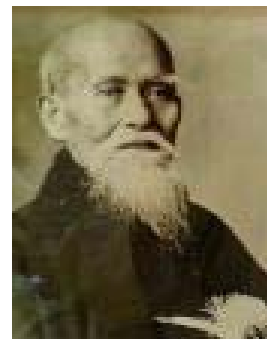


A Brief History of Applied Aikido

O'Sensei

To me, off-mat aikido is traditional, and not something new. Why do I say this? Firstly, O'Sensei emphasized that his art was a martial "way" and named his art accordingly. Secondly, O'Sensei's writings and attributed quotes attest to his vision of aikido as a vehicle for personal development and social harmony. He is recorded as having taught aikido and its' principles, to police, sumo wrestlers, dancers and other diverse groups. His concept of aikido was clearly a wide one.



Students of the Founder

O'Sensei's students each focused on different aspects of the art. Two were given instructions that are of relevance to applied aikido. Terry Dobson was told to "Teach aikido to your own people in your own way," while Robert Nadeau was given a scroll instructing "Teach the aikido that can not be seen with the human eye." When Senseis Nadeau and Dobson returned home the first seeds of "off-mat" aikido were spread in the West. Much early work on aikido in everyday life occurred in the United States as a result of this, particularly in the Bay Area. Books like *The Magic of Conflict* (Tom Crumm) and *Aikido and The New Warrior* (Strozzi Heckler ed.) then inspired others.

Enter Aiki Extensions



In 1998 a group of aikidoka interested in off-mat aikido were bought together by Prof. Don Levine of the University of Chicago. Members had diverse interests including security, arts, spirituality, business, academic research, bodywork and youth outreach; but were all concerned with employing aikido and aikido principles, in unconventional settings. An example of an AE member is Jose Bueno from Sao Paula, Brazil. He teaches aikido to street children in slum areas (see table by entrance) for health and to reduce the endemic violence there.

Applied Aiki in the UK

Jim O'Dwyer and Robert MacFarland Senseis were two early AE members, as was Michael Wolff in Scotland. I also suspect there are people out there doing AE type work, but who are not yet connected. The first British applied-aiki gathering was hosted by MacFarland Sensei, in Brighton Oct 2005. 30 people from 12 organisations attended and had lots of fun ☺. The second occurred in

London six months later and attracted 60 people, Ezra Shihan and Senseis P Smith, P Cooke, Q Cooke and S Whittaker taught workshops.

Around the World Today

Aiki Extensions has grown considerably and now includes members in approximately 30 countries. These include strong groups in Switzerland, Germany and The Middle East. AE organises projects such as "Training Across Borders", holds conferences and publishes member's work (many articles are freely available on the AE web site).



How to get Involved Further



If this type of training is of interest to you, visit the Aiki Extensions website for further ideas. There is a fee to become a member - but this can be waived if finances are a problem (AE is a non-profit organization). I encourage you to start your own projects in areas that interest you - if I can help with this then please ask. It's my wish to see this work spread in the UK as I see that it has great benefits to the aikido and wider community. I would suggest the following as first steps:

- Spread the word!
- Support any AE projects that you consider worthwhile, with time, donations or skills (e.g. arranging a benefit seminar for Iraqi Dojo Support or Ação Harmonia).
- Consider starting your own projects.
- Host further UKExtensions get-togethers like this one.

I hope that AE can highlight some of aikido's possible applications and be of use to you.

Warmly,

Mark Walsh
UK Aiki Extensions

Resources and Contact info:

Aiki Extensions website - <http://aiki-extensions.org/>
AikWeb (includes "off-mat" forum) - <http://aikweb.com/>

Mark Walsh, Sharon Bannister and Andrew Humpreys – Organizing committee UK
Scotland – Jim Wolff