the former can play in, at the moment,
a very fragmented process.(4) Adult educationalists have not taken any
prominent part in the variety of Poverty Programmes and community action
projects in the U.S.A. Numerous small studies have recently appeared in
adult education journals on isolated projects.(5) Community adult education
has become the "in thing" amongst many professionals in a variety of adult
education settings from W.E.A. branches to Evening Institutes. In the
absence of any model or framework however, there is a danger that the concept
will become too all-embracing to have practical meaning.

The Liverpool Experiment

There is a need, therefore, for a framework within which the variety of
roles adult education can play in the community development process can be
clarified and related to each other in some overall pattern. Such a framework,
or model, requires either a drawing together of the variety of experiments
carried out in a number of community development settings, or an intensive
project in one particular area, experimenting with a number of different
approaches. It is the purpose of this paper to present a framework based on
the latter. The experiment was one carried out by the Workers Educational
Association (West Lancs. Cheshire District) in co-operation with the Liverpool
Educational Priority Area Action/Research Project over a period of three
years from 1969 to 1972.

The Liverpool E.P.A. Project was one of six set up in 1968 after the Plowden Report (6) to undertake a policy of action/research designed to provide information regarding national policies for positive discrimination in primary schools in deprived areas. The adult education element was one with a wide brief i.e. to explore the educational needs and interests of adults in the E.P.A. area - approximately 100,000 population in central Liverpool - and to experiment with new structures, organisation and teaching techniques. The area of operation was one that offered unique opportunities for such experiments since, as well as the E.P.A. project, it was the centre for a variety of community action/community development type projects e.g. The Shelter Neighbourhood Action Housing Project, the Great Georges Community Arts Projects; The Vauxhall Community Development Project; as well as numerous residents' association and community councils. In fact it was something of a "Mecca" for those interested in community action, community development and educational innovation.

It is not the purpose of this paper to describe in any detail the various experiments carried out during the three year period of the project, not to analyse the philosophy underlying the approach.(7) Various papers have already been published dealing with these aspects of the study and it is hoped to produce a detailed, comprehensive report in the near future. However, taking a broad view of all that was attempted it is possible to erect a framework within which all the activities can be placed. This 'framework' is offered as:

(a) An organisational model for adult education provision in a community development setting which may be adopted elsewhere

(b) A definition of roles for adult education in community development projects

(c) An attempt to define more precisely the relationship between adult education and community development

An Adult Education Network

Adult education like any other "community" service is, in the great majority of instances, typified by a hierarchical structure and bureaucratic organisation. Although it often stresses its informality this is mainly a matter of teaching technique - and not always then! - and the relationship between teacher and taught. Structurally it implies a less formal teaching arrangement. However, this is almost always confined to the class-room.

In actuality adult education has a very formal structure typical of large organisations. The nature of the service (education) is decided - with few exceptions by those in control. The criterion for success is judged in terms of formal classes and the numbers attending. All the bureaucratic paraphernalia of registers and forms are much in evidence. Students participate in an education process decided for them. The "informality" is within this inflexible structure.(8) Like the social, health and welfare services, adult education is organised in a manner which is familiar to - and meets the needs of - the middle class section of the population. The question of "needs" is in fact rarely raised because those who control the organisation are in the main from the same background as those who are being catered for. If it is raised then it is unlikely that it will have any radical organisational implications for the body concerned. The organisational model is "center-periphery" where "the system's ability to handle complex situations depends upon a simple message

and upon growth through uniform replication." (9). Any mismatch in such a model between the institution services and its customers is seen as a fault of the latter.

An alternative to the above system is an adult education or learning network where needs and interests are defined and articulated by those involved in the learning process and the center-periphery model completely reversed. The network diagram is an illustration of how such a network evolved and operated over the three years of the E.P.A. Project.

See Appendix

The model should be looked at three dimensionally i.e. it has height as well as length and breadth. The circumference of the larger circle can be regarded as the physical boundary of the E.P.A. area or a set of criteria defining a certain section of the population or, as in this instance, both. The circle in the centre of the large circle represents adult education in the form of one individual field worker. The smaller circles within the larger circle represent the variety of groups found in the E.P.A. They range in levels of formality from "local residents" who gather regularly in a pub, to Community Councils representing residents' associations in the area. If each circle is seen three dimensionally i.e. as a column, then some columns are "higher" or more formal than others exhibiting some tendency toward a bureaucratic structure.

During the initial year of the project the adult education agent spent some considerable time making himself known to such groups identifying with them in their activities, in short, setting up a network in which he was seen as someone with particular skills, knowledge and resources to offer the community - in this case educational.

