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Nurturing University

Community Engagement: Bringing the Gown to the Town and the Town to the Gown

Using Art to Co-Produce Knowledge in International Aid Contexts

Vidarunna Mukulangal (Blossom Bud) " Say No to Drugs, Hai to Life"

Working with Women Heads of Households in Northern Region-Sri Lanka

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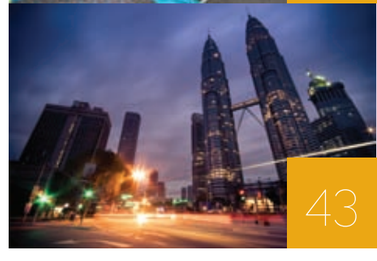

Editor in chief
Carolyn Noble

Welcome to Issue 16

Carolyn Noble

Welcome to the first of three editions for 2017. The focus of this edition in on Nurturing university (campus) community engagement which was the key theme at the inaugural international community engagement conference held in Nepal in 2016. Key players in organising this conference Bala Raju Nikku and Pradipta Kadambari are our guest editors.

University –Community engagement has influenced many university's research and scholarship agendas in quite significant ways. Criticised as too elitist and unresponsive to the diverse communities in which they are located and the professions they are educating students for, and the knowledge they are exploring and critiquing, many universities wanted to address this inequality by opening their doors and forming ongoing partnerships with their constituent communities. That is moving the town to the gown and the gown to the town.

Not only were universities keen to share resources such as their sporting fields, swimming pools, computer labs and libraries, accommodation and seminar and lecture rooms etc., many researchers moved to include community members as genuine partners and focus their research on improving the community's social, political and or economic position. The move was to enhance a reciprocal, equal partnership. As the university widened community and industry access to their resources as well as learning and information it began learning from those communities and industries and vice versa. This was a real move away from researching into to researching with. The aim is to empower communities, resource them and offer students experience of real life community activism and engagement.

Discipline- based courses such as social work and community welfare are examples of 'engaged' courses. Educators teaching in these programs have, and continue to have a long history of collaborating with their communities in research, scholarship and teaching activities, especially as preparation for professional practice upon graduation. This edition showcases many such examples of community university engagement from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Malaysia, Finland, Hong Kong, India, and Iraqi. Once again, on behalf of IASSW we offer this edition for your enjoyment and celebration of social work and its many fields of practice and influence.

Guest Editors
Bala Raju Nikku and Pradipta Kadambari

Nurturing University Community Engagement

Bala Raju Nikku

Pradipta Kadambari

The efforts to define, design, develop, and implement campus/university and community engagement programs in institutions of higher education is on the rise globally and the Asia Pacific region is not an exception. Within the universities, formal positions have been created and budgets were allotted despite cuts for research and development. This shows the rising significance of community engagement as one of the main functions of Universities. Despite it rise in interest and support this new emphasis on civic education and engagement by the Universities/Colleges/Campuses is highly debated and contested.

The proponents claim that an 'engaged' student will not only do well in academics but more likely to participate in public policy and show greater allegiance to democratic norms. Mainstreaming the community engagement across the campus pedagogy opens new spaces for experiential learning resulting in reflective practices and nurturing analytical scholars. The collectivistic communities in Nepal have abundant practices that are not captured by the researchers but are handed over to the next generations. This pool of knowledge resource that exist in the community is better tapped through the campus-community engagement initiatives for the benefit of both. The opponents are questioning these claims. They ask, is the younger learner unusually populated with people who avoid their civic duty. If this is true, how can the universities solve this issue just by introducing a few community engagement initiatives? The current debate is warranted because it is raising very pertinent and challenging questions about the very role of our universities and education system in general which is fragmented in many countries. This means social work has a lot more of a role to play.

This edition of Social Dialogue (No 16) is focused on unraveling this debate further: what, why and how of community engagement. The articles are carefully selected keeping the wider debate and discourses in context. As social work educators, we do hope that the collective scholarship will further contribute to countless efforts of engaging communities that are affected by both natural and political disasters, structural inequalities and global forces beyond the control of communities. The articles in this edition are work in progress and innovative efforts by schools of social work across the globe, determined to find better means and ways of engaging with communities. It is in this process of discovering a meaning of collaboration and synergy between campuses and communities, social work innovations in teaching and practice takes place. We believe it is too short a time to claim if these initiatives by schools of social work are changing the lives of communities. But for sure these initiatives are beginning to yield positive outcomes in strengthening student, educator, practitioner's civic engagement ideas and skills. By undertaking such engagment these schools are safe guarding citizen democracy, community rights and empowerment of boarder communities in which they are located. To take this debate forward, the Nepal School of Social Work will be organizing the second international conference on cutting edge issues in campus-community engagement in 2018. Please visit www.nsswengage.org for further details. Thank you and do enjoy reading this edition.

From the IASSW President's Desk

Prof. Annamaria Campanini
President, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

Dear Colleagues,

Wish you all a very happy, healthy and peaceful 2017! We are here with another exciting volume of Social Dialogue online magazine that is focused on Nurturing community campus engagement. We have many examples of such engagements from social work program across the world. We really want to continue to explore social work in different countries and to share knowledge and experience on what is going on.

Although the last months were full of activities, I would like to highlight some special issues.

I. Board Meeting in Nairobi

In January we had our Board meeting in Nairobi, followed by a very interesting Regional Seminar and a remarkable exchange with the KENYA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION an umbrella association that is working on defense of human rights.

2. Social work capacity building program in Vietnam

In October 2016 was realized the second social work capacity building program for Vietnamese

Social work educators. The three years program, jointly developed by the Capacity Building Committee of IASSW International Association of School Work (IASSW), the Asia & Pacific Association of Social Work Education (APASWE), Vietnam Vocational Training Association and Vocational Social Work (VVTA&SWA), the Vietnam Association of School of Social Work (VASSW) and the IASSW Regional Resource Centre Peking U – HKPolyU China Social Work Research Centre, was financially supported by the United board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, PORTICUS.

The purpose of this initiative, held in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, was to nurture a critical mass of social work educators who will be able to take up the leadership in developing social work education in Vietnam.

The program for this second year, chaired by Janet Williams with the cooperation of experienced trainers from the partner organisations, was focused on social work in schools and social work in health settings, providing intensive training which included lectures, practice simulations, case studies, field visits and follow-up projects in between the annual work.

More than hundred people with diversified background have attended these two workshops and their feedback is extremely positive and the impact far reaching.

We are looking forward to organizing the third workshop in 2017.

I think that this can be a good example on how the IASSW mission can be fulfilled and we hope that this type of initiative can be replicated in different countries.

3. World Social Work Day

The 21st of March all over the world we will celebrate the World Social Work Day.

This initiative aims not just to showcase the achievements of social work and increase its visibility, but also to highlight its synergies toward the collective commitments to social justice, sustainable development and human rights.

Since 2010 the focus of the WSWD was connected to the shared vision set up in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development around its four different pillars: social and economic equality , the dignity and worth of people, environmental and community sustainability, and the importance of human relationships.

This year- and also in 2018- different initiatives will be held, at different levels, to develop the topic: Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability.

As international commitment IASSW and IFSW are prepared to celebrate the WSWD at the UN in New York the 17th April and in Geneva the 21-22 of March and I will represent IASSW in both these initiatives.

We believe that it is very important to maintain and enhance the relationship with UN and the different agencies. IASSW has a representative that participates in different committees both in NY and in Geneva and we are working to establish our presence also in Nairobi.

The celebration of the WSWD is an important occasion to strengthen or to establish new contacts, cooperation and partnership with UN organisations and with allied international NGOs; to spread knowledge about social work, its values, principles and methods in practice and theory among UN-organisations and allied international NGOs; to highlight social work actions, policies and achievements in the pursuit of common goals and to disseminate the knowledge about UN activities, goals, program and campaigns among social workers and social work organisations and schools.

WSWD has become a highpoint in the social work calendar with social workers all over the world and **we invite you to share your initiatives and experiences** **hello@iassw-aiets.org**

We have established together with ICSW and IFSW regional observatory that will collect all of them and will prepare report at the end of 2018 to celebrating and promoting the social work contribution to the development of sustainable environment and community.

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Doing Disaster Social Work: Insights from the IASSW supported Disaster interventions by the Nepal School of Social Work

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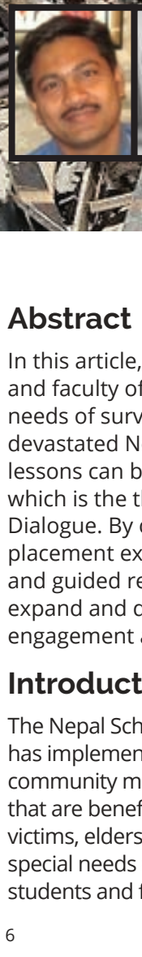

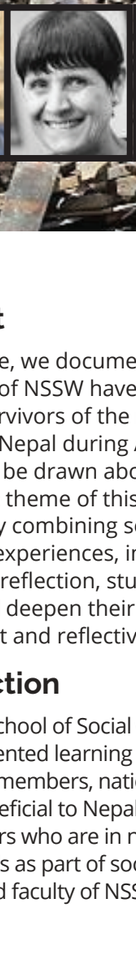

Bala Raju Nikku
Universiti Sains Malaysia(USM) and Nepal School of Social Work

Lena Dominelli
Durham University, England

Abstract

In this article, we document and analyse how students and faculty of NSSW have responded to the immediate needs of survivors of the mega earthquake that devastated Nepal during April and May 2015 and what lessons can be drawn about community engagement which is the theme of this special edition of Social Dialogue. By combining selected coursework, practical placement experiences, independent research projects and guided reflection, students and faculty are able to expand and deepen their understanding of community engagement and reflective social work practice.

Introduction

The Nepal School of Social work (NSSW) founded in 2005 has implemented learning projects together with local community members, national and international agencies that are beneficial to Nepalese children in slums, disaster victims, elders who are in need of care and children with special needs as part of social work learning sites for the students and faculty of NSSW (Nikku, 2009).

Social Work and Community Engagement Praxis

Schools of Social Work are part of the Universities and or higher educational establishments struggling to retain their identity. Fish's (2005) argued that institutions of higher learning should not participate in service learning or civic engagement. Contrary to Fish's argument many scholars show that university researchers, faculty and students can successfully collaborate with community agencies in a relationship of mutual respect for strengths to support the application of useful innovations that benefit both the parties (see Bellamy et all., 2008). Shared values between the university and the agency should drive the process. Hence the University / College and Community engagement is a process of two way learning, involving engagement between the University and the Community agencies and members. However, this engagement can be a tension for universities/ schools of social work as they attempt to navigate their many roles (Fisher et al, 2004).

Creating Alliances and Partnerships

Nepal is going through a series of transitions in its political establishment, especially due to the post conflict scenario and also struck by the both natural and political disasters. The need for trained and committed human resources like that of social workers is the need of the hour. We are aware that the nature of each student is different, so is their potential. Being a proactive school of social work, NSSW believes in creating a learning environment in which each individual will educate oneself with his/her own pace, spirit and potential. Students are encouraged to experiment, experience, innovate new approaches and test them for further scaling. For that, NSSW since its inception in 2005 has been creating learning platforms where social work students can learn not only from classroom teaching but also from their peers across the globe, family members and community. Prof. Dominelli played a key role in connecting IASSW resources to NSSW right after the mega earthquakes that shook the cultural and economic fabric of the Nepalese society. She has been a lead researcher on Tsunami Project of Sri Lanka at Durham University and serves as the Associate Director of IHRR. As both a sociologist and social worker, her research has been published widely used in disaster social work (Dominelli, 2012).

Engaging Disaster devastated Communities

The devastating mega earthquakes that shook Nepal on 25th April and 12th of May 2015 brought an international attention and support for thousands of stranded people, many of whom were evacuated and saved by rescue teams that came from other countries. Despite of all these efforts more than 8000 lives have been lost, thousands injured and over 250,000 houses, 32,000 classrooms reported completely destroyed including many of Kathmandu valley's architectural treasures. Undoubtedly, social work has a long history of responding to the needs of vulnerable populations, including those who experience natural or human-made disasters. Historically, social work has been involved in disaster relief; recovery dominated by psychosocial interventions and other models but has paid less attention to empowerment and social development in post-disaster recovery efforts. The students and faculty members despite being survivor victims of the quakes have come together and responded to the psycho social needs of the communities affected during and after the disasters. On the basis of pre-assessment and identified needs of the community members, the NSSW team chose Sipapokhari VDC in Sindhupalchok District (located outside the Kathmandu valley) where there was a high loss of life and property reported (Nikku, 2015).

The core team of NSSW also contacted international, regional and local social work organisations like the International Association of Schools of Social Work, (IASSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), The Asian and Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE), the International Consortium for Social Development Asia Pacific (ICSD-AP), Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work (JASSW) and other schools of social work in the region. By mobilising immediate internal resources and self-care methods, the small NSSW team made the crucial first step in disaster social work. Very soon the school became a hub for providing information related to disaster management, a place for shelter to community members and a place for local police to plan and discuss relief activities. In this process the NSSW as an institution also equipped with new programs and capacities like providing self care trainings to various groups including the police and army personnel. NSSW also delivered psycho social first aid and provided relief materials and referral services and organised community cafes to collect and help communities to build their coping mechanisms and plan further.

Community Cafe (CC) : a tool for community engagement

The earthquake disasters in Nepal not only shook the economic but also social and cultural fabric of Nepal. As part of its response to post disaster social work, NSSW orgnasied Community Cafes (with the assistance of Dr. Bonnycastle of University of Manitoba) to bring people together to discuss their strengths and resources available and to reconstruct their lives. Community Cafe activities offered a quality engagement with community members and became part of NSSW ongoing community engagement programs. We find CC as a tool that encourages participation and community ownership.

A community café is when a diverse group of people sit at a hospitable, café-style table and explore questions about a certain issue that matters to their life and/ or community. Each individual carries with them their own set of wisdom, insights, and ideas to the table, creating new and collective knowledge about an important topic. A group of people who share desired outcomes and goals have the capacity of creating change. The research/design team is comprised of several people. It typically involves the sponsor, café hosts, and participants. Each of these roles plays an important and vital part in a successful community café. The community café room should contain an inviting atmosphere that enables and cultivates good conversation. It is usually comprised of several café-style tables. Participants are assigned to a specific table which contains a set of questions designed to explore and discuss amongst one another.

The questions are formulated by the design team to have significance and relevancy to the issue at hand (Bonnycastle et al, 2015). The topics for discussion at Community Cafe's can be selected by the host in consultation with the members. A range of topics were discussed. For example, about the post-earthquake situation, the needs of people affected by the disaster, and the possible responses (both research and action based) provided a vibrant and passionate topic over which to converse. The participants of the first cafe included members of NSSW, faculty and students, guests from the Nepal Police department, the Physiotherapy Association of Nepal, Teach for Nepal and other specialists in health and development issues. Some of the most interesting projects that emerged out of the cafes were: understanding how local people's expertise and leadership can be utilized after a disaster; understanding in more detail the circumstances that lead to people seeking to be 'trafficked' as there was a big increase in this after the disaster; exploring the possibility of using local community members to staff the post-disaster relief centres and clinics; understanding exactly what has stopped people abiding by the building code; and understanding the role of social media in the community response to the disaster.

Insights

In this article we presented how NSSW as a young school of social work have developed different strategies of community engagement over a period of ten years since its inception. The disaster social work activities supported by the IASSW and other social work schools from all over the globe have laid a foundation and motivation for NSSW faculty and students being disaster victim survivors them self to come forward and use their social work values and skills in the protection and strengthening of families and communities to cope up right after the mega earthquakes disasters in Nepal in 2015. The Community Cafe as an engagement tool in addition to virtual help line supported by Prof. Lena from the UK and other colleagues have been used and modified according to the local needs. The skills learnt during and the post disaster time was put to use to train further volunteers at the community level.

One of the purposes of this paper is to show how social work / schools of social work might develop community engagement praxis. Social Workers do posses the knowledge and skills needed for empowering people and families. The main stumbling block however is whether social workers see this as a valid form of practice for themselves tied as they are to individualistic 'psychosocial' approaches within service-oriented contexts, discussed in the beginning of the paper. The case of NSSW shows that it is possible to integrate community engagement as an integral element to social work teaching and practice which benefits the students, faculty and community despite of the ethical challenges involved.

