

## **TOWARDS SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION IN RURAL SCHOOLS: PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATORS**

**R Sathiparsad, M Taylor**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The education reform process in South Africa is faced with the task of improving the quality of schooling by restoring a culture of teaching and learning in the classroom. Establishing healthy learning environments requires an exploration of factors impacting on the learning process. The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education 2001a) lists the following as areas of concern: problems in the provision and organisation of education, socio-economic barriers, factors such as violence and crime which place learners at risk, substance abuse, attitudes, problems with language and communication, lack of human resource development, and lack of parental recognition and involvement. Sayed (2002) views schools as the key institutions through which people could potentially experience themselves as social outcasts, recipients of skills or learning, or as agents of change. It is for such reasons that schools are crucial in human lives.

Acknowledging the factors outlined above, this paper discusses interdisciplinary research across Social Work and Community Health. The research was undertaken in Ugu North, a rural area in Southern KwaZulu-Natal characterised by unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and poor housing conditions. Prior research at schools in the area (Taylor, Dlamini, Kagoro, Jinabhai, Sathiparsad & De Vries, 2002; Taylor, Jinabhai, Naidoo, Kleinschmidt & Dlamini, 2003) revealed that sexual harassment, gender-based violence, substance abuse, truancy and a lack of interest in learning were common features amongst the learners, and that support services at these schools were either minimal or non-existent. These observations led to the present study, which was aimed at understanding the views of educators towards social work intervention in rural schools. This article outlines challenges faced by educators, problems presented by learners, support services for learners, educators' views on social work intervention and the role of social workers in schools. The results raise questions regarding the consequences for learners, families and communities who have no access to social work and other support services. One hundred and twenty-nine out of a total of 184 educators from twelve schools participated in the study, a response rate of 70.1%.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS**

A quantitative descriptive method was used, an approach suggested by Neuman (1997), where self-reported views are acquired and many variables are measured. Twelve rural high schools situated in the Ugu District were randomly selected from the lists of secondary schools provided by the Department of Education. All the educators at the schools were invited to participate and respondents provided informed consent. Research assistants handed out the anonymous questionnaires which, when completed, were placed in sealed envelopes and collected from the schools. Following Babbie and Mouton's (2001) and Neuman's (1997) steps in questionnaire construction, the instrument was developed to investigate educator perceptions about factors influencing the culture of learning and teaching in schools and their views on social work intervention in schools. Questions were close-ended and educators chose answers from a wide range of fixed responses. Neuman (1997) regards this method as appropriate for the context, that is, rural schools, and for purposes of anonymity, saving time, being cost effective and because of the availability of the educators. It also enabled easier coding of the data and comparison of responses. The data were entered and analysed using the Epi-Info 6.04 statistical package.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of the educators

The number of years in the teaching profession for educators ranged from one to more than 20 years as indicated in Table 1, with a mean of 9.7 years.

**TABLE 1**  
**TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATORS**

Number of years of teaching	Number of educators	Percentage (%)
1-5	42	32.5
6-10	38	29.5
11-15	23	17.8
16-20	18	14.0
> 21	8	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 129

Of the educators who participated, 20.9% reported that they were very satisfied with their jobs, 23.3% that they were considerably satisfied, 25.6% that they were satisfied, 21.7% that they were somewhat satisfied and 7.8% were not at all satisfied. Levels of job satisfaction may be linked to individual experiences, restructuring and uncertainties linked to transformation. In relation to job satisfaction, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997) and Sayed (2004) reflect that being an educator in South Africa means being a mediator, interpreter, leader, administrator, manager, researcher, learning area specialist, programme designer and supporter, along with other demanding roles.

### Main challenges faced by educators

Educators (69%) identified difficulty in implementing the outcomes-based curriculum as stipulated in the National Curriculum 2005. Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a developmental approach which focuses on what learners learn and are able to do at the end of a learning process. It is an activity-based approach to education designed to promote problem solving and critical thinking (Department of Education, 2001b). Educators highlighted the lack of resources at schools and the lack of material for OBE. This is consistent with Harley and Wedekind's (2004) contention that the OBE approach is problematic due to a complex curriculum policy, inadequate co-ordination and management, insufficient personnel and finance, and inadequate teacher development. These authors point out that educators, particularly at schools in rural and under-served areas, are frustrated by the lack of financial resources, and this, together with infrastructural problems, leads to severe backlogs in service. However, it is beyond the scope of this article to explore this issue further.