Such "resources" are identified in the model by the circles outside the "boundary" of the community. Some of these were organisations concerned with particular aspects of adult education i.e. the University Extra-Mural department, the W.E.A., Further Education. Traditionally they have adopted a modified center-periphery approach to adult education. However, in theE.P.A. Project they were seen not as innovators at the centre but "resources" on the periphery. Other voluntary organisations i.e. Shelter, Child Poverty Action are concerned primarily with housing and social needs but they recognise the importance of education in tackling these problems. However, like adult educationalists, they tend to attract the middle class activist rather than the working class respondent. Because the "agent" at the centre had a network of contacts with the community it was possible to use the talents and resources of such organisations in educational exercises involving residents with needs and interests in their particular fields e.g. (1) informal courses on House Improvement Grants run by Shelter; (2) informal courses on welfare rights and benefits for old age pensioners run by a local Anti-Poverty Group;

(3) informal courses for coloured parents on colour problems run by the
Community Relations Officer for the area. (4) informal courses for local
resident leaders on the planning issues underlying urban decay, in co-operation
with the planning department of the local polytechnic. (5) a short course for
local resident leaders on the role and function of community councils in
tackling the problems of the inner city run in co-operation with the University
Extra Mural Department.

In many instances the voluntary organisations whose prime function was
not education and with less formal structures (smaller columns) were much
more accessible and easier to direct to relevant needs than the more formally
structured educational bodies (higher columns). This was not true, however,
of the Workers Educational Association - the employing body - whose greater
flexibility and tradition of out-going education gave it a distinct advantage
in this type of operation. The other partner in the exercise - the
Educational Priority Area Project - by the very nature of its role also
adopted a flexible approach to needs and resources, thus greatly assisting
the exercise. However, the role of the adult educator in this project was
not confined solely to the sort of operation set out in the network diagram
where problems, needs and interests are articulated and the adult educator
provides the appropriate resources to assist learning. The major problem
in the whole exercise was the variety of roles often necessarily assumed by
the professional at the centre of the model. Below an attempt is made to
define these different, though related roles, inside the network.

Roles in a Community Adult Education
Network

1. Network Agent

The network agent is responsible for setting up the network of contacts
within his designated work area. This entails

(a) Making contact with the variety of informal groups operating
in his area.

(b) Becoming fully aware of the problems, needs and interests
in the area.

(c) Identifying those that are explicitly educational and
recognising those that would benefit from some form of adult
education.

The latter is not easy as the great majority of people in working class
areas, or areas of high social need, look with suspicion on those who profess
to be "educators". However, this is where the professionalism lies in this
particular role i.e. the ability to establish relationships with groups and
gain their confidence so that this natural suspicion is allayed. To use an
analogy from the industrial field the agent has to get into the "factory" and
join the production line. In this way he learns to speak the language of
those in the factory, can relate to their environment and problems and
translate these into educational or "learning" situations. The growth of
trade union education in Great Britain is a good illustration of this
approach. The ability of adult educationalists to speak the language of
those in industry and translate industrial/trade union problems into
educational exercises owed something to the knowledge that such educationalists

had of the industrial/trade union process and their network of contacts in the trade-union world (10) - a much more structured network than is to be found in areas of multiple deprivation, such as the E.P.A.

2. Resources Agent

As indicated in the model the resources agent sets up a network of contacts with organisations that can provide educational resources for the groups with whom he has established contact inside the circle. As illustrated earlier these are not confined to specifically educational organisations. The skill of the Resources Agent is his ability to realise and release the educational potential in organisations concerned with social, economic and political problems, as well as adult education institutions. Mention has already been made of Child Poverty Action and Shelter. Another particularly successful experiment was the use of local radio as an educational resource and teaching aid for groups within the network.(11)

The W.E.A.'s chief resource was its ability to pay people for their evolvement in leading "learning exercises". This made it possible in some instances to pay local residents to pass on skils and knowledge to other residents in an informal educational setting similar to that advocated by Illich in "Deschooling Society".(12) Other important resources were released into the community through the E.P.A. Project. These included finance, audio-visual equipment and team members who engaged in adult education exercises directed by the field worker.

