

IMPACT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ON HUMAN, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Lombard

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the annual South African social welfare budget has focused mainly on social security and hence included a very small percentage of funds for social welfare services. For the 2003/04 book year 91,7% was budgeted for social care, including social security, as opposed to 4,4% for the financing of welfare services (De Vries, 2004). In the 2004/05 budget provision is made for 91,6% for social care as compared to only 4,6% for welfare services, which is shared by the welfare sector in government and NGOs (De Vries, 2004).

Given this historical scenario, the plight of NGOs has been highlighted on an ongoing basis by the National Coalition for Social Services (NACOSS) requesting government to increase its funding for social service delivery. The urgent need to address the current inadequate funding reached a climax on 6 April 2004, when NACOSS went public on the financial crises confronting NGOs in maintaining and extending welfare programmes and projects; the coalition issued a press statement at a press conference held in Johannesburg. In response, the Minister of Welfare, Dr Skweyiya, voiced his surprise and stated that welfare services cannot be experiencing a crisis, since government has paid out millions for social security: He said: "The record as documented in the Ten Year review is clear for everyone to see that the ANC-led government has made major progress over the last ten years to improve the lives of the poorest of the poor through the delivery of social services. To date, over 7,7 million of the poorest of the poor now receive social grants at the total cost of over 34, 98 billion per annum, including older persons, people beneficiaries and government expenditure of over R10 billion per annum on social grants in 1994" (Media release on 6 April 2004 by the Ministry of Social Development and De Vries, 2004).

This counter-message to the outcry of the NGOs press statement creates the impression that government's view is that with social security in place, social services have been taken care of. In support of the NGO sector's concern regarding the focus of welfare spending, the message by the Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel, during the 2004 budget speech was firm: social spending, especially welfare spending, could not forever continue climbing at the swift pace it had in recent years. He said that in the longer term the spending side of the budget would have to be shifted towards a greater focus on investment spending, in both human capital and the more conventional bricks and mortar variety, to increase the economy's capacity to grow and provide sustainable jobs. The Finance Minister emphasised that government would have to seek a better balance between the growth in welfare spending and investments in education and infrastructure development. He said that government wants to see more people depend for their livelihood not on social grants, but on normal participation in the economy (Joffe, 2004). Clearly, government is committed "...simply put, to accelerate the pace of growth and job creation and to extend the scope of development and empowerment" (Hartley & Mabuza, 2004:4). Friedman (2004:4) concurs that social security must be balanced by development programmes and emphasises that the 2004 budget speech expressed that a commitment to fighting poverty lies within social welfare and social security spending and with the extended public works programme.

With the intended shift of grant administration and financing, including grant payments, to the national social security agency from April 2005 (Hartley & Mabuza, 2004:4), it remains to be seen

how welfare budget priorities in South Africa will change towards social services. Linked to this uncertainty is the interpretation of what social services entail and hence what it is, in addition to social security, that needs additional funding to extend the scope of development and empowerment. From policy documents, media reflections as indicated above and debates in practice regarding the roles of various social service professionals, it is clear that there is not a common understanding within and across government and the NGO sector on what social services include or exclude, and therefore what the impact of social service delivery entails which could inform funding decisions.

This article reports on the research findings regarding one of the aims of a quantitative study by Lombard (2003), namely to explore how the NGO social welfare sector contributes through social service interventions to human, social and economic development and the promotion of human rights.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social welfare is regarded worldwide as an economic drain on scarce resources and not as an investment in human and social capital. This leads to the marginalisation of the social welfare sector as well as social service professionals, which is reflected in low salaries, bad working conditions and a lack of empowerment to stand up for their own human and professional rights. The IFSW Policy Paper (1997:4) alludes to the fact that social workers, as advocates for change, are often in the forefront of movements for change and thus are themselves subject to repression and abuse which has many faces. This comes directly from clients, but also from government, other professionals and even from the broader society.

The question is why government's financing of social services constitutes less than 30% of the total costs of organisations such as from NACOSS, whilst government continues to demand more from social service delivery, including statutory services, which is beyond NGOs' financial and other resource capacity? One example is that subsidy per child at government residential children's homes in South Africa is R5 699 per month compared to the subsidy per child at NGO homes of R857 per month (Department of Social Development, 2004:26). Although there is no justification for this scenario, the irony is that NGOs actually proved that they could render the service more cost effectively than government. However, the impact of this is reported in the study: "There currently exists an air of distrust, suspicion and disrespect between the Government and children's homes" (Department of Social Development, 2004:31). Why is it that, whilst NGOs and government are meant to be partners in contributing to the development of all South Africans, inadequate funding of social service delivery so deeply entrenches the lack of trust and respect in the 'partnership'?

It is the premise of this article that research-based evidence on the way that social services impact on human, social and economic development and the promotion of human rights could close the gap between government and NGOs, since fact finding will pave the way for a better understanding of the contribution of the NGO social welfare sector towards social development. On this basis, government can make an informed investment in the people of South Africa by proactively preparing a budget for social services based on realistically costed social service delivery.

An understanding of how social service interventions impact on human, social and economic development and the promotion of human rights will not only clarify the contribution of social services to social development, but it will also empower social service professionals to identify boldly with their role and responsibilities with regard to developmental social welfare and social

development, and will furthermore empower them to challenge government to facilitate an enabling environment for social development as well as their own professional development.

For purposes of interpretation of the research findings from a theoretical perspective, the key concepts of the study, namely, *social services*; *human, social and economic development*; and *human rights* will be briefly outlined as they are applicable to the study.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALISATION

Social services

Social welfare in South Africa is developmental in nature, its goal being to bring about "...a humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people's creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life" (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997:7). This policy framework provides a mandate for social services to have a developmental focus, which will facilitate human, social and economic development and the promotion of the human rights of all South Africans. Within this framework social service interventions are consciously planned, goal-directed activities, implemented as a process which strives to facilitate basic need satisfaction and to change the contexts, structure, interaction, behaviour, thinking and/or feeling of all client systems (individuals, groups, families, communities and organisations) in order to empower them and facilitate their growth and development to function better in society (Potgieter, 1998:164, 297). Social services thus include a wide spectrum of services ranging from those that have a problem-solving to those with a social-reform focus.