Almost half of the educators (49.6%) identified transport to and from school as a problem. Many educators travelled long distances to school, some from the surrounding areas and others from further urban areas. Discipline management was mentioned as a challenge for 40.3% of the educators. This may be linked to the adolescent phase which, according to Wolfe, Wekerle and Scott (1997), is commonly characterised by rebelliousness, experimentation and peer pressure. It must be noted that risk-taking behaviours and disciplinary issues left unattended are likely to lead to psychological and social problems. These problems may also be linked to a lack of leadership and school organisation mentioned by some educators.

## Educators' identification of problems presented by learners

From the authors' informal discussions with principals, educators, learners and parents, a list of 22 possible problems relating to learners were drawn up. Educators were asked to indicate the prevalence of these problems at their schools. The responses were placed into seven categories, which are listed in Table 2 in order of their reported frequency. The discussion that follows focuses on specific problems mentioned within each category.

**TABLE 2**  
**EDUCATORS' IDENTIFICATION OF THE MAIN PROBLEM CATEGORIES**

<b>PROBLEM CATEGORY</b>	<b>Mean percentage of educators reporting problem</b>
Substance abuse	62.0
Behavioural problems	59.7
Poverty/social conditions	55.3
Individual and learning difficulties	50.3
Violent behaviour	31.3
Sexual behaviour	28.7
Communication difficulties	25.2

### Substance abuse

Substance abuse is viewed in two categories, namely alcoholism and drug abuse. In their responses 69% of the educators identified drug abuse as a problem and 55% mentioned alcoholism. These findings are congruent with findings of Malaka's (2001) study in rural secondary schools in the Northern Province, which revealed that, of a sample of 132 Grade 10-12 female learners, 86 (65.1%) consumed alcohol. Twenty-eight percent of those consumed alcohol socially, 3% habitually and 16% occasionally. Learners had very little knowledge of drugs such as cocaine, heroine and ecstasy, but a few had tried dagga experimentally and 34% of the sample admitted to using snuff nasally. Botvin and Dusenbury (1987) explain that a complex mixture of social, intrapersonal and developmental factors lead to substance use, generally beginning in adolescence.

Malaka (2001) expressed concern that, although substance abuse amongst youth in rural areas is a common phenomenon, researchers and service providers tend to target urban groups only, leaving rural areas without resources, services and development programmes. The author asserts that changing lifestyles and the downplaying of traditional values and norms may lead to an increase in deviant behaviour such as substance abuse.

### Behavioural difficulties

A lack of discipline was viewed as a problem by 62.8% of the educators. Discipline-related problems reported included absenteeism/truancy (67.4%) and lack of respect for other learners and educators (48.8%). It is interesting to note that in a study by Taylor *et al.* (2002) in Ugu North, secondary school learners themselves identified discipline as a problem at their schools. De Jong (2000) and Stevens, Wyngaard and Van Niekerk (2001) view classroom management and learner behaviour management as major challenges facing educators. These authors draw attention to the fact that many schools in South Africa are adverse environments characterised by low staff morale, poor resources and facilities, mismanagement, and social problems such as gangsterism, substance abuse and disillusioned learners. Educators need coping skills and techniques for dealing with disruptive youths and angry parents.

### **Poverty/social conditions**

The health and social conditions identified by the educators included illness (55%), hunger (59.7%) poverty (65.9%), lack of cleanliness (31.8%) and family problems (64.3%). Biersteker and Robinson (2000), Dawes and Donald (2000) and Sathiparsad (2003) highlight the link between learner behaviour and complex patterns linked to family situations, socio-economic conditions, the educational structure and teaching methods. Duerr-Berrick and Duerr (2000) assert that school staff are increasingly faced with learners who mirror the social concerns of their communities, bringing problems such as child abuse and neglect, poor health and family poverty to schools. Children raised in stressful environments are often unable to focus on the academic and social demands of schools. The link between poverty and schooling is illustrated in the Human Rights Watch World Report on Children's Rights (2002), which states that proportions of out-of-school children are highest in the least developed and poorest provinces. UNESCO (2000) emphasises that the child who does not go to school is also likely to suffer from poor nutrition and health care, inadequate sanitation and water, have limited opportunities to participate, and be exposed to violence and other risk factors such as child abuse and substance abuse. These complex conditions and factors act together to keep the child from participating in effective learning experiences in the family, school and community.