By concentrating attention on a specific deprived area's educational needs and interests, it thus became possible to link together a variety of organisations of different degrees of formality in a common exercise where they became part of a larger network. This linking together was never formally recognised - such a recognition would possibly have thwarted the whole exercise if it led to the usual committee structure. However, it would certainly add to the efficiency of such exercises if all the organisations involved with adult education (in the broadest sense of the term) recognised a common area of concern where they did not dictate "to" but received dictation "from" the community. Such an approach could lead to useful co-operation between agencies rather than the existing system of duplication, competition and misuse of educational resources. Implied in such an approach is the belief that adult education has a duty to put its resources at the disposal of those most in need even though it appears that there is no demand for such resources. The value of the network model is its ability to pinpoint such a need and to release resources accordingly.

3. Educational Guide

The role of "Educational Guide" falls into two categories:-

(a) Acting as educational adviser for peer group learning situations. Here the emphasis is on working closely with groups, assisting them in informal learning processes which may, or may not, fall into conventional patterns. For example a group of residents may want to run a summer play scheme for the first time. This can be a learning situation for parents and children, not only in terms of the organisational and administrative skills required, but also the opportunity it offers to help parents to learn more about the importance of childrens' play. The educational guide must step very carefully in such a situation for fear of imposing a structured solution. His position will not be one of leader but of adviser, seeing to it that the adults concerned learn as much as possible inside their own informal response to the problem.

Other learning situations can be slightly more formal i.e. discussion amongst a group of young women about marriage and the family today and their role as wives and mothers. Here the need is for material which can stimulate discussion, illuminate argument and help develop cognitive skills. Again the education guide must adopt a back seat approach, not dominating or imposing his views or solutions but rather creating a situation where adults can learn from their own shared experiences and material drawn from outside such experiences. It is here that adult education needs to explore more fully the cultural barrier and the educational role of popular culture and the mass media (13).

(b) Aside from such peer group learning situations, or arising from them, demands are made for information about more formal education leading to qualifications. Here the network system operates in reverse and "avenues" are opened up for such individuals to undertake more formal study in an institutional setting. The emphasis then is on counselling. This means discovering exactly what it is the person w...ts to do; evaluating his or her potential; stimulating confidence (extremely important); discovering the appropriate course and institution and making the latter aware of the special problems that make it difficult for those who need, and can benefit from, its resources, making use of them. This, of course, has ramifications for the admission procedure and internal organisation of such institutions. In a number of instances bureaucratic rules and regulations overrode obvious educational needs and potential. Nevertheless, in other instances educational institutions within the network of resources did respond favourably and adults moved out of their groups to undertake sustained study, often for posts in social work or community development.

4. Teacher

Although a great deal of community adult education involved tutor and peer groups learning together occasions arose when groups, or individuals, expressed a desire to learn more about some specialist subject. Here those concerned were prepared to adopt a more traditional teacher-pupil role, although the exercise had to take place in their own familiar surroundings. Thus it was possible to arrange for "teachers" with special knowledge of particular subjects to impart that knowledge - or skill - to other members of the community.

In one instance this entailed telling residents about witchcraft and magic. In another something about the history of their city. Or it could mean passing on the skills of hair-dressing, dress-making or home management. As stated earlier where possible local residents with such skills were used as "teachers".

The demands for "teachers" in a variety of subjects indicated that not all education in deprived areas had to be concerned with the local environment incorporating the shared experiences of those involved. Certainly this was an important aspect of the network. But, given the informal structure set out in the model, it was possible to gain confidences, overcome suspicions about education and cater for a wide spectrum of educational needs and interests from the "learning exercises" of the summer play scheme to the more traditional class with a teacher.

Problems with a Network Approach

The variety of roles undertaken by the field worker in the Liverpool experiment placed a great strain on him personally. The establishment of a network meant great emphasis on personal relationships with members of the community concerned. This was all important. Without it nothing would have occurred. Whereas in formal organisations the role and status of those involved in working together is often more important than personal relationships

amongst working class communities the latter is all important.

However, once such relationships are established other roles, such as those indicated above, are "forced" upon the field worker rather than deliberately decided upon. These roles are difficult to separate one from the other and may well be inseparable. At the same time the field worker has to "negotiate" with formal organisations in order to gain their support as "resources" for the network. This means, in fact, assuming another role where the skill required is that of converting institutions to a different view of educational needs and the necessity for a different response. In Liverpool this leads to a re-examination of the role and function of the main educational body involved i.e. the W.E.A. (14)

To quote from Donald Schon in a chapter on learning systems in "Beyond the Stable State "

'Network roles such as these vary in character and yet make common demands on their practitioners each of whom attempts to make of himself a node connecting strands of a network which would otherwise exist as disconnected elements. The risks of the roles are many, since the broker may often be squeezed between the elements he is trying to connect. The need for personal credibility is high, since each role demands that the person be acceptable and believable to different organisations and persons, each of whom tends to hold different criteria for acceptance'(15).