Social development

Social development aims to enhance people's well-being by linking human and social development programmes with economic development (Midgley, 1995:25). Social development is an approach which invests in human, social and economic capital. Social services, according to Midgley (1995:159), are now widely regarded as investments in human capital. Human development is closely linked to education and investment in human capacity through skills training and education. Social capital is used to connote the creation of strong bonds of community reciprocity and the strengthening of social relationships; the creation of social infrastructure such as housing, schools, health clinics, sanitary and water-supply projects; and the accumulation of assets of which Sherraden's work in the United States on asset development among low-income groups is a rewarding example (Midgley, 1995:160). Putman (in Gittel & Vidal, 1998:15) distinguishes between *bonding* and *bridging* capital, where *bonding capital* refers to capital which brings people who already know each other closer together, whereas *bridging capital* is the type that brings together people and groups who previously did not know each other.

Economic capital development implies that human development should be integrated into the economy through vocational training, job placement, the creation of micro-enterprises, cooperatives and community-based projects which encourage economic self-sufficiency and full integration into society (Midgley, 1995:160). However, for social development to build economic capital, Midgley emphasises that government should create conditions conducive to the emergence of small-scale enterprises that provide opportunities for poor people to generate the resources they need to meet their own social needs.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Respect for human rights is essential to the success of social development initiatives and social and economic progress and development. The UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said in his opening address to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna on 14 June 1993: "One thing is certain: there can be no sustainable development without promoting democracy and, thus without respect for human rights" (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1995:4). No NGO or government can successfully facilitate human, social or economic development if it is not committed first and foremost to social justice and human rights. In South Africa the Bill of Rights is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).

Despite a few welfare movements and initiatives prior to 1994, the social welfare sector, and social work in particular, has in general failed citizens in advocating for social justice and human rights. This was acknowledged by the welfare sector in a submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996 (Lombard, 2000).

Both development and human rights have as their main concerns survival, justice and human well-being. It can be said that the goal of development is the realisation of all human rights and that development is the process through which these rights are attained (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1995:2). The human being is the central subject of development and should participate in and benefit from development.

Through social development, the social service professions accept their share of responsibility for working to oppose and eliminate all violations of human rights on various intervention levels. The IFSW Policy Paper (1997:3) concurs that social workers must exercise this responsibility in their practice with individuals, groups and communities, in their role as agency or organisational representatives, and as citizens of a nation and the world.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative exploratory study was conducted by utilising a survey research design and questionnaires as a data-collection method.

In order to obtain specific information from a clearly defined group, the non-probability target sample was utilised. In target sampling great effort is put into involving a sufficient number of respondents by carefully explaining the purpose and value the study holds for them (Strydom & Venter, 2002:208). The sampling procedure enabled the researcher (author) to purposefully select respondents who (i) would reflect the broad spectrum of social welfare in South Africa with regard to service areas, (ii) could reflect on experiences ranging from those of managers to direct service providers, and, (iii) operate in all the 9 provinces in South Africa, including service delivery across urban and rural areas, in order to get a national perspective on the research topic.

The National Coalition for Social Services (NACOSS) met these criteria. NACOSS is a coalition of national and provincial non-profit organisations¹ representing and mandated by more than 3 600 community-based organisations that focus on meeting the developmental social welfare needs of all South Africans. NACOSS's constituency targets women, older persons, the youth, children, families, as well as addressing issues of drug abuse, disability, crime, HIV/AIDS, poverty and income generation. Their services benefit more than 11,5 million people of all ages throughout

¹ NACOSS Members: ACVV, AFM Executive Welfare Council, Age in Action, CANSA; Catholic Women's League, Epilepsy SA, National Council for People with Physical Disabilities SA, National Jewish Welfare Forum, Ondersteuningsraad, Operation Hunger, Salvation Army, SA Federation for Mental Health, SANCA, SA National Council for Child & Family Welfare, SAVF.

South Africa, employing more than 26 000 social service professionals and other personnel and involving at least 42 000 volunteers from the community (NACOSS Memo to Minister, May, 2004).

NACOSS may be said to represent the so-called formal welfare sector in South Africa, although the constituency is actively involved in developing community-based organisations at grassroots level. NACOSS has been in existence for more than 20 years, and its well-structured methods of communication and its services mean that it has an appropriate population for a quantitative study with mailed questionnaires as data-gathering method. Questionnaires were either hand delivered, posted or emailed to the national and provincial/regional offices with the request to spread them as widely as possible in their organisations. In response to a formal letter of request for voluntary participation, 13 of the 20 member organisations formally agreed to participate, 9 of which work in all 9 provinces, 1 in 6 provinces, 2 in 5 provinces and 1 in 3 provinces. The respondents presented a wide range of agency settings, including Age in Action, Apostolic Faith Mission Executive Welfare Council, Council for Church Social Services, Deaf Association for South Africa (DEAFSA), Epilepsy South Africa, Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA); National Jewish Welfare Forum; National Council for People with Physical Disabilities South Africa; *Ondersteuningsraad*; South Africa Federation for Mental Health; South African National Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SANCA), South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare; and the *Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie* (SAVF, including the *Natal Christelike Vroue Vereeniging*).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings of the empirical study are based on responses from 241 questionnaires. The data were statistically analysed by making use of the SAS South African software.

