“They teach us as if we are from the same country”: stories from a social work classroom with international students

New Challenges for Social Work Education in Cyprus

Social work education and practice in Bangladesh: Prospects and challenges

Desired outcomes in resource constrained environment - Some Zimbabwean and Eswatini experiences
2020 JOINT WORLD CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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28TH JUNE - 1ST JULY

PROMOTE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS : BRIDGING THE FUTURE

How Social Work education, research and practice; and social policy should move forward:
Promote human well-being to enable integration social life;
Ensure people's fundamental rights without losing sight of their abilities and capabilities;
Promoting the development of welcoming and educated local communities, empowered through people's participation.

Bridging space
North – South and East – West migration and globalisation require social work to promote human relationships and interactions both within States and between them, especially with reference to migrant populations.

Bridging time
Social Work AND SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS stand at a crossroads between their historical roots and the future challenges as articulated in the Global Agenda. The role of these system is to help make sense and support social transformation;

Bridging support
Social reality requires DIFFERENT COMPETENCES to promote the transition from "traditional public welfare" to a new "generative welfare system" including community development, civil society, third sector actors, for-profit agencies and other social actors.

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Welcome to Issue 21
Social Work Education: A Global Snapshot

This edition began with a call out to our international social work educators to send articles about issues, challenges and responses to what they think social work education is facing and needs addressing currently. Responses came from educators in Chile, Brazil, Canada, Australia, USA, Guyana, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Bangladesh, India and Germany. I proudly include them in this edition, and I thank all the authors for their contribution.

Social work education, both nationally and internationally, is facing many challenges; from addressing the impact of globalisation on the culture of higher education and the resourcing of programs and the need to develop a curricula that is responsive to the complexity of issues globalisation brings, to responding to the needs of international students and how to address the issues of acculturation and diversity and attempts to develop a curricula that reflects the indigenous cultures of the country in which it exists. Diversity and inclusivity present real dilemmas along with many other issues facing the profession. What does a curriculum that addresses indigenisation include?

One key role of social work education is to ensure that social workers are aware of global issues and are prepared to address and critique responses. While not all these issues are addressed in the edition, many hint at the broader context in which their programs are located. We offer this edition to make a contribution to the international debate and to expand the conversations.

Enjoy!
President’s report

Dear Colleagues,

This volume of Social Dialogue covers important issues facing social work education in many countries of the world. Academics are struggling with the problem to develop curricula that can respond to the challenges of the globalization, which are affecting all the planet, and at the same time, can prepare social workers able to work at the local level with theories, methods and interventions coherent with the history, the culture and the needs of their own specific context.

In this last semester I’ve traveled a lot, meeting different scholars, students and professionals in countries like Iran, Lebanon, Indonesia, South Africa, Europe, India, USA, Brazil and China.

It has been an important experience and I’ve had the possibility to listen to the challenges, the concerns facing social work education but also the interesting experiences and developments that are both realized and in preparation as social work education is undertaken in these and many counties across the world.

In many of these initiatives the topic of Internationalisation vs Indigenisation of social work curricula has been at the core of our reflections. Space does not permit a more detailed report here to do justice to the many interesting encounters and debates, I have encountered as I travel to countries listening and speaking about the concerns social work education is facing. More detailed information will be recollected in the reports that will be circulate at the end of the year between our members. However, we get a snapshot of some of issues and developments that program are grappling with in the special edition of social work education across the globe.

Let me choose two of the many initiatives.

1. I’ve was selected for the Hokenstad lecture at CSWE conference in Denver (24/27 October 2019) where I’ve presented my speech on International Organization: Building Capacity and Representing Social Work Education Globally.

   It was a great honor and a huge responsibility but I hope, through my talk, I informed the audience about the history of IASSW and the important role that this organisation has played in promoting social work education since its establishment in 1928 and the challenges that we have to deal with in our future.

2. This month (9,10,11 of November) I attended a joint meeting with the Regional Resource Centre-International Association of School of Social Work, PKU-HKPolyU China Social Work Research Centre; the China Women’s University and the China Association of Social Work Education a conference and two days’ workshop on Capacity Building on Social Work Education –Curriculum Development.

   The objectives were:
   • To build an international education communication platform to broaden the international horizons of social work educators in China, and to provide Chinese social work educators with a solid understanding of curriculum development in social work education;

IASSW – World Census of Social Work Education Programs – 2020 Directory

   We have only a few months to complete the world census of social work education programs offering at least one degree program in social work.

   Please enter the link: https://www.iassw-aiets.org/2018/09/03/iassw-world-census-of-social-work-education-programs-2020-directory/ and input your school, but also share it with your networks.

Rimini IASSW and ICSW conference 28/6- 1/7 2020 - Promoting Human Relationship: Bridging the future! (www.swesd2020.org).

   Call for paper will be closed at 15th of December 2019, so we are inviting you to submit your proposals.

   Early bird registration is open and will be closed 9th of March 2020.

   The Rimini conference will be focused on social work education and social policy, so there will be a larger space for our academics to share ideas, experiences and develop networks and platforms to enhance international cooperation.

   Hoping to meet many of you in Rimini I invite you to join IASSW and actively participate to our initiatives.

I want to end my notes with two important reminders:

• To foster communication between Chinese social work educators and the international social work community on issues relating to social work research and practice, and

• To promote communications and reflections on the indigenization of social work education in China.

It has been an amazing experience that I shared with two IASSW past presidents: Professor Angie Yuen and Professor Lena Dominelli. We also enjoyed and benefited from of the contribution of many international and Chinese social work education leaders. The hospitality offered by the Women University has been wonderful; the organization effective, with the involvement of the teaching staff and the very helpful and committed student group.

Together with the participants we discussed the curriculum design of social work education, focusing on different aspects like competences, contents, practice, research. We concluded with the commitment of continuing this experience in the next future.

I want to end my notes with two important reminders:
Decolonization and Internationalization: Critical Challenges for Social Work Education in Canada

This article will engage with the issues of decolonization and internationalization as two core challenges facing social work education in Canada. These are in no way dichotomous issues as there is a strong interconnectedness between them. Both decolonization and internationalization present social work education with opportunities and challenges. Both decolonization and internationalization are related to the colonial endeavor. In moving both the discourse and practice decolonization and internationalization further, social work education must address issues of equity as a means of critical and sustainable engagement.

Issues of decolonization and internationalization are not unique to Canadian social work education. In fact, they are included as part of the strategic priorities of more than 84% of universities across Canada (AUCC, 2014). What is of concern is how social work education has responded to these national challenges. How has social work education added to the discourse and what remains as some of the ongoing challenges? Though, in this article, for sake of organization, decolonization and internationalization are presented as two separate issues, it is a false dichotomy. Decolonization and internationalization are inextricably linked both as responses to, while at the same time engaging in, the colonial endeavor.

The Challenge of Decolonization

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Canada in its 2015 report raised some critical issues and concerns related to the histories and realities of Indigenous peoples in Canada. As a result of the TRC's report many academic institutions began to chart a course of decolonization. What exactly does decolonization in the context of social work education mean? This very question is central to one of the major challenges facing social work education in Canada. The reality of decolonization in the practice of education is distilled down to more course offerings on Indigenous histories and current realities, creating more opportunities for and recruiting more Indigenous faculty and students and, to a much lesser extent, creating more welcoming spaces for Indigenous peoples within the academy.

The history of social work in Canada rests within a colonial frame (Hogarth & Fletcher, 2018; Johnstone, 2018) and this is not unique to Canada (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011). Social work as a profession has and continues to play a pivotal role in enacting and re-enacting colonialism (Fortier & Wong, 2018). How then do we disentangle our professional selves from the colonial milieu when it is so inscribed in the fabric of our existence? One approach to addressing the colonial bent of social work practice is to correct for the colonial bent in social work education.

Many of the 43 accredited schools of social work in Canada have aligned themselves, to varying degrees, with their university’s strategic plan on decolonization or, for some universities, Indigenization. Several social work programs have increased both elective and core course offerings on decolonization theory. There has also been a greater drive to hire more Indigenous faculty within programs of social work. The accreditation standards of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE-ACFES) is currently undergoing review with an eye of including standards or principles on decolonization. Yet inherent in all of these responses are grave challenges. Moreover, despite these positive movements, decolonization remains an ongoing struggle for many institutions and programs in Canada.

Attempts at decolonization within Canadian social work education and in the academy at large, has taken place within a very small vacuum. Given that the TRC was the driver for the decolonial discourse, much of social work education has adopted a somewhat narrow preoccupation with a decolonizing mission that makes invisible the histories and realities of non-Indigenous racialized bodies and colonial subjects. Yet, even within this narrow frame, decolonialism remains a challenge. Often in social work education attempts at decolonization remain depoliticized and dehistoricized which means that many realities around colonialism are left out of the decolonial discourse. Further, although the work on decolonization within social work education is prioritized as a necessity that work has been challenged by a westernizing discourse and understanding which continues to center settler perspectives (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Another key challenge for social work education in relation to decolonization is that decolonization remains in a very theoretical and metaphorical space wherein we attempt to decolonize our curriculum, and our institutions. We teach theories of decolonization but we have not come to terms with what the practice of decolonization would mean. In the words of Tuck...
Towards a goal of remaining relevant, social work education must contend with decolonization in a way that moves it beyond theory to manifest itself in practice. The longer our education remains in a purely theoretical space, the further away we move from ever realizing a practice of decolonization. Reflexive pedagogy requires that we question our ways of knowing and being and how these become evident in praxis. Furthermore, social work education on decolonization cannot take place in a vacuum that only reflects in small measure the realities of Canada’s Indigenous peoples. Decolonizing education must also engage with the histories and realities of bodies that have for centuries been part of the colonial endeavor – decolonization education must embrace an equity focus that activates interlocking systems of oppression and domination (Hill Collins, 2002). This means giving attention to the complex relationship between systems of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, citizenship, age (Hill Collins & Blige, 2016). Decolonizing social work education must ask questions about who is missing in the educational structure which includes the classroom and the curriculum.

The Challenge of Internationalization

The other major issue taken up in this article concerning social work education in Canada is internationalization. The global crisis and global movement of bodies presents both challenges and opportunities. Academic institutions are uniquely positioned to address both. The move towards internationalization in fact can be viewed as a positioning of oneself as relevant amidst these global shifts. The prevalent understanding of internationalization, widely shared among Canadian universities and colleges, is that it is a process integrating an inter-cultural and international dimension into all areas of the university (Knight, 2003). In theory, internationalization would mean that the delivery of education and the purpose and function of educational systems within institutions would all be impacted in a symbiotic way through the internationalization mission.

As noted previously, by 2014 over 84% of universities across Canada had prioritized internationalization in their strategic plans (AUCC, 2014). For many of our academic institutions in Canada the practice of internationalization is a bit far removed from the theory and is concerned largely with the commercializing of education as a revenue generator for institutions and programs (Khorsandi, 2014). It serves largely an instrumentalist function. One of the key challenges related to internationalization in Canada is the very limited attention given to curriculum (Bond, 2009); and almost none related to pedagogy (Beck, 2012).

With it’s focus on social justice, social work programs, where they engage in internationalization endeavours, tend to move beyond commercialization in positioning internationalization as a means of enhancing diversity in the classroom. Beyond the classroom, much of the work done by key social work educators on international has focused on social work’s “treatment” of the “international” other. Therefore, internationalization in the Canadian social work context has taken on a performativity approach. Another way social work has engaged with internationalization is in creating greater access for students in social work programs to understand and experience the world through international placements. Within this matrix of accessing international experience, these placements are linked to cultural competency models where the level of analysis remains descriptive and falls shy of any critical engagement. Webhi, (2009) notes that such a focus on the “descriptive understanding of culture without engaging in a critical analysis of the contextual factors which surround it potentially reinforce[s] misconceptions as cultural stereotype (p.51). In this way, social work’s limited engagement in internationalization serves as another re-engagement in the colonial endeavor.

In advancing internationalizing social work education must move beyond the aesthetics of diversity to involve the critical questioning of the relationship between global movement of bodies, curriculum and Empire. Without such a critical gaze our education continues to enact, what Spivak, (1998) terms, epistemic violence. A violence through education that reinforces, legitimates and enshrines practices of domination (Galván-Alvarez, 2010). The pedagogy of internationalization needs to be decolonized. We need to move towards internationalizing our education and not merely our classrooms (Razack, 2009).

Conclusion

Social work education has in many ways humanized the discourses on colonization and internationalization. Where academic institutions struggle with theoretical constructions that do not quite resonate with practice, social work education is advancing these discourses, reframing for example, the commercialization of internationalization to harnessing the benefits of diversity in the classroom. Yet, there is still much work left to be done. Despite these advances social work education still falls short of challenging colonialism and racism embedded within these frameworks and in so doing continues the constitution of the racialized Other as invisible and unimportant.

Both decolonization and internationalization must take place within a framework of equity. Without moving towards a more equitable lens the colonial guards will remain unchanged and social work education continues to participate in the simple exercise of re-dressing and re-presenting colonialism. Social work education must determine to work against the complicity of continuing the colonial endeavor even under the guise of decolonization and internationalization. Social work education must engage with the critical questions of who hold the power to determine the discursive frame and for whom? Whose voices are left out and why?

Advancing these discourses is not an option however, in doing so we must widen the frame. We must decenter Whiteness.
Since the notion of immigrant transnationalism was articulated by cultural anthropologists (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1992; Basch et al., 1994) and later propagated by Portes and his colleagues (Portes, et al., 1999), a number of scholars, mostly from the social sciences (e.g., Faist 2000a; 2000b; Itzigsohn et al., 1999; Robinson, 2005), have popularized transnationalism across various academic disciplines. Transnational scholars agree that large numbers of immigrants aim for integration into their adopted country, but do not abandon their homelands. Instead, immigrants construct, maintain, and sustain multiple economic, political, and social relations with their country of origin. The burgeoning transnational literature speaks to the fact that contemporary immigrant transnationalism has become frequent and intense and is a response to two key processes: (1) contemporary globalization and (2) advances in communication and transportation technologies. The advent of modern transportation and communication technologies has facilitated immigrants’ transnational practices have not only allowed the rich and elites to participate in the global capitalist market, but has also promoted what Portes (2003) describe as transnationalism “from below” - the process of empowering ordinary and poor people to participate in cross border activities.

While several scholars, mostly from the social sciences have adopted and popularized transnationalism across various academic and professional disciplines, the idea of transnationalism in social work is also emerging, particularly in Australia and Europe. Unfortunately, the relationship between transnationalism and the social work profession has not been well explored in Canada. In this respect, many scholars have appealed to North American, especially Canadian social work professionals to adopt a transnational perspective that recognizes social work’s role beyond a bounded national state. This article responds to the call of incorporating transnationalism into the social work profession in Canada. Using a vignette, this article demonstrates the significance and relevance of incorporating transnational social work perspectives in addressing issues with immigrants and refugees in Canada.

Transnational social work: a neglected practice in Canada?

Since the idea of immigrant transnationalism was articulated and popularized by cultural anthropologists in the early 1990s, several scholars, mostly from the social sciences, have adopted transnationalism in examining issues of immigrants’ settlement and integration. Recently, the connection between transnationalism and social work is also emerging, particularly in Australia and Europe. Unfortunately, the relationship between transnationalism and the social work profession has not been well explored in Canada. In this respect, many scholars have appealed to North American, especially Canadian social work professionals to adopt a transnational perspective that recognizes social work’s role beyond a bounded national state. This article responds to the call of incorporating transnationalism into the social work profession in Canada. Using a vignette, this article demonstrates the significance and relevance of incorporating transnational social work perspectives in addressing issues with immigrants and refugees in Canada.