Yet Schon like Illich, presents a situation where the different roles are assumed by different people. However, Schon is concerned about a variety of networks, from the very informal at local level to the highly complex at governmental level. Each requires a different emphasis on the part of the network agent but at the same time they all have a common approach. "People capable of playing network roles frequently occupy places in several of the sub systems among which they operate. They sustain many organisational identities, and exist on the margins of institutions. They are - in effect - marginal men with both the negative connotations (of not being central) and the positive connotations (of being at the forefront)"(16).

Ivan Illich, on the other hand, is concerned specifically with educational networks rather than the very complex learning systems referred to by Schon which are attempts to deal with the problems posed for all formal institutions by the loss of the stable state. Yet Illich assumes that different people will - of necessity - fill the four roles he visualises in a network system. The roles he describes, although similar to those described in the E.P.A. experiment, are seen as four separate networks.(17)

Illich is concerned with educational network systems as applied to the whole of society, and equates quite separate roles with separate network systems joined together in a web. Contrary to Schon he seems to assume that the radical changes he proposes will initiate from the top as in the traditional center-periphery model. If the Liverpool model is seen as an illustration of Schon's approach to social and educational change then it would appear difficult to separate roles in a localised system. However, because of the burden it imposes it would seem that a "team" approach might be more appropriate. In such a team each member would adopt the variety of roles necessary to establish and maintain the network but each one would specialise in a particular role. In Liverpool a close working relationship with the University enabled the latter to specialise in the educational needs of the network of formal and voluntary bodies concerned with community development(18).

Adult Education or Community Development

To what extent is the network system as it evolved in the Liverpool E.P.A. adult education or community development or both? To a certain extent it can be argued that the network system with its emphasis on field work at grass roots level in a deprived area is a Community Work Approach and the method adopted by most community development workers. At an Organisational level the emphasis on "service delivery" and co-ordinating the activities of a variety of institutions with educational services to offer is one that the British Home Office Community Development Projects have adopted. However, they are concerned almost entirely with local authority and statutory body services whereas the Liverpool experiment illustrated the usefulness of co-ordinating statutory, voluntary and local authority educational services.

Thus in terms of strategy and organisation the Liverpool experiment in adult education offers a model for community development projects concerned with a variety of needs and resources. In a community development exercise the network would become a "web" with different agents concerned with different needs - including adult education. At the same time the network approach offers the possibility of democratic control over resources. The nature of the initiating body - the W.E.A. - a voluntary organisation with lay control over professionals, stressed the need for such a development and attempts are being made to replace the adult educationalist at the centre of the model by a branch of the W.E.A. comprising local people from the variety of informal groups in the network. This group will - it is hoped - form the hub of the system and the adult educator will become their servant. Such a development - if it is successful - could be paralleled in community development projects and meet the criticism of those who argue that such projects lack any system for democratic control by the communities involved.(19)

At the same time the nature of the community development process is such that not only can adult education be seen as another network in the web, another need that can be met by co-ordination of resources, but it is also an essential element in the whole process. The emphasis on community participation and involvement creates situations where people and institutions, at all levels, are placed in Schon's "learning systems" where the skills and knowledge of professional adult educators are essential if such exercises are to be success-ful. In Liverpool this was recognised by almost all the projects concerned with community development. Both the W.E.A. and the Liverpool University Institute of Extension Studies played their part in emphasising the importance of adult education in the whole community development process.(20)

To sum up then it would appear that the network model offers adult educa-tion the opportunity to participate in community development projects as an important additional resource, or resources, to meet specific community needs and interests. As developed in Liverpool it can also be seen as a model for community development exercises in general, offering the possibility of some form of local democratic control. Yet not only is it an important network in the web of community development emphasising personal as well as community development. It is an essential ingredient in a situation where people and organisations need to "learn through doing" i.e. to question themselves, their attitudes, their institutions and way of life, at the same time as they attempt to tackle the problems of social, economic, educational and political deprivation. The former is adult education and cannot be separated from the latter.