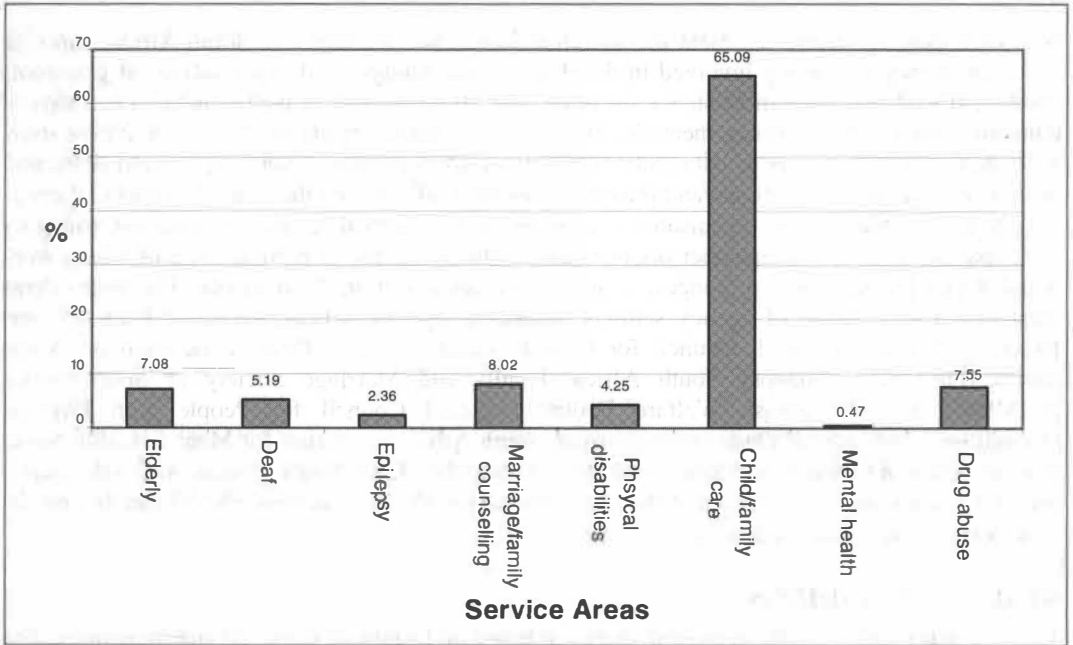
Respondents

Respondents indicated that the main focus of their service delivery was child and family care (66.80%), marriage and family life (9.77%), drug abuse (7.42%), the elderly (5.86%), deafness (4.30%), physical disabilities (3.52%), epilepsy (1.95%), and mental health (0.39%). Figure 1 provides a visual presentation of these main service areas of respondents' organisations.

CURRENT POSITION IN THE ORGANISATION

Of the respondents, 30.98% were managers (including supervisors), whilst 69.02% were involved in direct social service delivery. Of the 69.02%, the majority (45.49%) were social workers, 6.27% were social auxiliary workers and 0.78% were youth and care workers.

**FIGURE 1
SERVICE AREAS**



Work responsibilities in the organisation

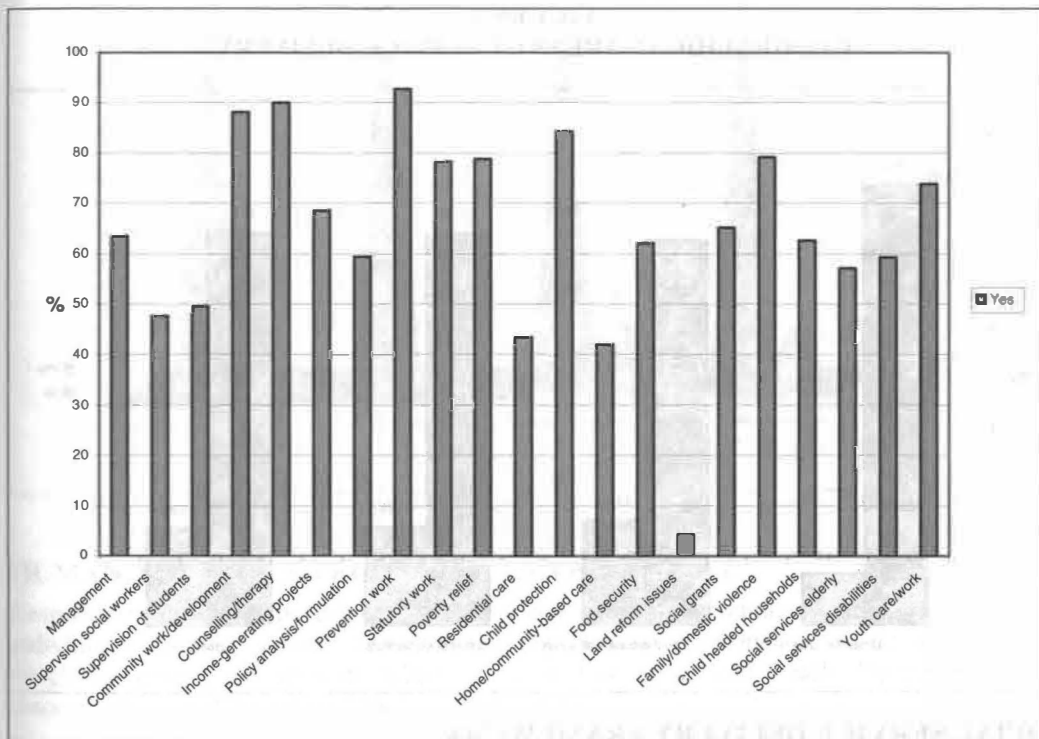
The work responsibilities of respondents are reflected in Figure 2.

Figure 2 indicates that the highest percentage of work responsibilities was in the prevention category (92.72%). The second and third largest responsibilities lay in counselling/therapy (90.05%), and community work and development (88.15%), followed by child protection (84.29%), family/domestic violence (79.23%), poverty relief (78.89%), and food security (62.09%). Of the respondents, 78.33% were involved in statutory work, which is linked mainly to child protection (84.29%) and hence the protection of human rights, particularly children's.

With regard to income-generating projects, the involvement of 68.57% is very relevant within a social development approach. This means that social service providers have embarked on the route of building economic capital. However, 65.19% of the respondents are involved in social grants, which indicates that much time is spent with this high priority of government. The 73.91% focus on youth care and youth development is in line with government's focus on the empowerment of youth (cf. Strategic Plan, Department of Social Development 2002/3-2004/5). The 43.51% involvement of respondents in residential care/treatment correlates with the higher percentage of involvement in community work and development (88.15%) and prevention (92.72%). Of the respondents, 42.14% is involved in home-based and community-based care. This needs to be seen in relation to the 62.66% of respondents involved with child-headed households/AIDS orphans (62.66%). The involvement of respondents with social services to the elderly (57.14%) and people with disabilities (59.33%) alludes to the fact that they are regarded as priority focus groups. Of the respondents, 63.53% were involved in management, 47.65% with supervision of social workers and 49.65% with supervising students. Although more than half of the respondents are involved in

policy analysis and formulation (59.46%), this remains low from a social justice and human rights perspective. Similarly, it is alarming that only 4.42% of respondents are engaged in land reform issues. Zastrow (1996:615) concurs that policy analysis is critical in view of the principles of social and economic justice.

FIGURE 2
WORK RESPONSIBILITIES



In addition to the above, 8.11% of the respondents indicated that they are involved in the supervision of child care workers, social auxiliary workers and volunteers. The same percentage (8.11%) are engaged in fund raising, 10.81% in debriefing of individuals and groups on issues such as HIV/Aids, and 27.03% in training, including training in EAPs, volunteers, auxiliary workers, lay counsellors, ABET life skills, sign language, change management, community development, self-empowerment of communities and women empowerment.