Background

Since the notion of immigrant transnationalism was articulated by cultural anthropologists (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1992; Basch et al., 1994) and later propagated by Portes and his colleagues (Portes, et al., 1999), a number of scholars, mostly from the social sciences (e.g., Faist 2000a; 2000b; Itzigsohn et al., 1999; Robinson, 2005), have popularized transnationalism across various academic disciplines. Transnational scholars agree that large numbers of immigrants aim for integration into their adopted country, but do not abandon their homelands. Instead, immigrants construct, maintain, and sustain multiple economic, political, and social relations with their country of origin. The burgeoning transnational literature speaks to the fact that contemporary immigrant transnationalism has become frequent and intense and is a response to two key processes: (1) contemporary globalization and (2) advances in communication and transportation technologies. The advent of modern transportation and communication technologies has facilitated immigrants’ transnational practices have not only allowed the rich and elites to participate in the global capitalist market, but has also promoted what Portes (2003) describe as transnationalism “from below” - the process of empowering ordinary and poor people to participate in cross border activities.

While several scholars, mostly from the social sciences have adopted and popularized transnationalism across various academic and professional disciplines, the idea of transnationalism in social work is also emerging, particularly in Europe and Australia. Unfortunately, the relationship between transnationalism and the social work profession has not been well explored in North America generally and Canada particularly. In this respect, many scholars (e.g., Midgely 2018; Schwarzer, Kämmerer-Rütten, Schleyer-Lindemann, Wang, 2016),

David Firang, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Trent University, Ontario, Canada.
have appealed to North American social work professionals to adopt a transnational perspective that recognizes social work's role beyond the bounded nation-state. In the U.S., some scholars (e.g., Midgely 2018; Schwarzeret al., 2016), have heeded to this call. It seems an exploration of transnationality and social work might have been, albeit, captured in the literature in the U.S in the early 1990s (Midgley, 2018; Furman & Negi, 2010). However, as Wallmann (2014) noted, even to-date social work educators in the U.S have employed transnational perspectives rather sparsely, irregularly and, above all, not explicitly.

While the U.S social work educators elsewhere in the world are striving to embrace the notion of transnationalism, the impact of transnationalism on social work in Canada has been given little attention in the Canadian social work literature, although exemption can be claimed for the recent works of Ives, Hanley, Walsh and Este (2014). It is rather unfortunate to note that while our world is increasingly marked by transnational processes, social work education in Canada seems to have got trapped in a national context. In the era of globalization, the emergence of a population of migrants, whose lives transcend across national borders, should be particularly important to Canadian social work research and practice.

The objectives of this article are twofold: 1) it responds to the call to embrace transnational perspectives into the Canadian social work profession and 2) it makes an important contribution to understand the way social work should respond to social needs and problems of those clients whose lives transcend across national borders.

Why the Need For Transnational Social Work in Canada?

The practice case example below will illustrate the significant of transnational social work practice in Canada.

The Vignette/Practice Case Example

A.R., migrated from Ghana to Canada in 1990 to study Business Administration at the University of Toronto. Prior to migrating to Canada, A.R held the position of Senior Accountant in the Ministry of Finance in Ghana. At the initial stages of the settlement process, A.R struggled to adapt to the Canadian environment. He found the weather bitterly cold to adjust, and at the same time experienced a culture shock. Despite these difficulties, he graduated with an MBA degree in 1993. After a few years of graduating from University of Toronto, he gradually adjusted and settled into the Canadian cultural milieu. However, A.R. did not find a job in the Canadian labour market that merit his MBA degree. He was forced to work in a manufacturing factory plant as a production line assistant, a position he held over 20 years. After many years of engaging in a menial job, A.R. became frustrated, lost social status in his community and consequently developed poor self-image.

Despite the situation, A.R. managed to save some money to travel to Ghana to visit his extended family, friends and relatives for the first time. Upon his arrival in Ghana, he was given a hearty welcome. His family, friends and relatives in Ghana held him in a high esteem and congratulated him for earning an MBA degree in a Canadian university. For the 2 months he spent in Ghana, he regained his social status, as he was socially and culturally accepted by friends, relatives and the local communities he visited in Ghana. Since his first vacation visit to Ghana, he has continued to maintain ties with his family, friends, and relatives in Ghana. He listens to Ghanaian news regularly via social media you-tube, he sends remittances regularly to Ghana to invest in housing and follows Ghanaian politics on a regular basis. All these transnational engagements promote positive self-image for A.R., who now recognizes cross-border activities as essential to his self-worth in Canada.

The Significance and Relevance of Transnational Social Work

A.R.’s case demonstrates why transnational perspective is very important in social work profession in Canada and elsewhere in the world. A.R’s case illustrates that transnational immigrants (transmigrants) struggle to settle and integrate in the destination country. There are many highly skilled immigrants, like A.R. who used to occupy higher social class in the country of origin prior to migration but are now occupy lower social status as their skills and qualifications are devalued in the destination country. In Canada, many immigrants like A.R. with higher educational qualifications are over-represented in menial jobs. It is worthy to note that occupational status of many immigrants like A.R. reflects structural inequalities engendered by systemic oppression (e.g. discrimination, racism, and exploitation) in the labour market and not necessarily their education levels. As such immigrants like A.R. are compelled to engage in menial employments which do not merit their qualifications. However, when these migrants maintain ties with their homeland by engaging in political, economic and social-cultural cross-border activities they attain social prestige in the country of origin. Thus, for many immigrants from the Global South to the Global North, their transnational experience is characterized by loss of social status in the destination country and gain of social status in the country of origin (Nieswand, 2011). However, the social work profession in Canada is yet to develop a focused understanding of the social injustices and systemic oppression that confront these transnational communities. Thus, to better understand the systemic oppression and needs of these transnational populations, Canadian social work education needs to research more on immigrant transnationalism.

One can imagine the life of A.R whose daily routine revolves around frequent exchanges of communications with families and friends in Ghana as well as travelling back and forth between Canada and Ghana. In these transnational exchanges, a social worker should understand that A.R.’s lived experiences would be preoccupied with numerous transnational exchanges rather than with issues in the Canadian community. Without recognizing the significance of transnational ties, a social worker will be worried that A.R.’s lack of community and civic participation in Toronto will compromise his ability to successfully integrate into the larger Canadian society. Understanding that these transitional exchanges enable A.R. to cope with the systemic oppression embedded in the Canadian society will help the social worker to understand the benefits of transnational ties, and consequently will allow the worker to offer culturally appropriate services for transnational populations. Further, A.R’s case can also remind us that some transnational populations are more likely to struggle to meet one of the basic fundamental needs in the Canadian society, while at the same time struggle to meet their familial and social obligations in the homeland (Firang, 2011). Some of the struggles faced by transnational populations include emotional distress and frustration as they strive to put down roots in the host country, while at the same time remit money and goods to meet familial and personal obligations in the homeland.

Social work practice with transmigrants will require different sets of practice skills and knowledge from traditional practice with immigrants and refugees. In the first place, social workers need to understand the elements that differentiate social work with transmigrants from that with traditional immigrants and ethnic minority groups in the host society. While the latter involves social work practice within a bounded nation-state, the former requires social work knowledge about immigrant issues that transcend national borders. Secondly, effective social work with transnational clients, such as A.R in Toronto, requires that social workers have a better understanding of the experience of international migration process, the distinct background characteristics of the transmigrant population, and the nature and frequency of transnational ties between the country of origin and destination. The latter is very important given that frequent transnational activities are important aspects of transmigrants’ daily experiences. Thus, social workers require knowledge about the nature
of ongoing transnational ties among immigrants during their settlement process. Such knowledge can help social workers develop effective assessment tools, identify the problems confronting this population, and implement appropriate interventions.

An important transnational tie that social workers need to be aware of is the practice of remittances – sending money and goods to family and friends in the country of origin. Remittances are essential to transmigrants and their families left behind. Remittances enable transmigrants to invest in property and business in the country of origin while at the same time enable them to fulfill important familial and social obligation by taking care of other family members left behind in the homeland (Firang, 2011). Remittances have implications for transnational population with respect to their well-being in the destination country. In the first place, frequent remittances may force transnational immigrants to take on multiple jobs to mobilize enough resources to send to the homeland. While remittances obviously benefit immigrant families in the country of origin, the transmigrants and their families at the destination country are more likely to bear the burden of this practice. Engaging in multiple jobs for long working hours can present psychosocial problems - emotional distress and frustration - for transmigrants.

Frequent remittances can also have implications for transmigrants' social needs, especially access to appropriate housing in the destination country. For instance, immigrants who send frequent remittances to their countries of origin may be forced to reside in low-cost rental housing in poor neighbourhoods in order to save money. In a situation like this, social work practice with transnational population can pose a dilemma for social workers. The dilemma occurs in a situation whereby the immigrant's sense of obligation to send remittances to the country of origin conflicts with the priority of building self-sufficiency in the destination country. Thus, if a social worker discovers that a transmigrant family like A.R. in Toronto, is remitting regularly to meet the familial obligations in Ghana, while at the same time ignoring his children's needs for appropriate housing in Toronto, a child protection social worker may file child protection case against the family.

At the same time social workers need to understand that transnational ties provide a number of strengths (advantages) for transmigrants. As A.R.'s case illustrates, ties with the homeland provide transmigrants, like A.R., with social recognition in the homeland as well as the social support networks they need to cope with life in Canada. Social workers need to understand that by sending remittances to their homelands, transmigrants seek to promote their self-worth and dignity in a fashion consistent with their own culture, and this self-worth and dignity are significant for integration into the host country. Unless social workers understand the transnational population's social field, they may have an incomplete assessment of an immigrant family's responsibilities and may offer inappropriate services for these population.

Conclusion:

This article has demonstrated that in the era of globalization, the emergence of a population of migrants whose lives transcend across national borders, is important to Canadian social work research and practice. Social workers require a set of special practice skills that are grounded in evidence-based research and culturally competent practice – a different set of attitudes and beliefs about immigrant transnationalism- in order to effectively work with clients whose lives transcend across diverse national borders. For social workers dealing with transmigrants like A.R in Toronto, culturally competent practice implies awareness of and sensitivity to immigrants' homeland cultures (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999; Lum, 1999; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Tsang, Bogo & George, 2003), and the ability to adapt effective practice skills that are congruent with the norms, values and expectations of transmigrant clients. •

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Rise and Fall of a Therapeutic Society

This article is premised on the dynamics of forces that brought the post-war despair to repair the wounds of violent human conflicts. The Enlightenment of course raised a scientific awareness in the United States to help people—individuals, families, groups and communities to mitigate human suffering with a professional approach. Social Work is a modern profession—unlike Law and Medicine—that American conscience brought to the fore. As a consequence, Case Work, Group Work, Community Organization, Social Action and Research emerged as our primary, basic tools of intervention. This is our original methodology which lead to processes that continue to develop these modes of help at different systems levels in the United States and other nations. Critically examined, Social Work’s real mission and purpose—both nationally and internationally—is embedded more in institutional-individual narcissism than in global wellbeing.

The Enlightenment, paradoxically, led to the emergence of, what I call, a Therapeutic Society. When a social system breaks down and basic social institutions fail, we speak of unmitigated catastrophe beyond human control. All our problems are self-inflicted disasters. Cataclysmic Climate Change is one such field that brings home this point. Terror, guns, and territorial ideologies breed Violence and Poverty, the two mother-evils that bedevil humanity. Our society is still mired in the myths that perpetuate ignorance, populism, and misery. Let us examine these critical issues of our time and see how relevant and effective Social Work is in today’s reality.

A therapeutic culture offers instant relief. Mental health professionals benefit from its expediency. However, it seldom resolves roots causes. Every mass murder and mayhem tend to appear as an act of an insane mind. Mental illness, however, accounts for only 4 percent of serious crimes. People grow out of childhood misfortune but hardly anyone becomes a Charles Manson. The point is: Social Work is used by mental health industry to make profit at Social Work’s expense. This is a Faustian bargain that our profession has become a party to.

Amazon forests are burning. Floods, landslides, and wildfires have become nightmares. When Icebergs melt and deserts in Rajasthan (India) get flooded, we reach policy conclusions to no effect. The current leadership in the US calls Climate Change a hoax. People in India wash Ganesha and Shiva Linga with truckload of milk—to invoke rain-god Indra’s mercy—while children in the world’s most populous democracy die of malnutrition. These dehumanizing conditions in Africa, South America, and other so called developing countries are interrelated. The question is: What can Social Work do to unravel, let alone mitigate, these monstrous issues?

Likewise, the specter of guns, terror and anxieties: “Guns don’t kill people; people do”. This crescendo of the new-right perverts the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution safeguarding people’s right to raise arm against aggressors. It has adversely affected health and mental health policies in the US. It leaves no room for social workers to play any meaningful role. If guns make us feel secure, the US must be the safest place on this planet. Alas, this fact is never realized in public and policy making processes. Domestic and international terror has become so commonplace that any local and world news is incomplete without a bad news. Fake news further confounds this naked truth.

Social Work’s future has a past

Algorithms of change need not be harbingers of a heartless future. Social Work, as a profession, is at the crossroads of ambiguous social transformation. The new Dickensian age posits the rise of the Economic Man and inequality on the same spectrum. Our pious goal of accomplishing social justice and equality masquerades as a guilt complex in a hopelessly divided, helplessly globalized, and painfully polarized world. This may not be so difficult to comprehend if examined through aesthetico-pragmatic view.

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Violence and Poverty, the two mother-evils that bedevil humanity. Our society is still mired in the myths that perpetuate ignorance, populism, and misery. Let us examine these critical issues of our time and see how relevant and effective Social Work is in today’s reality.
"Economic possibilities of our time,” Jeffrey Sacks claimed, would bring the end of poverty (2005). The rise of the Economic Man has no concern for the underprivileged, unemployed, indigent, homeless, poor and sick is a child of this rigged economy. Paul Collier’s recent book (2018) reveals a staggering reality:

“Nature abhors a vacuum, and so do voters. The frustration born of this gulf between what has happened and what is feasible has provided the pulse of energy for two species of politician that were waiting in the wings: populists and ideologues. The last time capitalism derailed in the 1930s, the same thing happened [again] ... The end of the Cold War in 1989 appeared to usher in a credible prospect that all such disasters were behind us: we had arrived at ‘the end of history,’ a permanent utopia. Instead, we are facing the all-too-credible prospect of our own dystopia.” (Collier, 2018: 5-6)

Jared Diamond’s thesis Upheaval, (2019) offering “turning points for nations in crisis” is indicative of the fact how eminent scholars of our time have been seduced by a failed messiah, aka, therapeutic culture. National crisis and individual traumas are not analogous. To equate both is to live in self-prophetic denial.

Rise of the Economic Man

“[E]conomics developed an account of human behavior as far from Utilitarian morality as it is possible to get. Economic man is utterly selfish and infinitely greedy, caring about nobody but himself. He became the bedrock of the theory of human behavior.” (Collier, 2018: 10)

The Great Depression as vividly portrayed in The Grapes of Wrath brought a silent revolution in American psyche. As human suffering and the wounds of war added to the magnitude of social problems, programs emphasizing social security and public assistance emerged to rebuild the broken system of residual safety net. Institutionalization of public welfare measures brought the Welfare State to offer relative sustainability and endurance. The New Deal and War Against Poverty macro-cosmized social policy. The Reagan-Thatcher counter-revolution resuscitated the Economic man at the expense of the welfare society that the “moral state” had assumed to be as its priority. The backlash against social welfare policies and programs continues abated. Welfare has become a dirty word that no presidential candidate dares to speak about. Notwithstanding Bernie Sanders’ socialist headlines!

