

# SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION AND SUPERVISION ACROSS ASIA PACIFIC

*Edited by Carolyn Noble and Mark Henrickson*



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## PREFACE

In 2009 the then President of the Asia-Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE), Professor Soung-Yee Kim from Korea, in partnership with the Korean Association of Social Workers and the Korean Council on Social Welfare Education sponsored a Dean's forum on social work education and practice development in the Asia-Pacific region. This forum brought together key scholars to gather ideas, share information, and have in-depth discussions on social work curricula and developments in the Asia-Pacific region. Countries represented included Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and The People's Republic of China. Topics explored included accreditation standards and licensing requirements; social work curricula and its structure, continuing education; field practica and supervision; and indigenous models of education and practice.

An important session on social work global standards spontaneously appeared as social work educators enthusiastically met to share, debate and learn from each other. What was remarkable were the similarities in accreditation standards and licensing requirements as well as in the structure and content of social work curricula, field education and student supervision practices. Most countries took the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) global standards as a model to adopt in designing and delivering their programs. While there were many similarities, the section on indigenous models of education and practice identified the cultural challenges that the spread of social work programs across the region brings with it. It also identified how the local voices of each country are beginning to adapt these standards

so as to make their programs reflect their cultural, social and political priorities and as a result are shaping new ideas, new curricula and new responses to issues of imperialism, socioeconomic privilege, paternalism and goodwill.

In many ways this forum inspired the APASWE book series beginning with the first book in 2009 *Social work education: voices from the Asia Pacific*, which then led to this book on field education and supervision across Asia-Pacific. As did the first book, this book draws together stories from social work beyond our individual borders and experiences. Also, like the first book we have worked across languages and cultures to produce this exciting and vibrant collection of research, experiences and debates about field education and supervision. No longer can social work field education be regarded as sitting on the periphery of social work, but must be considered an integral part of the education of social workers. It is in the field education experience that students explore the various ways to integrate knowledge, skills and experiences into their beginning practice.

In this volume we continue to acknowledge that English is the colonial language in the region, and have, as an attempt to address this issue, included several chapters in the author's own language. We have kept the same format where each chapter has abstracts in English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean in an attempt to increase the accessibility of this scholarship, and to help to continue building scholarly bridges in this vast region. All contributions have been peer-reviewed and each makes a unique and valuable contribution to social work scholarship across the region.

This book is the result of the hard work of many people. A special mention goes to our South Korean colleague Professor InYoung Han who helped enrich this volume by coordinating the chapters from colleagues in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. This edition is much richer for her efforts. A special thank you goes to the absolutely invaluable work of our translators, most of whom are postgraduate social work students or recent graduates. This group of people enthusiastically responded to the call for translation assistance as a way to participate in what they saw as an important undertaking and to contribute to the



## PREFACE

international development of social work education. It is with profound thanks that the editors acknowledge the hard and dedicated work of these translators: Shuguang Jiang, Milly Zhang, and Dr Polly Yeung (Massey University, New Zealand), Yayoi Ide (Massey University, New Zealand), Takae Itakura (D.Phil. student, Kyoto Prefectural University, Japan), and Keisuke Yuasa (D.Phil. student, Osaka University, Japan), Japanese; Jeawoo Jung and Young Im Lee Park (Massey University, New Zealand). The global community truly became local as these language teams worked together to produce the best possible result.

We are grateful also to the contributors to this book, who took time they did not have to write new work that contributes to the scholarship in this field. It has been our privilege as editors to work with committed and insightful international scholars who are dedicated to developing the Asia-Pacific regional perspective on social work field education. A significant development in this scholarship is the increasing number of cross-institutional exchanges that are happening across the region. We are entirely confident that international field education placements along with staff exchanges will only increase in the future. It is our hope that this book will encourage educators, supervisors and students to develop and undertake those experiences in an informed, thoughtful, and critical way.

## POSTSCRIPT TO THIS EDITION

The editors want to acknowledge that during the development of this book we were reminded with brutal ferocity once again how interconnected the Asia-Pacific region is. The region is connected not only by human constructs such as technology and trade, but by the very structure of the earth and its oceans. The earthquakes in the Canterbury district in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand and the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami off the northeast coast of Japan profoundly affected the lives of tens of millions of people throughout the region, including a number of contributors to the book you are now reading.