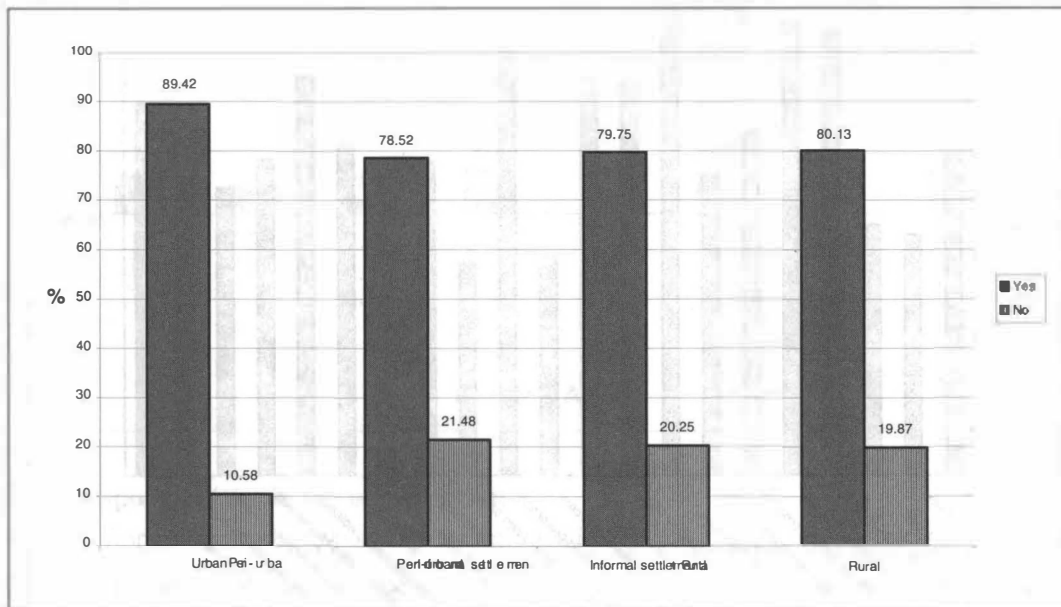
From a system-ecological approach, these findings challenge the concept and context of integrated practice. Generic, integrated services focus on the interrelatedness of human problems and build on the assumption that the problems and concerns of people are interactional in nature and part of a cycle of triggers and responses (Potgieter, 1998:191). Systems are connected and when any part of a system is changed, all other parts of that system are affected and change in some way (Potgieter, 1998:55).

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

From Figure 3 below it is clear that NGOs provide social services throughout the country. The finding that 80.13% of respondents work in rural areas, and 79.75% in informal settlements is

evidence of the extent to which NGOs reach out to the most vulnerable in society. However, working in these areas does not mean that the respondents (NGOs) neglect either the urban (89.42%) or the peri-urban areas (78.52%). These findings indicate that NGOs, holistically viewed, provide social services to the broader South African community. McKay (2003:14) states that "Today, the child welfare movement works in the poverty pockets in the Province, on the septic fringes of our society, namely, the informal settlements and peri-urban areas".

FIGURE 3
GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

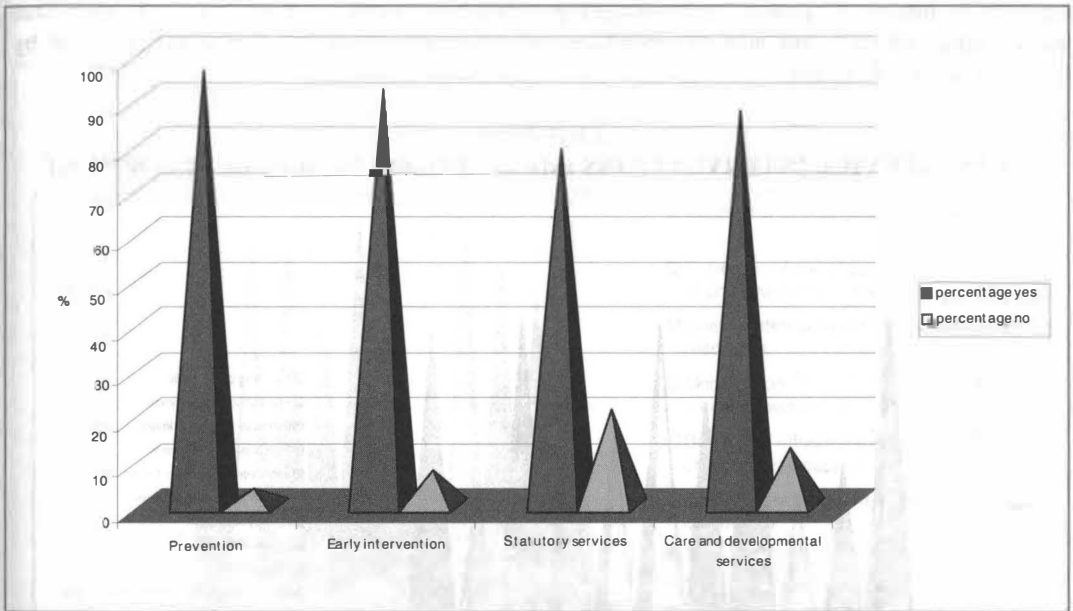


SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

As part of the transformation process of social service delivery, government expected service delivery levels to be prioritised by 2004 according to (1) prevention, (2) early intervention, (3) statutory processes, and (4) continuum of care and development (community-based care and residential care) (Financing Policy, 1999). Figure 4 reflects the service delivery levels of the respondents.

The high percentage of respondents' involvement in prevention (96.12%) and early intervention (92.52%) reflected in Figure 4 is in line with the transformation of social service delivery in South Africa. However, it is also clear that prevention and early intervention services cannot be promoted at the cost of statutory services (78.95%) and care and development (87.56%). Integrated social services do not mean that services can be provided in one area at the cost of service delivery in another. A holistic balance needs to be found according to the needs of the targeted groups for social services.

FIGURE 4
SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY LEVELS



HUMAN, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Respondents indicated the extent to which social service interventions with clients (including individuals, families, groups, communities) impacted on their *human, social* and *economic* development on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicated *not at all* and 5 *fully*. Figures 5, 6 and 7 respectively, reflect the mean of each of these variables.