### **Individual and learning difficulties**

In this category educators reported a lack of self-confidence/low-self esteem among learners (55.5%), a lack of interest in learning (72.9%) and not understanding lessons (22.5%). Donald *et al.* (1997) suggest that learning difficulties in basic skills may be due to poor teaching, frequent changes of teacher or school, or being away from school for a period. Prolonged learning difficulties may lead to low self-esteem, low frustration tolerance and behaviour problems.

### **Violent behaviour**

The study revealed that educators were concerned about the following forms of violence at their schools: sexual harassment (21%), aggression and fighting (39.6%), and learners carrying guns, knives and other weapons (32.6%). South African schools have been plagued by violence for many years due to socio-political and socio-historical factors whereby apartheid policies led to racial polarisation, inequities in resource distribution and institutional instability (Stevens *et al.*, 2001). Khosa (2002) and Sathiparsad (2003) assert that, whereas schools are meant to be safe havens where education can flourish, many South African schools have become sites of violence. This is exemplified by research conducted in the Western Cape by Biersteker and Erlank (2000), which revealed that the most common crime and violence problems in secondary schools were vandalism, drugs, fighting, theft and gangs. Learners carried weapons such as knives and guns, and stabbing, bullying and fighting took place in the playgrounds, as did drug abuse. In addition, the South African Medical Research Council (2003) reported that, of their sample of 1163 youths attending secondary public schools in KwaZulu-Natal, 16.3% carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, panga or kierrie. The national figure was 16.7% of a total of 10,364 youths. In KZN 35.6% of the youth reported that they engaged in violent behaviours during a given six-month period. Similarly, Mutume (1998) reports a school in Gauteng where teachers were viciously attacked, pupils were found with guns, and young boys and girls were sexually molested. These authors question whether it is possible for effective learning to occur within such destructive environments. Although corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa, teachers continue to inflict physical violence on learners as they see it as an appropriate tool for discipline (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Sexual harassment and gender-based violence are widely documented as areas needing attention in schools, especially in township and rural schools. Research by Beake and Zimbizi (1996), Human Rights Watch (2001) and HSRC (2001) amongst teenagers in rural areas found that physical abuse of female learners by male learners was very common. Indeed, rural girls experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse at the hands of family members, partners, learners and educators. Human Rights Watch (2001) points out that, because behaviour that is violent, harassing, degrading and sexual in nature remains unchallenged, it has become so normalised in many schools that it should be seen as a systemic problem for education, not merely a series of individual incidents.

### **Sexual behaviour**

The range of problems concerning sexual behaviour reported by educators included early sexual activity by young learners (58.9%), learner pregnancy (34.1%), HIV/AIDS infections in the families of learners (15.6%) and HIV/AIDS infections amongst learners (6.2%). These concerns are of great importance considering the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Some 41% of HIV-positive youths live in rural areas and a national survey by the Reproductive Health Research Unit (2004) revealed that 75% of HIV-positive individuals were aged 20-24 years. Among the HIV-positive 15-24-year-olds, 77% were female. The report concluded that gender inequalities are a major driving force behind the spread of HIV. Physical violence, the threat of violence and the fear of abandonment prevent women from negotiating condom usage or leaving relationships that are physically unsafe.

These findings are corroborated by Taylor *et al.* (2002), who studied 901 secondary school learners in Ugu North, the rural area in which this research is located. Despite the fact that 64.8% of the learners viewed the threat of acquiring HIV/AIDS as discouraging multiple sexual partners, 16.5% still indicated that they would want to have many partners. Of the 256 sexually active learners, only 33.5% of males and 10.1% of females reported always using condoms. Some of the learners began sexual activity as early as at age 10. The South African Demographic and Health Survey (Department of Health, 1998) reported a high rate of teenage pregnancy (35.1%) among the 15-19-year age group, indicating that many young people do not practise safe sex behaviour which places them at risk of HIV/AIDS. A subsequent study by the South African Medical Research Council (2003) revealed that nationally 8.1% of males (4786) and 11.1% of females (5530) were forced to have sex. These findings point to the need to further explore issues relating to masculinity, gender violence and sexual behaviour.