We teach human behavior and social policy as two of the main foundational required course requirements. I usually taught both during my last 50 years of tenure at different schools of social work, mainly Louisiana State University. Students, largely mistaught by a dualist faculty orientation, see social policy as a Macro intervention that “practitioners don’t require” (an oft cited reason for liking social policy). The micro-macro duality has been responsible for lack of holistic understanding of human behavior that we claim to teach. Social Work instructors, by and large, talk about the Bible of practice based on DSM5. The opus of my whole work has been unification of social work toward the reinvention and transformation of social work (Mohan, 1999).

Economic and social policy are intertwined to uplift the general human condition. Much of curricular design, despite accreditation standards on the books, however fail to grasp the inherent unity of a behavior-policy paradigm. The cult of practice, reinforced by locally preferred licensing policies, perpetuates exclusionary mediocrity and anti-intellectualism.

Institutional Regression and Curriculum

“We are all migrants”: Humans are a migratory species, yet some would divide us into two kinds: The migrant and the native” (Mohsin, 2019). This new political dynamic is against the evolutionary premise: Sapiens are evolving into a global species.

“Seas rise, crops wither, wars erupt... Humankind seeks shelter in another place”: This is today’s reality. Our basic social and economic institutions are faltering in the fissures of insecurity, uncertainty, and inhumanity. Our Hateland (Johnson, 2019) has nourished a culture of xenophobia, intolerance, and racism with unabashed arrogance. What President of the United States calls “American Carnage" is really a swamp of institutional regression confounded by the demise of humility, civility, and communitarianism. Affluent ‘gated communities’ are not communities; they are islands of prosperity amidst White Trash (Isenberg, 2016), underprivileged non-white Americans, unwanted immigrants and people left behind in the race of unprincipled economy. No social work curriculum captures the soul of this agonizing reality. A dialogical-didactic practice just can’t grow in such toxic environs.

I have proposed a radical shift in the hierarchized system of program and curricular designs that have proliferated following the American models. In Seven Pillars of Social Practice (Mohan, 2018), my emphasis is on three main changes:

• Strengthening MSW (Master’s) professional degree (implicitly abolishing both BSW and DSW programs).

• Restructuring of social work education and research within universities and institutions of higher education (explicitly eliminating the departmental solos of fractured knowledge in congruence with institutional goals and mission).

• Social Work offerings, both required and optional, designated and promoted across disciplines. In other words, making social conscience an integral aspect of professional-academic advancement.

Westernization versus Bharatiyakaran (Indianization)

‘Social work without borders” is a construct that goes beyond the purpose of International Social Work. The anti-Enlightenment rant is essentially, to use Nietzschean expression, “resentment” that feeds anger and discontent of all alienated people. Pankaj Mishra (2017) has highlighted this aspect as a major source of aggression, violence, and dissatisfaction across time and space. Need for indigenization is a reflection of this sentiment.

India emulated modern Social Work as an academic profession in the mid-thirties. By 1960, it had a full continuum of SW-EPR, Lucknow University being its pioneer at the doctoral level1. Subcontinental cultural landscape has radically changed in India: Three state sponsored national conferences lately deliberated the so-called “anti-colonial” Indianization (aka “Bharatiyakaran”) of Western social work which does not conform to Vedic (Hindu) customs, traditions, and values2. Global populism has brought reactionary nationalism that is

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1 National Geographic, August 2019, 236, 2 (cover)

2 In 2005, my submission (proposal) on the subject for the 51st Council on Social Work Education (New York) was rejected by CSWE’s Commission on Global Education. I did however present the idea on a different forum. See, New Global Development: Journal of International and Comparative Social Welfare:XXI, 2005 (Editorial).

3 The author holds Ph.D. (Social Work, 1964), Lucknow University on a prized Research Scholarship by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Government of India. See Social Psychiatry in India (Mohan, 1973)
unconducive to a civil society, the ultimate goal of a world community (of nations).

Cultural sensibilities and human adaptation lead to understandable indigenization. **Indianization** is an extension of extreme nationalism which runs against the DNA of Social Work.

**Uberization**

*Homosapien* is an incomplete creature. It’s hardly “social” when “work” disappears from life. Both constructs relate to *Sapiens* (Harari, 2014) mired in developmental issues in the dystopian swamp of digital revolution. Automation, sensors, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are not only replacing pilots and drivers; robots will replace brain surgeons. Humans make mistakes; robots don’t. AI is only a step away from cultivation of human emotions. One day, computers might hallucinate; it will be the end of history. This may well be the second most crucial epoch after the invention of “property” in the hoary antiquity. I fear soft professions like social work, nursing, librarians are doomed, to use Aldous Huxley’s words, by a “self-created need for self-destruction.” Even the future has a past.

**Three Takeaways:**

**First**, there is an unrecognized crisis in Social Work, Practice and Research (SW-EPR, Mohan, 1988; see Ch. IV).

**Second**, the meanings of both social and work have changed; the former needs redefinition and the latter is about to disappear as robotic innovations evolve.

**Third**, and foremost, Social Work ought to transform its ostrich-like approach to confront new anxieties.

**Conclusion:**

Algorithms of change need not be wickedly rational. Humane-compassionate values are essential for survival. A culture that thrives on the spills of Ghost Wars (Coll 2004) is a fertile land for perpetual racism (Johnson, 2019; Coats, 2017). The fading American Dream is an outcome of the rise of postwar middle class, “a historical anomaly” (Picketty, 2014). Social Work’s emergence is an evolution of this cultural landscape which ignores the cruelty of class struggle. Globalization has further obscured this myopia. I reiterate: Social Work should have been a candle, rather than a mirror. A therapeutic society is an unsustainable construct. Epistemologically, Social Work should be the end of itself.

*“He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.”*

Nietzsche

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4 The editor-in-chief of an important social work-development journal asked me if I would comment on the acceptability of this view—and a rejoinder to it for rejection. I gave an objective assessment of this revisionist, regressive historicism. My argument, briefly footnoted, include: 1) The call for “Swadruhsiti” does not fully reflect India’s humanity, notwithstanding current prevalence of politically pernicious ideology of *Hindutva*, i.e., Hinduization; 2) The Enlightenment marked the dawn of reason that brought scientific revolution; it was neither Western/European nor Eastern. To assert that mythological figures and rituals predated ‘science’ is absurdly ethnocentric; and the so-called Dharmic (religious), emic basis of indigenization/Indianization is a bogus political slogan to de-Islamize Indian polity and culture. Indigenization does not mean **Indianization**.

5 Y.N. Harari’s view of 3 great revolutions is another view of human evolution (2014); I believe Rousseau’s primitive innocence was destroyed forever by the man who plotted off a piece of land and declared it as his own. From agriculture to nuclear bomb flow from this threshold.

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Social Work Education in the 21st Century: Some thoughts from the heart

If I were asked to describe the social work profession in the 21st century, I would say, social work is fading into the background – meaning, it can barely be differentiated from other helping professions (i.e. psychology or counselling). This may sound a little cynical. Still, I fear education institutions are teaching social work students to support individuals inserting them into societal norms rather than to question such norms and the social structures that underpin them. I believe we need to rethink the relevance and purpose of social work education. We are experiencing an increasing misalignment between what social workers are doing in the field and what happens in classrooms. There is an increasing role strain between the values, principles and aspirations of the profession and the requirements of social work jobs.

Not so long ago, while reading Staub-Bernasconi (2017), I realised how much we struggle to articulate our mandate and practice domains. Staub-Bernasconi’s point of departure was a critique of the 2014 definition of ‘social work’, as outlined by the International Federation of Social Workers: “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing” (IFSW 2019). Staub-Bernasconi argued that this definition lacked clarity, and without a clear differentiation from other professions, we run the risk of being defined or annulled by them (Staub-Bernasconi 2017). While Staub-Bernasconi’s argument took a different much more sophisticated turn, there were a number of propositions in her article that resonated with me. Without a strong sense of who we are as social workers, we will continue to struggle to assert what our profession is about; as social work educators, we will continue to perpetuate this fuzzy identity. Without a clear mandate, our profession is easily pushed by neoliberal forces towards a shallow analyses that embraces a symptom-focused approach void of a root cause analysis. I agree with Staub-Bernasconi that the value overload and potential contradictions in values inherent in the above definition causes problems when articulating a clear mandate in the classroom.

For example, from my point of view the alignment of social work course education with specified fields of practice in Australia turns the curriculum into a fuzzy mix of approaches that are increasingly divorced from the core ideals that are supposed to underpin social work: universal human rights and social justice. To be an accredited Australian social work education provider we are required to demonstrate that courses include sufficient content with regard to child protection, mental health, cross-cultural practice, and practice with Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander people and communities in the curriculum. These content areas are undoubtedly important. However, by privileging these domains over others we introduce a certain ‘canon’ into the curriculum (i.e. assessment and counselling techniques) that may inadvertently shift the learning focus from the root-causes of social problems to the psychological pathologies of individuals. There is a distinct risk of adopting a superficial emphasis on the symptomatology of social issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, drug and alcohol etc. This impoverished analysis may then lead to individual-focused technical solutions translating into an inadequate service design and the subsequent failure to resolve social problems [see for example, Sousa
Santos]. In short, AASW accreditation rules may inadvertently cause mission drift.

This mission drift is exacerbated by the cross disciplinary delivery of social work units. Cost cutting within higher education has led to the outcome that many courses are co-delivered by disciplines that may not have the same code of ethics, ethos, or mandate. For example, mental health-focused social work units are often delivered by counselling or psychology departments that espouse individualistic approaches at the expense of a critical approach focusing on social root causes. Some social work education institutions have built strong critical social work curricula. Such courses provide students with a solid understanding of the root causes of social problems locating the realm of social work in the broader context of social structures. However, even when the curriculum provides a robust critical analysis of social issues, students may still be at risk of not visualising the potential of community development, policy and research work in shaping society due to the extensive use of cross-disciplinary teaching. Three decades ago, when I was studying for a Bachelor of Social Work, all units were delivered by social workers. Today, after three decades of higher education reforms, neoliberalism, managerialism, cost containment, and the push towards efficiency gains, social work courses are cross-disciplinary. For students this often leads to confusion in terms of the professional ethos they are socialised into and the analytic approaches that are discipline specific. As a result, this cross-disciplinary approach, the social work mandate (and ethos) in the mental health area has been heavily diluted and is becoming blurred with that of counsellors and psychologists. Nowadays, in the mental health field, there seems to be an over-emphasis on individual diagnosis and treatment. Narrative therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and others are dominating the curriculum. Despite their importance, they should not replace an in-depth exploration of the socio-cultural, political and economic construction of mental illness, and the vital role social structures play in the recovery and in preventative approaches. As social work was tempted to carve a clinical space for itself in mental health, we entered in competition with other professionals employing their methodologies rather than cultivating our own creating a knowledge gap that many social workers are no longer able to fill.

This trend has been accentuated by a sector whose professional practices have been shaped by 20 years of neo-liberalism. In many of the practice settings that typically employ social workers, structural analyses have given way to making individuals responsible for their ‘pathological’ behaviour. The authoritarianism that underpins much of behaviour modification approaches that have come to replace rights-based welfare is reliant upon counselling and psychological skills. CBT and mindfulness go hand in hand with punitive approaches to welfare. For students, clinical social work skills are often the pinnacle of the profession. Their acronyms pepper staff meetings to a point where they, shrouded in mystical veneration, become the quintessence of social work rather than one minor aspect of a social work profession that has lost its ways and that has forgotten the social determinants of health.

There are a range of organisations that continue to make the link between social structures and mental health outcomes. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its socio-economic disadvantage report shows a clear relationship between poverty and poor health outcomes (ABS, 2010). The Victorian Council of Social Services in its submission to Commission’s inquiry ‘Issues Paper into the Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health’ highlights the importance of broader reform and focus on solutions that are outside the clinical domain (VCOSS 2019). Their recommendations include adequate income, housing, carer support and respite, intervention at school and community levels. And while a range of community organisations are committed to services that are grounded in an analysis of social structures, large segments of the mental health sector are captured by an analysis that focuses exclusively on the individual. Recent research highlights the role of income support programs, nutritional support, housing, community outreach, and care coordination in order to address health and mental health issues (Taylor et al. 2016). CBT without programs that address the social determinants of mental health largely fail to achieve changes that address the root cause that makes CBT necessary. In other words, social determinants, human rights, and collective action to achieve social change should be the focus of social work education. This is our domain – not CBT. Our mandate is to work toward social justice and universal rights. This might involve CBT as part of a strategy towards change and empowerment. However, CBT should not become an end in itself.

Social work theorists often acknowledge that particular contexts cause stress that excessive stress might be correlated to mental health conditions. However, such insights are only partially translated into action. I think that we have done well in the bio-psycho sphere but have neglected to teach what we ought to do in the social sphere. Some schools are exemplary at delivering theoretical knowledge around the socio-economic and structural determinants of health. However, when it comes to skills development, we seem to be stuck and have been unable to move beyond counselling and casework.

While we often state that social workers should not engage in one-dimensional work when it comes to direct practice, we are commonly retreating to one-dimensional skills. I have not seen many examples of social workers discussing direct practice in terms of social determinants, human rights, and social justice. Policy, research, and community development skills are often neglected in direct practice training. Without these complementing counselling techniques, the liberation of individuals cannot be achieved. As it stands, students are likely to acquire a skewed view of direct practice work. Many students attracted to this field of practice, graduate without the plethora of practice approaches that could address structural disadvantage and oppression.

Clarity of purpose is linked to professional relevance. As voters in the developed world are voting with their feet in the face of technocratic solutions that fail to resolve abject social conditions, social work professionals with a mandate form part of the solution – social workers without a mandate are part of the problem. To foster the social work mandate, however, social work curricula need to teach students about (dialogical) human rights-based collective action, critical analysis, planning and the development of a more comprehensive social architecture. Such measures can be further enhanced by the creation of professional practice spaces in domains often neglected by social work education (i.e. the environment, workplace, housing, building collective solutions). Most importantly, however, we need to de-clutter our mandate bringing into focus (again) human rights and social justice. This focus may assist students in understanding the locus of the profession, giving them a solid foundation to not only resolve social problems but also giving them the capacity to design and implement preventative programs. To learn about social problems is important, but essential is our ability to articulate and bring about social change. Some readers might argue that, at present, social work education does exactly that. In response, I would say, we are failing to translate the ‘social’ of social work into practice - the focus on the individual has become an end in itself.

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Introduction

The historiography of social work in Guyana locates its emergence in the activities of social and religious groups seeking to enhance the wellbeing of formerly enslaved Africans, by way of self-help and community development initiatives. Current research findings reflect that social work practice has developed significantly since the 1930s. Impetuses for this are measures instituted by both the colonial powers and subsequent independent governments to achieve social welfare goals. This article seeks to highlight the significant influence shaped by the profession and social work practice and examine the contemporary issues facing the profession.

Social work in Guyana and the Anglophone Caribbean

Many historical, political, social, and economic factors have shaped the evolution of social work practice and education in Guyana, and the Anglophone Caribbean. The most significant was the colonial rule of Britain, under whose watch upheavals and riots erupted in the 1930s. The investigative Royal West Indian Commission (Moyne Commission) summed up the causal factors of the disturbances as citizens’ desire for better living conditions (Benn, 2011). Moyne Commission's recommendations to resolve the conflict had a rippling effect: The provision of social services expanded, professional social workers were introduced in state-sponsored social agencies, and modern social work practice evolved. Baker and Maxwell’s (2012) work provides further insights into colonial influences on social work practice in the region.

An important paradigm shift for Guyana was the process of change in the role of government and the state as agents of coordination and integration of social welfare services (Danns, 1990). While non-governmental groups relinquished their role in social services, the plantocracy-controlled sugar industry did not for capitalist reasons. However, in the early 1940s social work practice was incorporated within existing social services provided by the state apparatus, the Third British Guiana Legislative Council. The rationale for this was availability of decentralised facilities, framework planning, concentration of financial resources, and machinery for social control.