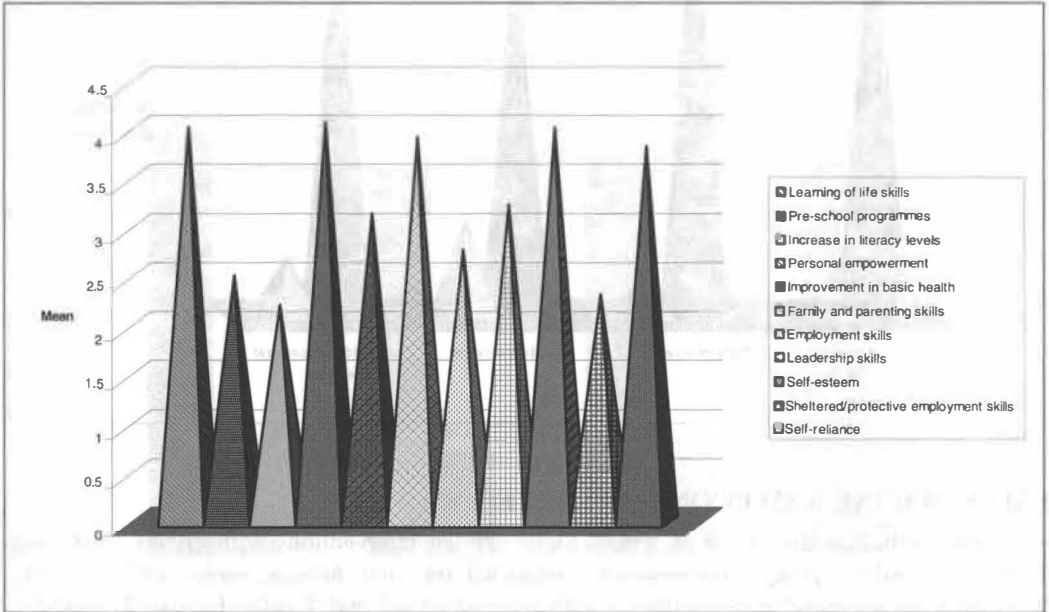
Human development

In Figure 5, the impact of social service interventions on clients' human development is reflected.

It is evident from Figure 5 that respondents' interventions impact the highest on the learning of life skills (4.03); and personal empowerment (4.08), which is again closely related to self-esteem (4.03). This finding correlates with Potgieter's (1998:191) view that life skills development should provide the knowledge and skills to access community resources as one of the key elements towards empowerment and the development of self-esteem. With regard to the findings on the variable, family and parenting skills (3.93), Potgieter (1998:268) argues that parenting skills prove to have a system-wide impact on all members, thus affecting the total environment of children. Parenting skills will impact on the improvement in basic health (3.15). Life skills and parenting skills contribute to the development of personal empowerment and self-esteem as well as self-reliance (3.84) and leadership skills (3.24). On a lower impact level, variables include an increase in literacy levels (2.22), sheltered/protective employment skills (2.32%); pre-school social programmes (2.52) and employment skills (2.78). The impact of social services on human development can be differentiated according to more direct and indirect involvement with clients. With regard to the variables that reflect a lower impact, social service providers operate rather as

brokers to link people with such needs to experts in the field. However, this does not mean that social workers do not have the responsibility to impact on human development needs, such as literacy and employment. Illiteracy imposes severe restrictions on poor people's access to knowledge, informed opinions and political participation (Speth n.d.) and, as such, they also impose on a person's human rights to education and employment that should be protected by social service professionals.

FIGURE 5
SOCIAL SERVICE INTERVENTIONS IMPACTING ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



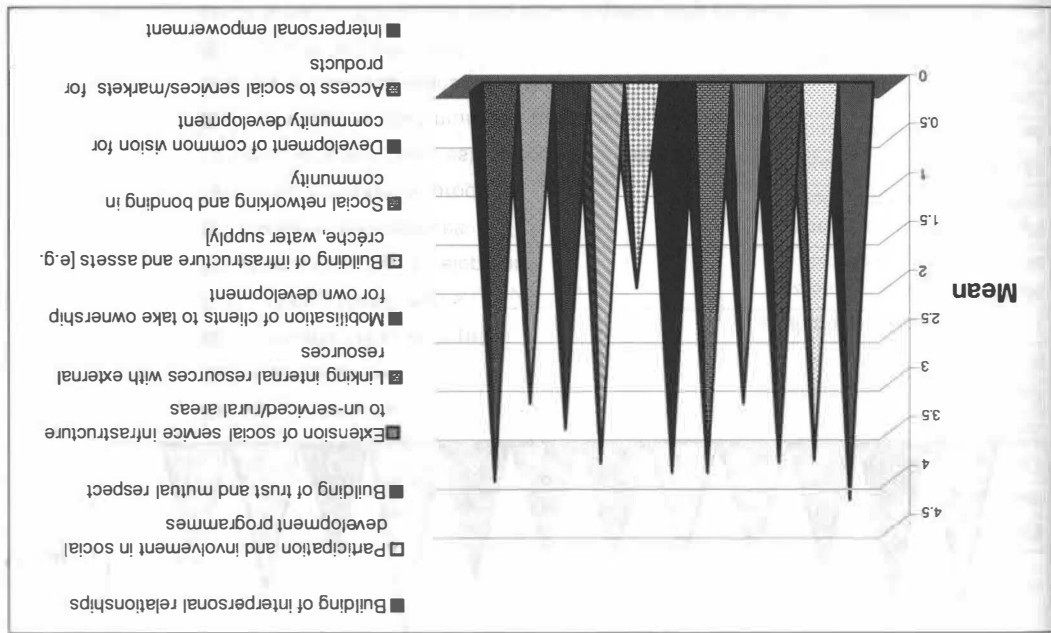
In a comparison between respondents involved in early intervention and pre-school social programmes, it was found that of the 93.10% respondents who said that they were involved in early intervention, only 29.01% indicated a high impact on pre-school social programmes, 14.81% indicated an average impact, whilst 56.17% indicated a low impact. This indicates that the interpretation of social services from an early intervention perspective runs across all social service areas and does not significantly contribute to early childhood development as a specialist focus area. This finding is critical in the context of government's high priority for both the child support grant and early childhood development. Grants cannot be provided in isolation of childhood development programmes and services to young children.

Social development

Figure 6 below indicates that the social service intervention with the highest social development impact is building interpersonal relationships (4.23). This is followed by interpersonal empowerment (4.04), the linking of internal resources with external ones (3.97) and mobilising clients to take ownership of their own development (3.95). These are, in turn, reflected in the impact on participation and involvement in social development programmes (3.82) and social networking (3.86) and bonding in the community (3.86); building of trust and mutual respect in the community (3.85); and the development of a common vision for community development (3.50). Social service interventions further impact on social development by providing access to

social services/markets for products (3.24), extension of social service infrastructure to unserved/rural areas (3.24) and the building of infrastructure and assets (2.06).