### **Communication difficulties**

Difficulty in communicating with fellow learners (20.2%) and difficulty in communicating with educators (30.2%) were identified as concerns relating to learner communication. Strong confident role models may be lacking. Strict authoritarian figures and the threat of corporal punishment cannot be ruled out as possible factors in stifling communication. These responses may also be attributed to a lack of adequate life-skills programmes focusing on improving communication and building self-esteem and self-confidence.

### **Measures to address identified problems**

Although educators (64.3%) reported that attempts had been made to address the identified problems at their schools, 14.7% said that these problems had not been addressed and 16.3% were unsure. As highlighted previously, rural areas are generally under-resourced and ill-equipped in terms of health, welfare and education services. Support services such as those provided by social workers, psychologists, medical and legal personnel are virtually non-existent. Support services at

the schools were minimal, with 5.5% of the educators reporting access to social workers, 1.6% to psychologists, 7.8% to nurses and 3.2% to guidance counsellors. Young people who require counselling and other services remain in a state of need.

Over half of the educators (65.6%) felt ill-equipped to handle learner problems, while 31.3% stated that they were adequately equipped to handle problems. The majority of the educators (77.5%) indicated that they did not have sufficient support services to assist learners. Flisher, Cloete, Johnson, Wigton, Adams and Joshua (2000) and Sathiparsad (2003) highlight the value of training educators who themselves went through a school system that did not offer life-skills or other support services.

Some 70% of the educators reported that life-skills education occurred at their schools, and 60% felt that the learners benefited from it. Bender and Lombard (2004) draw attention to the value of life-skills programmes from their research with black Grade 7 learners in a township east of Pretoria. Some themes implemented with learners included communication, rights and responsibilities, dating and relationships, and problem solving. The findings indicated that the life-skills programme had a significant effect on the personal development of the participants and their interpersonal interactions.

It is encouraging to note that programmes such as the Ministry of Education's Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service Campaign (COLTS) and the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) Department of Education's Life Skills Programme are in place, although these do not reach all schools. The process is hampered by a shortage of staff trained in life skills, inadequate monitoring of the programme and uncertainty about the quality of implementation. As with OBE, the model adopted aims at cascading the training down through the system. Problems arise where educators trained at the top of the cascade may not be sufficiently equipped to replicate the training within their districts and schools. An additional obstacle is that some principals oppose the programme, resulting in some educators feeling de-motivated due to lack of support at school after training (Harley & Wedekind, 2004).

### **Educator perceptions of social work in schools**

The fact that 92.2% of the educators felt that having a social worker at their school would be beneficial is a clear call for such services. Appeals by educators for social work services were also made to the authors during informal visits to the school. Frustration and despair were expressed as educators felt overwhelmed and de-motivated at not being able to cope with the many social problems confronting them at school. Their perceptions of the roles of potential social workers at their schools appear in Table 3.

Social worker roles, as identified by educators, can be clearly linked to the challenges faced by the educators and the range of learner problems identified in the previous sections. Counselling learners and parents was seen as priority social work roles to address issues such as substance abuse, discipline, violence, communication and sexuality. Likewise, training workshops for learners and parents can supplement, reinforce and support individual and family counselling. In addition, Delva-Taui'i'ili (1995), Flisher *et al.* (2000), Sathiparsad (2003) and Stevens *et al.* (2001) highlight the urgency for educators and parents to be trained in behaviour-management skills, including crisis intervention. The fact that 67.4% of the educators highlighted the need for support regarding learner problems is an indication that education service providers cannot function effectively in isolation. For this reason Sayed (2002) calls for the active involvement of role players from the education, health, welfare and other sectors to give effect to the holistic approach to education. The advocacy role of social workers was clearly highlighted by educators,

who felt that social workers could liaise with the School Governing Body, provide a link between the school and the community, and network with other service providers.

