A Study of Fieldwork Practice in the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka, with Implications for Social Work Training in Zimbabwe

by

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School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe

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Editor's Note

This Occasional Paper is reproduced from an original study undertaken by the author in 1990 while on sabbatical leave.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They do not necessarily represent the views of the School of Social Work in Zimbabwe or other organisations which participated in this study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A comparison of the differing methods of practice teaching/learning in three different parts of the world yields some useful insights. Although social work training is very different when considering the situations of Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe, there are several strands that bind them together.

Firstly social work is an international profession, with an international literature. Initiatives in one part of the world need to be considered by social workers in other parts, particularly where there are similarities in the socioeconomic situations of respective countries (eg poverty, communal values, etc).

Secondly the problems faced by social work educators are analogous and useful comparisons can be made between them. Exchange of information and dialogue with regard to achievements and failures in the field of training can be mutually beneficial.

Thirdly, a similar philosophy of adult education binds schools and faculties of social work in different continents together. This became obvious to me in researching the background approaches of various training institutions and bodies, where similar references and statements of intent were made in discussion of the mission and programmes of these organisations.

This Occasional Paper examines the use of practical fieldwork as a means of training student social workers to engage in professional practice. Aspects of the practice curriculum are discussed as well as the structure and general orientation of this method of training students. There are four main sections. Section One outlines fieldwork issues in the United Kingdom, particularly with regard to the accreditation of practice teachers and concerns over the quality and methodology of fieldwork training. Section Two examines the use of fieldwork in one Third World country (Sri Lanka) and its orientation towards social development. Section Three offers some comments and observations on theories of adult learning and their relevance to fieldwork training, while Section Four draws together some practice lessons which Schools of Social Work may wish to consider with regard to developing their fieldwork programmes.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In researching background material which culminated in publication of a Fieldwork Manual (1990), I came across material that had been prepared by the Canada/Sri Lanka Linkage Project, where the Faculty of Social Work at Toronto University had assisted the School of Social Work in Sri Lanka in revising and updating their curriculum, with special emphasis given to their practical fieldwork training. This information proved valuable, particularly as there is little published material on developing social work fieldwork in Third World settings. As Toronto University Faculty of Social Work had developed an international reputation in assisting in the development of relevant models of social work curricula, and a significant amount of material on this had been published in international social work/development journals, it seemed appropriate to use part of a sabbatical period to visit Toronto and meet with social work academics at the Faculty of Social Work. A further incentive was the fact that the Director of the Sri Lanka School of Social Work was then currently a doctoral student at Toronto University and was interested in meeting with me to discuss fieldwork programmes in Sri Lanka and find out about our own field training in Zimbabwe.

A further objective of this study was to gain information on recent developments and current issues in British social work policy and practice related to fieldwork training/ practice teaching. While in the United Kingdom I therefore visited the National Institute of Social Work to make use of their library facilities and also the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW), to obtain relevant information on social work training in the U.K. Information relating to the accreditation of practice teachers, pioneered by CCETSW, proved to be very useful.

Contacts were also made with social workers and student unit supervisors at various local authority Departments of Social Work, the Centre for Applied Social Studies at Swansea University, the Faculty of Social Work at Nottingham University, with the National Organisation for Practice Teaching, the South and West Wales Practice Teaching Centre and other organisations concerned with social work training. The result of this research is a rather unusual mixture of source material relating to social work practice teaching, which I hope will be informative and useful.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine practice teaching from a comparative perspective, using material from the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka and to consider the implications of this for social work training in Zimbabwe.

2. To consider selected theories relating to adult learning and their relevance to fieldwork training.

3. To consider how social work field practice can be improved and in particular how this can relate to a social development orientation within social work.

Section 1: Practice Teaching, Accreditation and Developing a Curriculum for Practice in Social Work Education: United Kingdom

Introduction

In the United Kingdom in recent years both the social work profession and the public at large have become increasingly aware that the general standard of social work practice needs to be raised. An obvious way of doing so is to improve the calibre of qualifying training for social workers. The introduction of the new Qualifying Diploma in Social Work (QDSW) is designed to do this. The aim is to improve the standard of practice competence, so the quality of the practice component of qualifying training will be crucial in determining the success or failure of this initiative.

In opening a workshop on the subject, Tony Hall, Director of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW), said that the primary aim of developing the new education and training was to ensure:

> *"(a) a broader knowledge base; (b) a greater depth of skill, including skills in at least one special area of practice; (c) the ability to transfer both into real life practice. All, but particularly the last two, depend on the nature and quality of the practice based experience we can offer" (CCETSW, 1987a:6).*

This "practice-based experience" provides the primary learning opportunity for students on qualifying training. It is also the only place where a student's practical competence can be meaningfully assessed and where acceptable standards of practice can be ensured. This practice-based experience includes not only the input of the practice teacher, but also a wide range of learning experiences within an agency.

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What is Practice Teaching?

According to Doel (1988), the activity called practice teaching has a profoundly different basis from student supervision. The key word is "teaching". Implicit in practice teaching is the idea that the job of teaching social work practice is different from the job of doing social work, that a skilled practice teacher should be a good social worker, but that a good social worker is not necessarily a skilled practice teacher.

The main points to be aware of in practice teaching are the following (Doel, 1988:45):

- what will be taught?
- how will it be taught?
- where will it be taught?
- how will the teaching be reviewed?
- how will what is learnt be examined?

There is a need to develop a curriculum for the practicum in order to clarify these points, and to identify the main components involved in practice teaching.

The main components of practice teaching have been identified as follows (CCETSW, 1987a:10):

• Direct teaching of social work practice skills, knowledge and values to students while they are working in a social work agency.

• Assessment of students' learning needs and the formal assessment of their practice competence.

• Organisation and co-ordination of the whole practice-based learning experience, including liaison with managers and other professionals the student might work alongside.

• Liaison with colleges and practice teachers to ensure the appropriateness of the practice-based experience to the students' learning needs.

• Supervision of a student's practical work.

• Integration of a student's learning while in practice with the college component of the course.

- Facilitating transfer of a student's previously acquired practice skills and knowledge to differing practice settings.

- Motivating a student and facilitating the best use of the practice learning experience to ensure that the student reaches his or her full potential as a practitioner.

- Liaising with future practice teachers or trainers to ensure the continuity of a student's learning and professional development.

- Liaising with colleges to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of college teaching and the adequate preparation of students for placement in practice.

Problems Experienced in Practice Teaching

These components and objectives of practice teaching have been undermined in the United Kingdom by an inadequate supply of placements, lack of effective monitoring of practice teaching, lack of influence of agencies on colleges and vice versa and inadequate resourcing of practice teaching. In addition, student units are often under threat and several have been cut at times of financial stringency. Inconsistent management and a lack of a career pathway have also hindered the development of practice teaching as a profession.

From the viewpoint of educational establishments, the problem of finding enough good quality placements is acute. For example, in October 1988, 40% of students at one North London Polytechnic had not found placements three weeks before they were due to start (Clapton, 1989:2). In addition, too few placements of indeterminate quality are offered by isolated and temporary practice teachers.

Some of the possible rewards for practice teachers have been outlined by Gray (1986:1) as:

a)   satisfaction gained in working with the student;
b)   contributing to the development of social work practice;
c)   the prospect of promotion;
d)   the prospect of a career in college-based social work education;
e)   status conferred by the validation of their own practice.