We acknowledge those who lost their lives, those whose fate is unknown, those whose lives are irrevocably changed, and those who continue to work tirelessly for the recovery and rebuilding of our region.

*Carolyn Noble and Mark Henrickson*  
*April 2011*

## CHAPTER TEN

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: MANAGERS' VIEWPOINTS

*Patricia Hanlen*

Managers are invaluable for their support of fieldwork placement for social work students. This chapter examines factors that influence managers' decision-making towards student placement provision, a role which has traditionally been overlooked in the literature. Understandings were gained from fifteen non-statutory managers gathered in a qualitative study in New Zealand. Māori and non-Māori managers were interviewed twice, with a three month interval between data gathering. Four themes of organisational, cultural, student and relational factors are considered for their influence on provision. Findings suggest the importance of student quality and their ability to make connections with local indigenous communities and reciprocity in relationships between educational institutions and social service agencies.

从经理的角度看社区伙伴合作关系

实习机构经理为社工实习生提供了大力的支持。经理的角色往往在有关文献中被忽视。针对此现象，本章节讨论在社工实习过程中影响机构经理做决策的主要因数。十五位来自新西兰非政府组织的经理参与了此项定性研究，从他们的角度探讨了本论题。毛利裔和非毛利裔经理先后两次被采访，采访问隔的时间为三个月。经理们

认为, 在协助实习的过程中, 他们做决策的原因来自四个方面: 机构, 文化, 实习生和人际关系。研究表明, 社工实习生应该积极与本地土著社区建立良好的伙伴关系, 而他们本身的性格和能力将会有助于实现这个目标。此外, 实习生也应该努力促成教学单位与社区服务机构间的相互合作关系。

### コミュニティ契約 —実習管理者の視点—

実習管理者は、ソーシャルワークを学ぶ学生の現場実習の支援において非常に重要な存在である。本章では、先行研究では伝統的に見過ごされてきてしまった要因、すなわち、学生の実習準備に対する、実習管理者の意思決定に影響を与える要因について検討する。その理解はニュージーランドにおける質的調査で収集された、特に法律の定めるところではない15人の実習管理者から得られた。マオリ族とマオリ族ではない実習管理者は二度インタビューを受け、それらのデータ収集の期間は3ヶ月間であった。組織的、文化的、学生、および関連要因の以上四つの主題は実習準備に影響を与えたものとして検討された。結果、学生の質と、学生が地元固有のコミュニティとのつながりを持つ能力、および教育機関と社会サービス機関との関係性における相互関係の重要性が示唆されることとなった。

### 지역사회 참여: (실습 기관) 관리자의 관점

관리자는 사회복지를 공부하는 학생들의 현장 실습 교육 지원에 있어서 매우 중요한 역할을 한다. 이 장은 학생 현장 실습을 제공하는데 있어서 관리자의 의사 결정에 영향을 미치는 요소들을 살펴볼 것인데, 이러한 역할은 전통적으로 관련 문헌에서 간과되어 왔다. 이와 관련된 정보를 얻기 위해, 뉴질랜드 비 정부 기관에서 일하는 15명의 관리자

들을 상대로 질적 연구(qualitative study)를 수행하였다. 자료를 수집하는 동안 3개월 간격을 두고 그 관리자들을 두 번씩 인터뷰 했으며, 그 중에는 마오리(뉴질랜드 원주민) 관리자들도 있었다. 현장 실습을 제공하는데 있어 관리자에게 영향을 끼치는 것으로 조직적, 문화적, 관계적 및 실습 학생과 관련된 요소, 이렇게 네 가지 주제로 고려될 수 있다. 이 연구 결과는 학생의 자질과 그들이 현지 토착 지역 사회와 자신을 연결할 수 있는 능력, 그리고 교육 기관들과 사회 복지 단체들간 상호 협력적인 관계가 중요하다고 제시하고 있다.