**TABLE 3**  
**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF POTENTIAL SOCIAL WORKER ROLES AT SCHOOLS**

Social worker roles	Educators' responses			
	Ye	No	Unsure	No Response
Assessing and prioritising needs at the school	48.1	3.9	12.4	35.7
Counselling learners	93.8	0.8	0.0	5.4
Counselling parents	72.1	3.9	6.2	17.8
Conducting training workshops for learners	79.1	3.1	4.7	13.2
Conducting training workshops for teachers	62.8	7.8	8.5	20.9
Conducting relevant workshops for parents	65.1	3.1	9.3	22.5
Advising/assisting with grant applications	72.1	0.8	5.4	21.7
Liaising with the School Governing Body	53.5	5.4	10.9	30.2
Providing a link between the school and the community	62.0	5.4	7.0	25.6
Providing support to educators	67.4	0.8	3.9	27.9
Assist with curriculum development	36.4	4.7	15.5	33.4
Assist with policy formulation at school	33.3	15.5	16.3	34.9

**N=129**

Schenck's (2004) study into the experiences of 45 rural social workers from five provinces in South Africa produced some relevant findings. Although drug abuse amongst the youth was mentioned as a problem, social workers were not involved in dealing with the issue. They were more pressed to deal with alcohol abuse in families, non-payment of maintenance, poverty and the lack of food and housing. Likewise, social workers did not deal with people with HIV/AIDS directly. Instead, most of their work focused on the placement of children of parents who died of AIDS. Prospective foster parents such as grandparents and relatives were often illiterate and needed assistance to apply for ID documents and death certificates. Another problem was that in rural areas magistrates were not always available to deal with the cases. These findings clearly point to the need for role clarification of service providers.

## TOWARDS SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

The evidence presented in this paper provides a strong case in favour of the appointment of social workers in schools. While some welfare organisations and health departments provide ad hoc services, these are clearly insufficient. Consequently, only crises are attended to, while supportive and preventive services are overlooked. While, theoretically, social work students are taught to bridge the gap between schools and communities, the channels for facilitating this process are unclear. Many trained social workers, frustrated by limited job opportunities and low salaries, sell their services abroad, while the need for social work services in South Africa increases.

Interestingly, Livingstone (1990) highlighted the mutual goals of school social work and education. Both are deeply concerned with the maximum development of young people. Both stress the fostering of the growth of each individual so as to fulfil his or her potential. Both are concerned with the physical and emotional education and social conditions of the child. In supporting Livingstone, Tshiwula (1995) notes that social workers, equipped with training, knowledge and experience in working with individuals, groups and communities, are in a position to provide meaningful direction for work in schools. In the present study the educators saw the

social worker as an important link between the school, the learner, the family and the community. A further role highlighted by the educators in this study and by Donald *et al.* (1997) and Tshiwula (1995) is that the social worker can contribute to designing the school curriculum to promote personal and social development of learners. In a broader sense, social workers can also run context-specific programmes aimed at preventing social and behavioural problems.

A question raised by this study is whether the provision of social work services in schools is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development, the Department of Education, or the Department of Health? A further option is that this task could, and perhaps should, be a joint undertaking of all three sectors. While these uncertainties remain, the social pathologies at schools deepen. Although youths engage in academic learning, there are limited structured mechanisms to focus on aspects such as confidence building, relationships, non-violent conflict resolution, communication, discipline, gender issues and sexuality, including sexually transmitted infections, rape, HIV and AIDS. Despite policies and political rhetoric, deep rural areas remain under-serviced and lack basic resources. Flisher *et al.* (2000) emphasise that the cost of dealing with the consequences of issues such as school violence and injury are far greater than implementing preventive programmes. Secondary schools are attended by young people at critical development points in their lives and their identity development can be positively influenced. Social issues mentioned by the educators – such as poverty, substance abuse, behavioural problems, violence and sexual problems – are realities that must be addressed through collaborative efforts by teachers, parents, school psychologists, social workers and other professionals. Such collaboration may increase the probability of intervention and thus enhance the prospect of beneficial outcomes for learners.

Based on the findings of this study, the authors strongly recommend that urgent attention be given to appointing social workers in schools, particularly in rural areas where the lack of basic resources aggravates social problems. Financial and other constraints may necessitate a few schools sharing one social worker. This would, in our view, be preferable to having no social work service. We support the suggestions of Bender and Lombard (2004), Flisher *et al.* (2000), Stevens *et al.* (2001) and Tshiwula (1995) that to reduce professional isolation, social workers should be part of a collaborative education support team including health workers, educators and psychologists and legal personnel. A broader network could include parents, community members, governing board members, doctors, nurses, police and clergy. Training and professional development programmes for social workers must offer an integrated approach to inter-sectoral work, capacity building, community development and institution-based building and support. In supporting a multidisciplinary partnership approach, Botvin and Dusenbury (1987), Schenck (2004) and Stevens *et al.* (2001) emphasise the significance of a commitment from the relevant sectors, including the government, to contribute towards providing a holistic education that produces well-rounded scholars. Although the KwaZulu Natal School Health Policy and Implementation Guidelines (2004) emphasizes an inter-sectoral approach, Biersteker and Robinson (2000) point out that such inter-sectoral approaches are often hindered by a lack of effective joint planning and budgeting for programmes shared between departments. Departments plan and budget on a sectoral basis, which impedes inter-sectoral interventions. The low budget available for social welfare services is a further constraint on prevention programmes. Flisher *et al.* (2000) draw attention to potential problems such as the fear of loss of influence by particular disciplines, destructive group dynamics relating to issues of control, and inadequate organizational support for inter-sectoral collaboration. This provides the real challenge for service providers across disciplines to join forces towards addressing the unmet needs and disparities in education.