However, Gray notes that such rewards balance badly against the personal cost of supervising a student, given that effective caseload management is rare and that the

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work of practice teachers is seldom supervised, evaluated or supported. He notes that many middle managers do not give practice teaching a high priority or consider it a focus for the work of their salaried staff. Also many social workers are not trained or experienced as practice teachers and their own supervising practice is sometimes doubtful. Gray (1986:1) concludes:

"In sum, educational issues are given an alarmingly low priority compared with operational issues, with agencies tending to see themselves as consumers, rather than providers".

In addition, although many student units have been set up by local authorities, the real costs of practice teaching are conveniently hidden through substantial voluntary involvement by practitioners, adding student responsibilities to their existing workloads (see Sawdon, 1986:vii).

In the face of some of these difficulties, practice teachers have come together to provide mutual support for their members. For example, the Islington Practice Teachers Support Group was established in 1989 to provide this back-up support, offering a regular two hourly session during work time with minutes taken of meetings. Their concerns were some of the following:

– a need for workload reduction on the part of members;
– support for members in times of placement breakdown or failure;
– lack of knowledge about new developments in social work theory and practice; and
– the issue of power relations (race, class and gender) between students and practice teachers (Clapton, 1989:2).

In April 1989 the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) approved a new strategy for dealing with concerns over the quality and quantity of practice teaching/learning opportunities. These included raising of awareness among agencies of the importance of providing students with high quality practice placements and introducing a new system for the training, assessment and accreditation of practice teachers. This involved the approval by CCETSW of the agencies providing effective practice teaching.

Issues of Accreditation in Practice Teaching

In the United Kingdom the responsibility for the accreditation of practice teachers rests with the employing authorities. Agencies may designate members of their staff as "accredited practice teachers" for up to five years. It will then be for agencies to decide whether to continue designation after this period. If accredited practice teachers move to other agencies the designation lapses, but they may be redesignated by their new employers.

Accredited Practice Teachers are Expected to Hold:

(a) a recognised qualification in social work, or in a closely related field;

(b) have a minimum of two years post-qualifying experience in social work, or in a closely related field.

Those who meet the assessment requirements are issued with a practice teaching award.

Objectives of an Accreditation System:

The importance of practice learning in producing competent social workers cannot be over-emphasised. Accreditation of agencies and practice teachers would aim to improve the quality and availability of practice teachers and placement provision. The objectives of an accreditation system would be to set standards for agencies and practice teachers in order to:

(a) develop a sufficient number of student placements to respond to individual students' learning needs and the development of specialist skills and knowledge required for practice;

(b) establish practice teaching as an attractive career development, with good working conditions which will both attract and retain experienced workers;

(c) ensure that practice teachers receive adequate training and supervision throughout their careers;

(d) ensure that the quality of practice teaching, placement arrangements and the accuracy of assessment can be actively monitored and maintained;

(e)   ensure that practice teaching, placement arrangements and the training and supervision of practice teachers are properly resourced and managed;

(f)   establish an acceptable national standard in placement arrangements and practice teaching but allow sufficient flexibility to permit variations according to local needs and initiatives; and to

(g)   facilitate closer integration of college and agency learning.

(points taken from CCETSW, 1988:6).

Role of CCETSW in Social Work Training

In the United Kingdom, the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) is the responsible body which provides guidelines and regulations concerning social work training, also providing funding for these purposes. In 1982/83, CCETSW took over responsibility for allocating training support funds from the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS).

In developing a long term strategy (see CCETSW, 1990:2), CCETSW proposes to promote the Qualifying Diploma in Social Work programme in a regional context and to provide a devolved budget for this purpose. The overall target is to provide a sufficient number of agencies in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to enable all students on QDSW programmes to undertake their practice learning in an approved agency supervised by an accredited practice teacher. CCETSW intends that this aim will be achieved by 1995, by which time there should be a pool of 4,000 accredited practice teachers.

Funding for CCETSW's Operations:

CCETSW has successfully negotiated the provision of funds from Government and in the year 1988/89 this reached £16,720,000, which represented a 31% increase in the Council's budget compared with 1988/89.

With regard to the specific area of practice learning and accreditation, CCETSW was allocated £1,321,000 to support developments in this area in 1989/90. In the same year training support funds totalling £1,568,000 were used to provide approximately 100,000 student placement days in England and Wales, just over one sixth of the requirement of the 6,250 or so CQSW students undergoing training. These funds are made available through CCETSW to voluntary organisations which provide placements in England and Wales. Separate arrangements fund placements in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Local authorities and probation services provide placements from

their own resources. Many of the placements provided by voluntary organisations are located in 40 student units whose staff undertake a range of activities including teaching on CQSW courses, student allocation and training and support of practice teachers.

During the course of the year, the Government provided a further one million pounds to assist with improvements in existing training provision. CCETSW indicates that preliminary information on the allocation and use of these funds point to many productive outcomes. However they note that commitment to improve social work education and training is unlikely to be sustained unless more funds are provided. (Figures taken from CCETSW: 1990:27).

Regional Practice Learning Centres

CCETSW is also designating regional Practice Learning Centres (PLC's) to provide training consistent with the Council's three non-negotiable objectives. These are:

(i)   increasing the quality, quantity and range of practice learning opportunities;

(ii)   developing practice learning opportunities across the education and training continuum; and

(iii)   developing anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice learning opportunities.

In addition the following are for negotiation in the light of regional needs:

(i)   participating in the development and provision of training and assessment leading to the accreditation of practice teachers;

(ii)   improving systems for planning, arranging and providing practice learning opportunities;

(iii)   developing multi-disciplinary practice learning opportunities.

(taken from CCETSW, 1990:3)

Example of Two Practice Teaching Centres

a) Wales

The South and West Wales Practice Teaching Centre was set up in January 1987 as a

response to the shortfall in placement availability, particularly in groupwork. The project's brief included exploration of ways in which new models of practice learning could be developed in order to create opportunities which crossed professional boundaries, focusing on skills, client groups and methods of work, as opposed to the traditional single placement setting. The Practice Teaching Centre started from the assumption that there was a wealth of good learning potential that was as yet untapped and unrecognised, mainly because it did not fall neatly into the usual orthodox practice placement settings. The model used by the Centre moves away from a "settings specific" placement and challenges the "singleton" placement model. It also tries to incorporate residential and day care services within an integrated care model. The Centre is based on a collaborative approach between college, agencies and the Centre itself. The Group Care Training Officer is used as a resource person, monitoring progress through contact with the practice teacher and providing feedback and evaluation of the placement to the agency and college. The Centre organises workshops and introductory sessions for new practice teachers involved in the placement and offers consultation and support to those who undertake student supervision. These are timed to be concurrent with a placement.