FIGURE 6
SOCIAL SERVICE INTERVENTIONS IMPACTING ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



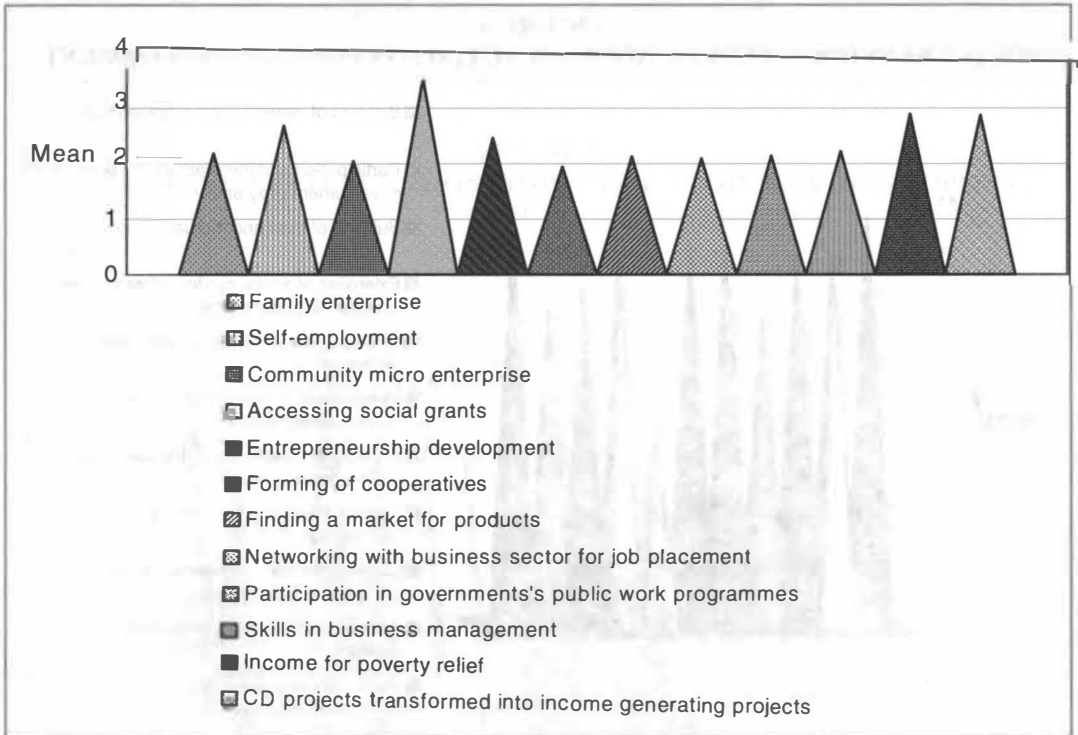
From Figure 6 it is clear that social service interventions have a huge impact on the social development of clients, especially with regard to bonding and bridging capital, whilst the impact on infrastructure and asset building reflects an area for growth.

Economic development

In Figure 7, the impact of social service interventions on clients' economic development is reflected.

From Figure 7 it is clear that the highest impact that interventions have on economic development is cash transfers through accessing social grants (3.53), which is followed by income for poverty relief (2.89). The transformation of community development projects into income-generating projects (2.87) is a bold step forward in terms of self-reliance and is closely linked to self-employment (2.69); entrepreneurship development (2.46); skills in business management (2.22); finding a market for products (2.13); participation in government's public work programmes (2.14); networking with the business sector for job placement (2.09); family enterprise (2.19); community micro enterprise (2.05), and the forming of cooperatives (1.94). The transformation of community development projects into income-generating projects (2.79) is in line with the emerging community economic development (CED) approach.

FIGURE 7
SOCIAL SERVICE INTERVENTIONS IMPACTING ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The findings reflected in Figure 7 confirm that social service professionals have embarked on social development programmes that are directly linked to economic development, even if still on a somewhat limited scale.

RELATION BETWEEN INCOME-GENERATING PROJECTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A comparison was made between the variable *income-generating projects* as a working responsibility of respondents and the economic variables impacting on economic development as reflected in Figure 7. These economic development variables were measured on a 5-point scale where 1-2 indicates a *low to not at all impact*, 3 reflects an average impact, whilst 4-5 indicates a *high to fully impact*. The N indicates the number of the respondents that indicated income-generating projects as part of their work responsibilities.

TABLE 1
INCOME-GENERATING PROJECTS IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development interventions/variables	Statistically significant difference		Respondents involved in income-generating projects	Impact of income generation on economic development		
	Yes	No		Low	Average	High
Family enterprise	x		N = 107 (68.59%)	54.21%	25.23%	20.56%
Self-employment	x		N = 111 (68.94%)	34.23%	35.14%	30.63%
Community micro-enterprise	x		N = 102 (68%)	60.78%	23.53%	15.69%
Accessing social grants		x	N = 106 (66.67%)	20.75%	16.98%	62.26%
Entrepreneurship development	x		N = 115 (69.28)	40.87%	34.78%	24.35%
Forming of cooperatives	x		N = 106 (67.95%)	64.15%	24.53%	11.32%
Finding a market for products	x		N = 105 (68.18%)	52.38%	27.62%	20%
Networking with business sector for job placements		x	N = 107 (67.30%)	64.49%	19.63%	15.89%
Participating in government's public work programmes	x		N = 109 (68.13%)	61.47%	19.27%	19.27%
Skills in business management	x		N = 110 (68.32%)	50%	29.09%	20.91%
Income for poverty relief	x		N = 114 (68.67%)	21.05%	30.70%	48.25%
Employment skills	x		N = 107 (69.48%)	32.71%	37.38%	29.91%
Community development projects transform into income-generating projects	x		N = 116 (69.05%)	23.28%	26.72%	50%

It is evident from Table 1 that the respondents' involvement in income-generating projects is strongly related to social grants (62.26%) and income for poverty relief (48.25%). There is an indication that respondents attempt to transform community development projects (76.72%) into income-generating projects. This is in line with the central argument of Shrage (1997:1), who postulates that, if community economic development (CED) is to become a strategy for social change, it will have to build on community organisation practice and integrate economic development into the rich traditions of community development. CED indicates an attempt to shift away from poverty relief/alleviation to income generation (poverty reduction). The respondents who indicated that their involvement in income-generating projects impact on skills in business management (20.91%) and entrepreneurship development (24.35%) can be linked to the impact on self-employment (30.63%), family enterprise (20.56%) and community micro-enterprise (15.69%) and forming of cooperatives (11.32%). If the *high impact* and *average impact* are read in conjunction, there is evidence of a shift in progress towards economic development as opposed to only poverty relief/alleviation. Potgieter (1998:10) confirms the stimulation of economic growth through the development of entrepreneurship, the creation of employment opportunities and the redistribution of wealth to address the effects of mass poverty and unemployment.