Integrating a new cadre of professionals into conventional systems came with challenges. Approximately eighty years later, social work practice and social work education have seen significant developments. This article examines challenges for the profession in Guyana and is based on current research undertaken by the author as part of her doctoral education. Presented are critical contemporary issues, some of which have entrenched historical roots while others are currently emerging and influenced by internal and external factors. Social work’s positionality in national development, therefore, makes it imperative to develop a plan to appropriately respond and contribute to social and economic development.
community development, including corrections, familial dysfunctionality, juvenile supervision, social security, schools' welfare, and formalisation of cooperative societies.

**Contemporary Issues for Social Work**
The focus in this section will be on selected contemporary challenges for social work practice, bearing in mind that some have historical roots. These include the dimensions of development, political instability and upheavals, social work training, and professional association and legitimacy.

**Dimensions of social development**
Guyana's economy has grown significantly following the implementation of a structural adjustment programme and neoliberal policies 1988/89. The current growth rate is 3.4%, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 3.676 billion USD, and the Human Development Index 0.654 (United Nations Development Programme, 2018).

Notwithstanding this positive economic overview, the reality for Guyana is that severe multidimensional poverty affects 6% of the population, and youth unemployment is 26.3% (UNDP, 2018). The saturated public service is the major occupational sector, however, 85% of all university graduate are lost to brain drain.

Chronic diseases including hypertension, cancer and diabetes are prevalent among the population of 748,000. Of particular concern to officials is the impact of HIV/AIDS, suicide, teenage pregnancy, and domestic violence. HIV prevalence rate among the 15 – 49 age group is 1.6%, on average 85.8 of every 1000 births are to adolescent girls 15 – 19 years old, and suicide rates for males and females are 46% and 15.5%, respectively (UNDP, 2018).

Successive governments have sought to develop a system that can adapt and respond to developmental obstacles and threats to the attainment of global compacts such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Trends in social problems make this an arduous task. As I write, Guyana's social services are grappling to effectively deal with the increasing refugee population in the hinterland regions. Venezuela’s political crisis has forced hundreds of migrants across Guyana’s porous border in search of peace and livelihood opportunities. This, and other existing socio-economic challenges form the core social dimensions of development.

**Political instability and upheavals**
Guyana's current political stability is extremely vulnerable. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) ruled on June 18, 2019 that the no-confidence motion tabled against the coalition government by the opposition was validly passed on December 21, 2018. National and regional elections are therefore constitutionally due; however, the executive arm of the state is yet to announce a date. Discontent (see Figure 1) is clearly evident in the activism and opinions expressed through the media daily.

A historical review suggests that the current political conflicts can potentially cause disruption to social and economic activities. These conflicts are structurally entrenched and rooted in the country's colonial experiences, and the divide and rule strategies of politicians during the cold war era. The population is ethnically heterogeneous with six groups, dominated by East Indians (43.5%) and Africans (30.2%). Multiculturalism is a public façade during national festivals, and when unmasked during election cycles contribute to episodic violence (see Figure 2). This is linked to a consistent track record of racial voting and the winner-take-all politics.

Citizens anticipate the demonstration of political maturity to mitigate any disturbances, particularly in light of Bajpal’s (2019) pronouncement that the economy is expected to grow by 33.5% and 22.9% in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Guyana is on the precipice of drawing first oil in May 2020, which predicts a fortune from the fourteen discoveries high quality, oil-bearing sandstones reservoirs. All political parties contesting the next general elections have championed the use of proceeds to provide free education and direct cash transfers to citizens.

**Training for social work practice**
The national goals to feed, clothe and house the nation by 1976 established a nexus between social work and development. This amplified the need to bridge the gap in social work education. Resultantly, the University of Guyana launched the Diploma in Social Work in 1971 to train a cadre of professionals who could embrace national development by using their skills to foster social and economic development. Like the nature of practice, colonial legacies permeate social work education. The curriculum was in alignment with the recommendations for a two-year training course for the
The envisioned economic windfall from oil and gas production provides hope for the development of social work found in the Younghusband Report on Education and Training for Social Workers (a British product). Early cohorts included paraprofessionals from public sector agencies, who completed their requisite field experience under the tutelage of professionals trained in Europe and North America.

Social work education growth has been slow both in terms of the expansion of programmes and in keeping with the global advancement of the profession. Twenty years after the diploma, a partnership with Dalhousie University resulted in the baccalaureate degree and the development of a critical mass of social work educators. In 2017, the Master of Social Work (MSW) was launched under a servicing arrangement with York University and support from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Notwithstanding these influences, issues relating to a human rights and social justice philosophy are scarcely infused in the curricula. Guyana has ratified ten human right treaties and is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals compact. Bearing this, and the frontal focus of human rights in the international definition of social work used locally, a pertinent question is, what resources social work education needs to bridge the gap of inadequate human rights content in the social work curricula? Responses must be placed frontally in any restructuring of the curricula.

Professional association and legitimacy

Professional association is a creature of political directives grounded in pragmatism, and rationalised on the basis of the government’s thrust to link social work to national development and the recognition of social workers as professionals. After the first decade and one-half of its legal registration and vibrancy, the Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers is struggling to remain relevant in social and economic development discourse. Its position is compounded by the lack of visibility and inability to sustain active membership. Bearing in mind that the University of Guyana has produced approximately 1600 graduates of the Diploma in Social Work to date, less than one percent are currently recorded as active members of the professional association.

Keynote speakers of the Inaugural Conference on the Practice and Standards of Social Work (July 21 – 22, 2016) challenged over 200 social work professionals to respond effectively to the current realities of Guyana. The conference was a collaborative attempt to influence regularisation of the profession, a feat that eludes the discipline and is necessary to concretise its legitimacy. The momentum gained has somewhat eroded, but social workers have recognised that notwithstanding the low remuneration packages they receive; their skills are needed and necessary for the development of Guyana.

Challenges and the way forward

The envisioned economic windfall from oil and gas production provides hope for the expansion of social services and the general welfare of Guyanese. Plans are evolving to develop a local content framework to ensure that Guyana benefits from the proceeds of the emerging oil and gas industry. Irrespective of this, the complexities of the social dimensions of development situate the role of social work and social workers in a place of prominence. Probable risk of the Dutch Disease further compounds this, since contrary to the commonly held belief; improvements in general welfare are not automatic outcomes of natural resource discoveries. Therefore, the need for social work practice and social work education to take account of their roles cannot be overemphasised. Correspondingly to the nations’ preparation for economic buoyancy, social work needs a concrete plan for its upward mobility in order to remain relevant and support social and economic development. Such a plan must account for the following:

- collaboration and cooperation of social work practice, social work education, professional association, policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders to address social development obstacles

- systems and mechanisms for building social cohesion

- assessment of social work education to determine training needs in light of the gap of a human rights and social justice philosophy in the curricula and the impending rapid economic growth

- approaches to influence national discourse and social policy trajectories

- measures to advocate for a regulatory framework for social work practice, and to generate public support for the critical roles of social workers in nation building.

References


Particularly older students who had completed degrees in the 1980s and 1990s complained that they did not pay tuition fees in order to explain and translate basic concepts to ‘internationals’. Classrooms, domestic students rebelled against the international ‘dominance’ arguing that they get the IELTS score that formed part of the minimum entry requirements into the MSWQ. In some organisations, international students made up 80% or more of new students enrolling in the Masters of Social Work Professional Qualifying (MSWQ) wreaking havoc with curricula, marking rubrics, ‘Turn it In’ scores, and pedagogy. Secretly, educators began to divide time into Before International Students (BIS) and After (the arrival of) International Students (AIS).

Whereas flipping the classroom was regarded as good practice BIS – particularly by faculty whose workload had increased dramatically in the aftermath of neo-liberal austerity - this was less so AIS. Indeed, it was getting rather quiet in flipped classrooms as students found it difficult to do their pre-assigned reading in time for the workshop (Moses, 2017). Born into the Global South many international students had limited financial means and English skills ‘under construction’. They were groomed to work in the bowels of our capitalist economy slaving away often on sub-minimal wage rates. As a result of their low pay, they were having to find extra ‘cash in hand’ work on top of the 20 hours/week their visa condition restricted them to in order to pay for Sydney’s cost of living and high tuition fees. Those students could be found at the back of the classroom, looking exhausted, anxious, and very quiet. They often felt judged for their sub-standard English language skills, which made them shy and withdrawn and which made it difficult to draw them into the somewhat flipped conversation. And as the workshop debates slowed, and as we attempted to project our words as carefully as possible, the flipped classroom ended up explaining basic concepts that many ‘internationals’ had not come across in their previous studies. Often the question materialised during staff discussions how some of these students managed to attempt to project our words as carefully as possible, the flipped classrooms generated were not up to the expected standard. Some grumbled that they were excluded from group assignments dominated by ‘internationals’ speaking their own language rather than English. As a result, they started to cluster with other domestic students or high performing ‘internationals’ creating islands of elitist excellence creating an ocean of panic.

Staff discussions increasingly focused on the development of ‘exit strategies’, the need to re-develop course content while refusing to ‘dumb down’ the course, the fact that the increasing proportion of ‘internationals’ in the classroom was crowding out domestic students, the ‘risk’ international students represented given that the federal government was likely to exclude social work from the PR pathway in the not so distant future, and the fact that the support services – or what remained of them after a cost-cutting exercise – did not seem to remedy the lacking scaffolding underpinning language and knowledge that students needed to build in order to become acceptable candidates for field placement agencies. Getting students placement ready for their first field education experience within 6 months became a major hurdle (see also Ross, Ta, & Grieve, 2019). Placement agency managers increasingly commented on the fact that they no longer had the capacity to supervise ‘weak’ students and asked for students that were near job-ready (see also Neden, Townsend, & Zuchowski, 2018). Placement supervisors commented that some international students carried a burden much heavier than others showing signs of stress and mental health issues that required staff and counselling interventions. Our workloads increased across the board. Investigating academic integrity issues became an ongoing task made increasingly difficult by the fact that ‘Turn It In’ seemed to pick up phrase segments that were also used in an exponentially growing number of student papers handed in around the world – highlighting that tertiary education is based on an increasingly global curriculum. Turn it in task forces were being formed with the mission to clamp down on academic ‘dishonesty’ and to save academic standards. Student grades marks were suspended, lowered, and subsequently re-instated when it became obvious that they had no case to answer or when procedural flaws came to the fore. There were discussions around the duty of care that our provider had the quality of tertiary education was ‘going down the drain’ and that the discussion the flipped classrooms generated were not up to the expected standard. Some grumbled that they were excluded from group assignments dominated by ‘internationals’ speaking their own language rather than English. As a result, they started to cluster with other domestic students or high performing ‘internationals’ creating islands of elitist excellence in an ocean of panic.

Facing the challenge of international students in social work education

A couple of years ago, Australian social work educators were faced with the fact that their students were changing. Increasingly they were greeted by diversity in terms of genders, colours, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. In 2018-9, domestic students seemed to evaporate making way for the great internationalisation of social work. Marketed as a pathway to Permanent Residency (PR), social work had taken off. In some organisations, international students made up 80% or more of new students enrolling in the Masters of Social Work Professional Qualifying (MSWQ) wreaking havoc with curricula, marking rubrics, ‘Turn it In’ scores, and pedagogy. Secretly, educators began to divide time into Before International Students (BIS) and After (the arrival of) International Students (AIS).
towards these students and how we would feel if our daughters and sons were treated as ‘cash cows’ that have precious few rights but plenty of obligations.

In Australia, the rights of international students are enshrined in the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (The Code) under the ESOS act. The code essentially views international students as consumers – not citizens with limited rights (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Hewett, 2010, Section 4). However, our government has a duty of care to international students which it outsources to largely self-accrediting education providers whose obligations are minimal in terms of the legislation and guidelines. This leaves international students in a position where they have limited recourse if their education or associated student support is sub-standard. By outsourcing its duty of care, and by failing to provide strong guidelines outlining minimum support standards, the duty of care towards international students and by extension the social and consumer rights of students are diluted to a point where they seem to transform, in Agamben’s terms, into ‘homo sacer’ – beings without rights and social significance (Agamben, 1998 [1995]).

Education providers, in turn, tend to devolve the responsibility for the quality of education to a large degree to teachers. This places social work educators in a difficult situation. Those following an anti-oppressive approach find themselves in a position where they are asked to uphold professional standards on the one hand, while under the obligation to defend a set of universal rights social work values are constructed on (AASW, 2010). Whereas the former compels us to fail students if they do not perform to standard, the latter obliges us to support and mentor students to create conditions that allow them to pass and become good professionals. Whereas the former is clearly important in terms of professional standards and the quality of human services in Australia, the latter is often made difficult by the very low requirements that students have to fulfil in order to be accepted into social work courses in Australia translating into large number of students with major support needs and support services that are often inadequate in the face of student needs, a factor that is only partially being addressed by the new AASW standards currently being discussed. Furthermore, those of us embracing the decolonisation of social work find themselves confronted with the fact that Australian social work is being reshaped by an amalgam of knowledges from around the world – including illiberal knowledges that clash with the social work code of ethics (AASW, 2010). Thus decentring Western knowledge and, by extension, interfacing international law and human rights discourses with an anthroplogy of rights that requires students to locate principles of collaboration and mutual acceptance (e.g., Panchamama or Ubuntu) in a plethora of cultures and reconnect them with dialogical claims arising out of post-modern universalities can be fraught with difficulties.

With all of this in mind, there is something profoundly wrong with the neo-liberal depiction of international students as ‘consumers’. This kind of representation overlooks the fact that international students can access some social rights. Some of the social rights of Australians can also be accessed by international students. For example, workers’ and consumer rights can be redeemed by international students. What is more, education brands are vulnerable to social media feedback and arrangements, field education placements solutions, and pedagogical approaches need to ensure that these students are capable of the next generation of social workers are up to the task.

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Interdisciplinary Studies on Social Work at the University of Chile: Critical proposals for social work education and public engagement

The interdisciplinary Studies on Social Work is a research cluster (NEITS - Núcleo de Estudios Interdisciplinarios en Trabajo Social, www.neits.cl) carried out at the University of Chile at the Department of Social Work. NEITS emerged in 2019 as part of an innovative educational project aimed at transforming social work education in the country. This initiative postulates that in order to develop critical interpretations and transformative proposals to address the challenges social work faces today, the profession needs to examine itself and assume its intellectual duties. In this sense, NEITS aims to develop and deepen the discussion on social work by examining its historical, epistemological, theoretical, methodological, political and ethical foundations as well as shedding light on its controversies, internal crises and contextual challenges at both the local and global scale.

The beginnings

The school of social work at the University of Chile has a long and turbulent history due to the country’s political past. In 1974, during Pinochet’s military dictatorship, the school was forcibly shut down due to its critical approach and ideological links to socialism and Marxism. The school was considered an incubator for subversive and dangerous thought for which many students and professors suffered political persecution (Sepúlveda, 2016; Ávila and Bivort, 2017; Del Villar, 2018). While democracy returned to the country in 1990, it was only in 2014 that the University re-opened the social work program within the Faculty of Social Science. This re-opening was an opportunity to develop an innovative proposal for social work education that differed from the more traditional social work educational programs available in the country. This innovative project was underpinned by critical social science approaches aimed at working towards redistribution and recognition of all citizens (Fraser, 2016). The proposal was based upon the articulation of i) social work research, ii) professional intervention and iii) public engagement with ‘non-academic’ sectors (service users, state ministries and public policy administrators, NGO’s, professional associations, social organizations, collectives, and social movements).