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By Reubot via Wikimedia Commons

Griffith University busway station provides transport link to community

Social work and community welfare: community-campus engagement

Carolyn Noble

Abstract

This article explores the phenomena of community-campus engagement that is shaping the culture of the higher education sector by encouraging all Higher Education Providers (HEPs) to engage more fully with civil society in the activities of teaching, learning, and research. In particular I report on a study which focused on social work and community welfare courses in an Australia university as specific examples of courses engaged with the community service sector.

Introduction

Universities have three missions: Teaching; Research and Community Engagement. I think this model is accepted across the world as important part of ensuring civil society is resourced by university's business, social, cultural and intellectual property linked to its academic scholarship and research activities. The new community engagement agenda wants to shift the traditional one-way interaction from university to more egalitarian relationship, one which community's interests and need for more programs, projects and resources can be enhanced by this partnership.

"Community- campus engagement" What is it?

In Australia, as elsewhere in the western world, as a specific educational initiative the notion of community-campus partnerships has changed the face of education across the sector in quite significant ways (Winter & Wiseman 2005). Influenced by developments in both the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) most Australian universities now have some form of community partnership or engagement policies and programs and seek differentiation by emphasising their strong engagement with their

constituent communities as their strength over the more traditional features such as knowledge work and pure research (Gibbons 2005; Holland 2005). Cooperative Research Centres (CRC), established in the early 1990s by Australian Federal Government is an early example. These CRCs were established to: improve productivity in existing businesses; develop new businesses, create new more industry-based courses; find new student markets and to break down the university walls and engage with industry in joint economic enterprises to generate R & D initiatives for both sectors (Winter & Wiseman 2005).

Industry collaboration was then extended to include whole of the community whether connected by geographic location, specific interest or affiliation or identity to address a broad range of issues from health to well-being, to help formulate community responses to government policy. Mutual and equal collaboration is to be encouraged with community agencies, organisations (Government and not-for-profit) and NGOs in order to improve the communities economic, social and health outcomes and to involve the community more fully in designing and implementing legislation which will directly or indirectly contribute to their health and well-being, resource allocation and need assessment. Empowerment to address social and economic exclusion in neighbourhoods is a further example of campus-community engagement partnerships. This approach was designed specifically to develop partnerships that are collaborative, mutually enriching and equal. Whose endeavour is, colloquially speaking, to bring the gown to the town and the town to the gown.

Social work and community welfare

Before the new community-campus discourse swept across the higher education sector many universities already had community engagement at its heart. In the applied discipline based programs such as medicine, education, counselling, health sciences, psychology and human services, knowledge transfer and industry experience is and has always been inextricably linked with professional education.

Social work and community welfare courses are obvious examples of 'engaged' courses whose development and raison d'etre is linked with the communities of practice that employ their graduates. Educators teaching in these courses have and continue to have a long history of collaborating with their communities in research and scholarship as well as being partners in the professional education curricula. These programs are popular in their regions as they produce 'home grown' and 'home educated' graduates who have a long-term commitment to its social and human needs. Epistemologically each of these courses is committed to social inclusion, community-building initiatives, and developing social capacity and activities to make stronger more equal and democratically engaged communities. Pedagogically each has work-based learning embedded in their programs, where students undertake placements in community organisations supervised by experienced professionals to integrate theory and practice into their professional education (Noble 2011).

So, if we were to explore their success what would we find about the motivations, their pitfalls and the overall benefits of such a partnership. What would further research entail?

The study

A grounded research project was undertaken between 2008-2010 to explore the questions raised above with 5 social work and community welfare educators at a dual sector University in Melbourne within the Higher Education (HE) and 5 Vocational Education (VE or TAFE) sectors as well as with 10 key representatives from community service agencies from the region in which the university was situated.

The main aim of this project was:

To explore why community groups in the community service field and social work and community welfare educators want (or not) to actively engage with the university to develop, foster, strengthen, deepen and commit to a partnership as proposed by the University's community engagement initiatives plan. In exploring the question why engage with the university, questions about the advantages and pitfalls would, hopefully emerge.

The Findings

In addressing the aims of the project several themes were identified as both leading and constraining engagement.

Themes facilitating engagement included:

1. Shared location and commitment to the region and opportunity to 'hire from the neighbourhood',
1. The rewards of sharing a positive and mutually beneficial professional relationships; that is the human factor of colleagues with each contributing valuable roles and functions in the education of 'would be' professionals; and
2. Field placements were highlighted as the most positive examples of community-campus engagement.

Themes hindering engagement included:

1. The language of engagement used by the educators was considered too abstract, too academic and not culturally assessable,
2. The engagement partnerships were seen to be driven by (top down) policy where University policy was determining the nature, form and involvement rather than stakeholders seeking out meaningful relationships themselves, and
3. Resource differentials and disparity in resources between educators and community members such as financial, facilities, working conditions and stability in employment hindered true equality and uneven rewards from collaboration.

Drawing together the responses from all the participants several important components were needed to inform and support community-campus engagement which was identified as;

- What is best for the region,
- The importance of sharing the same goals, vision, and what the outcomes will be,
- A connection that is characterised by mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment,
- An engagement where there is a balance of power among all partners and where each partner has equal access to shared resources,
- A relationship that exhibits clear, open communication in assessable language for all community members, especially those from Culturally and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) communities,
- A relationship where values, norms and processes are established with input from all stakeholders not just top down approaches, and
- A recognition that partnerships take time, commitment and continuity to develop and need regular maintenance to keep them effective, strong and rewarding.

Several concerns were also raised. All participants expressed concern as to how will partnerships manage the almost constant change in staff, interest, priorities and the long-term sustainability of projects, especially in the community sector characterised by short-term contractual work and funding insecurity and how will these partnerships make allowances for these challenges? How do communities as diverse as they are find their way into universities? and who represents that community? Who determines who the stakeholders are? Who participates? Further questions include: How will partnerships manage the almost constant change in staff, interest, priorities, and their long-term sustainability? How does one assess and document benefits and measure success? How are these communities to be identified and engaged and on whose terms, does this engagement occur? And, importantly, how does one define 'best practices' appropriate for all stakeholders? (Seifer 2008).

There is support for community-campus initiatives to be fostered despite the above questions being, as yet, unanswered. It is possible that the more senior player with most of the power will undoubtedly be the universities as they have many more resources than most of the community-based organisations including valuable infrastructures such as well-resourced libraries, lecture halls, seminar rooms, computer and interactive laboratories and sporting facilities, permanent staff and guaranteed ongoing government funding. However, this should not be a stumbling block. Civil society wants and should have access to institutions of higher learning and access to the resources they have and the knowledge they produce from the scholarship and research conducted within the university sector (Onyx 2008). Indeed it is crucial for civil society to have an equal part in the development of knowledge in order to build strong communities and help mobilise community skills and networks, harness energy and resources and apply them in ways that achieve collaborative and positive change.

Further research

As the support for this practice is gaining momentum it seems the time is right to begin to address the challenging questions about how these partnerships are to be made, supported, evaluated and maintained. As funding diminishes universities are reaching out internationally (locally and regionally) and seeking to find new markets (courses and students) and funding partnerships and while such activity is already taking place with many initiatives under way, it makes sense now to begin to articulate research agendas in order to provide guidance from a research and scholarly base. Further research could explore such issues as:

- How do we fully realise authentic and equal partnerships between campus-community?
- How do we balance power and share resources among partners?
- How do we build campus-community capacity to engage (esp. if new area of engagement)
- How do we create healthier communities through partnerships?
- How do we translate 'principles' and 'best practices' into widespread, expected practice?
- How do we deal with Ethical issues? Barriers? Funding? Resources or even Success? (Seifer, 2008)

These answers could be important in helping develop a 'in principle' model of an engaged community on which to base future collaborations. The next step would then be followed by research in addressing the key questions listed above as part of a collaborative process, involving academics and community partners. Community-campus engagements depends on an informed scholarship being fostered with all stakeholders in order to assure its success.

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An example of University Community Engagement

Nepal School of Social Work and Nepal Police Partnership in Disaster Response, Nepal Earthquake 2015

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Abstract

Nepal experienced 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25th April 2015, leading to loss of thousands of lives and properties. Right after the earthquakes, Nepal Police, a primary rescue force, initiated rescue and relief operations in 13 affected districts. Many of the security personnel involved had incidences of losing their houses and affects on their families. However, many of them were engaged in rescue mission. Their involvement as first line helpers had a tremendous risk of experiencing emotional distress and developing secondary trauma and burnt out. Recognizing the threats of disaster induced vulnerability in the officers, Nepal Police, for the first time, developed an Integrated Self Care Program to its cadres and officers. The program was the outcome of a training workshop organized by Nepal School of Social Work (NSSW) to police officers in self care. The training in Self Care was a part of Psychological First Aid project of NSSW and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) conducted in response to Nepal earthquake. This partnership of academic institution and security Institution has been providential in highlighting the innovation, integration and impact of University and Community partnership in strengthening the resilience of front line rescue officers and cadres of Nepal Police during disaster responses.

Introduction

The geographical location of Nepal puts it in the center of two massive tectonic plates making it 11th country prone to earthquake. On 25th April, 2015, Nepal experienced a devastating movement of the plates, resulting earthquakes of 7.8 Richter scale followed by 6.8. This engrossed 13 districts into high devastation. The update states the death toll of 8,700 people with 22,200 injured. More than half a million homes destroyed with 279,000 partially damaged (Quick Facts, 2016).

The noon of 25th April brought different levels of off time exposures to different people's lives. Nepal police as a first respondent security force deployed 44,629 police personnel in rescue and relief operation including 8 trained groups of highly specialized Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue team. (Police Mirror, 2015).

NSSW team as victim survivor engaged in disaster response from 5th day of earthquake. After 8 day long relief project in a village, it again involved in Psychological First Aid with students of TISS, India. NSSW social work students and Indian students conducted the project in 6 villages for 22 days with a social work practice framework of "Look, Listen and Link". Kadambari Memorial College on behalf of NSSW, worked closely with Nepal Police for security of the student teams in those highly affected areas.

Self care Training to Nepal Police from NSSW

The contents in the news were appreciating the painstaking efforts of Nepal Police despite the challenging geographical terrain and limited resources. The response to the critical situation like this involves incidents that demand specialized skills and equipments beyond policing activities. The selection criteria and training of police officers in general make the personnel more resilient than average citizens. However, the association of the personnel to the first line rescue and relief response is always full of unpredictable which can affect wellness of the helpers. A prolonged hour of exposure can initiate the stress reactivity which overtime accumulates and affects the mental and physical health of the officers negatively (Anderson et al, 2015). Nepal Police has recovered 1507 dead bodies, rescued 2253 alive and the police unit received 75,000 calls in its hotline during the rescue mission (Police mirror, 2015). The data shows the intensity of involvement of Nepal Police to the situation which was urgent, uncertain and full of panics.

Such exposure is accompanied by multiple threats and endangered self integrity of the helpers. If the threats are not recognized on time and coping measures are not applied, this can lead to negative outcomes (Butterfill & Marianti, 2006). NSSW has recognized the importance of self care program in this context to enhance the resilience of police personnel toward disaster induced vulnerabilities.

The workshop was objectified to address the primary issues of emotional ambivalence and compounding stress on cadres and officers. The training was conducted by trainer from TISS and included theoretical and practical aspects of stress, self awareness, profession, commitments, physical, emotional, relational and spiritual health during the time of stressful environment. It also provided techniques of self care. Thirteen police officers from different divisions of Nepal police participated in the workshop.

Integrated Self Care Training/ Workshop of Nepal Police

After the training, the team of trainees, blended the Self Care Programs with the emergency care policy of Nepal Police and formulated an integrated self care program called "Self Care through Counseling". The program began from 1st week of June, after nearly a month later the mega earthquake. It also included emergency monitory support provisions of Nepal Police to its personnel who had lost lives, property and had injury due to earthquake. The 13 trained officers

Training Session

were dispersed in teams to reach police units of all 13 affected districts, reaching out to 30,000 police personnel. The program added musical therapy, medical aid along with the organizational emergency care plan. The presence of high rank police officers with the Self Care and Emergency Care Plan in their bases boosted the confidence and enhanced the morale of the police personnel.

"I had confusion about the program that our organization brought for the affected officers. Now, I am clear and assured. I feel supported by the presence of the higher ranked officers coming this far with such activities to make us aware about taking care of ourselves. I am motivated to carry out my duties as well as the relief work."

Participant 1

"The best thing of the training was how to balance myself physically, mentally, spiritually and socially and conduct my duty effectively as police officer."

Participant 2

"I like the way progressive relaxation worked to deescalate my stress. The background music was very soothing. I found this very useful to balance my emotion. I now feel I can carry out my duty better than before"

Participant 3

Impressions of the Program

The police response to disaster is aligned with the legal authority, geographic information and best immediate equipment to enter disaster sites (Bonkeiwicz &Ruback, 2012), enabling them to reach to the unreachable. This advantage of the profession for police is more like a way of life than just a job. Police personnel face multiple potentially traumatic incidents and extremely stressful situation as part of their work, (Neiderhoffer 1978: Alexander 1999). Disaster rescue and relief work adds unpredictable stressors apart from usual ones. Being compassionate and emphatic can instill residue of stress which if left unattained, may develop into a compounded distresses, unprocessed memories and traumatic sensation which require discharging (Violent &Paton, 1999). A work sensitive approach is required to ensure the physical, psychological and emotional integrity of police officers. The difficult geographical terrain, the inaccessible road access and the ever occurring tremors posed a tremendous threat and challenges to the trainers to reach to their fellow police personnel. The distribution of risk of disaster induced vulnerability was highly uneven to the self care team as well. However this attempt of Nepal Police is an example of how individuals can negotiate and challenge what they face and utilize the resources at their disposal to combat threats during crisis.

The self care program conducted in the midst of the disaster had been effective institutional measure of Nepal Police to provide assistance in four domains of personal wellbeing. They were physical health, psychological health, emotional strength and social support. From the feedbacks, the participants were found to enhance their strengths and endurance and also have felt readiness to duties. It helped them to be aware of personal health .The training helped them to think positively, regulate self effectively and restore emotional integrity. Likewise, the psychological domain of self has been strengthen with sustained focus, improved mental balance and increased motivation to professional duties with addition of high morale. Police work is a combination of self assimilation and social assimilation of the police philosophy and objectivity. The social domain hence is an important aspect of police social network. The program was found to increase support to fellow coworkers, increase empathy and prioritize vulnerable officers. The emergency care provisions of Nepal Police brought a meaningful support to their officers in the critical situation.

Conclusion

Disaster relief is a complicated task of emergency where human services have to address variety of needs emerging from complex situation whatever its causes and there has been a history of involvement of social workers as well (Becker, 1997; Macrae et al. 1997; Rogge, 1996 in Uri Yanay &Sharon Benjamin,2005). However such responses were targeted on victims and survivors than the helpers like police. Police has statutory duties to perform in disaster situation everywhere as front line helpers. Disaster affects equally to the helpers who are expected to provide immediate relief (Hodgkinson and Stewart, 1991 ;Yanav &Benjamin, 2005).

Social work always integrates the person and environment component in holistic human functioning. The same approach has been applied by NSSW. It has taken the healthy functioning of the police personnel at the focus and at the same time considered the adversities of the environment the officers are involved in. The resource dependency theory, emphasizes on the need of inter organizational coordination and support (Faupel and Kartez,1996) which has been applicable in the disaster response too. NSSW has tapped the resources available in the disaster situation, coordinated with the police agency, linked to the trainer and addressed the issues of self care of helpers which most of the time remained unattained.

The partnership of NSSW with Nepal Police has created a practice of caring of care givers in police institution. This has been instrumental to police officers in strengthening resilience and enhancing wellness in the extremities of the aftermath. In long term, the self regulation skills in extremities can serve as tools to regain psychological and physiological equilibrium in any police work. Nepal Police has also recognized the value of Institution and community engagement outside its boundary and innovated, integrated and brought positive impact to its officials in the extremities of disaster management. The outcome of this engagement was synergistic to both the partners in terms of relationship, knowledge and capacity building and was a successful example of university and community partnership.

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Iraqi Refugee Resettlement: Healing Through Religion and Community

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photo courtesy of DFID via Wikimedia Commons

Iraqi Yazidi refugees in Newroz camp

Introduction

Every year, the United States (U.S.), resettles anywhere between 70,000 and 90,000 refugees from around the world. In 2016, the U.S. resettled 85,000 refugees (Connor, 2016). Of the 85,00 refugees resettled, almost half were from Muslim countries including Syria, Somalia and Iraq (Connor, 2016). Less than 10,000 refugees came from Iraq in 2016 with a majority coming from Syria. However, over the past 15 years, Iraqis have been a significant part of the resettlement process in the U.S.