The *low impact* on finding a market for products, as opposed to the only 20% *high impact* reflected in Table 1, correlates with experience from practice that products are produced as a result of skills training, without first writing a business plan which includes finding a market for the products. It is a market for good-quality products that will finally make the shift to economic development through income generation in South Africa.

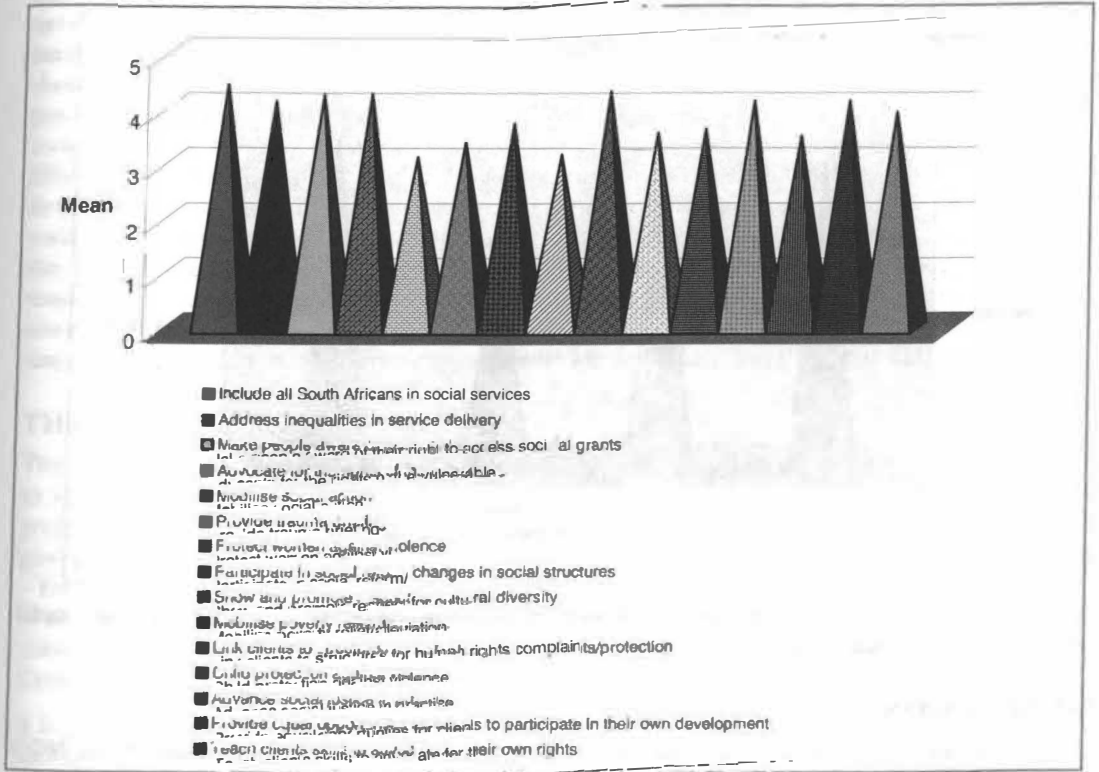
From Table 1 it is clear that NGOs have engaged in social development, even though in a small scale. Social development implies an integration of human and economic development. Work and job placements largely, however, fall outside the effort of the social welfare sector. From a comparison between *income generation and employment skills* and *networking with the business sector for job placement*, the findings indicated that *income-generation is not significantly linked with or contributing toward employment skills*, neither is it significantly linked with the business sector for job placement. Of 69.48% respondents who said that they are involved in income-generating projects, only 29.91% indicated a high-impact contribution to *employment skills*. Of 67.30% respondents involved in income-generating projects, only 15.87% indicated a high impact on *networking with the business sector for job placements* as opposed to a low impact of 64.49%. Furthermore, the social service sector does not participate enough in government's public work programmes, since of the 68.13% respondent who are involved in income-generating projects, 61.47% indicated a low impact as opposed to only 19.27% who indicated a high impact on participation in government's public work programmes. This finding is disturbing since the purpose of public work programmes is to provide employment for unemployed people – the same target group that relies on the social service sector for poverty relief.

PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Respondents had to indicate the extent to which social service interventions promote or contribute to the advancement of human rights of clients, including individuals, families and communities on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicates *not at all* and 5 *fully*.

From Figure 8 it is evident that social service interventions impact very highly on the lives of clients. The highest impact is the inclusion of all South Africans in social services (4.44), which is closely linked to showing and promoting respect for cultural diversity (4.32). This is closely followed by advocacy for the rights of the vulnerable (4.27), making people aware of their right to access social grants (4.25), addressing inequalities in service delivery (4.13), providing equal opportunities for clients to participate in their own development (4.13), and protecting children against violence (4.13). The impact, reflecting a mean between 3 and 4, includes teaching clients skills to advocate for their own rights (3.93), protecting women against violence (3.73), linking clients to structures for human rights complaints/protection (3.63), mobilising for poverty relief/alleviation (3.56), advancing social justice in practice (3.5), participating in social reform/changes in social structures (3.17), providing trauma debriefing (3.4) and finally mobilising for social action (3.12).