In order to work towards its mission, the social work Department organized different clusters aimed at producing research, organizing intervention projects and conducting public engagement. Thus, the clusters have been conceived as the core proposal of our innovative social work program, replacing more traditional social work education field practice settings. Undergraduate students begin participating in the clusters during their third year. Since social work undergraduate education in Chile has a 5 year duration, students have the chance to participate in three clusters (third, fourth and fifth years) during their studies. In addition, the students from our Social Work Master Degree program choose a cluster within which to develop their thesis. Each cluster is formed by undergraduate and postgraduate students, internal and external academics, professionals, public and/or private agencies, social organizations and movements that work together conducting research and intervention projects from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Until 2017, the Social work department had the following 5 working clusters: Socioeconomic Relations and Social Movements, Effective Innovations in Public Policy, Complex Territorial Systems, Society and Reinserción, Diversity and Gender: Intersectional Feminist Approaches. In 2018 the Interdisciplinary Studies on Social Work cluster was formed.
in response to the need to return and strengthen the profession’s critical tradition at the University of Chile.

The Interdisciplinary Studies on Social Work – NEITS Cluster

The NEITS initiative, as well as all other clusters within the Department, are anchored in critical approaches to the social sciences and their translation into research and social intervention processes. The particularity of NEITS, however, lies in its focus on social work. In other words, the object of analysis of the cluster is social work as a profession and as an academic discipline. From this perspective, the critical re-visiting of social work history is considered crucial in order to allow for the emergence of diverse interpretive keys that can help decipher the challenges the discipline faces today, while also examining the epistemic, conceptual, political and methodological debates that take place in the current context.

NEITS is formed by academics from diverse disciplines, social work students from undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and professional associations. All these actors undertake joint research and practice from an active, collaborative and participative approach, seeking to promote public engagement and diminish the gap between young and senior students, students and professionals, and between academic and professional worlds. It seeks to articulate theory and practice as well as research and social intervention.

Currently, NEITS is undertaking four projects related to i) critical historiography of social work, exploring the contributions of the Chilean Collective of Social Work -an intellectual movement of female social workers developed during the dictatorship in the 1980s; ii) theoretical debates in Latin American social work, examining the main trends and theoretical perspectives in social work publications and contributions within the region; iii) research trajectories of Chilean social workers, utilizing a longitudinal approach to study the research pathways of social workers in diverse institutional environments throughout the last 10 years; and iv) political horizons, ethical dilemmas and acts of resistance exerted by Chilean frontline social workers in the current neoliberal context. All these projects are underpinned by critical approaches to history, theory and the political agency of social work and social workers (Vidal, 2016; Matus, 2018; Reiningger, 2018; Muñoz, 2018; Rubilar, 2009; Galaz and Rubilar, 2019). The approaches underlining the research projects seek to challenge the neoliberal rationality that pervades the very history of social work which detaches past, present and future of the profession; neutralizes its theoretical basis; dissociates theoretical approaches from geopolitical foundations; and understands professional interventions as control and subjugation.

The NEITS initiative expects to contribute to the development of dense and complex understandings of social phenomena of high public interest, the generation of disciplinary knowledge in dialogue with other disciplines, and to the creation of critical and transformative social work repertoires and strategies.

Challenges regarding social work education

Primarily the NEITS initiative's collaborative and participative approach has been one of its greatest strengths since it has promoted fluid dialogue and exchange between students, national and international professors and researchers, social work professionals, and Chile’s main social work professional association (Colegio de Trabajadores Sociales) by organizing dialogues, workshops and seminars. These encounters have not only promoted public engagement and the transfer of knowledge by breaking with traditional elitist academic practices, but have also worked towards diminishing the gap between two historically separated spheres (academia and practice) (Aylwin et al., 2004; Matus, 2018). Furthermore, the research undertaken by NEITS has led to important findings on the challenges the profession faces today in a highly neo-liberalized context (Muñoz, 2019).

About the initiative's limitations, one of the biggest hurdles NEITS has faced has been overcoming traditional conceptualizations of social work “practice” or field work settings and projects. Historically social work education in Chile has consisted of numerous field placements in which students are placed within organizations and work under institutional supervisors who assign students specific tasks throughout the semester. This consolidated conceptualization of “practice” has proven difficult to overcome not only in working with different organizations and professionals but also with students who expect to learn certain “practical” knowledge in such formalized settings. While this is currently a challenge due to the initiative’s pedagogic innovation and the preconceived notions of social work practice settings, we predict this will diminish over time with greater diffusion strategies that permit debate and discussion on this new educational model.

A greater challenge this new educational model faces is rupturing the social imaginary of social work that limit the discipline's transformational potential. Social work in Chile has traditionally been considered a poorly valued profession, but have also worked towards breaking with traditional elitist academic practices, but have also worked towards diminishing the gap between two historically separated spheres (academia and practice) (Aylwin et al., 2004; Matus, 2018). Furthermore, the research undertaken by NEITS has led to important findings on the challenges the profession faces today in a highly neo-liberalized context (Muñoz, 2019).

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“They teach us as if we are from the same country”: stories from a social work classroom with international students

In this article, I share my experiences as a social work educator in an international context where I have had to adapt my approach to cater for the needs of international and domestic students pursuing their careers in social work. While Australia is a destination to many international students and is also multicultural and with indigenous communities, social work education and practice has remained predominantly western and stubbornly resistant to draw on plural epistemologies that inform diverse ways of doing social work.

International students

For the last three years, I have had an opportunity to teach at two higher institutions of learning in Australia where a master’s degree in social work is offered to domestic and international students. In Australia, the current debates and tensions are not about how international students are a ‘cash cow’ to universities and colleges in Australia (Burton-Bradley, 2018) but discussion is about how problematic, challenging, it is to teach and supervise international students. While the blame has been placed on international students’ poor English proficiency, only few if any social work educators and practitioners have critically examined their teaching and understanding of social work and epistemological assumptions. The concerns for social workers are that international students have no or limited understanding or knowledge of (western) social work and therefore they are a risk to Australian social work in particular and the social work profession in general.

There are serious tensions around international students’ lack of knowledge of ‘social work’. I have had conversations with some of the educators who have been frustrated by international students’ responses when asked about the social welfare system. Some of the students’ responses have been that ‘they do not know about social welfare system’, which some of the educators have taken to mean ignorance of students about formal systems of social work operating in their contexts. One only wishes that the educators could ask students about social work beyond what governments or welfare states do. But some who have managed to ask students to write about social work in their contexts have complained, rather bitterly, that what the students write is not social work, that it is something like social development or something very unclear which educators do not think is even social work.

However, as Carson (2017) notes in her talk on decolonising pedagogy, in the west, there is a really specific idea about what social work is and what social workers do which tends to be mostly limited to social welfare-related work. The teaching of social work including its history tends to be centered around social work as informed by mostly European events and ideas. For example, predominantly, the history of social work is traced from English Poor Laws of 1601 and Charity Organisation Society. Most of the western texts about social work emphasise this history even when it is acknowledged that this is not the universal history in all contexts (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2017). One would assume that since Australia has Indigenous communities and is also multicultural, the history of social work as organised differently in such communities, is given utmost consideration. Also given the fact that international students are coming from very different countries like Nepal, India, Philippines, Kenya, Nigeria, among others, one would assume that history and organisation of social work as it applies in those diverse contexts would be deconstructed to help students critically think about the profession they are pursuing. Instead, as authors Walter, Taylor, & Habibis (2011) have argued, Australian social work education and practice still remains predominantly white and all the other non-white have to re-orient themselves and their experiences. The western hegemonic thinking about social work only in specific ways is prioritised silencing the opportunity of learning about social work as organised differently in diverse contexts.

This is why during class discussions, international students do not actively engage because they do not have adequate understanding of western social work and policy context to be able to critique it. With emphasis on western social work, some of the international students have made very concerning comments about social work in their contexts. Some
have stated that “we really don't have social work in our countries”; Social work is not even recognised as a profession in our countries, people do not even know what a social worker is, that's why we are here to learn about what these developed countries are doing so that we can go and set up the same in our countries to have a strong profession”. Among what the students wanted to set up in their countries included aged care facilities and homes for people with disability, foster care homes for orphaned children, setting up child protection legislations and policies in their countries, among others. While it is not a crime to copy what others are doing, have we helped students critically reflect about the cultural appropriateness of some of the interventions? Indeed, among the reasons why the students were paying hefty amounts of money to study is to attain a degree from an 'international' university that would give them an edge over others who have studied from local contexts.

The most concerning thing for me as a teacher was that students felt so inferior that their social work profession was still “behind” since it was not like western social work. This was amidst some belittling comments from some of the other students from contexts where welfare state interventions existed. One approached me and sympathised with me that “let us see if they will write the assignments since they are not really familiar with social work”. Assignments requiring critical analysis of the policies and interventions in social work become an uphill task for international students who have to first of all understand western social work and later on be able to critique and bring forth the strengths and crises of a model of social work they are being taught to revere. Some of the students have informally complained that we teach them as if they are from the same country and context. “They do not engage us in group discussions, they have given up on us; when we ask for literature, they say that is our role to find the literature ourselves as students, but we are not from here and we don't know how and where to find it.” Domestic students are complaining too as they are burdened because they have to take on roles of experts in their groups where they have to explain to international students about domestic policies and ways of helping. The question is do we want to continue engaging in social work education and practice that perpetuates marginality of the many in our social work courses, and privileges the few who are already privileged?

**What is the major issue in social work education?**

One of the major issues that needs to be addressed is about epistemological diversity. Mainstream social work remains predominantly informed by western ideas and knowledges denigrating and silencing all other ways of knowing and doing social work that international students come with. Some of these students have lived experiences and stories from their contexts regarding how vulnerable people are helped in their communities. For some of the students, the role played by collectives or mutual aid community groups are well known. Through reciprocal living is how the vulnerable are supported in communities. When I mentioned some of these alternative ways of doing social work- identifying and responding to social problems, some students really became active, engaged, excited, because these were familiar. However, some students also questioned if this was really social work because for them social work is what is done by the government and NGOs. This is a narrow way of understanding social work especially in collective communities where community-based ways of helping embedded in local epistemologies are at the forefront while governments and NGOs have a limited presence or even non-existent particularly in rural areas. However, unsurprisingly, as a person from African context where social work was introduced as a colonial product and tool, such collective ways of being were demonised as primitive and this colonial indoctrination still plays out in social work students and educators delegitimising local ways of knowing and mutual helping.

Moving forward, a shared space where voices from diverse social work are centred rather than western epistemologies dominating the discourses is urgently needed. I make this recommendation because I have the interests of communities we work to help at the back of my mind. We need social work that builds on rather than silence and marginalise ways of survival of vulnerable communities. This way we educate students to work alongside communities facilitating and building on the knowledges of these communities. This is decolonising practice by legitimising local ways of knowing and doing (Tusasiirwe, forthcoming). What social work educators in Australia and beyond need to be aware about is the risk of perpetuating cultural and epistemological imperialism and colonialism through upholding west-as-best and west-to-the-rest attitudes. This perpetuation is likely if the current way of teaching social work is not re-examined by the social work educators and the Association of Social Workers accrediting and regulating social work practice in Australia.

A few attempts of what has worked for me is to incorporate some international literature and knowledges beyond Australia. When I am teaching introduction to social work, I have to also draw on the history of social work in other non-western contexts. I have had to read about social work in some of the countries where the students come from. In my teaching, I aim to help students envision some areas they can make a contribution in Australia but also in their countries. For example the global definition of social work (IFSW, 2019) recognises indigenous knowledge as theoretical knowledge informing social work yet there is still limited understanding of this knowledge in different parts of the world. This is an area that some of the students can contribute to understand. I also think about domestic students and how they can contribute to challenging neoliberalism, privatising and managerialism that is threatening the welfare state we revere in Australia (Ife, 1997). My intention as a teacher is to make sure that each student is valued and learning. All students need to be included and all knowledges that can help empower vulnerable communities need to be drawn on. We need to put first communities, their local epistemologies and how social work can work alongside.

In all, Australia is increasingly becoming a destination of many international students pursuing a career in social work. While some want to remain in Australia, others want to go back to their communities with an international degree that will land them jobs in reputable international organisations. Social work education must be seen to cater for all these students, drawing on pedagogy that relates and shows interests in the international contexts where these students come from and want to practice. Australian social work educators must practice the critical social work they claim to believe in by beginning to question their mainstream social work education and the epistemological assumptions. Social work educators must create shared space for multiple epistemologies and uphold understanding of social work as diverse. Surely human and social problems are not defined and responded to in universal ways around the world and its high time that we legitimised rather than othering other ways of helping, for the sake of finding ways to strengthen and build on local communities' ways of survival.

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Analysis of Vocational Training of Social Work and its Responsibility with Society

Understanding our origins, history and identifying with our past is an essential component to be able to raise new positions and open new paths for the Social Work discipline. This is a challenge that begins in the training process and culminates in the professional exercise. According to the UN “Higher education has a social responsibility, to train professionals committed to society, knowing that the commitment of each professional is to achieve social human development”. Vocational Training requires a great social responsibility, to contribute to the growth of society through its professionals, who will oversee and address the challenges of the current and emerging social problems. This article seeks to provide an analysis regarding the responsibility that the professional university-based social work training must have with society and the challenges that it attributes to professional practice.

University Vocational Training and its responsibility with the Society

The university has a social responsibility to train professionals committed to societal well-being as well as an understanding that the commitment of each professional is to achieve social human development. In this way, higher education has the responsibility to identify the direction of change and make decisions to integrate into the present and project into the future what is required of professional practice and to prepare professionals for future work (that is linked to the real issues that emerge in the future).

The university’s social responsibility must be understood as the institution’s commitment to disseminate and implement a set of knowledge, skills, and values that must be delivered through professional training where the development of being, knowing, and knowing how to do is crucial to its mission. To respond to the above, professional training must assume a commitment to society and its emerging social problems, as the authors Castañeda and Salame (1996) point out, in the face of the culture of social responsibility in vocational training, they state that it must assume the commitment to:

- Train professionals with solid scientific-technological knowledge and committed to values and principles of human, social and ecological sensitivity.
- Promote social responsibility activities in the community.
- Train graduates with social awareness about their profession, as a commitment to service towards human development.
- Contribute to the solution of problems of society or of the scenario in which it will intervene.
- Develop research and innovation spaces and groups towards the advancement of theoretical and practical knowledge with social responsibility, with solid scientific foundations and values, which allow to assess and transform social and environmental dynamics for human development.

From this perspective, professional training should consider a timely transmission of skills and appropriate tools so that each professional can respond to the demands of society according to their area of expertise and practice specialty and should also seek to enhance the skills and abilities that each discipline is demanding. In this context, one of the professions tasked with this job, is the discipline of social work. This is because it is a profession that is in permanent contact with people, and that their professional work forces it to have a permanent relationship with society and its needs. This is reflected in the multiple functions that social work fulfills within society. The country, its development and growth require professionals prepared to face the multiple and complex demands and needs and be willing to adapt to the changes and transformations that emerged from its development.

Social work’s professional training is constituted from the valuation of a formative tradition that has contributed decisively to the legitimacy of professional work, but this is not enough. The emerging dynamics and new social problems and structural transformations that society experiences require a critical review of the training programs, which must be constant and with follow-up processes, in order to allow a timely restructuring that ensures the development of the professional practice according to the new social reality as it occurs.