Iraqi refugees are often coming from war zones and high levels of exposure to the brutal realities of war. Many Iraqis have experienced the loss of loved ones, physical and mental injuries, and the loss of home and community that once provided stability, cohesion, and a sense of rootedness. Iraqis have endured a constant, unrelenting loss that a generation will now see and experience as "normal." For the fortunate few who have been granted access to the U.S. to start a new life, the experiences in their country of origin, their journey beyond the borders of Iraq, and life in a refugee camp all follow them to their new home. Although they have an opportunity to start life anew, they must also reconcile the past and the pains of the "new normal," and seek community in a land often foreign to them with different customs, languages, religions, and cultural and legal norms.

Within the international literature on refugee resettlement, the focus has primarily been on employment, access to healthcare, self-sufficiency, and integration into their new community. A key piece to integration are ties to community, religion, and spirituality, though this aspect can be overlooked in research and programs. This article is a piece of a larger research project considering the mental health needs of Iraqi refugees resettled in the U.S. While the focus of the research is on U.S. resettled refugees, literature and data is used from the international community. Studies on Iraqi refugees resettled in other countries, such as Australia and the Netherlands, are included. In addition, it is important to recognize that like most populations, Iraqis have diverse religious affiliations including Muslim and Christian as well as other religions (CIA, n.d., Index Mundi, 2014; Pew, 2013). The Pew Research Center (2016) states, "Overall, a far larger total number of Christian refugees than Muslim refugees have entered the U.S. since fiscal 2002. During the past 15 years, the U.S. has admitted 399,677 Christian refugees and 279,339 Muslim refugees, meaning that 46% of all refugees who have entered the U.S. during this time have been Christian while 32% have been Muslim" (Connor, 2016). This study does not consider the different religions, but rather the idea that religious affiliation and connection to community can serve as catalysts for healing from complex trauma (Bragin, 2010).

The authors will briefly discuss mental health needs and how community, religious affiliation, and spirituality can aid in the healing and integration process.

Mental Health Concerns Among Iraqi Refugees

High or extreme exposure to traumatic events, especially multiple events over prolonged periods of time, are correlated with high rates of mental illness or other manifestations of impaired emotional wellbeing of the Iraqi-American refugee population (Nickerson et al., 2010) There are many conflicting reports as to the precise prevalence of mental illnesses, but the overwhelming majority of research indicates that there are higher rates of pathological symptoms related to anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, somatization of symptoms, and other mood disorders within the population studied in Dearborn, Michigan (Jamil, Nassar-McMillian, & Lambert, 2007). It should be noted that many recent studies have been completed through the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services. In a study by Taylor et al. (2014), approximately 31% of participants, who were Iraqi refugees, were identified as being at risk for PTSD.

Another growing concern among Iraqi-American refugees is increase substance use and abuse. Jamil et al. (2005) conducted a study that looked at the mental health needs of Iraqi American clients in comparison to the mental health needs of Arab (non-Iraqi) American clients and saw the rate of substance abuse of Iraqi refugees was significantly higher (Jamil et al., 2007). Iraqi-Americans reported usage of smoking at 28%, alcohol at 2.3%, and drug use at 5.1%. Non-Iraqi Arab American's rates were lower with smoking rates between 15 and 20% and drug use rates at less than 1% (Jamil et al., 2005). When comparing PTSD symptoms of American veterans compared to Iraqi Americans, sleep disturbance is significantly higher in Iraqis (86.2% versus 5.9%), as are headache (61.2% versus 18.0%) and shortness of breath (37.1% versus 7.9%). These somatic symptoms may provide greater insight into the experience of trauma than purely psychological symptoms.

While there is not a large body of research that looks at mental health issues and illness rates among Iraqi refugees, there are some disheartening statistics. A study by Jamil, Ventimiglia, Makki, and Arnetz (2010) compared Iraqi refugees seeking service for mental health to Iraqi nonrefugees in the Detroit area, with neither group reporting high rates of recovery from negative mental health symptoms, though it should be noted that these are not truly comparable groups. The refugee sample did was not significantly different from the nonrefugees in proportion meeting criteria for depression (Iraqi 73% compared to nonrefugee 68%) or anxiety disorders (Iraqi 11% compared to nonrefugee 15%). However, among those who were considered "high treatment-utilizers" (those who attended the psychiatric clinic seven or more times), nonrefugees exhibited significantly higher response rates to the treatment than Iraqi refugees, with just 14.6% of refugees experiencing full remission of symptoms compared to nearly 45% of nonrefugees.

Community and Religious Life in Healing

Generally, core refugee resettlement services do not formally include religious, spiritual and community life. Core refugee services in the U.S., focus primarily on basic housing, employment, health access and "integration" into the broader community (Mincin, 2012; ORR, n.d.). Yet, some studies have shown that community and religious ties are an important aspect of healing and creating a strong sense of belonging (Mincin, 2012; Bragin, 2010). In addition, there has been significant research looking at the links between community connection, religion and spirituality and the healing process writ large (Phiri & Nadar, 2012).

The Iraqi-American refugee population is not a homogenous, cohesive unit nor is it a well-studied and defined population. In addition to the difficulty in examining the population holistically due to

stratification arising from class, education, economic status, political views, ethnicity, and ideology, Iraqis are often marginalized from the general populations of the resettlement communities from both discrimination and the desire to maintain native culture in the wake of displacement. Currently, services are deficit-based and not based on resiliency models. However, religious faith, a sense of community, and integrated services appear to provide some protection against adverse psychological consequences and aid in a successful new life in the U.S.

One way to ensure religious and spiritual life are incorporated into the healing and service delivery process is to ask Iraqi refugees how to integrate their beliefs into their new lives. Following the strengths-base model (Hodge, 2005) it is critical to actively engage clients in the healing and case management planning process. Asking Iraqi refugees to define community and how they see themselves engaging in their new community is key. What is also critical is discussing religious and spiritual beliefs, even if they are not a part of organized religion such as Islam or Christianity. Often, people who are religious or spiritual will call upon their faith or beliefs as sources of strength, hope, and feeling connected to community. Probing the client's beliefs and asking how they envision incorporating that into the healing process gives the power to the client and may very well aid in the healing process, if not play a central role in it.

Conclusion

Even though a sense of faith aids many refugees in their process of forced migration and resettlement into the host country, spirituality is conspicuously absent in psychological questionnaires and from relief work. Religion as a means of coping was a recurring theme in the research on mental health; what the trauma means to the individual can depend on her understanding of religion or culture as a context for human experience and a source of collectivity and emotional support. Rather than using paradigms of knowledge and pathology that may not be relevant when addressing mental health needs of refugees, the focus should be based on the perspective of what the refugees have experienced and their needs, with flexibility and malleability in services and diagnoses rather than a single, generalizable solution. Community engagement should be a goal as defined by the individual as well as acknowledgement of the power that religion, faith and spirituality hold in the healing process.

Social workers are in a unique position to assist Iraqis in their healing and integration process as well as advocate for community cohesion and spiritual grounding to be integrated into a holistic service paradigm. As a part of the global social work profession, we understand that religious and spiritual community can often provide a safe place for healing, community, and an opportunity to thrive in a new, complex environment for resettled Iraqi refugees.

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FEATURE

Objects and Nurturing Young People's Storytelling

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Abstract

It can be difficult for researchers to engage young people to tell stories about their lives. This paper considers how former service users of a youth work project in North-West Ireland unexpectedly employed objects on display in an agency meeting room to tell stories of transformative youth work encounters. The practical and symbolic functions of these objects in the lives of young people are outlined. The implications for social professional practice are highlighted.

Introduction

Drawing on research conducted in North-West Ireland, this article reflects on how two young people utilised objects on display in a youth work agency building, in unforeseen and illuminating ways, to tell stories of transformative encounters with social professionals. Young people take an active role in creating their histories, so we have to be vigilant to not only what they tell us, but also to how they tell their stories. Arguably researchers are likely to engage more effectively with communities if they are mindful of the ways in which people from the communities tell their stories.

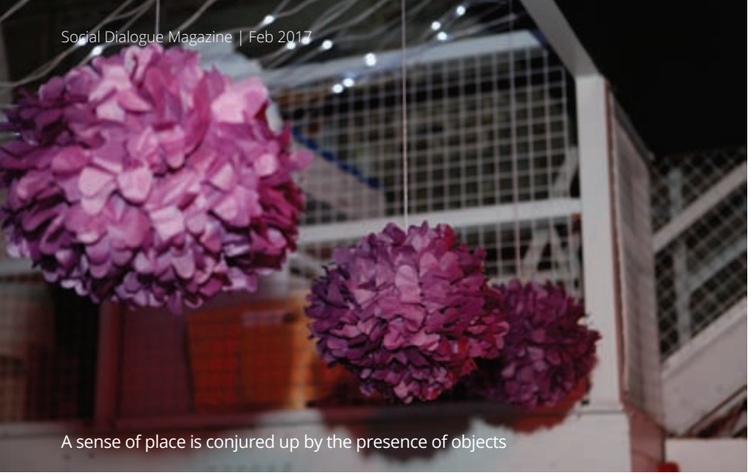
Objects and Place

Walls and doors physically frame the physical space in which youth work occurs indoors, but a sense of place is conjured up by the presence of objects in this space. O'Toole and Were (2008, p.618) note that a 'place is the nexus of things and spaces within a given boundary, and has imputed values and interpretations'. While a youth work space possesses an instrumental function, the presence of objects, co-created between young people and social professionals, may evoke the emergence of particular memories. Certain objects therefore generate a subjective understanding of space or lead to the construction of a unique sense of place. If the qualitative researcher conducts interviews in the same physical space, she needs to be open to the possibility that this space already holds certain associations for her respondents. Gagnon et al. (2015, p.204) suggest that researcher-respondent interactions are located, negotiated and experienced in particular spaces: 'place becomes an active element in its own right in the interview process'. Yet how respondents interact with objects in an interview space may already be influenced by previous meanings invested by them in these objects and spaces.

Objects and Stories of Transformation in Young People's Lives

As part of the research project to understand positive youth work experiences I interviewed Mary and Gemina, former service users of a youth project, in a windowless meeting room on the premises of a youth work agency in North-West Ireland. Mary and Gemina, best friends since primary school, now in their early-20s, came to the attention of the Irish Police Service in 2012 for shoplifting, which in turn led to a referral to a police diversion youth project. Mary and Gemina told me a story about how, after a period of involvement with the youth service, they had received a community award from the police service for making candles to give to older people at Christmas. In telling this story Mary and Gemina highlighted a picture of the awards ceremony on the wall and to a candle sitting on a shelf. By referring to these objects, the interview space transformed its meaning, distilling a distinctive sense of place for Mary and Gemina.

The presence of these objects enabled Mary and Gemina to construct their stories of youth work experiences and to communicate how these experiences affected them. The presence of an object can symbolise 'something much greater than itself, and which calls for the association of certain conscious or unconscious ideas in order for it to be endowed with its full meaning and significance' (Morgan et al., 1983, p.5). Candles, for example, served a number of functions in their stories. Candles represent the material outcome of a series of choices and actions by young people. Candles also signify a collaborative function; they embody the fruits of joint practices between young people and social professionals. What Mary and Gemina did with these candles allowed them to tell stories to present themselves as maturing human beings.



A sense of place is conjured up by the presence of objects

Pointing to a photograph of an awards ceremony, Mary proudly highlighted an occasion when she and Gemina were photographed receiving a community award to acknowledge their kindness towards older people. The photograph showed Mary and Gemina standing alongside police officers and youth workers at a community event. Rites and rituals are important dimensions of the symbolic life of organisations (Drummond, 2000, p.264), and both Mary and Gemina welcome the ritual of receiving an award. Pettigrew (1979) suggests that rituals represent the dramatization of a myth and can be used to reinforce values and goals. The ritual of a prize-giving ceremony was a public event. It enabled Mary and Gemina to see that society appreciated their efforts to contribute to the community. By attending the awards ceremony and referring positively to it afterwards, two forms of rites can also be surmised. First, the prize-giving ceremony signals a rites of passage being successfully navigated. It acknowledges Mary and Gemina's journey from one existence to another. The journey involves Mary and Gemina choosing new types of behaviours that the community respects. Second, there is a rites of enhancement which aims to augment the status and social identities of individuals. The awards ceremony both validated and contributed to the emerging social status of Mary and Gemina, in that it celebrated the reconstituted form of the social responsibilities Mary and Gemina decided to embrace.

Discussion

Social professionals can play an important role in shaping the meanings associated with a physical space to emerge. By permitting a candle to remain placed on a bookshelf and by allowing a historic picture of an awards ceremony to stay pinned to a wall, youth workers organised a meeting space in such a way as to invite the visitor to revisit the meaning which the physical space conveyed. The visitor is invited to bear witness to, remember or construct an affective and moral sense of a place, constructions partly informed by previous social practices. If a youth organisation fulfils the symbolic role of a nurturing parent, the place where the objects are displayed represents a site of 'enduring value, of nurture and support' (Tuan, 1977, p.29). By choosing to display objects, social professionals signal the continuing presence of young people and former service users such as Mary and Gemina in the life of the organisation. The organisation is building a sense of duration for young people. They are not forgotten; the organisation remains engaged to them. This brings to mind parents who leave their children's bedrooms untouched when their offspring have left the family home. The anthropologist Marc Augé (1995, p. 96), cited in Hubbard and Kitchen (2011, p.9-10), discusses how familiar spaces such as supermarkets, shopping malls and airport lounges act as 'non-spaces'. Hubbard and Kitchen (2011, p.10) interpret this to mean that non-places 'do not act as localised sites for the celebration of real culture'. On first imaginings one could possibly think that there could not be a more 'non-space' than a windowless meeting room in which the research interviews were conducted. In contrast, we have witnessed youth workers recreating such a space into a place infused with possibilities. By displaying co-created objects and pictures of awards ceremonies, the room acknowledges and celebrates not only the development of young people but also their reconstituted community networks.

Conclusion

In qualitative research we are accustomed to responding sensitively to the person we interview. This paper suggests that we also need to be sensitive to the environment in which interviews are conducted. Respondents can employ objects from an interview space in unexpected ways to tell interviewers stories of personal transformation. These objects can be represented in terms of their functional and symbolic qualities. Social professionals can mould physical space to invite visitors to generate reflections and associations. Being mindful of the significance of a particular place in people's lives is an asset to support their nurturing.

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Social Work Education: Model for University-Community Engagement

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(Excerpted from Keynote Address presented at the International Conference on Nurturing University Community Engagement: Integration, Innovation and Impact organized by Nepal School of Social Work (NSSW) (Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management & Nepal College of Development Studies) Co-hosted by Asia-Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN)

Abstract

Social work education provides the model for universities to engage with their communities to enable social change, a relationship that is gaining primacy globally. Universities have the resources, human and material, to address the aspirations of youth within and outside their communities and work towards social transformation. Social work education can facilitate and strengthen university-community collaborations.

Introduction

With privatisation of education in some of our countries and the move towards "internationalising school education", a different breed of young people are emerging from these institutions with highly elitist attitudes. In this scenario, there is tremendous need for HEIs to work with communities of the poor and disadvantaged so that these students become more sensitive to the social realities of their neighbourhood and are inspired to become productive citizens with high level of social responsibility. The second UNESCO conference on higher education held in Paris in July 2009 recognised the significance of social responsibility and community engagement for institutions of higher education.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can no longer stand aloof and disconnected but, rather, must create opportunities and become spaces of encounter where students and communities of the 21st century can learn together to become more active, engaged citizens in the creation of knowledge for a more just and sustainable world (PRIA, 2014).

Current Scenario of University-Community Engagement

Governments all over the world are working towards strengthening University-Community engagement and partnerships to address the needs of youth in the 21st century. Half the countries of the world, and all G20 countries, have formal policies that support and finance Community-University research and engagement.

Universities can contribute to social transformation by activating their students, faculty and staff. This is not a

new concept as we will see that while education is aimed at imparting knowledge and skills and appropriate attitudes to students, the educational institution also has the social responsibility to contribute to national development and build new knowledge. That is what the institutions are doing in their laboratories through research and through work on social issues. Social Work provides best practices for U-C engagement

Social work a helping profession is, as defined, a people centred profession that works towards social change, social cohesion, social transformation and collective responsibility. An integral component of social work education is field work, the practice component whereby students and faculty work on different social problems and development issues directly in the community or through various organisations and institutions. In this process they contribute to peoples development. Field action projects are also intitiated by social work colleges to demonstrate innovations in community interventions at various levels.