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COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCA-
TION. NETWORK
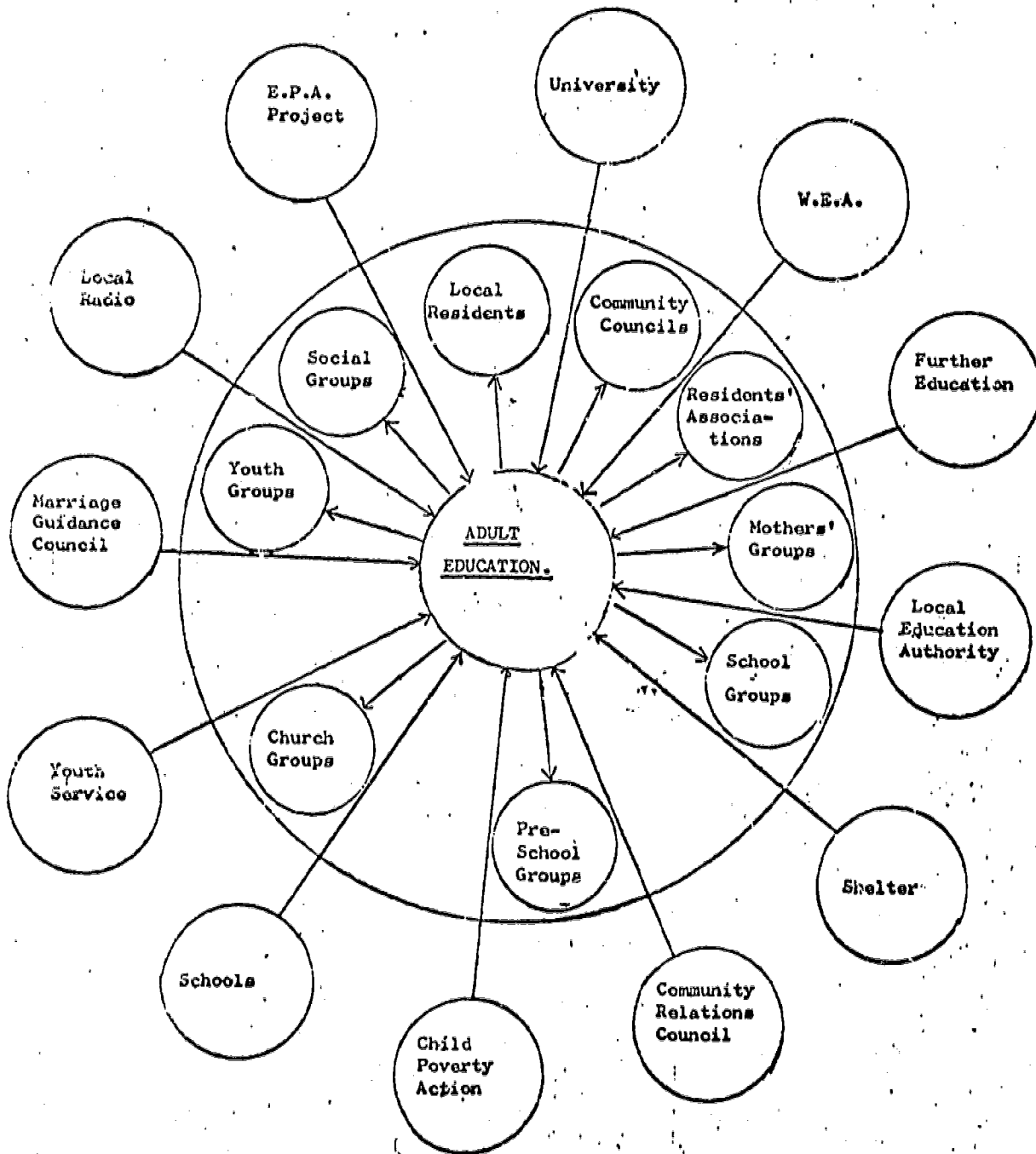
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(3) Colin Kirkwood   "Do it yourself newspaper - is this adult
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                                   See also:
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                                     (iii) Peter Day "Community Development and
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                                     (iv) R. Shaw & L. West "Class Dismissed?"
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"Educational Priorities and the W.E.A. – The case for Reform" *Workers Educational Association, Liverpool 1971*

(15) Schon op. cit. p. 200

(16) op. cit. p. 200

(17) Illich op. cit. p. 78 & 79
His four networks are:

(i) Reference services to educational objects

(ii) Skill exchanges

(iii) Peer matching

(iv) Reference services to educators at large

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These roles are similar to the ones detailed
in this paper except that Illich's network
includes all educational objects in society
except educational institutions. He defines
educational objects so widely that it is
difficult to see how his fragmented and
decentralised system could operate. The E.P.A.
type network offers the opportunity of
utilising existing educational institutions
inside a more democratic, responsive
educational system that could become
operational in quite a short time.

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