Students have a "main base" for their placement (eg children's home/adult training centre), but work with other agencies and organisations concerned with the client group. The idea is to provide a structured learning experience within and beyond the main practice base, with the designated practice teacher collating feedback from other practitioners about student performance. In this way students are able to demonstrate different facets of their work. They have access to a variety of professional role models, and this increases the chances of a fair assessment with a shared evaluation of their "seen" practice. According to Johnson and Shabbaz (1989:247), feedback from practice teachers, students, college and agency staff has been very positive, particularly in relation to the clearly identified learning objectives presented by the Centre.

b) England

A further example of a Practice Learning Centre is Cripps Lodge in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, which takes students from five different colleges. Following complaints from employers that students were not learning skills required for employment and that their knowledge was removed from actual practice, the Centre changed its approach to practice learning. It was felt that the single agency placements were not offering a sufficient variety of experiences to students and consequently were not meeting their learning needs. As a result placements are now made according to specific learning objectives rather than according to the kind of placement the student would like to have. The student is expected to engage with a wide variety of agencies and use a range of skills in a flexible way. They are expected to be able to negotiate their

learning objectives and then develop a realistic contract with the agencies concerned. Buckinghamshire Social Services Department now feel that practice teachers need to be more skilled and know what competencies are required for practice. This is even more necessary given the merging of the Certificate in Social Services (CSS) and the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) courses as the new Qualifying Diploma in Social Work (QDSW), with an even greater weight given to fieldwork. Consequently there is a need for practice teachers to receive training so that they are aware of expectations. As a result they now do 108 days training before receiving accreditation from the Centre.

Developing a Curriculum to Teach Social Work Practice

The Relevance of Developing a Curriculum:

The importance of the practice component in the social work curriculum has already been outlined. In the United Kingdom the need to improve the practice competence of qualified social workers was enshrined in CCETSW's proposals for the reform of social work training (CCETSW, 1987a:15).

Further, within social work education, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of learning for and from practice. The principles of adult education (Knowles, 1978) suggest that adults will wish to have their own past experience validated and incorporated in any learning programme and that they will wish to engage in learning which is clearly and immediately relevant to their future tasks. Since all social work students are adults, this implies that social work learning should be based on past practice experience and foreseeable practice tasks.

An effective practice curriculum is one which accommodates this central importance of practice in social work education. It is one which is developed for and from practice, rather than one which is imposed on a practice setting from without. Adult social work students require the opportunity to build on their unique past experiences which form an essential and valued framework for this exchange. The emphasis must therefore be on an internal learning process, where the practice teacher gives the student choice between different opportunities to learn and where the students allows the practice teacher to choose preferred ways of teaching when required to teach.

In short we are considering the essential elements in the design of a curriculum for the teaching and learning of social work practice. As Doel (1988) points out, the working part of a curriculum is the syllabus (the map that guides its operation) and there are four cornerstones to this:

1) Content – the objectives of learning are made specific and explicit;
2) Methods – the ways in which learning is promoted are made specific and explicit;
3) Sequence – opportunities for learning are presented in coherent stages;
4) Assessment – review of progress and examination of competence takes place at agreed intervals as part of the curriculum.

However syllabus is not enough by itself. According to Doel, two integral factors transform these four into a curriculum:

Aims – these involve moral and political considerations: what ought students to be learning and who makes the decisions over these priorities?

Evaluation – the aims of the course need to be evaluated, and each aspect of the syllabus. For example:

– are there elements in the content which are missing or redundant or repetitive?
– are the teaching methods interesting, varied and relevant to the content?
– is the sequence of learning opportunities logical, coherent and incremental?
– are the two aspects of assessment (review and examination) fair, accurate and reliable?

Doel (1988:47) mentions two factors which have militated strongly against the more systematic introduction of a practice curriculum.

The first is the spontaneous nature of social work practice – opportunities arise *ad hoc*, often unpredictably. However Doel points out that an experienced worker knows the kind of work which comes to the agency, and therefore the likelihood of appropriate opportunities for the student. The same worker will also prepare fall-back positions and alternative routes so the student can find the desired opportunities. In addition a syllabus should allow a number of teaching themes to develop spontaneously.

The second difficulty in applying a curriculum to practice-based teaching is the tacit acceptance by practice teachers of an impossible task – to attempt to teach all and everything. This can lead to the student learning to work in different contexts, but not using this in an incremental way. This is why there needs to be a clear focus on the specific learning needs of the student and a clearly defined agreement or contract between student and practice teacher.

If the practice placement and the class-based work are viewed as a whole, this presents practice teachers with a significant but welcome challenge. Each placement becomes

a testing ground for the previous class-based learning and an anticipation of the next sequence. The practice learning is no longer a discrete and self-contained chapter in the student's experience of training. This leads to the prospect of practice-led curricula, in which the class curriculum is in turn revised and shaped by the practice curriculum. Curriculum development would be seen as a joint enterprise rather than two or more separate ones; in some areas innovations would arise from the class setting, in others they would spring from practice.

Conclusion

The new term "practice teaching" (which used to be called student supervision) aims to reflect the positive educational and training responsibilities given to the practitioner who chooses to work with students. Many of the criticisms of practice teaching point *to the fact that it* is an unresourced, peripheral concern for many agencies. In order to change that situation, practice teachers need to develop collective recognition, expertise and power. Student units have begun to show these possibilities, and the time is ripe for the encouragement and growth of informed networks at both a regional and national level. Indeed the recent CCETSW propositions for a unified system of basic qualifying training for social work clearly imply the need for an expansion and developing recognition of the practice teaching component in social work education. This may come with the development of the new Practice Teaching Centres and a greater awareness of the relevance of fieldwork training to the profession.

Section 2: Developing Fieldwork with a Social Development Orientation (Sri Lanka)

Introduction

This section will examine the attempt to conduct an inter-institutional cooperative venture between the University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work and the Sri Lanka School of Social Work (SLSSW). The project was jointly designed and then implemented with participation in planning, implementation and evaluation, following a social development framework model (see Abrahams and Chandrasekere, 1990:213).

Dissatisfaction with previous short-term consultation and a wish to re-orient the School in the direction of social development had led the former Director of the SLSSW to discuss the possibility of refocusing and revising the curriculum in the direction of social development with colleagues in Canada. In their turn the Faculty of Social Work in Toronto was keen to engage in the process of "...an appropriate transfer of educational technology with a Third World forum" (Abrahams and Chandrasekere, 1990:215). There was a wish to avoid the expert-dominated, top-down model of consultation and instead use one based on social development consultation.

The project, which came to be known as the Canada/Sri Lanka Social Work Education Linkage Project, received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, the University of Toronto and its Faculty of Social Work, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Social Services and UNICEF. The Project began in 1981 and although officially terminating in 1986, contacts and further work continue to date.

Social Development and Sri Lanka

In researching background information for the Fieldwork Manual (1990), I came across material that had been prepared by the Canada/Sri Lanka Linkage Project, where the Faculty of Social Work at Toronto University had assisted the School of Social Work in Sri Lanka in revising and updating their curriculum, with special emphasis given to their practical fieldwork training. This information proved valuable,

particularly as there is little published material on developing social work fieldwork in Third World settings. As Toronto University Faculty of Social Work had developed an international reputation in assisting in the development of relevant models of social work curricula, and a significant amount of material had been published in international social work/development journals, it seemed appropriate to use part of my sabbatical to visit Toronto and meet with social work academics at the Faculty of Social Work. A further incentive was the fact that the Director of the Sri Lanka School of Social Work is currently a doctoral student at Toronto University and was interested in meeting with me to discuss fieldwork programmes in Sri Lanka and find out about our own field training in Zimbabwe.