FIGURE 8
IMPACT OF SOCIAL SERVICE INTERVENTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

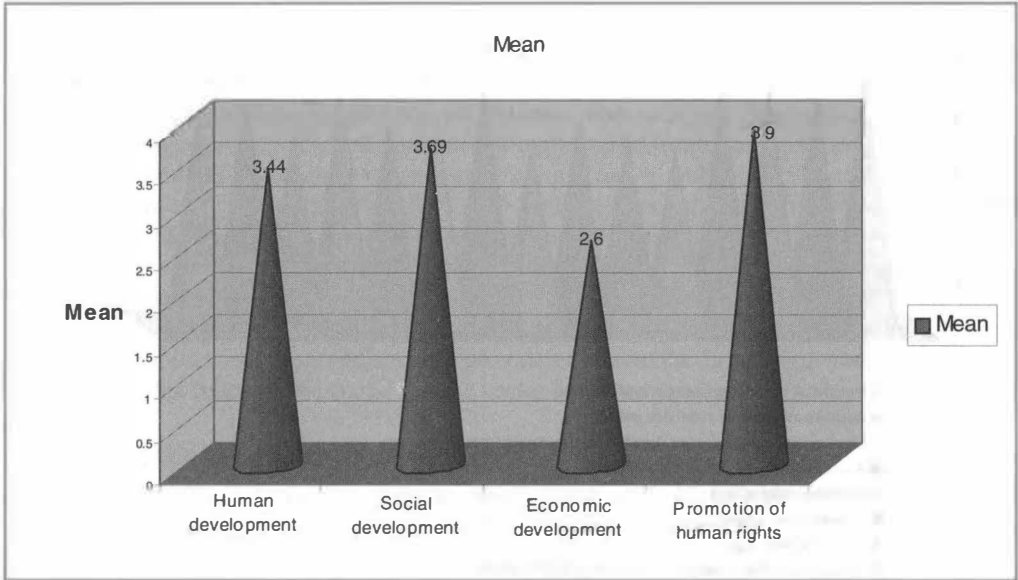


The findings in Figure 8 confirm that social service professionals in South Africa are actively engaged in the promotion of human rights. The IFSW concurs that social workers seek to uphold the agency of the individuals, groups and communities with whom they are working by carrying out their duties in a way that empowers people with individual and social problems and places them in a position to address their own social needs and to advance the cause of human rights throughout the world.

In summary, the findings indicate the mean of the total impact of social service interventions on human development (3.44), social development (3.69), economic development (2.6) and the promotion of human rights (3.9). It is clear that social service professionals contribute to the promotion and growth of human rights in South Africa and that human and social development investments in the country are a key factor in the promotion of human rights.

FIGURE 9

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SERVICE INTERVENTIONS ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



From Figure 9 it is clear that the social welfare sector is contributing to the goals of social development in South Africa.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the findings (see Figures 6-9) that the social service interventions of the NGO welfare sector impact on human, social and economic development. Gillwald (2003:22) regards education as the key to equality, which implies that investment in human capital and development could give a voice to the vulnerable and the poor. Within this context, social services make a major contribution to economic development – a point which is echoed by Midgley (1995:59): “Investments in human and social capital are urgently needed if people are to have the educational levels and skills to utilize the opportunities created by economic development”. However, this impact needs to be enhanced through a more deliberate linking of social programmes with economic development.

Human rights (see Figure 8) are protected and promoted through social service delivery and thus integrated with social development. The high level of accessibility of social services to all South Africans and the respect for diversity indicate the commitment of the NGO social welfare sector to transform its services. A further commitment is the balanced involvement of South African NGOs in the urban, peri-urban, informal settlements and rural communities (see Figure 3), and various service delivery levels (see Figure 2). These findings provide evidence that national NGOs can provide the provincial and local infrastructure and capacity to reach out to unserved and rural areas in South Africa.

The boundaries of social service delivery in the NGO social welfare sector, as an entity, range along a continuum of poverty alleviation and social security; counselling and care; and early intervention and prevention to community development and community economic development. All these focuses emphasise that integrated social service delivery can be a geographically located

one-stop service where a range of services is offered (The Family Foundation, March, 2003); it could imply an integration of knowledge, skills, competencies, intervention models, approaches, methods and intervention levels (Potgieter, 1998:11) and it could imply that an organisation or a network of organisations ensures that a balance in social services is maintained in addressing the needs of the target groups in the region it serves. From this perspective, an integrated approach should stop the never-ending debate on whether social work has a reform or a therapy approach to practice, because it simply has both. Billups (1990:22) argues: "This simultaneous dual focus and concern may be the only hope for eventually raising life for one and for all to its highest value". Elliott (1993:28) alludes to Midgley (1984), who pointed out that "...overemphasis on a social development approach has led to the neglect of remedial programmes in some developing countries at considerable cost to vulnerable groups and has therefore incurred criticism". However, this caution needs to be seen in perspective and does not mean that social service delivery can remain in its comfort zone and not deliberately challenge social service professionals to shift towards social development. Even remedial work should be challenged to accommodate an empowerment and capacity-building approach, which is in line with a developmental approach.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The ultimate challenge for social service delivery in the NGO social welfare sector is to continue to impact on human, social and economic development through sustainable programmes and projects. However, from a right to development perspective the greatest challenge ahead is for government to provide the optimum enabling environment – and this includes adequate financing – for the NGO social welfare sector to continue and to expand their current social service delivery. Whilst all persons have a responsibility for development, the primary responsibility for creating conditions favourable to realising the right to development lies with the state (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1995:3).

It is not a retention strategy that will keep professionals such as social workers in the country and which will retain their passion, energy and spirit to continue to make a contribution to human, social and economic development and the promotion of human rights. The challenge lies in the battle to keep the social welfare structures and services up and running; to address differences in funding and policy implementation between the various provinces; to narrow the gap between the salaries and benefits in the public sector and those in the NGO sector, and improve the poor working conditions of social service professionals; to provide a legislative framework for funding and service delivery; to assist in maintaining and extending the outreach of NGOs to rural/unserved areas; and to recognise their capacity-building role in the lives of the poor and the vulnerable as the research findings indicated (Lombard, 2003).

If the research findings reflected in this article are not sufficient evidence for government to invest in more funding of social service delivery in the NGO social welfare sector, then government is challenged to hear and observe the NGO social welfare sector's commitment to social development, not only through business plans or during meetings where NGOs struggle to convince officials how they have transformed social service delivery, but through personal experiences such as site visits, analysing video material, speaking to beneficiaries, attending annual meetings and, perhaps most of all, by recognising the efforts of the large number of volunteers that have kept many of these organisations up and running for as long as 100 years.

The NGO sector should continue to build networks and partnerships amongst themselves in order to be a representative voice for membership organisations but in particular for the beneficiaries of their services. The provincial initiative in Limpopo, known as PROCROSS, following in the national footsteps of NACOSS, is evidence of the transformation of the NGO sector to combine all

their efforts to make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable and the poor. It is also interesting to note that in 2003/04 Limpopo, one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, the funds available for social services was the lowest of all 9 provinces, namely 1,8% of the welfare budget (IDASA, 2004).

A strong NGO welfare sector does not weaken government but rather strengthens it, especially if government continues to play a facilitating and enabling role for social service delivery. The challenge for government is to create a true partnership with the NGO sector in order to achieve its aims of a better life for all. This can only be done by addressing the entrenched lack of trust and respect on both sides.

Finally, social service professionals are challenged to take pride in their own identity within the social welfare sector and boldly claim their role as being in the business of human investment as opposed to being an economic drain on society. They should stand up for their professional rights to make themselves heard with regard to working conditions and salaries, but also in particular acknowledge the valuable role that the social welfare sector makes in facilitating a democratic, pluralistic South African society (Lombard, 2003).

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- Prof Antoinette Lombard, Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa.*