Fieldwork placement of social and community work students is dependent on the voluntary good will of managers of social service agencies to support and resource it. Social work educators and students have always recognised and valued fieldwork placement as an essential component in the social work curriculum and students relish the challenge. The contribution of fieldwork placement is prized for its role in growing student skills, knowledge, and competencies as they learn to marry classroom learning with the realities of agency practice. Social work educators would hope that the student completes placement feeling inspired to be the very best social workers they can be in the future. Fieldwork placement has been described by Doel and Shardlow (1996) as the 'heartbeat of social work' (p24). Although the placement experience is a universal expectation of schools of social work, shortages of 'suitable' placements have been identified by educationalists in many countries. The educator's expectation is that social service organisations will reinforce 'the purpose, values and ethics of the profession' (Zastrow 2003, p25). The traditional expectation is that the agency will provide for day-to-day and formal social work supervision of the student as they learn about social work, develop professional competence and learn agency practices. Noble et al. (2005) state that despite rapid increases in social work and social welfare programs and increased numbers of students there is a decrease in the actual numbers of agencies willing or able to undertake partnerships with universities.

Social work fieldwork coordinators ask agency managers ‘Will you take a student on placement?’ This chapter addresses how non-statutory managers responded to such a question. The non-statutory sector contains a range of smaller placement providers, sometimes referred to as the ‘third’ sector, largely dependent upon government subsidies. The constructed term of manager, refers to a designated leadership and decision-making role of the person responsible for the smooth running of the organisation and its activities. Non-statutory managers have often been invisible in social service roles, often described as ‘agencies’ in the fieldwork placement and supervision literature. It is argued that both this sector and non-statutory managers within it are vitally important to the sustainability of this central component of social work education.

This chapter draws upon themes gathered from an interpretative qualitative study in New Zealand. Thirteen non-statutory managers were interviewed twice with a three month interval between each interview although two were unavailable for the second interview. Managers were drawn from a randomised sample of managers of non-statutory social service organisations. Two thirds of the managers in this study came from small- to medium-sized social services (under 12 full- or part-time paid staff). Many managers had previously acted in the dual role as both the student administrator, and social work supervisor. This focus on non-statutory social services was chosen because it is a large group of placement providers for social work students in New Zealand rather than simply statutory managers. These managers, Māori and non-Māori, employ ‘over half of the social work workforce as opposed to just over one third employed in the government sector’ (Social Workers Registration Board 2007, p16). Given that large numbers of students receive their practice learning from social workers employed in non-government agencies, this study is likely to have relevance beyond New Zealand, as international standards encourage ‘a partnership between the educational institution and the agency’ regarding field education (International Federation of Social Workers 2003, 3.3.10) Distillation of the data from 24 interviews indicates that in regional locations in New Zealand, the majority of student placements stem from polytechnic, and to a lesser extent *wananga* (tertiary institutions based on Māori

philosophy), educational institutions rather than universities. Although much of the literature refers to university–agency relationships the results are more relevant to polytechnics and *wananga*.

The random selection of the sample resulted in fifteen participants, ten of which were women and five were men. As almost half the participants were Māori, it was culturally appropriate for participants to receive collegial support during the interview process. Working with indigenous people in New Zealand requires not only recognition of the connections with the land, but any research relationships include the notion of reciprocity.

### TRADITIONAL MODEL OF FIELDWORK PLACEMENT

The traditional model, sometimes called the apprenticeship model, ‘reflects the one-to-one relationship, implying one student assigned to one supervisor in one location’ states Cleak et al. (2000, p161). Today the traditional model is the most prevalent form of integrating learning with practice and developing student competencies in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. No money changes hands with this model, with formal negotiation often beginning with a verbal and written contract, when the manager agrees to take a student on placement and educate him/her into practice. Alternatively a staff member takes on the role of supervisor, particularly in large social service agencies. Time limited learning contracts are agreed to and signed at the onset of the practicum, contracts designed by the schools of social work for implementation. The placement may conclude with an event organised by schools of social work to recognise contributions made by agencies towards the learning gained by students on placement.