In Sri Lanka more than 50% of the population is considered to be poor, with the number of government food stamp holders numbering 7,3 million. 40% of the child population is suffering from malnutrition. Welfare expenditure has been gradually reduced as investment for economic development programmes has increased, and this appears to have worsened the plight of the poor. There is a great deal of emphasis placed on poverty alleviation (7,3 million of Sri Lanka's 16 million population are below the poverty datum line). Public assistance encourages the investment of surplus funds in micro projects.

Dhanapala (1989:49) has stated that social development is a goal and a process based on three interrelated principles: human dignity, equality and social justice. He notes that the Sri Lankan government has taken many developmental measures to alleviate poverty and uplift the life and condition of the people. Examples of these efforts include land development, land reform and other developmental projects. However he notes that little attention has been focused on social development, since most of these activities have been directed towards economic development – which have not succeeded in curtailing the income distribution gap between the rich and poor.

Following the setting up of this Linkage Project, Abrahams et al (1990) designed a Practice Manual to assist in the teaching and learning of social development practice. The Manual introduces the readers to the concept, philosophy and value base of social development and then explores the knowledge, methods and skills necessary for social development practice. The authors suggest a Social Development Reader be developed locally (in Sri Lanka and elsewhere) to provide the specific context which should enhance the usefulness of this manual.

The authors note that social development is based on positive, humane, people-oriented development in society. They write:

"Social development assumes that the goal of development is to improve the economic, cultural, physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual conditions of human beings, and that people should be provided with the opportunity to develop to their full potential" (Abrahams et al, 1990:2).

In order to assist local people in working towards this, the authors note that the social development worker should take a proactive and preventative approach. The worker should have skills in working with people; survey and investigative skills, planning skills, implementation skills, monitoring skills and evaluation skills, among others (Abrahams et al, 1990:13). It is these skills which the SLSSW intends to equip students with by the end of their training period. According to the Principal of the SLSSW, there is 100% employment of social work graduates from the School. Sri Lanka has a requirement that social workers must have a diploma in order to be employed. They are employed as Social Development Assistants by Government Departments such as the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Health and NGO's such as UNICEF and UNDP.

In conclusion Dhanapala (1989:50) suggests the following inter-sectoral strategy for social development in Sri Lanka:

1)   There should be an integrated approach to development;
2)   Special emphasis should be given to programmes for children, women, youth, the disabled, and for drug addicts;
3)   Special attention should be given to employment and underemployment;
4)   Peoples' participation should be encouraged in policy making and imple-mentation programmes.

Goals of the Linkage Project

Sri Lanka seemed a useful place to begin this initiative as by the early 1980's social work had begun to receive recognition for the part it could play in social development in the context of the Third World. In addition the Sri Lankan faculty had identified specific social work educational and technological areas with which they required assistance. The University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work, had expertise in the field of international social work, including three faculty members familiar with Sri Lanka and one who had worked with community development training in Sri Lanka. This expertise, coupled with the recognised changing processes of social work education in Canada, particularly in relation to Toronto's multi-cultural communities, led Toronto faculty members to address the issues of transferability of teaching and

practice technologies. Therefore, both participating faculties were able to plan curriculum development together, paying particular attention to the cross-cultural aspects of this exchange.

The Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work and the Sri Lanka School of Social Work outlined the following goals and objectives:

(1) to cooperate in a planned programme for the development of social work education;

(2) to upgrade the curriculum within the context of social development efforts in Sri Lanka;

(3) to strengthen the development of trained social work manpower at the Diploma level and to begin plans for a Master's level degree;

(4) to jointly produce analysis, evaluation and documentation concerning the project.

The goals of the Project also included objectives for both Canadian and Sri Lankan social work educators. The Project's principal goals in this context included:

− to increase the capacity of the Sri Lanka School of Social Work to contribute to its country's development efforts, and

− to increase the capacity of Canadian social work educators to provide appropriate technical assistance for these efforts (see Abrahams,1986:3).

Ground rules for consultants included the factor that no consultant was to participate in open meetings without the presence of his or her counterpart. This was established in order to transfer knowledge and to demonstrate a sense of partnership. Joint seminars were held where ideas and knowledge about field instruction could be shared and discussed. Later a field instructor's training course was developed and conducted by the Sri Lanka teaching faculty with some consultative assistance.

The Project was based upon a concern for developing both appropriate content in social work courses and curriculum development in social work education in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan initiators of the project desired a curriculum that had a focus on social development and the Canadian faculty members provided resources and experienced personnel to assist them in working towards this. The Project implementors recognised that the appropriateness of Western social work education had been questioned in recent years with great regularity, but no actual testing, evaluation and

documentation of these transfers had been undertaken. This Linkage Project provided the opportunity for a continuous analysis and evaluation of content - and the process by which that content was transmitted to students.

In addition to revising courses to include inputs on social development, the goal of the Project to "upgrade" the level of the Diploma programme included the following elements:

- providing more up to date content;
- teaching of content to be both descriptive and analytic;
- more depth and complexity in content taught – eg discussion of several theories about similar phenomena;
- meeting the increased expectations of students regarding their level of participation, encouraging greater independence of learning and a higher level of competence in analytic skills.

Factors Influencing Implementation

The teaching staff of the School serve a joint role as Officers of the Ministry of Social Services and Educators within the School of Social Work. This fact, together with the current civil disturbances have affected the School as staff have had to serve in refugee camps, while students have had their placements disrupted through having to function as assistants in the operation of the camps. Other crises due to drought and flooding have meant that teaching faculty have been involved in planning for emergency operations. Apart from the negative impact of these crises, it is recognised that the positive outcome is the involvement of the School in issues of major concern within Sri Lanka.

The lack of good physical facilities and sufficient academic resources is consistent with many Third World educational facilities. Resource constraints generally affected the implementation of the Project, although some funding was available. These limitations now are being recognised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and plans are underway to address some of them.

There were several problems associated with bringing the course content up to date to current thinking and literature. The social development area of social work practice is quite recent and therefore publication in this field has only recently become significant. The School possessed no recent professional journals or texts in either social work or social development and no recognition or time had been given to faculty for academic

preparation. This may have created some dependency on the external consultants, although this is not recognised in the literature available on the Project. One of the consultants has in fact noted (Herington, 1985:16):

"A strong group cohesion existed in the faculty teaching group, and warm collegial relationships had been established with the Canadian counterparts, past and present...Over time I observed a growing equality in the relationships with counterparts taking equal responsibility and initiative in our work together".

Fieldwork Consultation

The fieldwork consultation consisted of four major areas (Bogo, 1985:19):

1)   to develop the field instruction capability and competence of the SLSSW faculty as field instructors by:

• the development of a Field Instructors Course that presented current theory and practice and examined the usefulness of models developed in North America in the Sri Lankan context. The goal was to develop a Sri Lankan model of field instruction that would incorporate social work values and practice within an educational methodology relevant to Sri Lanka;

• on-site field instruction sessions conducted by the Sri Lankan faculty with students in their social development projects in order to provide a link between field instruction theory and practice;

2)   to offer an Agency Supervisors' Training Course to a selected group of social workers in Sri Lanka who either already had, or could, perform as field instructors;

3)   to undertake intensive work with the Field Work Coordinator at the SLSSW with the aim of developing his expertise and leadership capability;

4)   to facilitate the faculty's deliberations in respect to further field practice curricula issues that require development.