Social work education provides a direct model for departments to get involved with their neighbourhoods. Social work departments and colleges can provide leadership in the process of building and strengthening university-community engagement.

Field work in social work is the major tool for acquiring social work skills through experiential learning. “Learning by doing” is the way forward. This entails working with clients at an individual, group or community level on social and development problems and issues that affect their lives. It is through the social work relationship or partnership with the service user or client that change is initiated. This student based platform of learning provides scope for the department of social work and university system to expand its engagement with the community at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Students are placed with different organisations both governmental and non-governmental to work in communities. In social work we are concerned about development with communities using a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach.

The steps in community engagement (ASHE, 2014) are very similar to community work involving social work students. However, the difference is that the university takes responsibility for creating a long lasting partnership with the community through existing organisations and local groups as well as the local municipality. Thus it is not just a relationship between one or two social work student/s or group of students with his/her placement agency and the community where the student initiates the intervention. It is an entire systems change process where it is possible to adopt an ecological or systems framework for change. This process is sytematically documented and the community becomes a partner with the university system. In reality the community people should be able to access the resources available in the university as the students work with the community on social issues and social deveopment. The boundaries for sharing have to be determined in the partnership agreement. Through the field work process in social work and field action projects, universities can gain access to the community.

To achieve this, the university should review its own vision and mission to reflect how it envisions its responsibility towards the community at large at various levels.

CO brings people together to collectively address problems, concerns or issues with the goal of enhancing self-determination, achieving greater equality, and affecting a shift in power relationships to benefit members of oppressed communities. At a micro level, a social work course which teaches about child protection and child rights will have students placed with communities of the poor and marginalized where children are deprived of education, health, recreation etc. This may seem to be the most acceptable form of engagement through fieldwork placements which benefit both the learner and community people.

Field Action as Best Practice for Community-University engagement

The Field Action Project (FAP) is a key strategy to enable social work institutions to fulfill their social responsibility and address social realities through social interventions. These projects serve several objectives: demonstrating new interventions; provide field experience and training to social work students and faculty; and develop indigenous knowledge base and literature for teaching and practice (Dave, Raghavan and Solanki, 2012). These projects are also symbolic of the CU engagement as they are anchored through departments of social work.

Other disciplines can also learn from these experiences and help the university to expand community activities and also develop a more sustainable relationship with communities.

FAPs have also been experiments which are recognised by the government and integrated into their national programme.

Several FAPs developed by the schools of social work have influenced national programmes and policy. There have been several initiatives from schools of social work in India that have made a mark nationally and internationally. Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) (http://www.yuvaindia.org) introduced a people’s planning model in creating a city based movement against oppression of the poor. Childline Foundation (http://www.childlineindia.org.in/1098/ accessed on 30-06-2015), for the first time brought in a citizen driven and rights based perspective in the practice of social work with children. The Resource Centre for Violence against Women (RCI-RAW) (http://www.tiss.edu/TopMenuBar/field-action/projects/rci-vaw-the-resource-centre-for-interventions-on-violence-against-women accessed on 30-06-2015) nurtures effective interventions with different stakeholders through training and research to enable deeper understanding of the issue and interventions to stop violence against women. Thus the field action projects have firmly established the social development model over the remedial approach.

Here again without University support, these projects are unsustainable.

After Hurricane Katrina, students in the Asian American Studies program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston traveled to New Orleans to volunteer in the relief effort specifically targeting New Orleans’ Asian American community. The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 affected 14 countries and 230,000 people. Several universities in India and abroad as well as international and local social work associations responded through their social work faculty and students to work with the affected people.

How does this engagement become a true partnership is when the process involves capacity building of the community people in research and evidence building; that is in participatory research whereby the people become the decision makers and facilitate their own transformation. It is how the community is viewed- whether as partners in development; whether as recipients of the university knowledge and expertise or place for student learning and research.

Embedding community engagement in the foundation of social work principles and values is critical. For instance, believing in the inherent dignity and worth of human beings, in equality and social justice, in protection of human rights, in collective responsibility and belief in people’s capacity to change and initiate change are very important for the practice of social work. And these principles and values also need to provide the base for UC.

Conclusion

Social workers, educators, researchers can lead the community processes for social change and for developing sustainable university-community engagement. Social work education provides faculty and students the opportunity for self development through work with people. As Rhoads writes in the conclusion of his study:

“Fostering a sense of self grounded in an ethic of care is one of the central challenges of education and becomes increasingly important as our society grows more diverse. By fostering an ethic of care, higher education encourages the sense of otherness needed for democracy to survive and, indeed, thrive in a complex and fragmented social world.” (Rhoads, 1998: 294).

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Photos: Left to right

Resource centre for interventions on violence against women (http://www.yuvaindia.org)

Programs photo gallery (http://www.yuvaindia.org)

Childline India (http://www.childlineindia.org.in/1098/history-birth.htm)

‘Working From the Ground Up’: Partnerships with Local People Working for Change

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Abstract

This article overviews an action research project, Working From The Ground Up, which was undertaken in two social housing areas in Sydney, on the east coast of Australia. The purpose of the research was to tackle the entrenched social exclusion and disadvantage in these two neighbourhoods by working with the local people, from the ground up, to identify issues they considered needed to change, and with them, develop and trial initiatives (small projects) that would contribute to positive changes in their lives.

Introduction

Working From the Ground Up (WFGU), an action research project, was undertaken in Sydney, the largest and most heavily populated, and most unaffordable, city in Australia. It was carried out between 2008-2015, by a team of researchers at the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales, in partnership with organisations from three state government sectors, which provided housing, health services and education services. The project was funded through an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant, with financial and in-kind contributions from the partners. The aims of the research were to work in partnership with local people to tackle the entrenched social exclusion and disadvantage in two adjacent social housing neighbourhoods in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

Research Approach

As the focus of the project was to work with local residents and to contribute to positive change in their lives and neighbourhoods, an action research approach, complemented by a community development approach, was chosen. Action research was selected because it can enhance social justice by maximising the participation of stakeholders and those who are affected by the research and can be used to bring about changes in specific contexts, especially when the change is practical and can be implemented in real situations (Weis and Fine 2004). Action research is not a methodology, but is an orientation to inquiry with an obligation to action (Groundwater-Smith and Irwin, 2011, p. 59). For this reason, action research can, and does, admit a variety of ‘methods’, both qualitative and quantitative, using a variety of tools most appropriate for unique situations or ‘the local’. In this project, numerous methods were used to collect data including: surveys, individual and focus group interviews, project evaluations, analysis of policy documents, census and other data, minutes, researcher’s reflective notes and notes of meetings.

Drawing on community development ideas and practice was central to the research as it involved encouraging participation and fostering community partnerships between residents and residents, researchers and residents, residents and service providers, and residents, researchers, service providers and policy makers (Goodwin et al 2010). Community development can be seen from a variety of theoretical perspectives, but central to most approaches is the principle of creating opportunities for community members to set and achieve their own goals (Brennan and Barnett, 2009). Often this is about ‘change from below’ (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006, p. 121) and enabling communities ‘to have effective control of their own destinies’ through collective responsibility. The WFGU research was premised on starting with participant understandings of their own communities and priorities for change. The emphasis was on ‘bottom up’ rather than ‘top down’ and the knowledge that social change is most likely to be appropriate and sustainable when residents are involved. By focusing on working with residents to both determine and achieve their goals, top-down or uninformed ‘solutions’ to community issues were resisted. Residents were involved in formulating and implementing ideas for change, assisting with evaluations.

The WFGU Project was based in a particular location so taking a place based approach was also important. Randolph (2004) refers to ‘the geography of disadvantage’ and explores the idea that not only can disadvantage be concentrated in particular places, but also that disadvantage might have a compounding effect on neighbourhoods. Current community development work in neighbourhoods indicates that engaging at the level of place or locality is central to tackling social disadvantage and has positive outcomes for residents who can find local solutions to local problems (Judd and Randolph, 2006; Randolph, 2004; Vinson, 2007).

The WFGU research project focussed on the strengths and assets within communities to counterbalance the deficit lens through which many disadvantaged communities are viewed. The aim was to shift power back to the local communities by building community ‘inside out’ (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993) and encouraging local resident participation in the projects. Members of the team (Irwin, Baldry and Goodwin) had previous long term community development partnerships with local social housing communities (Judd et al 2007) and the WFGU project was built on learnings and experiences in these projects.

Overview of the research

The project was conducted in three phases: Phase One: Engaging the Community; Phase Two: Developing and Trialling Initiatives; and, Phase Three: Consolidation and Sustainability (for more detail see WFGU, 2010; WFGU, 2012, WFGU 2015).

Phase One: Engaging the Community, began with the research team ‘reaching out’ to local residents and searching for appropriate premises. A cottage was located and the team began to engage with residents, inviting them to share their experiences of living in the area and their ideas and priorities for change. This was done through a series of social activities and by undertaking a household survey. Surveys were completed with 230 residents. These were complemented by interviews with residents who wanted to contribute more to the initial stages of the project. The findings of the survey and interviews were disseminated to all residents in the neighbourhood and a series of consultations were set up with as many community members as possible. An initial set of priorities for action in the neighbourhoods was established. The priorities identified from this process were: older residents (isolation, health and general wellbeing); mental health (increasing numbers of people with mental health issues in the neighbourhoods); Aboriginal participation; families, children and young people.

Phase Two: Developing and Trialling Initiatives was focussed on tackling the issues identified by local residents of the social housing neighbourhoods. The researchers worked with local residents, service providers and stakeholders to develop initiatives to address the priorities residents had identified. Engagement with local residents was key to the success of the research and to secure resident’s trust, interest and encourage their participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of community development initiatives. Residents were involved in both the creation and sustaining of the community development initiatives by designing, planning, evaluating and implementing changes to achieve the desired outcomes. Throughout this phase data was collected and analysed in relation to each project. A second household survey was also undertaken and provided information on residents’ perceptions of key aspects of community and perceptions of change around identified areas of need over the period covered in Phase Two of the project. WFGU being located in the Cottage was crucial as the project developed, as it was both a place the research and researchers were located and where a number of activities were held. Local residents came to see it as their space, highlighting the importance of the researchers being physically located in the social housing areas.

Overall numerous small projects were initiated in the four areas originally identified by residents A summary of the projects is presented below (for more detail see Wannan 2016).

1. Our Mob Yarning Up: Aboriginal Tenant Participation

Our Mob Yarning Up: Aboriginal Tenant Participation Project aimed to develop ways to engage with local Aboriginal people; develop a better understanding about successful Aboriginal tenant participation; create ideas about how Aboriginal participation can continue longer term; and improve communication and relationships between the housing providers at the local level and Aboriginal people. The project achieved this through a) developing trust and connections, and b) exploring and developing new models of participation. The projects created focussed on two main issues: building connections and new approaches to tenant participation. The projects included: Aboriginal centre based activities, celebration of Aboriginal events such as NAIDOC Day and Sorry Day, BBQs for Aboriginal families, outreach morning teas in people's homes, community art projects, Aboriginal stalls staffed by local women at local events, working with Aboriginal workers in health and schools to connect with Aboriginal families, development of a bush tucker section in the community garden, yarning sessions with children about Dreaming stories and living in the area, engagement with the state government housing provider; working on Namatijira Aboriginal Community Action Plan (CAP), information sharing between residents and the housing provider and messages on boomerangs and hands.

2. Get Connected: Mental Health

The overall aims of this project were to promote greater social inclusion and increased opportunities for people living with mental health issues in the two neighbourhoods. A number of innovative strategies were used, including the employment of consumer advocates to work with mental health consumers living in the two neighbourhoods about their priorities and to convey this to the wider community and service providers. Participants in this project expressed an interest in improving their access to learning through community based computer courses which were run at the cottage. They also wanted to increase opportunities to influence decisions through the telling of stories about their lived experience and decided to create a DVD about their experiences of living in social housing. The DVD, Get Connected Voices Speak, Lives Change, included the stories of 34 local residents living with mental health issues. It was shown at a special screening with over 150 people in attendance.

3. Our Place Projects

The focus of the Our Place Projects was residents aged over 55 living in the neighbourhoods. Initially social events such as BBQs were held at the cottage. As trust grew between the residents and researchers the residents came up with numerous ideas for specific projects that they considered would improve their lives. One of the first initiatives was computer classes at the cottage. Many of the older residents come from other countries in Asia, Europe and South America and being able to use the internet enabled them to have ongoing contact with their families in other countries or in other parts of Australia and reduced their isolation. Health and wellbeing was an issue that concerned many of the older residents. Partnerships were developed with local agencies who responded with information sessions and gentle exercise classes at the Cottage. This developed into coffee and discussion mornings which the older people organised. From this, an age appropriate community garden project developed; work on the beautification of the over 55s complex and the running of a vegetable co-op.

Involvement in these activities propelled the formation of the Over 55s Research Group, the main aim of which was to participate in policy processes for service improvement. This group undertook their own analysis of the findings of the second household survey and ran a forum to provide feedback to a broader group of older residents. Priorities for action were identified at the forum including improving the information exchange between government agencies and social housing residents especially to discuss safer housing design; better transport services and changes to bus routes. In this example, the older residents sought to refashion the research-policy nexus, and to position themselves as both researchers and as policy participants.

4. Connecting with Each Other: Families, Children and Young People

The focus of this group of projects was parents, children and young people, who suggested planned and guided projects to address some of the disadvantages and exclusion they experienced on a regular basis. To incorporate children and young people as participants in the research project, different research approaches were employed and data collected that led to particular projects. These included: a discrete participatory action research project with 'hard to reach' young people; a youth roundtable and a yearly careers event for high school students. Other projects included the establishment of a homework club in the local primary school; an annual Family Fun Day with a focus on activities for children and young people, a parents group, healthy eating and cooking classes and a series of family outings.

In Phase Three, Sustainability and consolidation, the focus was on the consolidation of activities, investments and resources needed to sustain the community development initiatives. Participation of residents, service providers and businesses was key to the success of the WFGU research. As Phase Three progressed it became clear that for the project to continue funding to facilitate some of the community activities would be important to ensure sustainability and funding agreements with local organisations and larger NGOs has meant that some of the projects remain ongoing.

Conclusion

Evaluations from the residents and other stakeholders show that the WFGU project has promoted social inclusion which has contributed in different ways to the life of the local community, creating opportunities for participating in a range of activities and events, and has contributed to new knowledge and understandings about communities and the people who live in them. Participating in community initiatives has enabled residents to feel more connected and supportive of each other through informal networks, which have been established around activities at the Cottage, and through natural day-to-day interchange. Many have gained knowledge, skills, and confidence in different areas of their lives. Several of the projects that were part of WFGU are now managed by local residents (eg community garden) or by services who work with local residents (eg family fun days, careers expos).