In planning social work intervention in schools, particularly in rural areas, it is useful to bear in mind the difficulties experienced in working in rural areas. Schenck's (2004) research revealed that people did not understand the role of social workers, who usually travelled long distances to reach people requiring services. A further finding was that community developers involved in poverty-alleviation programmes did not include social workers in this process. Social work graduates acted as administrative officers processing grant applications, while community development officers – who sometimes had only six months training – did community development work. This practice highlights the urgency for role clarification to facilitate effective service delivery.

Policies stipulating the incorporation of social work intervention and intervention by other service providers at various levels in schools is emphasised. Effective intervention requires that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that policies translate into action.

## CONCLUSION

The pre-requisite for social work intervention in schools is that schools must have access to social workers, who are mandated to provide services. The findings of this study clearly show that further delaying this step will cost the country in terms of the quality of education and the calibre of learners produced. At the same time, social work graduates are emigrating or taking up other jobs. A simple explanation may be that there are very few social work posts in areas where the needs are the greatest. Compounding the problems are the low salaries and the low status that social workers endure, despite their specialised training and their ability to confront a range of issues. Our challenge to the government is to heed the educators' pleas highlighted in this paper and to grant them, learners and their families access to a range of services, including social work services, to enable them to obtain maximum benefit from their learning environments.

## REFERENCES

- BABBIE, E. & MOUTON, J. 2001. **The practice of social research**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BEAKE, L. & ZIMBIZI, D. 1996. From girlhood to womanhood. **The South African women's health book**. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- BENDER, C.J.G. & LOMBARD, A. 2004. Personal and interpersonal effects of a life skills programme on Grade 7 learners. **Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk**, 40(1):87-106.
- BIERSTEKER, L. & ERLANK, D. 2000. Taking back the gangsters playground. **Children First**, 4(30):9-12.
- BIERSTEKER, L. & ROBINSON, S. 2000. Social economic policies: Their impact on children in South Africa. In: DONALD, D., DAWES, A. & LOUW, J. (eds) **Addressing childhood adversity**. Cape Town: David Philip.
- BOTVIN, G.J. & DUSENBURY, L. 1987. Life skills training: A psychoeducational approach to substance – abuse prevention. In: MAHER, C.A. & ZINS, J.E. (eds) **Psychoeducational interventions in the schools: Methods and procedures for enhancing student competence**. New York: Pergamon Press.
- DAWES, A. & DONALD, D. 2000. Improving children's chances. In: DONALD, D., DAWES, A. & LOUW, J. (eds) **Addressing childhood adversity**. Cape Town: David Philip.
- DE JONG, T. 2000. School organisation development: a success story. In: DONALD, D., DAWES, A. & LOUW, J. (eds). **Addressing childhood adversity**. Cape Town: David Philip.