Achievements of the Linkage Project

The Project provided training for the Sri Lanka School of Social Work faculty members in the assessment of social development projects. Field sites were selected

and translations of all relevant materials regarding these field sites was completed, and data collection on the sites took place. Work on the design and development of appropriate field manuals for the social development projects, as well as the completion of textual materials for use in the classroom, began, and continues despite the termination of the project.

The involvement of Ministry officials in a number of the workshops initially only designed to provide staff training turned out to have a positive impact upon the relations of the SLSSW and the newly formed Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The local recognition of the expertise of the SLSSW faculty was visible in a way it had not been previously. The contributions of SLSSW to the development programmes of Sri Lanka have begun to receive appropriate recognition (Abrahams: July 1990:4). The ongoing work of all consultants and staff has resulted in the presentation to Parliament of a Bill to establish the Sri Lanka National Institute for Social Development. At this time sites for the establishment of the Institute (which will supersede the Sri Lanka School of Social Work and undertake its functions within a broader framework of social development and social welfare) are under consideration and funding has been requested to support the development of such an Institute.

Periodically throughout the progress of the Project, evaluation sessions were held, at times with the use of a consultant. The social development model was deliberately used as a process of consultancy and the project participants considered that this process contributed as much as the content of the consultancies to an appropriate transfer of educational technology:

> *"The social development consultation processes of modelling, participation, contracting, support of counterpart-initiated change, discussion of results, and joint participation in evaluation of progress formed the basis of the consultancies. These consultancies and the processes through which they were carried out illustrate empowerment through technology transfer"* (Abrahams and Chandrasekere, 1990:221).

According to the Project documents, the primary objective of developing and refining knowledge and skill in field instruction was achieved through the Field Instructors' course and the field visits to various agencies, which provided an experiential and skill-training component to the course. Bogo (1985,26) writes:

> *"Members felt closer and more open as a result of the experience. Group cohesion and support developed with the Faculty perceiving a direction for themselves in the field instruction programme. Members were able to accept and*

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carry responsible roles as group presenters. Individual faculty reported a growing sense of self-awareness and understanding".

The production of the Social Development Manual was a major achievement of the Project. This was translated into Sinhala. This Manual is intended to be used alongside local Social Development Readers which will provide the country-specific relevance for field training purposes.

Two of the consultants on the Project were women and they, together with the female staff on the Sri Lanka School of Social Work stressed issues relevant to Women in Development. However some concern was expressed by field instructors with regard to the probability of an educational activity that encouraged creativity and flexibility taking place in government agencies, which were seen as bureaucratic and inflexible. In addition, prevailing authoritarian styles in education at the School and elsewhere gave rise to some concerns.

Fieldwork at the Sri Lanka School of Social Work

It may be useful to examine the current situation regarding fieldwork at the Sri Lanka School. This information has kindly been provided by Sarath Chandrasekere, Principal of the School and currently a doctoral student at Toronto University:

There are three fieldwork placements spread over the three years of the Diploma. The course is structured as follows:

(a) First and Second Years:
  – 3 months academic work
  – 3 months fieldwork
  – 3 months academic work

(b) Third Year:
  – 9 months fieldwork

(a) First and second year fieldwork placements

With the first placement students are expected to work more on a family level, visiting families in their villages and homes to assist with any personal difficulties. During fieldwork the agency field instructor and the School faculty supervisor meet twice a month. Faculty members go out to visit students on placement two days a month during periods of fieldwork. They will spend the time with the student, going to visit families with them and directly participating in their work. Vehicles are provided by either the

agency or the School. Students have a written contract signed by all three participants in the fieldwork process. They are expected to provide a minimum of four reports during this period.

During the first three days of the placement the student undertakes a simple data collection exercise concerning the area they will be working in. They then select 15 families and with assistance from their supervisor reduce these to five. They will then work with these five families dealing with any problems that might arise and write these up as case records for the agency and School.

The instructor will complete three or four assessment reports on the student during each placement which will comment on such factors as: empathy, confidence, knowledge of theory, attitude, preparation, assessment skills, etc.

The placement in the second year is more involved and the student is expected to work with the whole community rather than just with families. If the student wished, and if it is considered appropriate, he or she may continue to work with the same community and families throughout all three placements.

During the first three weeks the field instructor takes the student and will introduce him or her to the community. The student will accompany the supervisor to all the houses in a particular community (this might be about 150 families), with the intention of getting to know the households concerned and building rapport with the community. At this time the student will also be undertaking a community survey report which will be given to the instructor at the end of three weeks. Following this the student is expected to undertake a social development project which should be developed at a grass-roots level, mobilise community participation and deal with issues of social concern. The guidelines used for the social development project, and for its evaluation may be seen in Annexures 1 and 2.

(b) Third year fieldwork placement

This is a much longer, nine month placement where there is no field supervisor as such. This is seen as an integrated rural development project. Students engage with the local community, undertaking a needs assessment using local people to assist in the study. There is an emphasis on participation of local people and the importance of their involvement from the beginning of any project is stressed.

Students are expected to work on their own, although a nominated supervisor will write up a report at the end. Students are also expected to write up a social development

project report of about 6,500 words and also to deliver an oral defence of their project. At the end of the placement, students will come together with agency supervisors and staff from the School to share in a residential week's debriefing.

Every two weeks the student is expected to produce a fieldwork report indicating what has been achieved and what there is still left to do. The students will meet up together with the faculty staff twice during the nine month period and together with the faculty supervisor once a month.

With the final placement there is no field supervisor as such. The agencies provide support to the students and supervisors will write up their reports at the end of fieldwork. At the end of the fieldwork students return to the School for a week (with their agency supervisors) to stay in residence and share with each other their fieldwork experience. They are expected to do a 45 minute presentation before a panel. When this is finished students engage in music and dancing, volleyball and other recreational activities with faculty staff and agency supervisors.

Students are evaluated on their project at the end of the third placement in the following way:

Individual social development project proposal............................ 10 marks
Faculty supervisors report.. 30 marks
Panel presentation.. 50 marks
Participation in discussion... 10 marks
Total... 100 marks

Students are also expected to grade their own performance and then discuss their own assessment with the faculty instructor. Approximately 60% are likely to give the same mark, whereas 40% might give a higher mark than that given by the instructor; however this provides the opportunity for open and frank discussion of the student's performance.

Most of the field supervisors are ex-graduates of the School. Every year the School provides four or five days training for these ex-graduates. The training includes a session on social development. After the vacation following periods of fieldwork (in the third term) the field supervisors are invited to the School to discuss how practice suits theory and vice versa.

Conclusion

The Linkage Project provided the opportunity for a dialogue on social work knowledge relative to the general learning objectives for students about to practice social work in Sri Lanka. The role of the consultants was to assist counterparts in articulating and conceptualising social work theory, to consider its relevance and to refer them to sources of more up to date content. For example new material on social development and systems theory was developed as a result of this effort.

The desire of the Sri Lankan faculty to re-orient the courses towards social development was a significant factor in the apparent success of this Project, as was their commitment and interest in closely monitoring the students' performance during fieldwork.