The present study was conducted within the context of the traditional, or apprenticeship model of fieldwork placement, where there are usually three major roles identified in the literature: the student supervisor, the student and the placement coordinator from the school of social work. Under the traditional model it is expected that either one internal supervising social worker or a contracted external supervisor takes responsibility for the student’s social work learning on placement for a contracted period of time. At times, the school

may contract an external supervisor for short periods if an agency cannot provide student supervision. Although external supervisors can offer an objective view, external supervisors are disadvantaged if they do not fully understand the way the services operate. Whether the student placement is in the traditional setting of a social service agency or working in the wider community, for example at times of a disaster, the location of the student's learning still has to be managed and supervised. The manager of smaller organisations may also be the supervisor of a student on placement as well as carrying overall responsibility for administrative systems alongside equal responsibility for a student's learning, happiness and wellbeing while they are hosted in their organisation, as was found in the study reported here.

The managers also carry the responsibility and risk a student may bring to the workplace. It is the manager of a social or community service agency who holds the legitimate authority to say 'yes' or 'no' to students on placement. Although the supervisory role is vital to the success of fieldwork placement, it is argued that the manager is equally important as it is they who have the overview, the control over the time, workload, material, electronic, technological and people resources to expend upon students.

The word 'manager' carries and creates meaning and from a postmodernist viewpoint, the role itself is socially constructed. The methodological framework focuses on a constructionist approach and the use of systems ideas along with the concept of students contributing voluntary work, unpaid, as they learn in an unfamiliar organisation. Constructionist methodology places a focus on the role of managers within the structure of non-statutory organisations, managers that have the authority and power within the structure to sustain or reject such a system of student learning. Systems epistemology assisted with understanding the principles of circularity of information exchange and interactional systems, assumptions, patterns, forms and types of organisations and how power, ethics, change and stability in social systems provide sign posts (Bilson & Ross 1999).



## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The study from which this chapter is drawn revealed that there was a demand for 'quality' students, that is, those students seen by managers as possessing sufficient intelligence, skill, commitment and motivation to contribute to the service delivery. Understanding was sought from these managers as to how personal, social, or psychological factors about students might influence their decision-making. The managers studied were seeking students with sufficient competence and a compatible value system to fit into and contribute to the work of the agency. They expected them to come partially informed about the agency's purpose and the social needs it was addressing. Managers' willingness towards placement provision is likely to be influenced by memories of good or bad experiences of past student placements. Goodwill is generated by students who create cohesion with the agency staff, and fit comfortably with its culture and organisational purpose. Student enthusiasm, observation, learning, action and reflection as they developed into emerging professionals appeared to impact on managers' willingness attitudes. Cooper (2000) too argued the importance of training, socialising and moulding students into the agency culture and contended placement must be supported by strong student monitoring.

Although the schools of social work generally instigate and shepherd the placement process, the agency managers were clear about their expectations of student abilities and ethical behaviour. Non-statutory managers in the study, in response to a question about whether internal or external organisational factors influenced their decision-making on the student placement question, placed emphasis on student competencies. Overall, they were looking for attributes such as social maturity and advanced training, students interested in agency work and students who matched their ethnicity or religious preferences, although there was flexibility over the latter. Other skills and values identified from the data included the ability of the student to listen well; students who were encouraging, helpful, caring, passionate, respectful and able to work with difference and open to supervision. Managers had expectations of ethical behaviour such as trustworthiness; honesty, keeping of confidentiality and being able to 'fit' into the agency value

system. Such students were likely to be seen as an asset, and therefore an influence on managers' future willingness towards provision of a place.

The data synthesis into the literature would suggest that the more advanced students were in their study, the more likely they were to display a wider range of skills and knowledge to support and benefit the organisation, therefore more likely to be considered as 'earning their keep'. The results enrich a statement by O'Connor et al. (1998) in that managers gave primacy to students who showed initiative, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of agency service contracts. Similarly, Rogers et al. (2003) state that self-awareness, adaptability, flexibility, critically reflective and intellectually and personally prepared practice as professionals are desired attributes of students preparing to be helping professionals. It would appear that a double bonus presents itself, when time and energy investment is rewarded if the student on placement is suitable to fill a current or pending employment gap.