- DELVA-TAULI'ILI, J. 1995. Assessment and prevention of aggressive behaviour among youths of colour: Integrating cultural and social factors. *Social Work in Education*, 17(2):83-91.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2001a. **Education White Paper 6. Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system**. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2001b. **Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grade R-9**. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. 1998. **South African Demographic and Health Survey**. Pretoria: Department of Health.
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. 2004. **KwaZulu Natal School Health Policy and Implementation Guidelines**. KwaZulu-Natal: Department of Health.
- DONALD, D., LAZARUS, S. & LOLWANA, P. 1997. **Educational psychology in social context: Challenges of development, social issues, and special need in Southern Africa**. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- DUERR-BERRICK, J. & DUERR, M. 2000. Maintaining positive school relationships: the role of the social worker vis-à-vis full service schools. In: FREEMAN, E.M., FRANKLIN, C.G, FONG, R., SHAFFER, G.L. & TIMBERLAKE, E.M. (eds). **School social work practice**. Washington DC: NASW Press.
- FLISHER, A.J. CLOETE, K. JOHNSON, B. WIGTON, A. ADAMS, R. & JOSHUA, P. 2000. Health promoting schools: Lessons from Avondale Primary School. In: DONALD, D., DAWES, A. & LOUW, J. (Eds) **Addressing childhood adversity**. Cape Town: David Philip.
- HARLEY, K. & WEDEKIND, V. 2004. Political change, curriculum change and social formation, 1990-2002. In: CHISHOLM, L. (ed) **Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa**. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. 2001. **Scared at school: sexual violence against girls in South African schools**. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. 2002. World report on children's rights. Available: <http://www.hrw.org/wrzk2/children.html>. Accessed 03.07.2003.
- HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL (HSRC) 2001. **A study of school responses to violence and harassment of girls**. Commissioned by UNICEF.
- KHOSA, V. 2002. Schools: Safe havens or sites of violence? *Agenda*, 53:75-80.
- LIVINGSTONE, B. 1990. School social work in practice. In: McKENDRICK, B.W. (ed) **Social work in action**. Pretoria : HAUM Tertiary.
- MALAKA, D.W. 2001. Substance abuse among rural female high school learners in the Northern Province. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 37(3):268-277.
- MUTUME, G. 1998. **South Africa – education: Violent crime begins in the classroom**. Available: <http://www.oneworld.net/ips2/feb98/southafrica crime.html>. Accessed 13 January 2003.
- NEUMAN, W.H. 1997. **Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches**. Needham Heights: Allan & Bacon.
- REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH UNIT. 2004. **HIV and sexual behaviour among young South Africans: a national survey of 15-24 year olds**. Available: <http://www.rhru.co/za/images/docs/nat%survey%>. Accessed 22 April, 2004.

- SATHIPARSAD, R. 2003. Addressing barriers to learning and participation: violence prevention in schools. *Perspectives in Education*, 21(3):99-111.
- SAYED, Y. 2002. **Inclusion and exclusion in education policy in India and South Africa.** University of Sussex. (Unpublished manuscript)
- SAYED, Y. 2004. The case of teacher education in post-apartheid South Africa. In: CHISHOLM, L. (ed) **Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa.** Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- SCHENCK, C.J. 2004. Problems rural social workers experience. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 40(2):158-171.
- SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL. 2003. **Umthenthe Uhlaba Usamila – The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey.** Cape Town: South African Medical Research Council.
- STEVENS, G., WYNGAARD, G. & VAN NIEKERK, A. 2001. The safe schools model: An antidote to school violence? *Perspectives in Education*, 19(2):145-158.
- TAYLOR, M., DLAMINI, S., KAGORO, H., JINABHAI, C., SATHIPARSAD, R. & DE VRIES, H. 2002. Self-reported risk behaviour of learners at rural Kwa-Zulu Natal high schools. *Agenda*, 53:69-74.
- TAYLOR, M., JINABHAI, C.C., NAIDOO, K., KLEINSCHMIDT, I. & DLAMINI, S.B. 2003. Epidemiological perspectives of substance use among high school principals in rural KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Medical Journal*, 93(2):136-140.
- TSHIWULA, J.L. 1995. **The development and evaluation of a preventive programme for juvenile delinquency.** Port Elizabeth: University of Port Elizabeth. (Unpublished Masters Dissertation).
- UNESCO. 2000. **Education for all and children who are excluded.** Paris: UNESCO.
- WOLFE, D.A., WEKERLE, C. & SCOTT, K. 1997. **Alternatives to violence: Empowering youth to develop healthy relationships.** California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Note:** This is a revised version of a paper presented at the National Conference for Social Service Professions, Pretoria in October, 2004. Conference theme: Dialogue across disciplines: partnerships in development.

### **Acknowledgements**

South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development, for funding.  
 The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture, for supporting the study.  
 The educators who participated in the study.  
 The research team.

*Ms Reshma Sathiparsad, Centre for Social Work, University of KwaZulu Natal, and Dr Myra Taylor, Department of Community Health, Nelson Mandela School of Medicine.*