Chilean society has undergone major changes at the economic, social, political and mainly cultural level. Changes can be linked to the effects of globalization, migratory processes, new information technology and new forms of communication, among others. These changes have impacted and forced the different helping disciplines to adapt their professional work to the new demands and needs by this new society that is in a constant transformation. In this way, professionals have had to seek, create, innovate on the march, new ways of intervening in the unknown scenarios that social reality expresses, acquiring new tools, new knowledge, new skills that equip professionals to respond to the demands and challenges that they face day by day. However, the challenge is put before professional practice and the responsibility passes to professional training to train professionals with the tools, skills and knowledge necessary to give response to this new society; that is training program needs to be forward thinking and adapt to changes in social needs even before they emerge. Elizalde (1991) has argued that “the institutionalization of this transmission of experiences is expressed in the educational and training centers, transmitters of knowledge, those who face a growing speed...
and transcendence in scientific advances and technological changes, have drifted towards a growing specialization and disciplinarity of knowledge. Rather than continue this drift the training institutions have the responsibility of generating professionals who are able to function in the workplace and thus be able to respond according to their abilities and knowledge to the required requirements of new social systems and arrangements as they develop.

**The challenges of Vocational Social Work Training**

Vocational training is a key process for the development of discipline within society since it is the basis for professionals to implement the tools, knowledge, skills, values that have been taken throughout their training. Since the mid-twentieth century, there have been important changes in society, which should be assumed by vocational training, to adapt and prepare future professionals to face these new social events.

Social work needs to be reflective, adaptive and rethink their objectives and establish flexible and adequate structures that allow preparing and training integral professionals who are partakers of the changes the country is experiencing.

The challenge of the social work training is to identify and specify the direction of the change for its transformation, projecting itself to the future and at the same time promoting the necessary measures to enable the development of the potential of being, knowing and knowing how to do, while also having the social responsibility of having a set of competencies for the development of the discipline, motivating research, innovation and social projects, which require training professionals with solid theoretical, methodological and ethical knowledge, adjusted to professional practice. This is possible by maintaining a permanent dialogue with the institutions, the state, the professionals in practice, which will allow access to and recognize the local, communal, regional, national and international priorities and needs that society requires.

Margarita Rozas (1998) points out that the object of social work is located in the delicate intersection between the processes of daily reproduction with its respective obstacles and difficulties and the distribution processes, where “the object of intervention is constructed from the daily reproduction of the social life of the subjects, explicitly based on multiple needs that are expressed as demands and deficiencies and thus arrive at the institutions to be helped from where the students forge a relationship and a link with social reality, allowing them to become part of what happens there, establishing the course, the social commitment that each professional should have when implementing their discipline”.

Recognizing the context, understanding the political and governance fabric, will allow you to make a link between the theoretical-epistemological and social reality, and forge a comprehension of social phenomena. This will generate a comprehensive knowledge that contributes to critical thinking, reflective against the spaces where to intervene, which in turn will allow you to assume a professional position and opinion, which can lead, in your professional practice to proposals in social policies, and participating in the planning or evaluation of these. Social work schools must assume the commitment to develop a comprehensive professional training, which must be understood as one that trains a person as a professional, and therefore must be involved as an agent of change, through its activity, with transformative responsibility of reality, taking into account the social context where it takes place.

The invitation is to look at the training plans, rethink their structures, see their concordance with reality, adapting and reconceptualizing the old schemes and reconstructing what is necessary to improve current training models that are able to respond to the new demands and challenges that professionals have in the social scenario where it acts. The challenge is to take care of learning spaces, mainly where the student is in direct contact with the community, looking for spaces where linking and integration between knowledge is possible, making a contribution to institutions, but focusing on the empowerment of learning. These tasks require social work schools to evaluate and innovate in the spaces where they are inserted. Castañeda and Salamé (2005) agree. They argue that as today’s innovation is recognized as a permanent demand and linked to the technological, economic dynamics that follow each other in the globalized society, social work schools should align with the advances and assume the changes as a necessary part of the student learning process.

In this way the Schools have a great responsibility to deliver the biggest and best tools where professionals are configured, trained to respond to the demands of a multidimensional and complex society that changes and mutates rapidly. Iamamoto (1998) points out that “one of the biggest challenges is that because the social worker lives in the present, is incumbent to develop his/her ability to decipher reality and build proposals for creative works and be capable of preserving and realizing rights, based on emerging demands in everyday life. Therefore, the invitation is to be alert and problematize about what is to be done and what is necessary to do and deliver the skills that allow the understanding of complex and multiple spaces in which it will intervene.

Academics who teach classes must assume this commitment and ensure that their teaching is adequate, of quality and adjusted to the social context where they are going to intervene. It is necessary to be alert to the transformations and changes that they experience, both socially, economically, politically and culturally, and try to adapt their training proposals and adapt the guidelines to the current and future needs that emerge.

Social work’s professional training requires permanent contact with people and as their commitment is to train professionals at the service of society, we must adjust and constantly review the curriculum to “search for new responses to the requirements of a dynamic and demanding professional environment, whose growing demands for flexibility and multifunctionality, permanently question the contents of a disciplinarily specialized repertoire” (Castañeda & Salamé, 2005).

The challenge is to open spaces for theoretical discussion, to open spaces for dialogue between disciplines, which allows us to build a common ground against the social phenomena with which we are going to intervene, since these demand need to be addressed from different perspectives, different knowledge, different disciplines that will help provide timely solution as the needs emerge. As mentioned above, an imminent, constant relationship with the environment, with the institutions, with the professionals who are in constant contact with the social reality is necessary and it is they who must deliver the lines by which professional training should be focused. We must generate a strong bond, not of use of space as only a practice center, but a joint construction, where institutions and their professionals demand professional training skills, knowledge, tools, skills that they manifest as inescapable for professional action.

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Análisis de la Formación Profesional de Trabajo Social y su Responsabilidad con la Sociedad

Entender nuestros orígenes, historia e identificarse con nuestro pasado, es un componente esencial para poder plantear nuevas posturas y abrir nuevos caminos para la disciplina de Trabajo Social. Este es un desafío que comienza en el proceso formativo y que culmina en el ejercicio profesional, según la ONU “La educación superior, tiene la responsabilidad social, de formar profesionales comprometidos con la sociedad, sabiendo que el compromiso de cada profesional, es lograr el Desarrollo Humano Social”. La Formación Profesional, adquiere una gran responsabilidad social, de contribuir al crecimiento de la sociedad a través de sus profesionales, quienes estarán a cargo de enfrentar los desafíos y responder a las emergentes problemáticas sociales. Este artículo busca entregar un análisis frente a la responsabilidad que la formación profesional de Trabajo Social Universitaria debe tener con la sociedad y los desafíos que esta le atribuye al ejercicio profesional.

La Formación Profesional Universitaria y su responsabilidad con la Sociedad

La universidad, tiene la responsabilidad social, de formar profesionales comprometidos con la sociedad, entendiendod que el compromiso de cada profesional, es lograr el Desarrollo Humano Social. De esta manera, la educación superior, tienen la responsabilidad de identificar la dirección del cambio, y tomar decisiones para integrarse al presente y proyectarse al futuro, ya que la universidad es por excelencia donde se constituye el conocimiento que permitirá cimentar el saber al servicio del desarrollo social.

La responsabilidad social universitaria, se debe entender como el compromiso que tiene la institución de difundir y poner en práctica un conjunto de conocimientos, competencias y valores que deben ser entregados atreves de la formación profesional en donde se potencie el desarrollo del ser, saber y saber hacer. Para responder a lo anterior la formación profesional debe asumir un compromiso con la sociedad y sus problemáticas sociales emergentes, como bien lo señalan las autoras Castañeda y Salame (1996), frente a la cultura de responsabilidad social en la formación profesional, plantean que está, debe asumir, el compromiso de:

- Formar profesionales con sólidos conocimientos científico-tecnológicos y comprometidos con valores y principios de sensibilidad humana, social y ecológica.
- Fomentar actividades de responsabilidad social en la comunidad.
- Formar egresados con conciencia social sobre su profesión, como compromiso de servicio hacia el Desarrollo Humano.
- Contribuir con la extensión a la solución de problemas de sociedad o del escenario en el cual va a intervenir.
- Desarrollar espacios y grupos de investigación e innovación, hacia el avance del conocimiento teórico y práctico con responsabilidad social, con sólidos fundamentos científicos y valores, que permitan valorar y transformar dinámicas sociales y ambientales para el Desarrollo Humano.

Desde esta perspectiva, la formación profesional debiese considerar una oportuna transmisión de competencias y herramientas adecuadas para que cada profesional, pueda dar respuesta a las demandas de la sociedad según su área y especialidad y además debe procurar potenciar las habilidades y capacidades que a cada disciplina se le demanda. En este contexto, una de las profesiones que se ve más exigida, es la disciplina del Trabajo social, ya que es una profesión que está en contacto permanente con las personas, y que su quehacer profesional, obliga a tener una relación permanente con la sociedad y sus necesidades, esto se ve reflejado en las múltiples funciones que cumple el Trabajo Social dentro de la sociedad. El país, su desarrollo y crecimiento, requieren de profesionales preparados para enfrentar las múltiples y complejas demandas y necesidades, y dispuestos a adaptarse a los cambios y transformaciones que se expresan constantemente. La formación profesional de Trabajo Social se constituye desde la valoración de una tradición formativa que ha contribuido decisivamente a la legitimidad del quehacer profesional, pero ello no resulta suficiente. Las dinámicas emergentes y las nuevas problemáticas sociales y transformaciones estructurales que experimenta la sociedad, exigen una revisión crítica a los programas formativos, la que debe ser constante y con procesos de seguimiento, a fin de permitir una reestructuración oportuna que asegure el desarrollo del ejercicio profesional acorde con la realidad social a través de una formación pertinente y de calidad.

La Sociedad Chilena ha experimentado grandes cambios a nivel económico, social, político y principalmente cultural, efectos de la globalización, de los procesos migratorios, nuevas tecnología de la información y nuevas formas de comunicación, entre otras, que han impactado y que han obligado a las distintas disciplinas a adaptar su quehacer profesional a las nuevas demandas y necesidades exigidas por esta nueva sociedad que está en constante transformación. De esta manera los profesionales que ya están ejerciendo su profesión, han tenido que buscar, crear, innovar en la marcha, nuevas formas de intervenir en los desconocidos escenarios que la realidad social expresa, adquirir nuevas herramientas, nuevos conocimientos, competencias que permitan responder a estas exigencias y desafíos, sin que se van manifestando día a día, ahora bien, el desafío se antepone al ejercicio profesional y pasa la responsabilidad a la formación profesional la que tiene un compromiso inquebrantable, formar profesionales con las herramientas, competencias y conocimientos necesarios para dar respuesta a esta nueva sociedad de esta manera para la autora Elizalde (1991) “La institucionalización de esta transmisión de experiencias se expresa en los centros formativos de transmisión, los que enfrentados a una creciente velocidad y trascendencia en los avances científicos y tecnológicos, han derivado hacia una creciente especialización y disciplinariedad del saber”, por tanto las instituciones formadoras tiene la responsabilidad de generar profesional aptos para desenvolverse en el mundo laboral y así poder responder según sus capacidades y conocimientos a los requerimientos exigidos de los sistemas sociales.
Los desafíos de la Formación Profesional de Trabajo Social

La formación profesional es un proceso clave para el desarrollo de la disciplina al interior de la sociedad, ya que es la base que cimenta un profesional para poner en práctica las herramientas, conocimientos, competencias, valores que han sido cogidos en todo este transcurso. Desde mediados del siglo XX se producen cambios importantes en la sociedad, los que debiesen ser asumidos por la formación profesional, adaptarse y prepararse para enfrentar estos nuevos acontecimientos sociales. Para asumir estas nuevas concepciones es de vital importancia, que los proyectos formativos de las Escuelas de Trabajo Social busquen replantar sus objetivos asumiendo su responsabilidad con la realidad social en la cual se desarrolla y establecer estructuras flexibles y adecuadas que permitan preparar y formar profesionales integrales que sean participes de los cambios que experimenta el país.

El desafío de la formación profesional de Trabajo Social, es identificar y precisar la dirección del cambio para su transformación, proyectándose al futuro y promoviendo a la vez las medidas necesarias para posibilitar el desarrollo de las potencialidades del ser, saber y saber hacer, teniendo la responsabilidad social de disponer un conjunto competencias para el desarrollo de la disciplina, motivando métodos de investigación, innovación y proyección social, la cual exige formar profesionales con sólidos conocimientos teórico, metodológicos y éticos, ajustando su conocimiento amplio e integral que contribuya al mantenimiento permanente con las instituciones, con el territorio, con los profesionales en ejercicio, lo que permitirá valorar y reconocer las prioridades y necesidades locales, comunales, regionales, nacionales e internacionales, lo que la sociedad requiere, como bien lo señala Margarita Rozas (1998), que el objeto de Trabajo Social se sitúa en la delicada intersección entre los procesos de reproducción cotidiana con sus respectivos obstáculos y dificultades que tienen los sectores subalternos para su reproducción, y los procesos de distribución, en donde “el objeto de intervención se construye desde la reproducción cotidiana de la vida social de los sujetos, explicitada a partir de múltiples necesidades que se expresan como demandas y carencias y que de esta forma llegan a las instituciones para ser canalizadas o no” desde allí los estudiantes forjan una relación y vinculación con la realidad social, permitiendo hacerse parte de lo que sucede allí, instalando desde ya, el compromiso social que cada profesional debe tener a la hora de poner en práctica su disciplina.

Reconocer el contexto, comprender el tejido político y de gobernanza, le permitirá hacer un enlace entre lo teórico-epistemológico y la realidad social, y forjar una compresión de los fenómenos sociales, esto permitirá generar un conocimiento amplio e integral que contribuya al pensamiento crítico-reflexivo frente a los espacios en el cual este va a intervenir, lo que a su vez le permitirá asumir una posición y opinión profesional, la que puede propiciar, en su ejercicio profesional en propuestas a las políticas sociales, participando en su planificación o evaluación de estas. A partir de lo anterior, las escuelas de Trabajo Social, deben asumir el compromiso de desarrollar una formación profesional integral, la que debe ser entendida como aquella que forma a una persona como profesional, y que por tanto debe involucrarse como agente de cambio, mediante su actividad, con responsabilidad transformadora de la realidad, teniendo en cuenta el contexto social donde se desarrolla.

La invitación es a mirar los planes formativos, replantear su estructuras, ver sus concordancias con la realidad, adecuando y reconceptualizando los antiguos esquemas y reconstruyendo lo que es necesario mejorar, buscando modelos de Formación Profesional que sean capaz de responder a las nuevas exigencias y retos que tienen los profesionales en el escenario social donde actúa. El desafío es cuidar los espacios de aprendizaje, principalmente donde el estudiante está en contacto directo con la comunidad, buscando espacios donde se posibilite la vinculación e integración entre los saberes, contribuyendo ser un aporte para las instituciones, pero poniendo el foco hacia la potenciación de aprendizajes y esto exige a las escuelas ir evaluando e innovando en los espacios donde estos se inserten, como lo plantean las autoras Castañeda y Salamé, (2005) que “Hoy en día la innovación se reconoce como una demanda permanente, en el emergente marco de las lógicas de transformación profesional que atraviesa el colectivo, asociada a las dinámicas tecnológicas, económicas que se suceden en la sociedad globalizada”. Y por ende las escuelas debiesen asumir este desafío, alinearse con los avances y asumir los cambios como parte necesaria del proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

De esta manera las Escuelas tienen una gran responsabilidad de entregar las herramientas y mejores herramientas donde se configuren profesionales, capacitado para dar respuesta a las exigencias de una sociedad multidimensional y compleja que cambia y muta aceleradamente, así también lo aíma Yamamoto cuando nos señala que “Uno de los mayores desafíos que el trabajador social vive en el presente, es desarrollar su capacidad de describir la realidad y construir propuestas de trabajos creativas y capaces de preservar y efectivizar derechos, a partir de demandas emergentes en el cotidiano. En fin, un profesional propositivo y no sólo ejecutivo” por tanto la invitación es estar alerta y problematizar sobre lo que se hace y sobre lo que es necesario hacer y entregar las competencias que permitan la comprensión de espacios complejos y múltiples en los cuales se va a intervenir.