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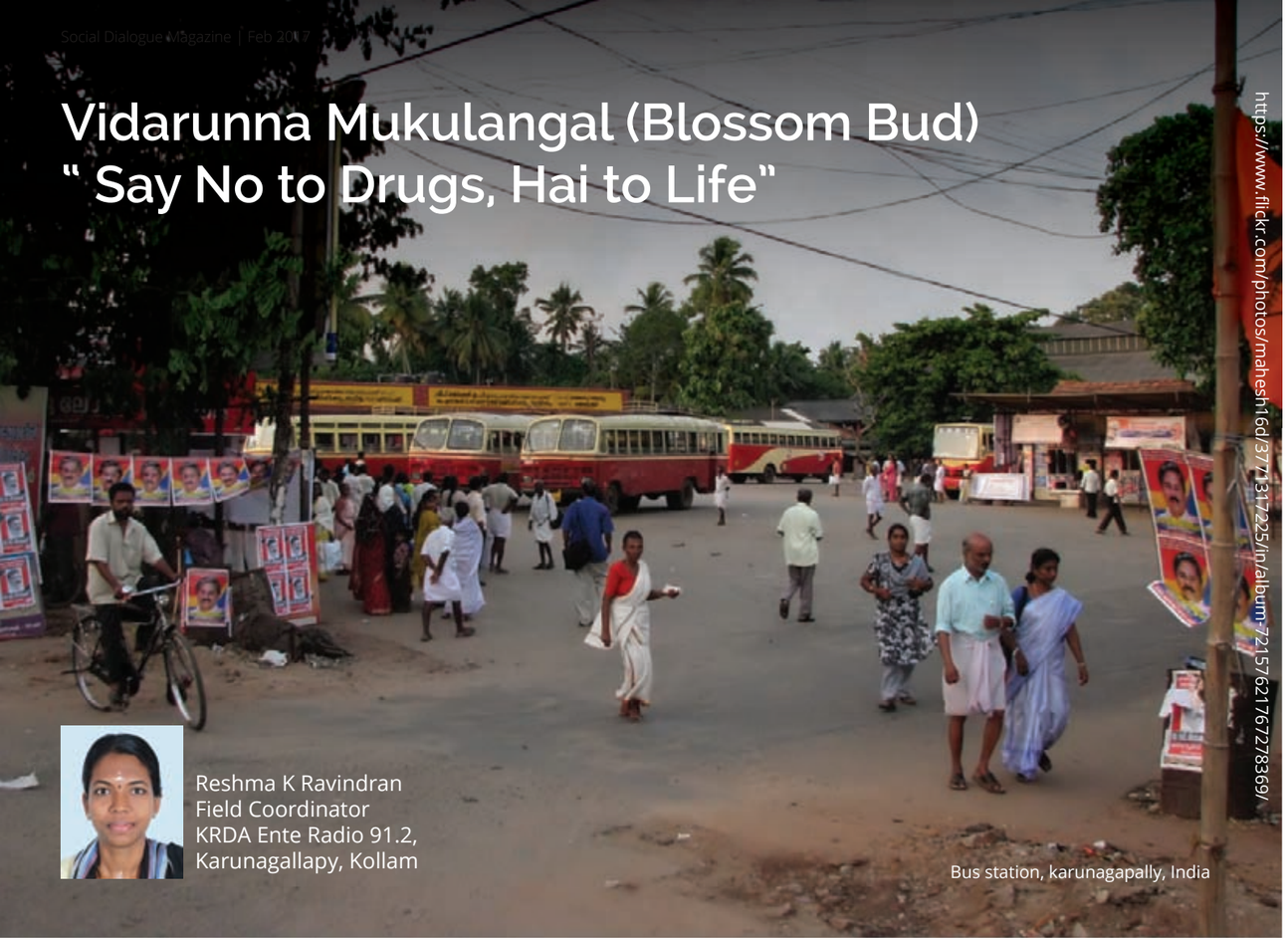
Vidarunna Mukulangal (Blossom Bud) " Say No to Drugs, Hai to Life"



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Abstract

"Say No to Drugs, Hai to Life", with this motto KRDA Community Ente Radio 91.2 onset a Six Month Anti- Drug Awareness campaign "Vidarunna Mukulangal" ('blossom' for 'vidarunna' and 'bud' for 'mukulangal') on October 6th 2016 at Karunagapally Taluk and nearby areas respectively of Kollam District in Kerala "The God's own Country" in Nation India. The significant focus of "Vidarunna Mukulangal" is on the community especially students and youth who were addicted in Drugs and other substances. In Kerala "Karunagapally" and "v" are the two major places having strong competition on buying liquor. This article discusses the six months findings.

Introduction

Karunagapalli is a municipality in Kollam district of Kerala, India, situated 27 km north of Kollam and 60 km south of Alappuzha. Karunagappalli taluk consist of Alappad, Ochira, Adinad, Karunagappally, Thazhava, Pavumba, Thodiyoor, Kallalibhagom, Thevalakkara, Chavara, Neendakara, Clappana, Kulasekharapuram, Thekkumbhagam, Ayanivelikulangara, Panmana and Vadakumthala. The Municipality is bound on the north by Kayamkulam, east by Kunnathur taluk, south by Kollam and on the west by the Arabian Sea. It is the major town other than Kollam and most developing place in the district. Both Road and Rail facilities to several significant spots of Kerala and other states of India are available here. Karunagapalli bus station is on National Highway 47. Karunagapalli is blessed with major tourist attractive spots including House boat facility in Alumkadavu, Azheekal Beach, Oachira temple, Pandarathuruth Church, Sheik Masjid Mosque, Padanayarkulangara Mahadeva Temple, Thazhava, Sasthamkotta Lake etc. Sree Narayana Trophy boat race, an annual boat race is organised in the Kannety (Pallickal) River, Karunagappally, during the season of Onam Festival. The famous Chinese fishing nets can be found on the banks of the lagoon. The Amritapuri ashram is also situated in vallikavu,which is 8 km from karunagappally.

Karunagapalli

Karunagapalli is covered with urban, rural and coastal area. Karungappalli used to be an agrarian economy until the late 19th century with coconut, banana, tapioca and paddy as the main crops grown. With rapid urbanization and the consequent pressure on land the reliance on agriculture has dwindled. Several cottage and small industries have now come up in the area in brick making, engineering and electronics. Proximity to Kollam (27 km) and the excellent road and rail infrastructure have helped in this transition. The area also receives substantial foreign remittances from the large number of people from here working in the Gulf countries. Fishing forms the major source of livelihood for the coast dwellers. The major employers in the public sector are Indian Rare Earths Limited (IRE) & Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited (KMML) in Shankaramangalam, KERAFED in Puthiyakavu, House Boat Manufacturing in Alumkadavu, the state owned Kerala Feeds Ltd in Kallelibhagom are also major industries.The KMML is the first of its kind. Cashew nut industry plays a vital role. Western India cashews in Puthiyakavu and Latha cashews in Charamurimuk are the major cashew processing units in town limits. Coconut, Paddy, Tapioca, Banana etc are the other main agricultural crops. Prominent small scale and cottage industries are based on bricks, well rings making, engineering and electronics items handicrafts etc.

Karunagapalli is a big town access with many resources and commodities. But the status of 'Karunagapalli' in the usage of Alcohol and other substances are very much higher and the most of the people are highly addicted and especially the students are the main targets of Drug abusers. Many cases related to this topic are reporting each and every day in the Excise office. People directly and indirectly becoming victims and in many family facing critical problems.

KRDA Community Ente Radio 91.2

KRDA Community Ente Radio 91.2 started Vidarunna Mukulangal with a case study in various schools at different areas includes Rural, Urban and Coastal areas. Reports and responses were very shocking. A large number of students are addicted and most of them uses a drug named 'cool', they have different ways to access this. The students are punished for these malpractices like dismissal or suspension. No one is provided de-addiction and other follow up's. One of the significant shocking responses was from teachers and other school authority. For safety of the reputation of the school, majority did not cooperated with the team. They were not ready to share the information and were completely regretting the reality. In small shops drug products are providing. In some toffees drug content is adding and some children were hospitalised due to stomach pain. Some highlighted reports based on this study:

- In Rural, Urban and Coastal areas there are students studying who were economically forward and backward also.
- Students are founded in weak health in the class.
- Small covers with the drug content were founded from under desk and benches.
- The drugs are spreading to rural and coastal areas from urban area through various methods.
- Girls are also becoming a part of 'drug mafiya'.
- The students and other youth are finding the money for buying drugs through small free time jobs including Nazik dol, Catering Service etc.

Six month "vidarunna mukulangal" anti-drug awareness campaign

October

- An awareness road show was conducted. At each main stops the field reporters took the response of community and broadcasted in radio live programmes.
- The official Inauguration was done by His Honourable Satheesh Bino IPS (Kollam Dist Commissioner) at Govt. Boys HSS, Karunagapally on 2016th October 6th.

November and December

- Anti Drug Awareness Classes and Radio Club Inauguration at various schools- In each week anti drug awareness classes were conducted at two schools each with the help of Excise Department and radio club was inaugurated. After that survey team provided live activities to the students including slogan making, group discussion etc. And all awareness classes were broadcasted through radio.

January and February

- The various programmes of Excise& Police officers, Doctors, teachers, politicians, activists, students, organisations, direct and indirect victims etc were broadcasted through radio including group discussion, talking's, interviews, skits, songs, sharing experience etc

March

- An anti drug cell squad is going proceed in different areas of Karunagapally. The effective operations against Drug abuse is going to initiated at various parts of Karunagapally.
- A project proposal will submitted to Government for a de-addiction centre in Karunagapally.

More than we have an effective link with both community and Excise department. The people shares important information to us and we informs it to the Excise department for further action. The six month project may extent due to the negative effectiveness of drug addiction. This problem is not only ruining the life of a single person but the whole family and whole the community.

Conclusion

By this story I am concluding this article. A father from a traditional family with high economic status with wife and two sons lived a happy life. And now both the Sons were addicted to drugs and economically they became destroyed and the cute mother selected a life of sex worker for daily livelihood. This must be not allowed for the coming generation. We all are a family and all the children are our children. They are the blossom bud who will spread sweet smell of an intelligent and peaceful life in coming days.

Keeping Service User Involvement in Social Work Education Honest

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Abstract

This article argues for the involvement of service users in social work education. In particular it suggests this will help prepare social workers of the future but challenges us to consider how this can be done meaningfully and with integrity benefitting students, service users and social work academics.

Introduction

This article focuses on how we ensure that service user involvement in social work education maintains its integrity and positively contributes to the development of social workers and better outcomes for service users.

Embedding service user involvement in social work education

The involvement of service users and carers has been mandated in England since 2003 and the current social work regulator, Health and Care Professions (HCPC 2014, online) stating that; 'Service users and carers must be involved in the programme'. The guidance on how to achieve this is weaker although social work programmes have been provided with financial support. Involvement has covered everything from the admissions process – taking part in interviews, curriculum design and delivery, assessment, programme management and even as members of the HCPC inspection teams for social work programmes.

It is worthwhile reminding ourselves that:

The words we use to describe those who use our services are, at one level, metaphors that indicate how we conceive them. At another level such labels operate discursively, constructing both the relationship and attendant identities of people participating in the relationships, inducing very practical and material outcomes (McDonald, 2006, p. 115).

We should also seek to avoid bifurcation whereby we 'other' the service user. Service users can be (and are) student social workers or academics whilst at some stage of our life journey we are all likely to require social care support, whether this is for a child with disabilities or an elderly parent.

Service users can be involved in the whole range of social work education activities at a number of different levels. Needham and Carr (2009) have identified three levels of co-production that are adapted here, compliance, intermediate and transformational. The compliance level refers to approaches whereby service users collaborate with academics to deliver modules, but they are not involved in unit planning or assessing. The intermediate level is when service user skills and strengths are recognised and they may be involved in the selection of candidates, delivery of sessions and/or assessment. However, such situations maybe experienced as a form of manipulation or exploitation if the service user's contribution to the programme is not valued. The transformational level accepts the service user as an expert with strengths in their own right and asks social work programmes to consider a dialogue in identifying what they can offer to transform curriculum development, programme delivery, assessment and programme management. Different levels of co-production maybe appropriate at different times in programme delivery, but if all are at the compliance level it is worthwhile asking whether this is really meaningful involvement?

Service users have one key quality that distinguishes them from others within the academic setting, their experience and knowledge of social work practice and policy is based on their direct experience of being on the receiving end of both intended and unintended outcomes.

Practical Issues

In deciding to work with service users in a social work programme there first needs to be a rationale for the involvement not just meeting the regulatory requirements or a romanticised notion that everything will just fall into place. It is also absurd to believe that service users will necessarily improve social work education without providing training and support. We all had to learn and so do service users, otherwise we set them up to fail. It is also important to ensure that service users expenses and payments for participation are paid quickly with due awareness of any tax requirements and how payments may impact upon benefits.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to successful inclusion of service users can be the staff team who may view their inclusion as 'dumbing down' the curriculum. Also, just as some staff may need bringing onside, so do students. Students can feel that service users are not 'real' lecturers, have little to offer and are resistant to learning from those who they see as their future 'clients'. As can be imagined such involvement is not always comfortable and requires a service user champion to work with all sides and to use the discomfort as a source of learning.

Benefits for students

In seeking to involve service users student social workers will benefit from hearing what is like to be on the receiving end of a social worker's practice, what was valued and what was seen as irrelevant. As such it helps students to break down the 'them' and 'us' attitude and making the students better prepared for their placements and their future practice.

Benefits for service users

It offers service users the opportunity to be part of a broader process of making educational and political change, within a more equal relationship where those who are the subject of social work interventions educate future social workers. It also provides service users with the opportunity to give something back for the care they received whilst also recognising their strengths and self-confidence.

Benefits for lecturers

Involving service users in social work education also benefits lecturers in helping lecturers to stay close to practice, to provide a wider range of learning opportunities for their students and to ensure that should they require a social worker in the future they are more likely to be better educated.

Conclusions

This article has argued for the meaningful involvement of service users in social work education. In a recent special edition editorial of Social Work Education (McLaughlin et al. 2016) we had 45 abstracts from 13 countries on this theme. It was noticeable there is a growing international evidence base of the effectiveness of this approach although there is still much more to do. However, if we accept that differing types of knowledges and experiences contribute to a more holistic understanding of social work then we all have something to learn from each other, then does not that also include service users? The challenge of involvement becomes, not if, but how.

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Using Art to Co-Produce Knowledge in International Aid Contexts

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Abstract

This short descriptive paper utilized arts as a methodology for co- producing definitions of problems and of solutions so as to allow Sri Lankan villagers, community leaders and external experts to collaborate in defining how art can help solve the problems and the solutions to the aftermath of natural and man- made disaster. It describes how each sector understood the central challenges differently, as well as the role of arts in facing these challenges. It shows how art can open a space to hear and integrate these different knowledge structures.

Introduction

Social work aims to integrate the knowledge of practitioner's policy makers and service users so as to co- produce effective solutions to problems. This need is especially strong in international aid settings, where there are large gaps between levels of power and types of knowledge of the local people, local helpers, professional experts, and leaders. Arts-based methods of research are theorized as decentralizing the dominant hegemonic discourse because images are a universal language, they are less power-infused than words in Western culture and they create indirect confrontation with power holders that is safer for those without power.

Arts-based project- summary

Arts-based project was used as a methodology for co- producing definitions of problems and of solutions so as to allow Sri Lankan villagers, community leaders and external experts to collaborate in defining the problems and the solutions to the aftermath of natural and man made disaster. On a community level, traumatic experiences gain coherence and meaning when described or reflected back through symbolic productions that enable reconstruction of a culturally contextualized and more enabling narrative of the disaster. In other words, the arts reignite the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas, and products characteristic of a society

Over 500,000 inhabitants of these regions were displaced from their homes and had to flee to 315 provisional refugee camps or to the homes of relatives due to tsunami floods and heavy rains (Ingram, 2005; Mahoney et al., 2006). The conflict since 1983 between the dominant Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamil guerilla groups brought about massive and deadly destruction to the population of Sri Lanka. The intervention described in this article took place in Batticaloa, an area affected by war, tsunami, and flooding in eastern Sri Lanka (more detailed publications about this case study in Huss et al, Disasters, and in International Social Work).

Each group was asked to define what are the central problems, and how could the arts, help with these problems. Each group created art products together, and then explained these products to the rest of the groups.

The results show that the village women wanted to rehabilitate the community structures so as to create weddings, and to have materials to create dowries. The women also explained that they had to learn to depend on themselves and not on the men, and so they needed the Goddess Kali. The men villagers defined the reconstruction of the temple as vital to sense of safety and protection from further disaster, and also sports materials so as to harness the energy of the young men into positive things and regain group pride: While the villagers did not use abstract concepts, such as community 'resilience' or 'rehabilitation', the concrete things requested are associated with ways to strengthen their village"

Compared to this, the community leaders defined the problems as how to integrate back into school the non-literate children who missed formal education due to the war and having to work for their families; How to engage disabled people, who are often marginalized and stigmatized; How to reduce drinking and violence among unemployed men, and How to teach birth control and nutrition to young mothers suffering from malnutrition. While the villagers wanted to use arts to reconstruct their religious and community rituals, the community workers wanted to use art as a didactic tool to teach good values and behavior and to impart information to illiterate people, as well as a psychosocial intervention for children who couldn't reach school for formal education, as well as for elders, and disabled people.

Compared to this, the external experts wanted to give art therapy to address traumatic reactions.

Finally the community and international aid NGOs – wanted to use art to create elements to bring in funding such as a peace museum and crafts products to attract tourists and to create visibility of the community.

We see that arts were understood differently by different cultures and classes involved in the rehabilitation project: By taking time to unravel these understandings, and to co- produce a plan of action that includes conceptualizations of arts of all groups. This gives voice to the villagers to self –define their problems and the solutions they need, rather than adhering to the 'experts' views.