Curriculum planning workshops were held to encourage the faculty to find ways to integrate adult learning principles into the curriculum design. The faculty adopted several approaches in this regard:

1) they started holding students more responsible for their learning (eg students were expected to hand in assignments on due dates without written reminders;
2) they recognised students' previous experiences when teaching theory, and developed more flexibility in responding to students' expressed concerns in class by repeating material for clarification, or diverting from the prepared lesson plan;
3) they used a more informal teaching style and a variety of teaching tools.

The result of using this teaching technology was the creation of a more collegial teaching/learning relationship between teachers and students. However as a Senior Consultant with the Project (Herington, 1985:10) points out, despite this the academic programme still tended to remain prescriptive and rigidly structured in it scheduling. More time and specific theoretical input in this area would be necessary to effect further change, if the School desired to fully adopt this model.

Herington (1985:13) concludes:

"In summary, I do not believe transferability of knowledge is a major or difficult problem in Sri Lanka as long as due attention is given to a thorough understanding of the local cultures and patterns of community life. This understanding informs the selection of content to be taught and how such content needs to be adapted to the local practice context".

Section 3: Selected Theories - Adult Learning and Fieldwork Training

Introduction

This section will consider the relevance of some theories of adult learning to field education in social work training. Three interrelated theoretical frameworks are selected as having particular relevance in this regard. Firstly the framework offered by Bogo and Vayda (1989) is presented, then Knowles (1972) and finally Hamilton and Else (1983).

Bogo and Vayda (1989) - the Integration of Theory and Practice (ITP) Loop

Bogo and Vayda (1989:227) point out that in field education the student and instructor participate in an interactive learning experience. They quote Kolb (1984) who argued that adult learning builds on the premise that learning is stimulated by a problem that needs to be solved and is therefore firmly rooted in practice experience. He suggested a cycle that moves from concrete experience to observation, reflection, abstraction, generalisation and then to the formation of hypotheses to be tested. Bogo and Vayda (1989) have adapted this Kolb cycle to social work practice and have developed a model which they term the Integration of Theory and Practice (ITP) loop.

This loop has the following components:
1) Retrieval
2) Reflection
3) Linkage
4) Professional response

1) Retrieval – This model starts with retrieval, where the student (or social worker) recalls information - either the facts of an initial encounter, or other observations. The methods of retrieval include observations made through recall and verbal reports, process and summary recording, audio or videotapes, live supervision, or co-working experiences. The content can include details about the specific setting and circumstances, interpersonal communication, and cultural, economic or political factors.

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2) Reflection – Reflection starts with personal associations, thoughts, feelings and ideas which follow the encounter. The field instructor should help the student identify the values, biases, assumptions and attitudes which attach to the observed facts in order to make them understandable within a personal context. Because values and assumptions modify observations, they must be acknowledged as far as possible - eg cultural, class, racial and sex biases or assumptions. Since the entry point in the loop is rooted firmly in the professional enterprise, reflection must always relate to the practice experience. While subjective, it is focused and purposeful and should not be generally invasive of a student's personality.

3) Linkage – This step moves to a search for the professional knowledge base that makes it possible to choose a specific response to a particular situation. The field instructor's task is not only to draw the student's attention to theoretical knowledge, but also to help the student apply that knowledge in relation to a specific practice situation. The student needs to link theoretical knowledge to the phenomena of practice in order to come to a clear idea what the response should be.

4) Professional response – A particular response or action is selected and this should be consistent with the nature of the problem as diagnosed by the student. Students may struggle with the process of selecting an appropriate response from a bewildering array of options, but in time should become more skilled in doing so.

Bogo and Vayda (1986:5) have summarised this approach as follows:

"The process of field instruction training includes the following:
1. Reflection on one's primary comfort as a competent practitioner along with an ability to tolerate residual discomfort.
2. The ability to retrieve elements of one's own practice behaviour and to subject these elements to critical analysis.
3. The ability to articulate this process, that is, to be able to say what was done and why it was done.
4. The ability to link practice behaviour to the value and knowledge base derived from practice experience and to articulate this linkage.
5. The ability to engage the student in the same process of retrieval, reflection, linkage and response.
6. The ability to help the student build and reinforce a level of practice capability that will meet professional standards".

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Social work education needs to develop the expertise of students as active, self-directing learners, able to respond to the changes that characterise present day professional practice. Bogo (1983:7) recommends that the following procedures should be taken into account when setting up field experience for social work students:

1. Schools should state their educational objectives in the practicum in a clear and specific manner. Schools and agencies, in their negotiations, should examine these objectives so that agencies can decide whether they can offer practice opportunities where students will be able to meet the broad objectives of the school.

2. Students should be actively involved in choosing the agency setting in which they will do their practicum, as the agency not only determines the general field of practice but also the practice approach or model they will learn.

3. Students should be expected to assess their own preferred learning styles and to use this knowledge in negotiating their practicum setting. Educational counselling used by the faculty, or social work practice labs or seminars may be used by schools to help students develop this ability and knowledge.

4. Schools should provide educational experiences for field instructors where they can develop knowledge and skill about field instruction. A central focus should be on assessing the social worker's preferred teaching style, their underlying assumptions relating to learning and teaching, and the impact of these elements on the educational experience with students.

5. Field instructors, knowing what they can teach and how they prefer to teach, should be afforded the opportunity to use this information in selection of students for the practicum and in negotiating with the student the content and process of their time together.

Knowles – the Guiding Principles of Andragogy

The work of Malcolm Knowles who applied the principles of andragogy to social work education, is of particular relevance to field instructors. He defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (1972:32), and contrasts this with pedagogy - the art and science of teaching children. Knowles' thesis is that pedagogy is not a suitable methodology when it comes to teaching adults as it is basically a "top-down" approach. According to Knowles, pedagogues have traditionally decided what knowledge and skills needed to be transmitted to students and th ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾

lesson plans and course outlines for transmitting them. He suggests that we need, in its stead, to explore more innovative ways of teaching adults, and andragogy offers that possibility. He argues that adults learn better experientially, can be involved in analysing their own experience, and tend to have a problem-centred orientation to learning.

Knowles considers that andragogues:

"...define education not as a process of transmitting knowledge, but as a process of inquiry. They concern themselves, therefore, with preparing and marshalling resources for engaging learners in inquiry according to process designs, and they define their role as facilitators and resources in the process of inquiry" (Knowles, 1972:36).

Knowles suggests that the characteristics which promote an optimal learning climate are "informality, mutual respect, physical comfort, collaboration rather than competition, openness, authenticity, trust, non-defensiveness, and curiosity" (1972:36).

He presents four assumptions about the adult learner from which he draws principles of andragogical theory that differentiate it from pedagogy:

1)   Maximum learning occurs when the educational expectations are consistent with the learner's self-concept as a self-directing adult;

2)   Since adult learners have rich life experience, which can be analysed and drawn upon as learning resources, the educational expectations should place "...decreasing emphasis on the transmitted techniques of traditional teaching and increasing emphasis on experiential techniques which tap the experience of the learners and involve them in analysing their experience" (1972:35);

3)   Since adult readiness to learn is the product of the developmental tasks required for the performance of evolving careers and social roles (they are ready to learn those things they believe they need), learning opportunities should be shaped to recognise those needs;

4)   Since adults seek education primarily to cope more adequately with current life problems and want to apply immediately what they learn, the curriculum design should be problem-centred.