Los académicos que imparten clases deben asumir dicho compromiso y velar para que su enseñanza sea adecuada, de calidad y ajustada al contexto social donde se va a intervenir, se hace necesario estar alerta a las transformaciones y cambios que experimenta, tanto a nivel social, económico, político y cultural, y procurar adecuar sus propuestas formativas e ir adaptando los lineamientos a las necesidades actuales y futuras que emergen, así lo destacan las autoras Castañeda y Salamé (1996) indicando la necesidad de “actualizar los marcos teórico-metodológicos, éticos-valóricos y ajustar los ejercicios técnicos-operativos a objeto de responder de mejor forma a todos estos requerimientos” volcando esto a un compromiso inevitable que todo docente debiese asumir para proporcionar sustento a las Escuelas de Trabajo Social donde se desempeña.

La formación profesional de Trabajo Social, exige permanente contacto con las personas y que su compromiso es formar profesionales al servicio de la sociedad, tratando de velar por entregar un currículum coherente con la realidad social, el cual debe estar en constante revisión, como bien plantea Castañeda y Salamé, “incesante búsqueda por nuevas respuestas frente a los requerimientos de un entorno profesional dinámico y exigente, y bien los esfuerzos demanda de demandas emergentes en el cotidiano. En fin, un profesional propositivo y no sólo ejecutivo” por tanto la invitación es estar alerta y problematizar sobre lo que se hace y sobre lo que es necesario hacer y entregar las competencias que permitan la comprensión de espacios complejos y múltiples en los cuales se va a intervenir.

El reto es abrir espacios de discusión teórica, abrir espacios de diálogo entre disciplinas lo que nos permite construir un suelo común frente a los fenómenos sociales con los cuales vamos a intervenir, ya que estos demandan ser atendidos desde distintas miradas, distintos saberes, distintas disciplinas que ayuden a dar solución a afrontar las necesidades emergentes. Como se ha dicho anteriormente, se hace necesaria una vinculación inminente, constante, con el entorno, con las instituciones, con las comunidades y organizaciones para enfrentar el desafío de formar profesionales que desarrollen capacidades proactivas que les permitan desenvolverse en las exigentes y dinámicas del mundo laboral.

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What makes for a good program?

Standards of quality for higher education in times of change

This article identifies and describes important standards of quality for social work education at the university level in order to provide lecturers and teachers, students, and practitioners in social work, as well as policymakers, with criteria for assessing and designing good social work programs and curricula. Situated in the context of a rapidly changing educational landscape, evolving welfare states, the impacts of digitalization, and changing attitudes toward democracy, social work programs need to redesign their form, content, and organization. Based on discussions with different professional associations during a consultation process with academics and practitioners in social work, this article highlights standards of quality for such programs. After describing the current situation of social work education in national and international contexts, the article identifies recommended standards of quality for social work programs and closes by summarizing short-term tasks and challenges for them.

Social work education in changing contexts

Our reflections on the standards of quality for social work education at the university level—their changes, their consequences, and their necessity—derive from the context of higher education and welfare systems in Germany. This context can be characterized as having a growing need for qualified social workers in practice. But simultaneously having a higher-education policy that does not increase the number of tuition-free, state-funded educational institutions for social workers. This gap has been filled by a growing number of private universities who funded their social work programs by tuition fees paid by students, parents, or employers. For the German education system, in which degree-awarding programs at the university level typically do not charge tuition, such developments have caused unprecedented changes in the academic landscape for social workers. Changing funding structures threaten to introduce influences that could compromise established standards of social work education and academic freedom. Some schools have already experienced effects that have lowered their academic standards and had to meet requests for more functional, uncritical, “employable” social workers. Many new social work programs have also begun to shift from offering general academic study to providing degree-oriented curricula in small, specialized fields such as integration management, school social work, social management, and music education.
The national situation in Germany reflects broader trends that can be recognized in many other countries. Locally and worldwide, societies currently face a proliferation of social problems, often rooted in expanding forms of social inequality and mounting economic and ecological problems. Such problems also increase the need for academically trained social workers who can overcome them. At the same time, the logics of the market could gain ground in the global landscape of universities, as relations between state-owned and private providers in higher education in numerous countries shift due the increasing number of universities with fee-based business models. Beyond that, the possibilities of digitalization offer new models of online, distance, and blended learning settings that counter classical face-to-face education in classrooms and group work situations. Rising internationalization also makes it necessary to reflect on the effects of migration and develop new concepts of identity, new institutions with global, transnational perspectives, and new forms of teaching and academic reflection with new content. Last, increasing political polarization between liberal and fundamentalist groups challenges the creation of a new basis for solidarity and social cohesion.

All of those developments formed the basis for a series of discussions within the German Association of Social Work (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziale Arbeit, DGSA), an association of social work academics and professionals in Germany that we currently represent as board members. With reference to an empirical study on changes in the landscape of social work education, a consultation process within the DGSA and with other professional associations, and public forums at conferences, a position paper on standards of quality for social work education was published that summarized major recommendations for social work education from an academic perspective on the profession and discipline.

Standards of quality for social work programs in higher education

The following paragraphs highlight the major standards of quality described in the DGSA's position paper, with additional consideration of the Core Curriculum for Social Work Studies of the DGSA (2016), the competence-oriented objectives in the Qualification Framework for Social Work of the German Association of Schools for Social Work (Fachbereichstag Soziale Arbeit [FBTS], 2016), the recommendations of the German Sciences Council (Wissenschaftsrat, 2013), and the broader debate among social work academics.

a) Standards of quality for program content

The chief factors of quality in social work education are the content of the curricula and its relation to the academic debate on social work theory, methods, and research. Along those lines, three criteria for curricular content have been identified: quality curricular content and design, academic autonomy in designing curricula and research- and theory-oriented teaching.

Quality curricular content and design: All curricular content needs to derive from reflections on the available knowledge base of social work theory, methods, and research. As a whole, the curriculum needs to promote a meaningful depth of reflection and scientific reasoning and reflect the broader academic discourse within the field of social work. Core curricular and professional qualification frameworks can guide analyses of whether a curriculum encompasses relevant areas of study and whether a program is oriented toward a generalist profile of social work as a profession and discipline.

Academic autonomy in designing curricula: It is critical to decide who should have the authority to define the content of a program of study. Universities and their faculty need the right to influence the design of the curriculum according to the standards of academic freedom and scientific debate. At the same time, policymakers, employers, or other funding parties need to be prevented from gaining the power to design a curriculum that suits their interests and meets their demands. Instead, curriculum design needs to remain under the governance of academic staff and the scientific community.

Research- and theory-oriented teaching: Social work research, theory, and academic discourse need to be connected to social work teaching. Such a disciplinary foundation needs to foster a research-minded culture at universities, and teaching needs to refer to the instructor's research activities as well as the ever-changing state of research in the field.

b) Standards of quality for structural conditions

A good social work curriculum also requires a structural environment that supports the development of the program. To that end, five structure-related criteria have been identified: a sustainable model of study, quality teaching settings, quality practice placements, appropriate program density, and academic governance.
A sustainable model of study: Social work programs can be completed in full-time university courses as well as in dual forms with partners in the practice field or in online, distance, and blended forms of learning. The primary criterion for a model of study should be its adequacy in meeting the program's aims. Higher ratios of practice-based and online learning should be chosen for didactic reasons, not due to financial considerations. An increase in practice-based units should also not be dictated by employers to create more uncritical, functional social workers who can be better subordinated in contexts of practice and in organizations. Instead, every model of study should be designed to support the education of academically trained, reflective social workers who can find a professional basis for practical interventions and establish a critical, reflexive relationship with contexts and policies of practice.

Quality teaching settings: The majority of teaching staff in a social work program needs to be academically qualified in social work theory, research, and methods at the doctoral level. To recruit qualified professors and lecturers, universities need to grant academic freedom for teaching and research as well as positive, long-term professional positions. At the same time, social work programs need to be accredited by independent accreditation agencies oriented to professional standards. To be an active part of the scientific community, a school of social work needs to be a member of professional social work associations for practice, education, and research on the national and international levels. To enable social workers to be effective and reflective in their practice, the teaching program needs to build upon an elaborated theory-based, practice-oriented model that both meets the requirements of social work practice and the academic standards of the discipline.

Quality practice placements: Typically, integral in social work curricula, practical placements provide social work students with phases of supervised action and reflection as well as afford them experiences for reflection on theory. To accompany these phases, universities and organizations in the field have to recruit and train supervisors who can create settings for reflection on practical experiences related to the academic discourse in social work. Moreover, the roles of supervisors, university mentors, and organizational managers need to be performed by separate persons. A contract for practice should clarify the rights and duties of each party, and especially when the employer pays the student's fees, students need to receive fair, transparent conditions regarding their obligations to the employer in terms of the contract's duration and the possibilities of reducing the workload and changing positions. Students who assume responsibilities in an organization also need to receive adequate financial compensation for their work.

Appropriate program density: The amount of time devoted to completing university courses, work in practical fields, and individual study to pursue personal academic interests should be reasonably balanced. Students need challenging but realistic learning-oriented tasks in transparent, reliable settings. Programs also need to develop accommodations and procedures for crises, illness, and disabilities.

Academic governance: Structures are necessary to enable students and academic staff to engage in adequate forms of democratic participation at their universities. Managerial and senior positions need to be filled in transparent elections, and all groups of stakeholders need to be represented in decision making. Policies that promote equality should also be mandatory at universities.

c) Standards of quality for organizational settings

A good social work curriculum and its structural contexts need an organizational, policy-supported environment that supports its creation and development. To that purpose, two criteria for the organization of social work programs have been identified: sufficient funding and a political context.

Sufficient funding: Various forms of funding are available for social work programs, such as full state funding, mixed models involving fees and state funding, models with full private funding by students, parents, or employers, and loan-based funding to be repaid by students once they earn their degrees. In any case, it is imperative for social work programs that their interests are not superseded by the interests of their funders. Instead, social work programs need to have the liberty to design their curricula and forms of teaching and research according to the criteria of scientific rigor and academic freedom and the standards of the social work discipline and profession. Moreover, the possibility for eligible students to matriculate into the program has to be fair and equally available.

Political context: The establishment and implementation of programs of study need to prevent individual financial interests or the interests of individual groups of stakeholders from overriding policies of higher education and welfare without democratic legitimation. To that end, governments need to establish suitable forms of and settings for higher education in consultation with all stakeholders, as well as provide adequate funding for up-to-date infrastructure for higher education.

Summary and outlook

In recent decades, an impressive number of social work programs in higher education have been established in a wide range of countries. Their establishment has prompted a robust increase in research, the development of theory, and the expansion of social work professions and the discipline itself at both national and international levels. In that process, the academic profile of social work has also influenced contexts for social work practice and continuing education.

However, those developments are currently jeopardized by ambivalent forces, including new influential groups that risk the de-professionalization of social work in education and practice. In settings of higher education, a multi-tiered landscape of universities with high academic standards and ones that no longer meet adequate academic requirements can be anticipated. Beyond that, undemocratic, illiberal, and fundamentalist groups in many countries have gained increasingly more influence over programs of study, universities, academic societies, publishing organizations, research projects, and even forms of teaching. In response, it remains crucial to reconsider how the academic standards of teaching and research can be safeguarded in both the short and long term.

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New Challenges for Social Work Education in Cyprus

Social Work Education in Cyprus can be considered as a “new” discipline, with a brief history of almost twenty years. The proposed article aims to develop the evolution of Social Work curriculum during this period of twenty years.

Program of Social Work profile
Social work is a new field of study in private tertiary education in Cyprus. The first Social Work Department was created in September 2001, by the Frederick Institute of Technology.

The Department has been involved in numerous studies since its establishment in 2001. Most of them were funded by EU Solidarity Funds (e.g. EU-European Refuge Fund and EU-Integration Fund) and national organisations (e.g. Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance). In addition, staff has participated in various European consortiums and networks promoting awareness on intimate partner violence. Moreover, staff has been involved in number of different studies regarding intimate partner violence, child trafficking, disabilities and issues regarding refugees and third country immigrants. The skills and expertise of key staff involved in the project are presented hereby.

In September 2007, Frederick University was established after a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus. The Social Work Department was now able to offer an accredited undergraduate degree recognised and accepted by all EU countries. The Social Work Department was now able to offer an accredited undergraduate degree recognised and accepted by all EU countries. The program of study consists of 240 ECTS of theoretical modules, including 1200 hours of supervised field work in a wide range of licensed social welfare agencies mainly in the public and voluntary sectors. Needless to say that the curriculum is in line to the Bologna plan on university study programs (De La Fuente Robles and Cano 2019).

Profile of student
The graduates of the Program have the knowledge and skills required for the practice of social work at a generalist level and can provide services to individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. Upon graduation, social work graduates can register as licensed social workers. They can be employed in the public, private and voluntary sectors and work in all social work fields.

Curriculum development
The aim of the program is to provide quality social work education for students and to prepare them for professional social work practice in order to empower and enhance the well-being of vulnerable populations and communities at risk. The program is academic and all students are expected to complete 1200 hours of supervised field work in a wide range of social welfare agencies. It prepares its graduates for direct employment as licensed social workers and lays the foundation for graduate studies in the field of social work and social policy.

Curriculum
The first social work program did not have significant differences from the program which was passed on to a University level in 2007. As indicated in Figure 1, the program consisted of 54 modules, field work in 3 consecutive semesters and a dissertation. In the second program review in 2012, the main change which took place concerned a decrease in the number of modules taught in each semester and consequently an increase in the ECTS in each module (see figure 1).
In 2017, the last official program review was realised and approved by the Ministry of Education. This time the review of the undergraduate program focused more on the change of a few module titles and content but also to the status of the dissertation which became optional.

In 2012, along with the second undergraduate program review, a Master's degree program in Social Work and Social Administration was approved by the Ministry of Education with two specialisations: (a) Clinical Social Work with Families, Individuals and Adolescents, and (b) Community Development and Social Administration. In 2017, the graduate degree was reviewed along with the undergraduate degree. The main changes concerned: (a) the length of the program, from four semesters to three – reduction of modules (90 ECTS), (b) the annulment of the field work for the Community Development and Social Administration specialisation, and (c) thesis became optional – students could choose modules instead. Finally, in 2018 a PhD degree in Social Work was offered by the University.

### Field work

The benefits of field work are well documented for both graduate (Petrila 2015) and undergraduate students (D'Abate 2009; Matthews and Lawley 2011). For example, students’ field work placements have been shown to have a positive effect on overall student satisfaction with their international education experiences (Matthews and Lawley 2011). Additionally, they function to provide students with access to career opportunities and increased access to career decision options. Relating to career opportunities, student internships enhance students’ resume by honing networking and technical skills as well as giving students the opportunity to interact with professionals in their fields (Beebe et al. 2009).

Students' field work placement is the most compact part of the entire educational process of the social work program curriculum (Vassos et al. 2019). It is conducted in three consecutive semesters at various organisations/services, under the supervision of professional social workers who are members of the academic staff of the Department of Psychology and Social Sciences and in collaboration with administratively responsible professionals at the organisations where the students are placed for their field work. In addition, the field work placement is a core course for which students are assessed for their performance and graded accordingly after completing a total of 1200 hours of field work. The organisations for students’ field work placement should be approved as appropriate by the Social Work Program, as they play a significant part in students' educational journey (Bailey-McHale et al.2019).

The field work placement provides students the opportunity to combine theory with practice and to prepare themselves as future professional social workers. It also aims to cover students' educational needs to complement and deepen their knowledge in social work profession. Moreover, it provides students the opportunity of networking and connecting to the job market for their future employment. Academic supervisors substantially contribute to this goal by voluntarily contributing to and assisting organisations in conducting research, conferences or other events.