Full publications of this study relating to different aspects of it can be found in:

Huss,E. Kaufman, R., Avgar, A. (2013). Arts as a vehicle for community building and post-disaster development. Disasters. 2016 Apr;40(2):284-303. doi: 10.1111/disa.12143. Epub 2015 Aug 17

Huss E,. Kaufman R, Avgar A, Shuker, E 2015 Using arts-based research to help visualize community intervention in international aid International Social Work 2015, Vol. 58(5) 673–688

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Working with Women Heads of Households in Northern Region-Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In the post-war development phase in Sri Lanka, attention to female-headed households is vital for the evaluation and promotion of sustainable development. These households, headed by women labeled as war widows, are numerically significant, and tend to be the most marginalized and prone to poverty in any given community. Identifying challenges faced by these households will enable social workers to help women attain self-sustainable development. This article is based on the writer's experience of working with WHH, research carried out in 2010 and 2013, and continuous observation of and communication with the particular community until 2016. This article also aims to bring out the challenges to women heads of households and the vital role of social workers in this specific area of community development.

Introduction

In the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, women have had to face the loss of their men folk, physical safety, and psychological security on the one hand, and on the other, a struggle for survival and sustaining the family. The war in Sri Lanka has ended, but its effect on women has not. It has been estimated that in the Northern Province alone, more than one hundred thousand women heads of households have registered with governmental and non-governmental organizations for support.

Challenges faced by FHH and social work intervention

The impact of war on women is, on the one hand, a very personal and painful experience (death, disappearance of loved ones, sexual assault) and has, on the other hand, long term social impact: wartime and post-war conditions force women to take steps and responsibilities outside of their traditional roles: spending more time outside the home, becoming not only a nurturer but also the

breadwinner, dealing with the army and police, etc). A research study entitled Challenges and coping capacity of women heading the families in post war situation in Sri Lanka, conducted in 2010, reveals some of the challenges faced by such women: poor economic condition, multitasking roles, military control, unsecured houses, and major injuries. Managing money and dealing with the military administration were totally new for many women. Staying in unsecured houses without male support at night is a risk for them. Twenty-six percent of the women in the study have physical disabilities due to serious war injuries.

A significant finding of this study is that seventy-two percent of the respondents were getting 500 – 1000 rupees monthly income and sixteen percent were getting below 500 monthly income when daily average cost was around 400 SLR. Low income and limited education have been shown to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems, and studies suggest that economic deprivation is the primary cause of many of the challenges faced by female-headed households.

However, the wellbeing and self-sustainability of these families depends not only on the economic aspect, but also on social and psychological aspects of their position. The financial challenges these women experience often lead to prostitution, unwanted pregnancy, fatherless children, and many other social problems. Fulfilling multiple roles is challenging for women with little support from family, relatives, and neighbors. Women are also afraid to voice complaints against rape, since they have no social support. These women have come through war trauma, loss of their husbands, and loss of all means of survival; they are trying to rebuild their life from zero. This is the greatest challenge they are facing. Without identifying these needs, it is not possible to provide effective support for improving their economic status.

A study conducted to assess the improvement of women-headed families in the wake of development initiatives found that, even though NGOs and the government implemented many programmes to improve the economic and social development of such households, very few have improved to any significant extent and for others, the situation is worse than before. This is because such initiatives have focused only on the economic aspect and have not addressed social and psychological aspects of these women's lives.

Studies show that the psychological effects of sudden loss of one's spouse may be severe and long lasting. On the other hand, especially in the case of young widows and single mothers, we have to acknowledge the need for sexual intimacy. This area is neglected because of cultural barriers, especially in Asian countries. The expectation that widows should avoid sexual thoughts and practices means that their natural sexual desires are not acknowledged. Due to this social blind spot, many young widows get into stigmatized and unhealthy relationships, multiplying their difficulties. A recent study shows that out of 6 case studies in a particular village, 2 young widows have given birth, adding one more child to their family even though they were struggling to take care of the other children. Due to a lack of guidance in this sensitive area, these young widows are at risk.

In Sri Lankan society, working against cultural norms is not an easy task. Nevertheless, social workers here as elsewhere must practice the principles of social work to make positive change in the lives of the individuals, families, and communities they serve. Social work strives to look at problems from the client's perspective, looking past cultural and other barriers to recognize their actual needs and their human dignity.

Role of social workers in ensuring self-sustainable development of WHH

In the face of cultural, economic, and physical barriers, women heads of households in Sri Lanka struggle to cope with day-to-day life. To cope with challenges, a person needs physical and mental strength, social support and, often, economic support. Social workers should concentrate on these areas and develop a model to work for self-sustainable development of women-headed families, which will positively impact the country's development.

Diagram - A

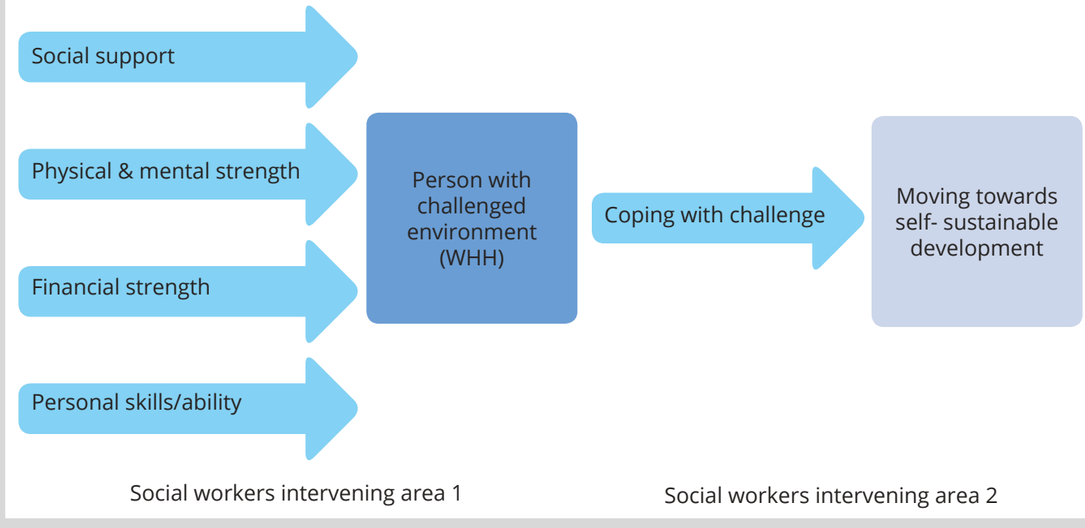

Diagram - A

Diagram A shows the areas needing social worker intervention. In the intervening area 1, social workers have to apply a rights-based approach to mobilize the available resources within and outside the community and build holistic support for individuals and communities. Rights-Based Approach means not only focusing on women's rights and the duty of the state to protect and promote these rights, but also empowering the right holders to achieve self-sustainable development as individuals and as a community. There is a misconception and practice even among social workers in this regard, which has led many development initiations implemented by the government and non-governmental organizations created dependent communities instead of self-reliant ones.

Application of Rights-Based Approach for self-sustainable development

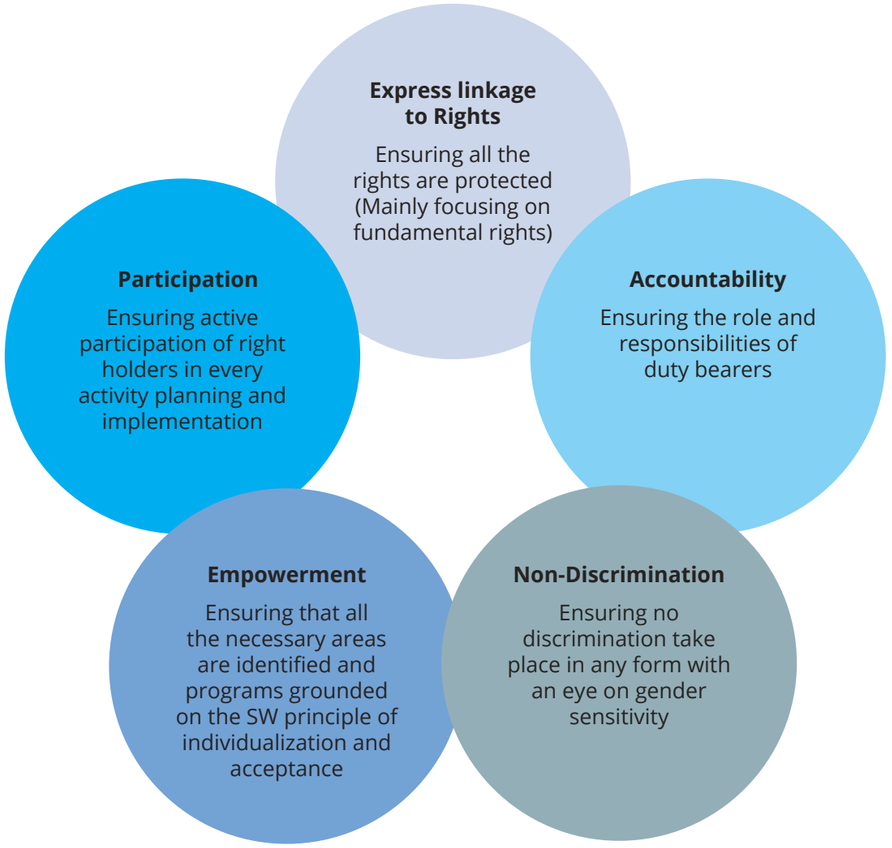

Diagram B

Diagram B shows the necessity of applying all five principles to bring about long-lasting positive change. Social workers can play a vital role in promoting equal opportunities, ensuring equity in services, sharing resources, building participation, and facilitating a caring community, enabling women and their children to lead a meaningful life (IFSW, 2014).As shown in intervening area 2, another important role of social work is monitoring and facilitating self-sustainability. So, the diagram also highlights the role and responsibilities of duty bearers and right holders. The following areas need to be taken into account:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the community (as individuals and as a whole)
- Internal and external resources (with emphasis on internal resources)
- Gender sensitivity
- Community-oriented, not project- or budget-oriented programmes
- Identifying specific needs rather than generalizing

Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given by the people around us. To create an environment that can provide social support to vulnerable people, social workers have to mobilize those who have needs or problems in common and enable them to support each other.

The war in Sri Lanka has made many women the heads of their families due to the loss of their husbands. Women-headed families are economically deprived and vulnerable to the social issues such as rape, isolation, and helplessness. Even though the war has ended, women still struggle for survival and dignity. Yet women have been developing strategies and confidence to face the challenges in their day-to-day life. This is a relatively neglected area of study in the field of gender and development after the Sri Lankan conflict. Special concentration on female-headed households is imperative to foster sustainable development.

Initiating University – Community Engagement in Northern Manitoba and Abroad

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Abstract

This article explores a collaborative partnership between two universities in Northern Manitoba that have significant resources to integrate teaching, learning and research and to develop collaborative responses to northern community issues.

Introduction

Our collaborative teaching and research community engagement experience started 5 years ago in Thompson, Manitoba, Canada. Marleny was newly hired at the Northern Social Program for the University of Manitoba and Maureen had been working with the University College of the North since 2005 in Thompson. We both had backgrounds in participatory research, popular education and community development. For Marleny this was in the context of Central and South America as well as Canada, and for Maureen this experience came in many different capacities in the Yukon Territory, northern B.C. and Ontario. We immediately hit it off and talked excitedly about research possibilities in northern Manitoba. To find a compatible research partner is like finding gold!

Our first project was funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) to study how northern female students define and describe their own success. During this project we learned much about how the educational experience and successes of our female students are intricately connected to family and community. The majority of our students identify as First Nations and Metis. This project gave us the encouragement to think further about the link between education and research and how we could use our knowledge of community based participatory research (CBPR) to work together with community (Simpkins & Bonnycastle, 2014).

We then decided to use Marleny's experiences and learnings from teaching Systematic Inquiry and Feminist Perspective courses by engaging students to work with community members and local organizations to address real social issues such as homelessness and violence against women. She had used community cafes and photovoice before to engage community and we were immediately eager to use some of these approaches to work with students to analyze social issues in Thompson (Bonnycastle & Bonnycastle, 2015).

Our first experience was a series of community cafes that helped us to generate genuine conversations among community members, decision makers, staff, academics and students about successful collaborative experiences, past and current social issues in Thompson and northern communities and their ideas about future research in northern Manitoba. The response was outstanding. More than 60 people attended two community cafes including the Mayor of Thompson, city council members, NGOs, VALE, as well as a variety of service providers, students and academics. Many issues were highlighted but homelessness became one of the biggest issues and everyone agreed that this needed attention as it was affecting not only Thompson but also other northern communities. Perhaps the most important point was that homelessness was caused by many other exclusions and inequalities in northern Manitoba.

Thus, homelessness became our next collaborative and community engagement project. We initiated this idea with the City of Thompson staff who were working on strategies to address homelessness in Thompson. We were again funded by CCPA to conduct a photovoice project with a group of homeless people living at the Thompson homeless shelter as well as at a transitional facility at 95 Cree Road and Phoenix House (MAPS). During this project we met weekly over breakfast to go out and take pictures or to discuss issues of significance to them. At one point this photovoice project was showcased at a Harm Reduction Conference in Thompson.

The pictures were grouped together under headings: "Before" homelessness, "Surviving" homelessness, and "Transitions" after homelessness. This turned out to be a very poignant event as participants at the conference asked questions often in tears, saying that they hadn't really thought about the lives that "homeless" people led before they became homeless. Also people who had family members on the streets reacted with much emotion but were glad that these pictures were being exhibited and discussed (Bonnycastle, Simpkins & Siddle, 2016).

To make a long story short, this experience led us to organize a number of community café consultations on homelessness, on women and violence and on youth homelessness. We also became involved in the creation of a Northern Manitoba Research Network to encourage collaborative community based research in the north by northerners. This has been a forum to include different voices to talk about successful experiences, challenges and potentialities for future learning and research.

Our work on homelessness was recognized by the community and in 2015, The Community Advisory Board on Homelessness in Thompson asked us to coordinate the first Thompson Point in Time Homeless count. The Federal government and the City of Thompson provided the funding for this project and for the first time Thompson has statistics about homelessness. This was very much a university- community engagement project; more than 40 volunteers were involved including service providers and community members of different ages and experiences such as youth and those with a lived experience of homelessness. This experience led us to become the coordinators of the second PIT Count in 2016 in the city of Thompson.

By 2015 we were awarded funding to study youth homelessness in northern Manitoba by the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, the University College of the North and CCPA. This might be the most challenging of all our community based activities as youth with unstable housing are often not so obvious and they don't particularly want to participate in "research" activities. We did manage to complete 60 Youth surveys, conduct a community café consultation, a youth hip hop event as well as a youth homeless count.

By 2016 we realized that after 5 years we had collected a lot of data such as stories, statistics, programs, learnings and experiences on homelessness and housing instability in northern Manitoba. Not only did we have a lot of data, but we had also built valuable relationships with service providers at institutions such as the Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, the Thompson Crisis Centre, the YWCA, The Boys and Girls Club, Youth Aboriginal Council (YAK) at the high School and UCN's Gay Straight Alliance. Beyond that and perhaps the most important component of this long term project has been the inclusion of homeless and people with lived experience of homelessness who have been actively involved in these initiatives. On several occasions we had community discussions with homeless people and service providers. Homeless people, service providers, politicians, media, students and professors engaged in dialogue to analyze data and inquire about systemic and welfare issues that have caused these numbers and talk about possible responses. Sitting together with people who have never been included in a dialogue about homelessness was a very powerful experience that helped homeless people to speak up, students have been able to overcome their fears of meeting with unknown people and service providers have learned that the solutions won't be possible without the inclusion of people who have been affected by housing instability, displacement and systemic issues. We could not have published papers, received funding or presented at conferences if it hadn't been for all the community partners from service providers to academic partners to the homeless and the youth themselves. In 2015, after the two earthquakes that impacted Nepal, we started working with the Nepal School of Social work (NSSW) to contribute to their efforts in supporting affected communities. We worked together with faculty, students and community agencies to train them on the use of different community engagement approaches such as arts, community cafes, and photovoice. An art-based workshop was developed to strengthen their capacity to work with children to make meaning of their traumatic earthquake experience, to engage children in re-creating and rebuilding the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of their lives. We also used community cafes to help the NSSW in its collaborative interventions with partner organizations to address the numerous problems and needs of communities after the earthquake. Students and staff were involved in the community café with community agencies. The discussions ended up with five main ideas to work with different groups addressing a variety of issues. These topics were expanded in 2016 with participants at the International University Community Engagement Conference in Nepal. It was the second community café in Nepal with the co-facilitation by faculty and students.