#### *Avoidance of risky students*

It would appear that managers were more likely to remember 'risky' students of the past and resolve in the future to avoid students who were likely to drain time and energy from the organisation and themselves. Managers did not like students who had: serious dependency issues; unacknowledged and unaddressed child abuse histories; their own children in care; students who were protected with violence orders by the Courts; or those who were subject to legal restraining orders. Serious convictions, unaddressed health or physical fitness issues or drug and alcohol concerns were student issues managers also did not wish to invite into their organisation. Such grave matters were seen to deter and detract from the fieldwork experience as intense feelings of the student could override the focus on learning. Risky students were also seen as posing a threat to the good name of the manager, the staff and the organisation. Managers wanted to avoid 'disastrous students' as described by one manager. Issues of conflict, power struggles, and disharmony within the organisation were seen as time consuming and as risks to the delivery of the service to clients. Some managers were unwilling to spend their time sorting out conflicted student relationships, 'baby-sitting'

students or ‘passing the [student] parcel’ around the staff, with ‘less than satisfactory’ students. Similarly, students with mental health or substance abuse problems, ethical violations, illegal activities and disrespectful classroom behaviour were cited as causes to terminate Master of Social Work students from a program (Jarman-Rohde et al. 1997).

Risk to placement sustainability was created by students who lacked confidence or alternatively were ‘loose cannons’, that is, those who talked indiscriminately and were more likely to break client confidentiality. Such breaches of confidentiality or unethical or incorrect decision-making by students were seen by managers as posing a risk to client wellbeing. If student relationships with a supervisor became unworkable, this too was seen as a signal that complaints from clients might eventuate. Most managers in the study were aware of student risks and placement ‘failure’ indicators, gained from previous experiences of students. These indicators of a ‘problem’ student appear to be identified by staff and shared within the team, prompting the development of strategies to avoid escalation of fieldwork placement failure. These managers wished to avoid having to put such strategies in place, by being fully informed about student characteristics and curriculum provision prior to the placement selection interview. Managers expected frequent monitoring at placement commencement when issues were more likely to arise. These managers knew they could select for preferred student characteristics, as there were many competitors for placement provision.

Dearsley (2000) also found that graduates were not well prepared for child protection work and that their training on child abuse was minimal. Additionally, Napan (1997) reported that there was a dislike for the idea of students practising on clients because their lack of experience and those with an inquisitive nature might add to clients’ burdens, which suggests that students must be advanced in their study prior to placement.

### *Placement matching process*

Every school of social work has difficulty in placing students, either because of placement scarcity or insufficient opportunity for matching student characteristics with availability of places. Students who are

difficult to place, such as those students who have significant child or adult care responsibilities, or challenging personalities, pose a dilemma for fieldwork placement coordinators. The coordinator may be faced with the obligation to place enrolled students and not wishing to generate harm to the school's good name or be faced with a conflict-ridden or failed placement through mismatches. In order to avoid regrets, resentment and the lotteries of the past, managers were seeking full information and student selection interviews well before placement commencement. They wished to gain information similar to that required of a job applicant. Coordinators would have to know students sufficiently to be able to promote a student's worth and ensure students quality. The problem, of course, is that 'quality' is socially constructed and very difficult to define or assure. Further, Rogers et al. (2003) described how important it was that field educators or supervisors intervene early if issues arise before damage is done to collegial relationships and conflict escalates in the practicum. The managers in this study expected a robust matching and selection process to take place as they did not want to have to admit a selection mistake to their staff, or to justify an unpopular decision to disillusioned staff. Unwillingness to offer placement positions results when the transactions costs are too high or when known benefits of provision are outweighed. The process becomes one of de-motivation, loss aversion and risk aversion (Gleitman-Fridlund & Reisberg 2000) or as March (1997) said, it leads to 'uncertainty avoidance' (p123). This in turn is likely to lead to planning in advance of the request for placement, not to take a student. Therefore, managers are more likely to think about risk, rather than the advantages students bring, if their experience of previous students has been unfavourable to themselves or their staff.