Andragogy and Social Work Training

With regard to social work training, Knowles suggests a curriculum that is basically organised around the problem areas with which social work deals, perhaps with a different,but sequential set of problems each year, and:

> "...with the sequence of learning within each unit being from field experience to theory and principles to foundational knowledge to skill practice to field application" (1972:37).

The purpose and structure of the field practicum provides the environment for practice learning. It is problem-centred, presenting the student with a situation requiring action which must be subjected to evaluation and re-evaluation. However, while self-direction, initiative, and responsibility for one's own learning are ·expectations, Knowles does not suggest abdication of the involvement of the teacher with the student. Thus the learning/teaching team of student and field instructor engage actively together.

Sawdon (1986:56) in commenting on the use of Knowles' principles in social work training, makes the following points:

• social work students are adults who see themselves as essentiallyself-directing, and in this respect are no different from those who have responsibilities in working with them – ie practice teachers and college tutors;

• each person's experience of living is the base to which they relate new learning – ie it should be a constantly developing source on which to draw to promote new learning. If such a resource is devalued or ignored, it is likely that the adult sees this as not only rejecting his of her experience, but also denying identity and rejecting him or her as a person;

• if we can assume that the desire to learn in social work is based on a desire to be more effective in practice, then the adult learner will tend to view learning in a problem-centred way, rather than a subject-centred way;

• there is a need to derive personal satisfaction from what we do as social workers and social work educators.

Hamilton and Else (1983) - a Humanist Educational Perspective

A similar perspective to that found in Bogo and Vayda, and Malcolm Knowles' concepts, is offered by Hamilton and Else (1983). Their book is written from a humanist educational perspective. They point out that the humanist orientation to education has is a valid perspective, and is reflected in the progressive education philosophy of John Dewey (1916, 1934), in the adult education philosophy of Malcolm Knowles (1970), and in the socio-political writings of Paulo Freire (1970) and Ivan Illich (1971).

Hamilton and Else suggest that the content and process of education should empower students - that is increase their confidence and self-reliance:

*   by demonstrating respect for their self-worth and dignity;
*   by encouraging them to be self-directing and thus treating them as subjects rather than as objects;
*   by having them participate in and share responsibility for their education;
*   by making use of the richness of their experience;
*   by shaping learning opportunities around their felt needs.

They point out that since students disperse to a wide variety of placements, field education is the curriculum component with the greatest degree of individualism, and therefore has the greatest potential for implementing a humanist educational philosophy. Hamilton and Else write (1983:11):

> *"Field education is a consciously planned set of experiences, occurring in a practice setting, designed to move students from their initial levels of understanding, skills and attitude to levels associated with autonomous social work practice".*

They view the use of learning contracts as a useful way to facilitate this. Learning contracts are agreements, collaboratively designed by the student (learner) and the teacher (facilitator) that specifies intended educational outcomes. Learning contracts:

> *"...provide a mechanism for implementing a humanist educational philosophy - a philosophy that advocates active participation of learners in the design of their education, that treats learners as subjects rather than as objects, that acknowledges students as responsible, self-directed independent persons, and that values and makes use of the richness of their past experience" (1983:54).*

The use of a contract stimulates and structures discussion of programme expectations and rationale, while this also encourages the selection of appropriate field placements and structured supervision, resulting in a positive teaching/learning situation. A specific commitment is obtained from all parties which provides a basis for mutual accountability, and this should decrease the likelihood of misunderstandings or failure to achieve agreed objectives. In addition the contract spells out not only the expectations but also the criteria and process for assessing performance.

Conclusion

Contemporary social work professional practice necessitates continuous education and development. Social work students need to develop practice competence, responsibility, initiative and expertise and it is likely that this will be achieved in self-directed learning, with a high degree of participation on the part of students. However fieldwork should be conducted in a structured manner and the use of a learning contract helps to clarify the expectations of all concerned.

Section 4: Practice Lessons for Zimbabwe

Extension of the Period Spent on Fieldwork

One of the major achievements of social work training in Sri Lanka appears to be the extensive field training that students engage in. The length of fieldwork is substantial – 15 months out of a three year (27 months) training course at the Diploma level. This period represents over half the training period and is consistent with periods of field training at British Schools of Social Work and many other Schools internationally. A generally accepted view today is that field instruction is of equal importance to academic instruction in a professional and practical field such as social work, and that this should be reflected in the time spent on fieldwork. In the Third World this is of even greater importance as the academic literature mainly reflects Western experience and local practice theory still remains to be formulated. Hence it would seem appropriate for fieldwork to be given more priority than it is at present.

The period of fieldwork training at the School of Social Work in Zimbabwe, in comparison, only represents 6 months of the 27 months of the Diploma course (approximately 20% of the overall training period). Consideration should be given to extending the period spent on fieldwork, although it is recognised that there are logistic problems associated with the School having to fit in with the University timetable (see also Hall, 1990:42, re further discussion of this topic).

"Immersion" of Students with Communities

Another achievement in Sri Lanka which can be identified concerns the close relationship that exists between students and the families and communities with which they work. Students are required to go and stay in communities, often for very long periods of time (for example during the nine month placement). They are immersed within the client communities and as a result develop a deep understanding of their situations and problems. In addition staff from the School will spend time in these rural situations with the students, which increases their understanding as well. The "debriefing session" at the end of the long placement (a residential situation which students, School and agency instructors all attend), is a further useful mechanism to gain a clearer understanding of the problems faced by the various communities and groups that are being assisted by social workers. Although this model of practice is unlikely to be applied at the School in Zimbabwe, any similar project or research which can offer this type of experience is to be recommended.

Development of a Rural Fieldwork Practice Centre

The recommended use of Practice Teaching/Learning Centres in the United Kingdom to provide an integrated, multi-disciplinary and broad-based placement experience for students seems a useful approach for Zimbabwe. The emphasis at the School of Social Work on social development as the primary focus for social workers indicates the need for a generic and multi-sectoral training. In this context, the development of a rural Fieldwork Practice Centre which could offer students an in-depth and intensive field experience working with local communities over a period of time would seem appropriate. In previous years the School has set up rural fieldwork Centres to cater for this need, but these have been time-limited and subject to severe resource constraints. If funding were available for a longer-term and more consistent rural Centre which could serve a particular area of the country, this would be a very useful addition to the field training available through the School.

Accreditation of Practice Teachers in Zimbabwe

"Practice teaching" is a term that seems to have replaced "student supervision" in many schools of social work in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The use of this term extends a greater recognition to agency staff who are in effect also engaging in direct teaching of social work knowledge, values and skills. The use of the term recognises that there is a direct partnership between the academic institution and outside agencies in the training of students. Consequently there is need for greater recognition of the work undertaken by agencies, for follow-up training, seminars, workshops and constant dialogue between school and agency. The School has developed training workshops for agency supervisors at regular intervals, which is a very positive development, but further training and mutual dialogue is to be encouraged.

A system of accreditation of practice teachers is one method for both the training institution and outside agencies to demonstrate their legitimate concern for the maintenance of high standards in fieldwork practice. Accredited practice teachers in the United Kingdom will undertake their responsibilities either on a full-time basis, or part-time, usually with some recognition of the workload this creates.