Then, in 2016, a Research Institute was held in Kathmandu to continue strengthening community engagement around the specific issues previously discussed through the community cafes. This institute was focused on Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) by demonstrating a photovoice approach.

Conclusion

Our university community engagement efforts have contributed to promoting and developing collaborative work with students, faculty and community agencies to analyze current issues and engage in identifying future development. These approaches include political, cultural and social functions that would be useful to address local issues by incorporating post-secondary education, research, social policy advocacy, community development and social work practice with dignity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Joint ongoing learning process of social work students, academics and practitioners in health care

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Abstract

In this article we describe the praxis clinic activities (Figure 1) between Tampere University Hospital (TAUH) and social work degree programme at the University of Tampere (UTA) and reflect the benefits of collaboration for both organisations and community members. The total number of staff at the department of social work at UTA is about 30 of which two thirds are in teaching positions and one third as researchers. The number of social work staff at TAUH is 56.

Introduction

Relationship with social work practice is vital for social work academic education, both for students' field education and for research partnerships. Also, for social work as a practical profession it is important to have relationships with social work education to fertilize continuous reflection and to develop knowledge-based practice. All this and even more is possible to achieve with organised partnerships between educational institutions and practice organisations.

In the Finnish context, the early roots for praxis clinics can be found in the 1970's. In 2007, Finnish Ministry of Education outlined that praxis clinics are needed to form a structure for social work education and research and an arena for cooperation between universities and working life. Ministry saw the need for centers with strong knowledge, expertise, development and innovations. In this connection, the term praxis can also philosophically be used to refer to the very activity, where people engage, apply, exercise, realize, and practice ideas.

Social work degree programme at UTA has strongly developed its' praxis clinic activities during the last decade. Today, praxis clinics network is understood as an essential research and learning environment and natural companion to the degree programme. With TAUH, praxis clinic activities have longest history and also the modes of operation are most diverse and developed. The first praxis contract between these organisations was signed in 1984.

1. Social work practice teaching (in the field).
2. Social workers teaching practice (at the university).
3. Problem-based learning combining theory and practice (social workers, students and teachers as actors).
4. Social work practice as an open research environment.
5. Collecting and storing data – social work data archive.
6. Development of reflective and research based practices.

Figure 1. Praxis clinic activities.

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Tampere University Hospital

Practice teaching and learning

The annual quota for BA and MA students' field placements at TAUH makes interorganisational collaboration in practice teaching and learning predictable and unambiguous. This notably simplifies students' field placement organising at UTA. Social work practitioners from TAUH participate regularly in role plays in social work skills seminars, which are organized to prepare students for their field placements.

In TAUH, social workers have established their own mentoring cafe as a support structure for practice teachers. The structure is supporting especially those who are new in the teacher's role. Mentoring strenghtens the identity of practice teachers. UTA is also organising education for practice teachers. The aim is to offer a course every second year for those practitioners who plan to become practice teachers. Most often TAUH practice teachers want to work in pairs and share the supervision of the student. Working in pairs prevents too heavy workload and contributes to joint reflection and collective professional culture.

The recognition of student's role by practice teachers is praised by the students. The double identity of teacher and social worker seems to be important for successful practice teaching. Also the service users benefit from practice teaching. When teaching the students, practitioners are inspired to develop the analysis and description of their work from the service users' point of view. As Paul Stuart (2004) has found in his research, social workers in health care settings humanize the organization and individualize the work with the patient.

From TAUH point of view, taking students to field placements gives the opportunity to orientate future workers in the practice; it helps in competition when recruiting good applicants to open posts. Guiding and supervising students strengthens social work expert culture in the organization.

Orientation to interprofessional work in health care

Social workers from TAUH offer a very popular course on health social work practice every second year at UTA. The most recent invention in joint teaching is a masters' course in social work in interprofessional context. Roots of the current course are in the former collaborative courses with medicine, psychology and social work. The new course was planned and put into action by TAUH social workers and a university lecturer together.

During the course, four key themes of social work in interprofessional health care context are studied following problem-based learning (e.g. Poikela & Nummenmaa 2006) model. Each learning cycle consists of starting tutorial, where students define their learning task on the basis of problems formulated beforehand by social work practitioners. Next, students seek information through international scientific literature and by participatory observations at different departments of TAUH. Finally, students come back to the closing tutorial, where new information is shared and a collective answer is formulated to the defined question. What is most important is the presence of professional social workers as tutors in starting and closing tutorials and interaction with social work practitioners at the university hospital during the observation days.

This masters' course has proved out to be very fruitful both for social work students and social work practitioners. Students' understanding of social work in interprofessional health care settings has deepened, they have changed their presuppositions of

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University of Tampere (UTA)

the subordinate position of social work in a hospital, and they have become aware of the usefulness and importance of theory to structure observations and experience. For social work practitioners the course has given a possibility to define and re-evaluate the key elements of their work, reflect their work with students and exercise theoretical reflection with the help of students' written reports. This course has revitalized professional motivation and active thinking both among the students and the practitioners. In addition to the joint courses in the social work degree programme, there are also other reciprocal arrangements to joint learning in both organizations.

Research

In the field of research, social work masters' theses play an important role in praxis clinic cooperation. It is yearly routine that TAUH social work manager (PhD herself), based on the discussion with her staff, presents topical research themes for students. Research themes may be raised also during student's practice learning period at TAUH. Yearly, from two to five masters' theses are completed. The administrative structure of the research implementation has been agreed, which prevents many problems in the process. The social work manager has administrative and ethical responsibility of student's research implementation at TAUH. She has personal discussion with the student about the research topic, she offers supervision and help for the process of getting the research permit and at the end she organizes a staff seminar, where the student can present the findings of the research.

Students' research activity helps develop social worker profile as an academic profession at TAUH. Sometimes the research topics are interesting also to other professions and are delivered to those professions, too. Students' research work supports knowledge based practice at TAUH. It strengthens the analytical and theoretical thinking of practitioners and contributes to health social work literature. When agreed with the informants, research data will be saved in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive at UTA for later use by other researchers.

Several social work practitioners (three at the moment) at TAUH are pursuing doctoral studies at UTA. Most often, they have taken their research topics directly from their own work aiming at developing social work and interprofessional work. Research topics are often related to service user involvement and social work role in health care. There are also topics, which are related to the burning issues of current global phenomena and national or regional policies like loneliness of unaccompanied minors as refugees, part of a doctoral study of a social worker in the child psychiatric unit of TAUH.

UTA and TAUH organize biannual national conferences in health and mental health social work in collaboration with the professional association of Finnish health social workers. The conference offers an arena for topical societal discussions from health social workers' point of view and brings health social work practitioners and academics to joint discussions from equal positions.

Conclusions

Collaboration boosts thinking, reflection and efforts in the work of both organisations. It facilitates student's learning and helps maintain supportive structures for students practice learning and research. Arenas are needed to strengthen the professional identity of social workers. Partnership between UTA and TAUH helps to build these arenas. In shared reflective environment it is also possible to find timely solutions to problems that can never be totally avoided in human action.

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FEATURE

An encounter with young prostitute mothers in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia

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Abstract

This article is regarding an encounter with five young prostitute mothers who shared their reasons for being involved in prostitution, abuses in their childhood, betrayal by the significant men in their lives, their personality of negative self-image, attempts of suicide, how they resolve their inner conflicts to move on in the trade and the dominance of men in their lives. This encounter gives us the urgency to realize that this marginalized group needs help and understanding.

Introduction

Prostitution is when two adults agree to have sexual intercourse. The only difference is that one adult has agreed to pay money to the other (Zweiniger, 2001). Commercial sex is widespread in Asia but it is a very discreet business. You have to be an Asian man to know where to look for it. That is why it is hard to write about prostitution in this region. It is also why it is important for the rest of the world to listen to the experiences of women who sell sex (Brown, 2002). Prostitution has been called "the oldest profession in the world" and the economy in almost all countries has a sector engaged in this activity. Prostitution of women and girls is clearly seen in all countries whereby it has become a powerful and flourishing business sector.

Encounter with Prostitute Mothers

1. Reasons for Entering Prostitution

The concept of feminization of poverty is an increasing problem among women. Limited income has a great impact on a woman. These women tried to solve this problem independently through jobs or being involved in prostitution. However being more independent has caused them to be trapped in a dilemma which is rather complicated. They look for financial resources for their survival through an easy way out. These prostitutes mentioned that their problem in finding jobs is due to their low academic qualifications and skills. Women describe prostitution in monetary and material terms (Strong, 2001).

2. Abused as a Child and Youth

These prostitutes experienced one long term effect of sexual victimization when they engaged in prostitution. Silbert & Pines (1982) noted that 60% of the prostitutes participating in the study experienced childhood sexual abuse. Adult prostitutes often recount a history of childhood sexual abuse. In a Canadian survey, 73% of the study sample of former prostitutes reported being sexually victimized as children (Bagley & Young, 1987).

3. Trust vs Mistrust

The significant men of these prostitutes did not protect nor provide for the women under their care but were rather cruel and unjust to them. The prostitutes felt unloved by these men in their lives. They have been betrayed by the men close to them, thus making it hard for them to trust anybody else. The significant men made the women feel unworthy of themselves. This distrust played a major part in their involvement in prostitution. As stated in Erik Erickson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development, all of them have experienced isolation and rejection of some kind in their lives. They have isolated themselves for fear of being cheated and rejected again. They have run away from these significant people in their lives who were supposed to give them protection, security and comfort.

4. Negative Self Image

These prostitutes also think of themselves negatively. They have poor self-image and described themselves as "bad". This is related to Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development theory that prostitutes tend to suffer from depression and low self-esteem caused by their inability to fully develop through the necessary stages of personality. Prostitution has become a nightmare in their lives as it is not a job you can go out and admit to the world (O'Neill, 1996).

5. Suicide

The suffering, shame, disappointments and lack of peace in the lives of these prostitutes have led them to have suicidal thoughts and attempts. They have not been able to love themselves thus creating an emptiness in their life. Shneidman (1996) views suicide as an action taken when a person's threshold of pain has been reached and becomes unbearable. These powerful negative feelings combined with self-harming/destructive behaviors as a way of reducing pain, appear to lead to an extremely high rate of suicide (Pointer, 2001).

6. Resolving Conflicts

The prostitutes realize that their acts violate religious and social values. On the other hand, they justify their actions to affirm that they are not doing anything wrong or immoral. Their strategy to overcome their conflict is through smoking, alcoholism, drugs, other activities and chanting religious words. These conflicts, Erikson argues will restrict their ability to build trusting relationships with others. This lack of control may represent an obvious attempt to take charge of themselves rather than relying on other people. It is an attempt to be more independent and not to depend on anybody.

7. Male Dominance

Men seem to have the right to have sex as they are able to pay and these prostitutes on the other hand need the money. There is no law, no rule, no etiquette and no courtesy that stops any man from using vulgar words on a prostitute (Dworkin, 1994). The payment for older prostitutes is less compared to the younger ones. Men are more interested in the physical appearance and are attracted to younger prostitutes and pay them more.

Conclusion

In this encounter, the prostitutes expressed their need to have a family of their own like any other married couple. They hope to receive love and acceptance. They wish to hear kind and comforting words and not vulgar words as they used to hear before. They want fair treatment and not to be exploited. Once they have this in their lives, they will be able to overcome the negative feelings within themselves and leave prostitution for good. Until then they will continue in this trade.

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APUCEN

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SECRETARIAT

ASIA-PACIFIC UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (APUCEN)

http://apucen.usm.my/index.php/en/about-apucen/16-apucen

The hallmark of engagement is the development of partnerships that ensure a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge between the University and the community'(Holland & Ramaley, 2008).

Asia-Pacific University - Community Engagement Network (APUCEN) is a regional network of academic institutions of higher learning concerned with promoting the culture of university-community engagement in a proactive, inclusive, holistic and participatory way APUCEN is motivated by the belief that institutions of higher learning and the community can collaborative to generate ideas on how to improve the quality of life of the society in the Asia Pacofoc region. Community engagement, from the viewpoint of APUCEN goes beyond outreach and extension or service. Instead, APUCEN is committed to the idea that universities should seek mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with communities to address communities' issues and needs; with a commitment to sharing and reciprocity that is guided by mutual respect among the partners.

The emerging trends in higher education placed a higher than ever expectations on universities. Institutions of higher learning are expected by the community and the government to make meaningful and tangible contribution to national, regional and international growth and well-being. APUCEN passionately believes that if universities are to achieve their mission to develop and apply knowledge with society in mind, then their core functions have to build not only on an academic base but also upon an intellectual civil base that can offer solutions to societal problems. APUCEN acknowledges the immediate needs for universities to embark on university-community engagement due to current changes in knowledge generation and diffusion, the need to address critical social, economic, cultural, and environmental concerns, to encourage engaged learning and to acknowledge academic involvement in nation building.

The increasing need for a home grown Asia Pacific network that not only addresses the immediate needs discussed above and but also having a network that appreciates the aspiration of the Asia-Pacific region inspired the setting up of APUCEN. APUCEN subscribes to the concept of an engaged institution that better address local/regional issues and problems with approaches/solutions that better suit local/regional cultures and values. In this, the adoption of local wisdom is encouraged.

APUCEN also acknowledges that volunteerism is pivotal in the development of a broader strategy of university-community engagement. Volunteerism is the pulse of APUCEN's existence, for the spirit of volunteerism is strongly felt not just within APUCEN's guiding principles and objectives but it is also strongly embedded in the type of projects it is associated with. With this in mind, volunteerism in institutions of higher learning is seen as a 'two-way knowledge exchange' by allowing both academicians and students to gain new perspectives, share and create knowledge with the community, enhance the quality of life for the surrounding communities and enable both parties to identify their critical needs.

APUCEN envisage making real difference to university-community partnership to informed progress particularly for the bottom billion or the underprivileged. It is in line with APUCEN's aspiration to unite civil society and higher learning institutions and networks in common efforts to co-create knowledge, mobilize it to inform practice and policy, and improve the quality of life of the society within the region.

The objectives of the regional network are as follows:-

- ✔ To promote and instill the community-engagement concept and values to staff and students of institutions of higher learning.
- ✔ To create capacity building for university-community partnerships.
- ✔ To disseminate and share information, knowledge, resources and good practices.
- ✔ To provide a platform for joint flagship projects.

“It is a taboo to talk about it”

Promoting expressive arts intervention for Life – Death Education in Hong Kong

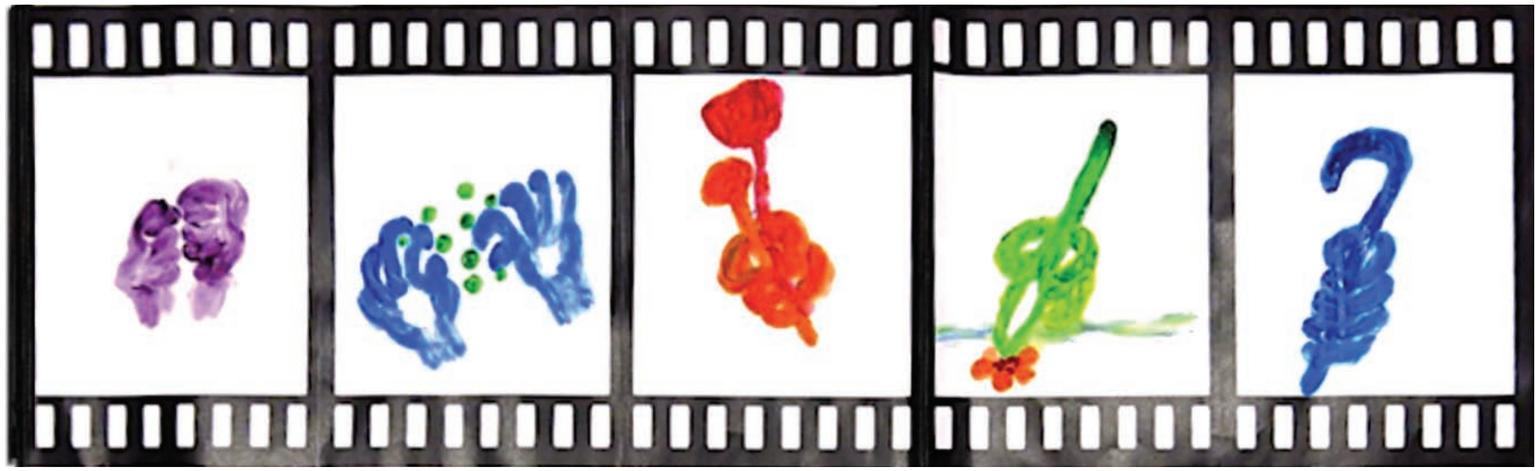

Figure 1: Film rolls of life: Although simplistic, finger paintings below by an elderly participant has concluded important frames and events across different life stages with simple images. The image of the “hand” symbolically conveys rich meanings. From left to right side, a pair of tiny hands represented her childhood, the pair of hand was doing handicraft work in youth, she was holding hand with the partner in the third drawing, picked up the paintbrush to learn painting after retirement, and was holding a cane in her hand in late life stage.