Coordination processes and the nurturing of relationships between organisations primarily fall to the school's placement coordinator, a role which Hay, O'Donoghue & Blagdon (2006) say needs clarification. Shardlow and Doel (2005) identified the coordination role as mediation of student needs with the requirements of the agency. The coordination role requires the support of the manager, the services of a student supervisor and staff goodwill for the placement duration. The negotiation by the coordinator requires arrangements for the student

to transition from an educational system into a service delivery system. Organisational systems do vary in terms of technological, social, cultural, organisational, managerial and educational ways. Managers' responses are influenced partly by who requests the placement, the way the question is asked, credibility and status of the person asking, and the timing of the question to the organisation. The expectations of the managers in the study far exceed coordination tasks and responsibilities and fail to do this position of external engagement, justice.

### *Cultural knowledge*

Students able to work with local indigenous communities were valued by many of the managers in the study under focus here. Māori managers indicated the importance of either seeing curriculum vitae which contained tribal affiliations, or the early opportunity to ask students about their family and tribal connections. The skill to work with difference, make relationship connections with clients and the wider community with whom they worked was valued. Therefore, Māori managers sought students who knew their own family genealogy. By extending links, students were seen as being able to build on relationships with local tribes and sub-tribes to improve tribal disconnection and dysfunction while addressing social issues. Students were selected on individual merit and 'someone who is loving, kind and firm'. Māori managers focused on student learning; learning that would be returned to their people and community. Their hospitality was offered freely and generously with expectations for a mutual relationship of gifting. The majority of Māori managers favoured a *mana enhancing* reciprocity approach (Ruwhiu 2001) to student placement. 'Mana is about the power and prestige of *tangata whenua*, [people of the land] and the respect that is accorded to them ... it may increase or decrease in response to the actions of others and to changing environments' (Ruwhiu 2001, p116). In the present study, the student is seen as a gift coming from the community, via the school, where managers and staff would in turn gift their basket of knowledge to the student who is expected to return such learning back to the local community, particularly to enhance and improve their peoples' wellbeing.

## ORGANISATIONAL PRESSURES

One of the barriers to placement is the internal and external pressures on social service organisations. These pressures lead to variation in responses to requests from fieldwork coordinators. As a manager metaphorically described, the student is not to think of themselves as being a passenger on holiday, but rather going on an ocean-going liner where the seas will be rough. The research identified factors ranging from pressures as a result of globalisation and market forces, through to international and local competition for placement. The findings offer support for the idea that social service managers in New Zealand appear to be accepting the continuance of a resource-poor environment. When a decision is made to provide a placement, it seems that the non-statutory managers that were in my study are resigned to making the best of material resources offered. Material constraints were viewed as something the organisation could overcome, while staff resourcing for fieldwork placement was a key organisation issue influencing provision. Hay, O'Donoghue and Blagdon (2006) found that placement resources were lacking within agencies, which they felt restricted the development, maintenance, and recognition of the relationship and training which subsequently impacted in a negative way on the quality of student places provided.

Contracts to deliver a social service with government assistance are lobbied for by agency managers in competition with one another. Discontent with the government contracting process with social services in New Zealand and competition between providers is seen by Aimers and Walker (2008), as a one-way process of market activity which places agencies in danger of losing their autonomy and contact with their community. Sanders and Mumford (2010) believe the managerialist dialogue still holds dominance within social service management and pressures managers' judgment. In New Zealand, government contracts barely cover 70% of the income needed to sustain current services, with no room to grow said a manager outside the study (pers. comm., 12 November 2008).

Non-statutory organisations cannot escape the influence of economic factors on provision. The economic environment in which social services function pressures organisational thinking, management and staff and service delivery; factors argued by Maidment (2001) as influencing teaching and learning on placement, a concern reported by Jarman-Rohde et al. in 1997. The notion of placement provision as voluntary work was a new realisation for some managers that emerged during the study. Supervision of student placement is voluntary work on top of paid work for the social worker, unacknowledged by payment and not contracted for through service contracts with government. The results from this study suggest that managers were resigned to their position of lack of money in their government contracts or from the schools of social work, in exchange for providing a placement. There was awareness that other professions received payment and a few managers had received payment for international students on placement, but they accepted such disparity. This lack of payment was not seen as a factor influencing willingness to provide for a student placement, even though the sector was seen as under-resourced for service delivery. The broader question arises as to why social work education is out of step with other professions in terms of financial acknowledgement? A New Zealand comparison made with teacher education students on placement with Waikato University, where money changes hands, although 'pitiful', the Early Childhood Placement Co-ordinator (pers. comm., 29 April 2010) indicated that it was increasingly difficult to find placements because of teacher workload, which suggests that heavy work load, is a factor for this sector also.