However, the situation in Zimbabwe differs from that in the United Kingdom to the extent that practice teachers are not employed as such by agencies and there is no career pathway for those wishing to specialise in working with students. Instead agencies provide supervisors to work alongside and supervise students who are sent to them by

the School of Social Work. However the process of becoming an agency supervisor can be a rather random affair and need for further training and follow-up support. Accreditation would still be a useful procedure in these circumstances as it would provide the basis for developing a consistent set of criteria for student assessment and for organising training courses for the supervisors concerned.

A system of accreditation would also be useful if legislation currently under consideration by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare concerning the creation of a Social Work Council comes into effect, as there will be a need to standardise and develop a more professional approach in social work education. In Zimbabwe there is no organisation similar to the British Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW), which provides regulations for and oversees the maintenance of quality and standards in social work training. However the possible incorporation of the proposed Social Work Council should provide a similar function in Zimbabwe.

Developing a Curriculum for Practice Teaching

If practice teaching is to be given increased recognition within social work training in Zimbabwe, it may be useful to attempt to formulate a curriculum to guide students, lecturers and agency staff. This could run concurrently with reviews of course material which regularly take place in respect of the academic courses. In addition, the relationship between taught academic material and the knowledge required for practical training could be regularly reviewed.

A practice curriculum would probably need to replicate some of the detail given to course aims and objectives, course content, required reading, etc, that is presently given to academic courses. In addition methods of assessment need to be considered and some changes might need to be made to raise the quality of assessment – for example, there is no provision for double marking of student reports to ensure consistency and fairness of grading as there is with final examinations in most of the other academic courses (although the system of composite marks does provide some objectivity). The guiding principle would be to maintain similar standards as far as possible between practical and academic courses.

Implications of Adult Learning Theories

The adult learning theories examined in this report stress the need for students to be essentially self-directing and to participate as far as possible in arranging their own learning experience. This approach has only been tried to a minimal extent in the Zimbabwe context and there is probably still too much reliance of the direction of the Director of Fieldwork or agency supervisor.The use of learning contracts, signed by the student and agency supervisor, and discussed with the Director of Fieldwork, seems a useful approach as this places all concerned with fieldwork training on an equivalent level where discussion of objectives and tasks is expected to take place. The School is already making use of these placement contracts and this should continue to be encouraged.

If students are to be more self-directing and to take more responsibility in terms of their learning situation, it is also important to develop teaching styles that are far more participative and involving of students in the educational process. The "banking" approach where students are provided with all necessary information and expected to regurgitate during examinations should be avoided, and instead students encouraged to develop more creative and participative approaches to their learning.

Development of Local Practice Reader

The production of *A Manual for Social Development Practice* was one of the achievements of the Linkage Project. The authors recognised that each user will have different settings for social development practice, and designed the Manual to be flexible enough to provide useful, rather than restrictive, guidelines. They suggested that a locally developed Reader in Social Development would be a useful accompaniment to the Manual. Such a Reader would require specific knowledge about society and culture: the social, economic, political, religious and environmental aspects of the society in which social workers are expected to carry out their work. The authors suggest that the educators wishing to use this Manual in a classroom setting gather together a series of these writings about their society and produce locally relevant Readers. This would seem a useful initiative for the School to consider as there is an urgent need for a comprehensive social development textbook geared to Zimbabwe's specific problems. The School is producing a textbook on Social Policy in Zimbabwe, and a local Social Development Reader could enhance and operationalise this text. In addition the School has now produced more serious publications through the *Journal of Social Development in Africa* which is helping build a local indigenous literature in the field of social work and social development.

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Appendix 1

Sri Lanka School of Social Work: Diploma in Social Work

Guidelines for the Social Development Project to be Designed and Implemented During the Second Year Block Field Placement

1. The Project can be selected in relation to the student's employment or residence station.

2. The Social Development and Research Project to be conducted during the Second Year are to be done as complementary Projects.

3. The Project should not merely extend an existing service in the same manner. Adaptation of existing services to meet changing socio-economic needs should be considered.

4. The premise of the Project should contain a clear objective of bringing about planned change.

5. Utilisation of Social Work Practice Methods should be clearly demonstrated in the Project proposal and in its implementation.

6. Evaluation of the results of the Project in relation to its objectives should be part of the Project's design. The final report should include the results of the evaluation.

7. The Project can be designed as a multi-year Project, but one clear stage of the Project should be the end of Field Placement. Evaluation should be conducted at this stage.

8. Multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches are preferred.

9. New and imaginative proposals are expected.

10. Projects have a better chance of success if they are consistent with national policies and aspirations.

11. Projects developed at the grass-roots level; mobilising peoples participation, voluntary action, better delivery and adaptation of existing services to meet the needs of the local communities could be considered.

12. Projects intended to demonstrate new approaches to solve problems, deliver services and benefits to the community, local officials, leaders and decision makers (eg politicians) could be considered.

Appendix 2

Sri Lanka School of Social Work

Guidelines to be Used by the Panel Members in Evaluating Student Projects

		Scores
1.	The rationale for and the originality of the topic chosen.....................	10

2. (a) The precision and conceptual neatness of the problem statement.
   (b) The adequacy of the students understanding of the social, economic and political factors or issues of the problem
   (Including a Survey of Literature and Related Projects)..................... 15

3. Evaluation of the appropriate use of social work knowledge, skills and strategies in the implementation of the Project. Specifically: Role of Student and implications for Social Work Practice.. 30

4. The logic of the evaluation, suggestions and conclusions, how well the student organises the material, how convincing are his arguments, and how well does the student define the concepts with respect to his/her Project.. 15

5. Does the report follow a logical development of ideas appropriately introduced and concluded. Is it a scholarly report?............................ 15

6. Oral presentation – ability, clarity, thoroughness and overall assessment... 15

                                                                                    ———

                                                                                    100

Appendix 3

Materials Obtained Relating to Field Practice (includes references used in this Paper)

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A Study of Fieldwork Practice in the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka, with Implications for Social Work Training in Zimbabwe

A comparison of the differing methods of practice teaching/learning in three different parts of the world yields some useful insights. Although social work training is very different when considering the situations of Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe, there are several strands that bind them together.

Firstly social work is an international profession, with an international literature. Initiatives in one part of the world need to be considered by social workers in other parts, particularly where there are similarities in the socioeconomic situations of respective countries (e.g. poverty, communal values, etc).

Secondly the problems faced by social work educators are analogous and useful comparisons can be made between them. Exchange of information and dialogue with regard to achievements and failures in the field of training can be mutually beneficial.

Thirdly, a similar philosophy of adult education binds schools and faculties of social work in different continents together.

This Occasional Paper examines the use of practical fieldwork as a means of training student social workers to engage in professional practice. Aspects of the practice curriculum are discussed as well as the structure and general orientation of this method of training students. There are four main sections to this Occasional Paper. Section One outlines fieldwork issues in the United Kingdom, particularly with regard to the accreditation of practice teachers and concerns over the quality and methodology of fieldwork training. Section Two examines the use of fieldwork in one Third World country (Sri Lanka) and its orientation towards social development. Section Three offers some comments and observations on theories of adult learning and their relevance to fieldwork training, while Section Four draws together some practice lessons which Schools of Social Work may wish to consider with regard to developing their fieldwork programmes.

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