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Abstract

Recent advancement in medical technology extends life expectancy, yet concurrently introduces challenges in quality of life maintenance. This phenomenon shadows positive aspects of retired life and solicits various negative emotional reactions that undermine wellbeing in the elderly. It is documented that without the proper care, elderly people might experience hardship in searching for or consolidating meaning of life (Singh & Misra, 2009), and it is no different for elderly in the context of Hong Kong society (Wu, Tang, & Kwok, 2012). Hence, rediscovering positivity, regenerating meaningfulness in life, and providing emotional support are vital for Life-Death Education (LDE) for the elderly, in assisting them to pursue a healthy end stage of life in the face of rapid decline in physical capabilities (Wong 1998; Wijk & Grimby, 2008). For healthy elderly, LDE can be something more active and positive that can involve family; something that is fun, interesting, and relationship reconciling. However, breaking the silence brought forth by the death taboo is not an easy task.

Introduction

It has been documented that Chinese elderly generally report anxiety toward death (Wu, Tang, & Kwok, 2002). Even though death is inevitable; talking about “death” has always remained a taboo for most traditionally minded Chinese people. According to Wong (1998), one of the key elements of successful ageing is to discover positive meanings of life and death in spite of the gradual decline of physical condition. A positive understanding of life and death provides the necessary motivation for pursuing healthy ageing which allows a high level of life satisfaction. Hence, instead of passively waiting for death, promoting a positive attitude that involves treasuring the present moment of life is more proactive and meaningful (Chan, 2015). In order to achieve that, establishing a holistic LDE regime for the elderly is essential.

Existing life and death education in Hong Kong

LDE in Hong Kong generally includes conveying profound life and death knowledge. The preparation of tangible matters (e.g. legacy, assets, funeral), assisting the individual at the end of life by chronicling a holistic life review, developing retrospect on some special life events and significant people, and expressing departure to family or the beloved ones are standard aspects of LDE. The format would be via public education, small group sharing, questionnaire survey or care in residential homes. There is also a trend of adopting experiential activities to explore life and death issues. However, these types of education do not often address the taboo that exists in Chinese culture regarding discussion of death. Although the concerned taboo has diminished since the millennial turn, long-withstanding oriental mindsets remain framing death as anathematic (Chan, 2015). Therefore, a creative and pro-life method of LDE is preferable to encourage the positivity of such discussion.

Challenges of LDE with conventional verbal counseling

In Chinese tradition, one can discuss almost anything except death, especially under special occasions such as weddings, in front of the sick, dying, or those in old age. It is especially true to some tradition-bound families that mentioning the word “dead” is a bad omen for the Chinese New Year. Thus, no one likes to say or hear the Chinese word “four” in the New Year, since its pronunciation is similar to the word for “death.” The phenomenon is not limited to oriental culture; similarly, mentioning death in western culture might occasionally induce an atmosphere of uneasiness. The strong emotions aroused by talking about death are also impended since they might be perceived as problematic or weak in traditional Asian cultures (e.g. China and Japan). To various extents, communicating life–death issues with the elderly is challenging.

A verbal approach to discussing death may be practically unfeasible for the elderly, because topics related to life and death spur not only emotive issues, but a lengthy mixture of personal history and relationships. Verbal communication – a socializing platform characterized by its linear, logical and rational exchange of information, when used for expressing intertwined emotions and memories, demands rigorous physical and mental effort. For the elderly, the enormous amount of strength required for verbal sharing might deter or inhibit their voices. Along with the unfavorable deteriorating cognitive abilities, retrieving, organizing, verbalizing, and expressing significant life events or important people may become extremely time-consuming and even threatening.

Furthermore, the elderly might fail to remember the details owing to memory loss. A lot of elderly people in HK are old immigrants from mainland China in the postwar 40’s or 50’s. These people are used to talking in their own dialects, thus introducing a linguistic barrier between local social workers and participants. After all, when most of the precious moments become the past, the elderly normally question the purpose of talking about life as death silently approaches. Life–death education therefore denotes a special “temporality and spatiality” to the elderly community counter to other social interventions since issues being dealt with for the elderly in LDE belong to the past.

Verbal forms of communicating life–death issues, based on the above mentioned hurdles therefore are often challenging. All of the aforementioned issues pose challenges for HK social workers to carry out effective LDE for many of us, a younger generation, may not have the concept of death or know how to discuss it. Additionally, death can be understood as it touches on spirituality. Perhaps even many social workers have not seriously delved into these phenomena, and may avoid talking about death with their service users who are seniors.

Combined verbal – nonverbal means of LDE: The use of arts in Elderly Care Program

Verbal form of counseling on LDE for the elderly might be challenged by the difficulties of understanding and articulating complex inner processes, such as ambivalent thought, implicit memory, strong emotion, and spiritual issues. Recent neurological research has re-discovered the functions of the right brain in processing nonverbal cues, holistic/nonlinear processes, and regulating emotion, via the interaction between the mind and the body (Schore, 2015).

As a combined nonverbal–verbal form of counseling approach, expressive arts therapy (EAT) facilitates effective right-brain processes that makes use of nonverbal, nonlinear, and affective communication. Meanwhile, EAT demands the interaction between the body, mind and spirit of an individual in the creative arts making process. The involvement of kinesthetic movements, psychological components (e.g. perceptual and cognitive skills), and emotional engagements requires and strengthens active left and right hemispheric brains interactions (Nan & Ho, 2014). The engagement of the above mentioned inner processes meticulously helps to retain and train cognitive focusing, organizing, and memorizing abilities that facilitate the account or recount of significant events and people in life, which are the core components in LDE.

There is growing research on the benefits of the use of arts in elderly care program. Engaging in art activities, including music, visual art, play, drama, dance/movement, can significantly achieve symptoms reduction (e.g. pain, fatigue and mood) (Choi & Park, 2012; Nainis et al., 2006), or improvement of appetite (Nainis et al., 2006). The use of arts can help the elderly engage in holistic and reflective processes upon memories, hopes, fears, anxieties and anger towards life and death issues without triggering excessive emotional responses or unnecessary defense mechanisms (Bolton, 2007; Nan, 2015). As arts provide a supportive environment and serves as a vessel for expression, it facilitates more effective processing and sharing of thoughts, as well as positive cathartic emotional expression through or after the arts making process (Malchiodi, 2012; Huhtinen-Hilden, 2014). In regards to changing attitudes towards life and death, arts provide the viewing distance to mindfully meditate and review life and articulate a personally meaningful life story in art. This process of mindfulness gives insights and transforms views on life and death issues (Redhouse, 2014) (Figures 1-2).

Practitioners are encouraged to develop sensitivity and ability to provide a supportive environment for facilitating the creative processes and cultivating themes related to life and death

Despite the fact that EAT emphasizes personal expression of inner processes than artistic training in the elderly, it is necessary for the social workers to receive special training on the use of arts in working with elderly people on LDE, especially regarding the evocative power of arts in triggering strong emotional reactions (Huhtinen-Hilden, 2014). Practitioners are encouraged to develop sensitivity and ability to provide a supportive environment for facilitating the creative processes and cultivating themes related to life and death (Huhtinen-Hilden, 2014).

Expressive-arts-based research projects & preliminary findings

Regarding intervention and research in LDE, we have recently conducted a study to investigate how expressive arts methods foster effective understanding and communication of issues associated with life and death. The study was conducted for elderly people in a community setting. A 10-session expressive-arts-based LDE program was provided for 100 participants (aged 60 or above) that aimed at enhancing meaning of life through reviewing life history, exploring perception toward death, expressing emotions, cultivating dialogue with family in death issues, and inducing actions for preparation of death. Educational information about funeral and interment was conducted in the program. Artworks created were shared between amongst the elderly at the end of a session, and focus groups were implemented (N=49) to understand the subjective experiences in this arts-based LDE program. A phenomenographic approach (Barnard, McCosker & Gerber, 1999; Marton, 1981) was adopted to analyze and interpret qualitative data collected from both procedures. The preliminary research results support the effectiveness of expressive arts methods for conducting LDE in community setting.

Another “train the trainers” study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of expressive-arts-based methods for palliative care work. 35 healthcare workers in palliative care setting received three days training in expressive arts methods for palliative care service users, who are mostly elderly. A combined quantitative – qualitative research method was applied, with a telephone interview (N = 7) being conducted 3-4 months in post-training, to understand the efficacy of

Figure 2: Treasure box of life: An elderly participant customized boxes with handmade flower patterns to express feelings of sentiment in retaining most precious memories, things, and people in life when life is toward an end. Arts, therefore, embodies personal and commemorative meaning via an aesthetic means for self-expression.

expressive arts methods when applied to palliative care work. The preliminary research results show promising outcomes for the efficacy of expressive arts methods in the enhancement of palliative care.

Concluding thoughts

The anxiety of death is common but the fear does not necessarily surface until the brink arrives. With a culture that undermines discussion of death, many do not have the opportunity to express their fears, organize their thoughts, and prepare for the unerring fate. Not only the moribund people miss the opportunities, but their significant others are also affected. The culture impacts not only recipients of life-death education, but as well the facilitators of this education. Social workers who are dedicated to providing LDE, at times may also be intimidated by the taboo of death, hesitate to resolve or confront death-related issues for the self, and are prone to compassion fatigue. LDE should aim for transforming the cultural taboo to improve the pathos surrounding death issues, thus fostering quality communication between facilitators and recipients.

Expressive arts therapy, under current circumstances, provides an alternative outlet to buffer the tension created by verbal communication for LDE. The creative fusion of different arts forms not only encourages elderly people’s engagement with such interesting activities, but as well provides a platform for effective communication of complex thoughts and feelings regarding life and death issues. The use of arts methods empowers the service users and gives unique “voices” through the means of art. Future studies on the impacts of expressive arts and how it can be applied to working with different types of users in the field (e.g. cancer patients, traumatized individuals) is greatly encouraged.

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Postgraduate Social Work the right step forward for interpreter

Frankie Yue Zheng - MSWQ

When Frankie Yue Zheng decided to advance her career prospects with a higher education, entering the field of social work appealed to her for its natural transition from her existing specialised role.

"As a professional translator and interpreter, I see my work not only relying on language skills, but more importantly on human rights and social work values, to support vulnerable individuals and families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to access services and support," said Frankie.

Frankie was eligible to apply for the Australian College of Applied Psychology's (ACAP) Master of Social Work (Qualifying) thanks to her Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpreting. She enrolled as an international student and graduated in 2016.

"I consider my undergraduate degree to be highly relevant to the social work profession in multicultural societies like Australia," she said.

ACAP is listed on the Jiaoyu Shewai Jianguan Xinxi Wang (JSJ) 'Study Abroad' website. The JSJ website is a reference provided to assist Chinese students in their choice of overseas institutions at which to study.

"ACAP was able to provide a course to fit my criteria – qualifying, postgraduate, less than two years in duration, and open to international students," said Frankie.

"It was also very flexible in admission. Although I come from a non-social science background and may not have completed social science units, I was able to gain an offer from ACAP through a statement of my values, passion and experience working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) individuals in the community. ACAP is also conveniently located in the city."

Placement benefits prospects

A temporary paid job has resulted from the second of Frankie's two placements. Maintaining the connection from her internship, in November 2016 she started a temporary six-month part-time paid role at the City of Sydney, in its International Student Leadership and Ambassador (ISLA) program.

"My role is Community Programs Support Officer and my main duties include assisting with implementation and evaluation of the City's program and on City-wide community events including the Living in Harmony Festival and Youth Week in the City. I work closely with community stakeholders to ensure processes and outputs respond to community needs and best practice," Frankie said.

Frankie had been at placement with the City of Sydney, in its Social Policy and Programs team, under its City Life Division.

"My main role [at placement] was assisting with the project management of the City's ISLA program, which provides training, mentoring and practical experience to leaders in the international student community," she said.

"This project resonated strongly with my experience as an international student in Sydney and as one of two ACAP international student delegates to the Council of International Student's 2016 National Conference."

Insight from the field

One thousand hours of field education is required by Master of Social Work (Qualifying) students during the latter stage of the course. Frankie's first placement had been at the Uniting Harris Community Centre, a not-for-profit community support agency in Sydney's inner city. Here she had the chance to use her linguistic skills extensively while rounding out her social work experience with extensive face-to-face client contact.

"I was mainly responsible for assisting and supporting local groups and individuals through developing and implementing cultural, educational, recreational and social projects and events which aim to build community relationships while addressing community needs and issues," said Frankie.

"Most of the work involved running a one-on-one technology tutorial with people with a disability and seniors, organising multicultural events and activities, helping Mandarin-speaking service users to access information and support , and distributing material aid resources to homeless and low-income individuals and families in the neighbourhood. The experience helped me identify my strengths in community project and event management, and more importantly areas for improvement."

Frankie describes her placements as "the most important component of my course" and, along with the temporary role at City of Sydney, she has been approached about taking on contract work at Uniting Harris Community Centre in the future, as opportunities arise.

Study with a community culture

Frankie has fond memories of the close connections between faculty members and students at ACAP, made possible by the college's unique advantages in scale, and its specialty courses related to allied health.

"ACAP has a lot to offer and it could expose you to many opportunities if you are proactive," she said.

"I cannot imagine being in any prestige university where professors and heads of the schools would be so accessible, who would have the time to answer your questions and constantly check on your learning progress. These have absolutely had an extremely positive effect on my confidence and academic performance."

Of the School of Social Work itself, Frankie gained from the teaching style and the collaborative ongoing learning that reflects the nature of the profession.

"Aside from field education, group assignments have been the most rewarding and helpful experience that has been beneficial to my studies and my wellbeing," she said.

"They not only taught me how to learn to work with others and to work with differences, but also provided a vital platform for international students like me to connect with local students outside of the classroom and to learn various interpersonal and communication skills that are not in the textbooks."

"Now when I think back I think of the wonderful times where study groups gathered at libraries for discussion and went out for coffee/dinner afterwards, and the lifelong friendships that grew from such times," said Frankie.

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About IASSW

IASSW, is the worldwide association of schools of social work, other tertiary level social work educational programs, and social work educators. The IASSW promotes the development of social work education throughout the world, develops standards to enhance quality of social work education, encourages international exchange, provides forums for sharing social work research and scholarship, and promotes human rights and social development through policy and advocacy activities

The IASSW was founded in 1928 at the First International Conference of Social Work, held in Paris. It initially comprised 51 schools, mostly in Europe, and was known as the International Committee. Revitalized after World War II, the organization expanded its membership to include a wider range of countries and was renamed the International Association of Schools of Social Work.

Membership in the IASSW comprises social work educational programs at the post-secondary or tertiary level and interested individuals, mostly social work educators. The association has member schools in all parts of the world. Five 5 regional organizations in Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America; and North America and the Caribbean are affiliated with the IASSW. IASSW is governed by the Board of Directors under a Constitution approved by the biennial General Assembly. IASSW holds consultative status with the United Nations and participates as an NGO in UN activities in Geneva, Vienna and New York. Through its work at the UN and with other international organizations, IASSW represents social work education at the international level.

The mission statement adopted in 2000 commits the IASSW as the international organization to four major purposes:

1. to develop and promote worldwide excellence in social work education, research and scholarship in order to enhance human well-being;
2. to create and maintain a dynamic community of social work educators and their programs;
3. to support and facilitate participation in mutual exchanges of information and expertise;
4. to represent social work education at the international level.

The International Assocation of Schools of Social Work has member schools in all parts of the world; 5 regional organizations in Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America; and North America and the Caribbean are affiliated with the International Association of Schools of Social Work and represented on the board of directors.

The IASSW promotes the development of social work education throughout the world, develops standards to enhance quality of social work education, encourages international exchange, provides forums for sharing social work research and scholarship and promotes human rights and social development through policy and advocacy activities.

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