Managers appear to be seeking students who could fill pending or planned staffing vacancies. Staffing is a major organisational factor which appears to fluctuate with stable and unstable environments and therefore impact on placement provision. This in turn affects transactions with others such as placement choices in a competitive environment. The current study findings indicated the occurring themes of workload pressures on agencies, insufficient support from schools, and ambivalence over contracts with schools, with some similarities to findings by Doel and Shardlow (1996).

*Competition between education providers for placement*

Interpretation of the present study findings leads to a picture of a highly competitive market for placement provision in the provincial cities and towns. Competition for a placement with the agency was a major factor contributing towards unwillingness to provide, as it was too difficult for these non-statutory managers to provide for more than one student at a time. In the research study, these managers juggled a multiplicity of loyalties, in a sea of competition for placements, not only from social services but occasionally from overseas. If that was not enough, competition for placements came from outside the social service sector as well as within it.

Competition for places comes from other training providers such as early childhood course providers or mental health training providers. This 'outside' competition suggests that there is a shortage of placement providers within those arenas and social services are seen as alternative choices for students from other disciplines. The students are crossing organisational boundaries when a placement is obtained for them, so competition for placements can mean that the first caller at the organisational door, may be the only one for whom it is opened that year. Many writers, such as Healy (2000) and Fook (2002) identified competition as a factor in influencing scarcity of placements, but the study in focus extends this understanding by identifying the extent and source of the competition. It also focused on how managers are realising the extent of the pressure to make their choices and the possibility of making early selections or commitments to favoured providers. Such pressure is likely to result in a selection of students who provide them with the least risk or cost, and most benefit to achieving the agency purpose. Some managers noted high staff turnover with some staff leaving the sector. Such staff turnover raises the question as to how far the pressure on social workers to respond to social needs has extended. Is it fair to ask busy social workers to carry extra work generated by students crossing boundaries into organisational space and is the sense of contributing to the long-term development of the profession sufficient reward in itself?



## SUPERVISION AND ORGANISATIONAL WORKLOAD

The majority of managers in my research study carried out the role of both manager and supervisor of social work students, so there was little need to find a supervisor from the staff. In these dual roles managers did not release themselves from their core duties. This lack of reduction in duties counter what Hay et al. (2006) noted, in that reduction in the supervisor's regular workload was necessary to contribute fully to the placement learning. Additional work was seen to potentially hinder willingness towards provision by Hay et al. (2006), who found 70% of supervisors and students agreed there was a need for this release from core duties by supervisors. It is argued that workload reduction is the ideal, but in reality it appears that such reduction is not feasible or a realistic expectation of schools of social work, given the workload in social service agencies. If the manager had not undertaken the supervision of the student, they consulted with staff to find an internal supervisor. Walsh-Tapiata and Ellis (1994) questioned the insufficient recognition, support and status given to the task of student supervision. The managers in the New Zealand study generally felt external supervisors may lack understanding of operational matters and how the organisation functioned. Preference was indicated for internal supervisors over external ones, because of their depth of organisational knowledge, advantageous to student learning. Additional scrutiny of the agency from an 'outsider' may also be considered an unwelcome unnecessary pressure. Demographic and policy shifts could lead to loss of supervisory staff for students which may mean managers look for 'ready to go' mature students, advanced in their study to fill gaps, relieve workload pressures on the agencies and the need for supervisors. Given the number of competing factors influencing managers of non-statutory social service organisation, the findings suggest that at times managers may have been willing to provide, but did not have the capacity to do so, so saying 'no' to a student placement did not necessarily mean the closing of the door permanently to schools of social work.

*Inter-organisational relationships and reciprocity*

In the present study the subsidiary question was asked as to whether practical changes to the traditional placement model would influence provision and whether the model met agency needs. The traditional fieldwork placement model of seasonal contact was seen by many managers as an 'on again, off again' relationship between schools of social work and non-statutory social services. All managers in the study under focus, called for relationship development from the traditional 'placement season' to an all-year-round placement building relationship model. Understandings gained leads to an annual process cycle of 'greet, train and support, then thank agencies' model unfolding across the calendar year, rather than the period designated by the school for student placement in their agencies. Drawing on systems theory of inter connected systems, an annual arrangement will put more energy into relationship maintenance so an 'equilibrium state' (Payne 2005) is achieved. For practical purposes it is concluded that schools of social work need to compact their lists of potential providers to facilitate manageable relationships. As Hardcastle and Powers (2004, p298) identify, '100 units of social structures has a density potential of 4,950 relationships'. Hardcastle and Powers (2004) state that coordination and control of social networks (such as social service agencies) need to be reachable and central with size, density, segmentation, frequency and types of exchanges affecting the function of relations and structural positioning. It is suggested that lists of potential placement agencies held by schools of social work be controlled by profile with segmentations devoted to fields of practice in defined geographical locations for student matching purposes. This current study found management goodwill, fluctuating commitment dependant on organisational factors and a wish for a sustainable tangible all-year-round relationship as key considerations for continuation of collaboration.

As Maidment (2001) propositioned, relationships in the practicum were influenced by communication, goodwill and agency commitment to social work education. Relationship building through placement liaison visits, by student placement coordinators or staff, appeared not to contribute significantly to school-agency connections, although

these were considered important for the students' needs. Reciprocity in relationships is an important factor influencing managers' willingness towards fieldwork placement. It is relatively easy to argue that relationships are at the heart of all human interaction. Allan (2000) identified the need for partnerships, collaboration and flexibility in arrangements, maximisation of resource sharing and the fostering of effective relationships between various parties. So too, it is argued here that management roles, status and expectations play a part in professional relationships at various levels, as identified by Compton et al. (2005). However, relationship building is an area in need of significant improvement to enhance agency willingness and participation (Maidment 2001). As Ishisaka et al. (2004) identified, collaboration and partnership greatly improved people's lives therefore these are capable of moving institutions such as a university, polytechnic or *wananga* to a larger sense of purpose.

The findings from this New Zealand study indicate that managers also wanted direct involvement with the university and access to pertinent literature relevant to staffing needs. The principle of *whanaungatanga* [relationships] from Māori culture, a binding of individuals to wider groups, affirms respectful relationships in what Ruffolo and Miller (1994) called a mutually benefiting reciprocal exchange process. Thematic analysis and synthesis of data suggests that managers are asking for more regular meetings coordinated by and at the educational institutions, to work out what might be shared interests and exchanges, other than money. Ideas suggested for greater cohesion, trust and participation by managers were research activity outcomes which were related to their field of practice. Information updates; free entrance to courses; loan of material resources; and accesses to services, such as a library, were suggestions for reciprocity from the present study. A literature matching system could be developed before placement commences and gifted to the agency, or alternatively integrated into student task allocation whilst on placement.

The managers in the New Zealand study sought chances for professional liaison for themselves, professional development for their staff and greater opportunity to contribute to classroom teaching and

informal liaison with the schools throughout the year, rather than just during the placement season.

## CONCLUSION

Schools of social work have been resource dependent upon non-statutory social services manager's goodwill to host their students for many decades. New understandings of factors influencing the non-statutory manager as a key stakeholder in fieldwork placement have been discussed in this chapter. Managers have the overall responsibility to control the process, the resources and for the student's overall wellbeing whilst on fieldwork placement. Competition for student placements, heavy workloads and managers' expectations of work ready students have been considered as factors influencing the nature of managers' responses to the question of fieldwork placement provision. Managers require sufficient information about students prior to placement to assist them to make decisions. Reflection upon past decisions about previous students influenced the managers' willingness or unwillingness towards fieldwork placement provision. Limited knowledge of students or their cultural connections, combined with organisational instability, could position managers to say 'no' to a place, alternatively positioning them to make risky decisions, or leave them to hope for low adverse consequences following their decision to provide a student placement. With constant change in local and global environments, fieldwork placement will remain an ongoing challenge to all stakeholders.

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