During the years 2001-2019, field work placement has developed and evolved. Academic supervisors are flexible and adapt individual supervision; they are trying to support students to solve their personal problems through seminars and experiential exercises in order to be more productive, and to enhance their skills by acquiring more knowledge and experiences. Field work placement also focuses on the societal benefits and on tackling modern social problems. Students are placed in organisations that provide specialised services and handle social problems that have not been so prevalent in previous years. For example, organisations for students’ placement are: day care centers, the Red Cross, Center for People with Dementia, the Army, municipality’s social services and the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority. The Department is currently cooperating with more than 150 organisations all over Cyprus.

### Research

The social work program has been involved in many studies since its establishment. Most of these studies were funded both by national and European funds. Back to 2001, the vast majority of the funding programmes were EU funds (e.g. EU-European Refugee Fund and EU-Integration Fund), which were managed by the Ministry of Interior. By that time, most of the research projects implemented by the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Review</th>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Field Work</th>
<th>Dissertation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>54 (207 ECTS) Includes: 2 electives from other departments (2 ECTS each) &amp; 2 social work electives (3 ECTS each)</td>
<td>3 Semesters (25 ECTS: 5, 7, 13 ECTS respectively)</td>
<td>Compulsory (8 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>39 (202 ECTS) Includes: 1 elective from the department, 1 elective from other department, 2 social work electives (5 ECTS each)</td>
<td>3 Semesters (30 ECTS: 10 ECTS each)</td>
<td>Compulsory (8 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>38 OR 36 + Dissertation (206 ECTS) Includes: 2 electives from other department (5 ECTS each), 1 social work elective (6 ECTS each) + 2 more social work electives (6 ECTS each) to replace the dissertation</td>
<td>3 Semesters (34 ECTS: 10 ECTS the first one and 12 ECTS each of the other two)</td>
<td>Optional (12 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Department were related to asylum seekers, immigrants and humanitarian aid to vulnerable people living in the Republic of Cyprus. The Department’s staff had great working experience on the specific target group, which enabled the Department to secure funding for a number of research projects. In the following, new academics were employed due to the Department’s expansion, which led to the enrichment of the departmental scientific and research domain. From that point, staff was involved in a variety of different research projects regarding intimate partner violence, human trafficking, disabilities and issues regarding refugees and third country immigrants; moreover, staff participated in various European consortiums and networks promoting awareness on intimate partner violence. In 2012, a multi-disciplinary team conducted the first national research that aimed to investigate the extent, frequency, types and consequences of domestic violence against women in Cyprus, in which more than 50 students were voluntarily involved.

The establishment of the Master’s degree at the Department of Social Work (2012) and the involvement of new academic staff led to the creation of new research pathways. The departmental research culture was further strengthened and broadened due to the new conditions: a) the recruitment of new colleagues who joined the Department, and b) the involvement of postgraduate students in research projects. From that point onwards, the Department increased the number of projects in which its staff was involved; funding is now derived from European research projects, such as Erasmus, Erasmus+, LIFE and Justice. These derived from European research projects, such as which its staff was involved; funding is now

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De La Fuentes Robles, Yolanda and Cano, María Carmen Martín (2019) Youth and adolescent social work education. Analysis of the impact of the Bologna plan on university study programs in Europe, Social Work Education.


Navigating towards social work desired outcomes in resource constrained environment - Some Zimbabwean and Eswatini experiences

The article aims to give a situation analysis on the gaps and opportunities for a pro social developmental approach and sustainable development social work frontline practice in Eswatini and Zimbabwe. The article provides an overview of the current socio-economic trajectories that frontline Eswatini and Zimbabwean social workers operate in. Barriers for a broad spectrum of robust social work interventions are catalogued. This encompasses older persons’ social security interventions, sustainable development in context of extreme climatic events and poverty mitigation for youths. We conclude by offering pathways by which social work interventions can be enriched to be responsive and more pro poor despite pervasive resource constraints.

Introduction
Despite an enabling policy environment, pervasive resource constraints in Eswatini and Zimbabwe have hampered holistic social work interventions desired outcomes. As will be shown later in this article state and non-state actors’ continuous investment in communities’ capacity building for bottom up social development interventions overcomes poverty.

Socio economic contexts
Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe’s protracted fiscal imbalances have constrained development expenditure and social service provision, undermining poverty reduction efforts. Unemployment pressures have mounted due to dwindle employment opportunities (African Development Bank, 2019). Furthermore, Zimbabwe experienced Cyclone Idai in eastern Zimbabwe on 15th March 2019. Strong winds and heavy rain totalling 200mm to 600mm (equivalent to 1–2 seasons) caused flash flooding across parts of the provinces of Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Masvingo, which are home to 44 % of the country’s...
population. At least 344 people have been recorded dead and at least 257 people are still missing, and about 60,000 people have been displaced by the Cyclone (Government of Zimbabwe, 2019).

**Eswatini**

Despite its lower middle-income country status, 63 percent of Swazis live below the national poverty line (United Nations Country Programme Eswatini, no date). Although there has been progress, Eswatini's development challenges include slow economic growth; high inequality levels and poverty; high unemployment rates especially among youth. Moreover, United Nations Country Programme notes Eswatini has high communicable (HIV and TB) and non-communicable diseases: incidence and prevalence. This is in the face of health system constraints; high maternal mortality; high chronic malnutrition levels increased numbers of vulnerable households. Low women participation in decision-making; high incidence of violence, particularly gender based violence against children and women; high teenage pregnancy rates is further compound any social work related interventions. Again, United Nations Country Programme in Eswatini (no date) notes limited research and technical capacity for timely and quality data generation to inform the integration of risks and climate change adaptation capacity constrains pro-poor policies and strategies effective implementation, especially in education, health and agriculture.

Eswatini has a very high HIV prevalence affecting 26 percent of the population between the ages of 15-49 (World Food Programme Eswatini country programme, 2018). Life expectancy is 49 years, and 45 percent of children are orphaned or vulnerable with chronic malnutrition being a concern. Stunting affects 26 percent of children under the age of five. Eswatini is vulnerable to drought in the south east. An estimated 77 percent of Swazis rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods (World Food Programme Eswatini country programme, 2018).

**Scope and dynamics of frontline social work**

The following section of the article examines current trends in the social work training and practice trajectory in Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Zimbabwe faces a dire social worker shortage putting the country's vulnerable children and the aged population at risk. The National Association of Social Workers in Zimbabwe (NASW-Z) reported 945 social workers as registered with Council of Social Workers (CSW) (Makaripe, 2016). Of these, according to Makaripe only about 530 have been renewing their licences yearly, suggesting the remainder may have left the country or changed professions. The number is too small for a population of some 13 million people and vulnerable children are the most likely group severely affected by the shortage. The social worker to children ratio is at about 1: 14 000, according to sector workers. In South Africa, the ratio is at 1:250, while in Botswana, it is at 1: 1867. The social worker to children ratio in Namibia is at 1:4 300 (Makaripe, 2016). In terms of frontline professionals principally implementing Zimbabwe's child protection agenda, deep-seated capacity weaknesses throughout the Department of Social Services (DSS) undermining effective social work interventions. In 2010 Wyatt, Mupedziswa and Rayment (2010) conducted an assessment of DSS and noted that it is extremely under-resourced to meet the challenges it faces, in terms of the number of vacancies among professional frontline staff, the professional qualifications and experience of many of the staff who are in post, and the physical facilities and resources at their disposal (Wyatt, Mupedziswa, & Rayment, 2010). Furthermore, salary levels do not permit sufficient recruitment of qualified staff recruitment and retention for effective discharge of core functions, and NGOs and other public agencies dependence undermines its monitoring and supervisory responsibilities (Wyatt, Mupedziswa, & Rayment, 2010). Again, discontinuation of a previous arrangement to support national Secretariat National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children(NAP for OVC) implementation efforts was made by UNICEF. UNICEF deemed considerable capacity had been built within Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS is predominant social workers employer in Zimbabwe However, in 2018, the DSS suffered consistent staff attrition, with large numbers of previously trained and experienced staff moving mainly to the United Kingdom and Australia (UNICEF, 2018).

**Resource constraints impacts**

In the following section of the article we enumerate different social work practice domains whose effectiveness is impacted by resource constrains.

**Robust child protection gaps**

Zimbabwe has an enabling legislative and child protection policy framework but it is hampered a critical mass of resources unless if grounded in support like UNICEF Zimbabwe country programme interventions. A study by Muridzo, Chikadzi, & Kaseke, (2018) examined challenges faced by role players including social workers working with child sexual abuse survivors within Zimbabwe's Victim-Friendly System illuminates the above observation. The Victim Friendly System represents a confluence of multi-sectorial professional interventions targeting child sexual abuse survivors in Zimbabwe. Professionals involved include social workers, medical doctors, nurses, police, magistrates and prosecutors, counsellors, educationists and psychologists. This qualitative study findings highlighted that by working in a shrinking economy a plethora of challenges to professionals’ as social workers effective discharge of the child protection agenda includes staff and skills shortages, lack of financial and material resources, poor access to proper infrastructure and other logistical constrains.

**Social work and confronting environmental degradation**

Given its geographical position and vulnerability due to limited adaptive capacity exacerbated by widespread poverty no continent will be severely struck by climate change impacts as Africa (UN Environment, 2018). ‘Person in environment’ is the guiding framework used in social work practice, but its meaning has tended to include only the social, political, and economic environments, and sometimes the housing and built environment, but has generally ignored connectivity with the physical environment (International Association for Schools of Social Work (IASSW), 2016): “The Africa We Want”, a remarkable plan of action to consolidate and position Africa’s priorities and concerns in the SDGs, underscores the interconnectedness between people, the planet and the economy as it aims for prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, with freedom from conflict and improved human security. The Agenda 2063 is aspirational in outlook, requires country-specific actions some of which are hinged on biodiversity, encouraging their integration and mainstreaming into core policy areas (Flora and Fauna) Mainstreaming of Climate Change Adaptation in social workers led community development interventions is pivotal. For changing climate adaptation with droughts and extreme rainfall events becoming more frequent in the future, social workers’ repertoire of skills to creatively engage communities through approaches as group work is essential. The community needs to both flood proof their irrigation scheme and protect the larger catchment area from environmental degradation and soil erosion. Replanting the forests, grasslands regeneration and taking up sustainable agriculture practices enhances water infiltration into the soil and reduce erosion and siltation (UNDP Zimbabwe country programme, 2019).

**Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)**

From a developmental social work perspective it is laudable that in year 2017 Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) set aside $5 million to lend to physically challenged persons as part of empowerment funds under RBZ’s five-year National Financial Inclusion Strategy. The money
will be given as loans to support projects by People Living with Disabilities (PWD) through various banks (Mananavire, 2017). Given Zimbabwe’s socio-economic turbulence, social workers steered participatory action research initiation is critical to establish efficacy of these funds to PWDs.

Pathways for enriched social work practice

The foregoing explored different frontline social work domains influenced by resources availability. The next sections offers strategies for robust frontline social work to mitigate resource constraints.

Social work theory and fieldwork enrichment

Major challenges for social work globally have been created by globalisation of neoliberalism in a postcolonial world order in terms of uneven developments and increasing inequalities, making social work education reformulation necessary (Jönsson & Flem, 2018). Social work is an international profession and similarly social work education internationally has always embraced both academic and practical components (Dhemba, 2012). There seems to be a lack of interest on fieldwork issues among social work scholars, which partly explains the paucity of literature on the subject. A taught component on fieldwork would contribute towards generating research interest on fieldwork issues among social work scholars (Dhemba, 2012). Critical and global perspectives informing international field training in the Global South can create unique opportunities to prepare students in challenging the dominant social forces and power relations behind the reproduction of inequalities (Jönsson & Flem, 2018).

Advocacy for pro poor budgeting

Social protection remains a vital part of poverty reduction and marginalised groups in society tend to be less covered by social protection programmes than those enjoying social and economic advantage (Mteuwa, 2018). According to UNICEF, in the 2017 Zimbabwe national budget, support to PWDs was allocated US$800,000. However, with an estimated 900,000 people living with disability, this would translate to US$88 cents per person for the whole of 2017 (UNICEF Zimbabwe Programme, 2018).

Knowledge management

Robust knowledge management in social work is critical. In navigating to choices and decisions, institutionally embedded procedures, protocols, methods and techniques influence practices and what is considered taken-for-granted knowledge (Scoones, 2019). Questionnaires, case studies, empiricism, philosophy and interviews are research techniques that have reached redundancy. Currently, alongside discourse analysis, phenomenology, critical theory, cooperative enquiry, grounded theory, appreciative inquiry and critical rationalism participation action research is being prominently used in research (Mbigi, 2014). Mbigi(ibid) calls on social workers to seek new and innovative ideas to solve social ills.

Conclusion

The article has shown dynamics of social work practice in resource constrained contexts. However, this should not deter the social work raison de etre of enhancing social functioning of Zimbabwean and Eswatini service users transforming them into empowered communities.

References


Social work education and practice in Bangladesh: Prospects and challenges

Though social work education was introduced in 1950s in Bangladesh, its academic and professional status is still far from being satisfactory. Social work graduates are engaged with manifold jobs in government, non-government and international organizations at home and abroad, but social work as an academic discipline or as a profession is much less familiar among all segments of people in the country. Students seeking admission in universities generally do not prefer social work for undergraduate study; rather opt for economics, English literature, sociology, public administration, political science etc. The reasons are multifarious like absence of state recognition for social work as a profession, lack of specified fields for social work practice, misunderstandings about social work education and profession, invisible contributions of social work practitioners and researchers, limited academic exercises of social work academicians etc. This article highlights some of the important issues relating to social work education and practice in Bangladesh.

Introduction
Social work education started in Bangladesh in 1950s with the recommendations of United Nations expert team to address the chaotic situation erupted due to the exodus of Muslim migrants from India to Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947 before the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 (Das, 2018, p. 33; Samad & Das, 2014, p. 73; Das, 2014, p. 40; Das, 2012; Sarkar & Ahmadullah, 1995). Number of schools of social work under different public and private universities across the country has increased.
since then, but its familiarity as an academic discipline or a practice profession is still considerably low (Das, 2018, pp. 33-34; Samad & Das, 2014, p. 74). Although social work graduates are well-employed in multiple sectors including government, non-government and international organizations inside and outside the country, status of social work is not rated as per the status of economics, business administration, English literature, sociology or even anthropology. In some cases, social work is substantially underrated considering it as a small branch of sociology without much theoretical underpinnings (Samad & Das, 2014, p. 74). Most people are unaware of the professional status of social work in the country. There is no reason for social work to be treated as highly prestigious as it fails to prove its special capability to serve the people, especially the marginalized ones (Das, 2012). Social work graduates generally do not work as social workers, and contributions made by social work graduates while working with different organizations have never been recognized as the contributions of social workers. The major challenge before social work education and practice perhaps lies there.

Is there anything called practice of social work?

Social work has been practiced from time immemorial in the Indian subcontinent. Voluntary, philanthropic and charity based social work mostly inspired by religious values have been undertaken by different individuals and organizations at different times in the entire region. The nature of practice of social work has changed with the advent of modern social work education and practice. But social work as such has never turned into a profession here (Shasti, 1966; Thomas & Pradeepkumar, 2018). Numbers of government organization under multiple ministries have been executing varied programs to benefit the marginalized and vulnerable population across the country where graduates from numerous academic programs actively work. Social work graduates are also found working in service-based government organizations like Rural Social Service (RSS), Urban Social Service (USS), Children's Family (orphanage), Hospital Social Service, Cooperative Office, Women Support Programs (WSP), Correctional Services, One Stop Crisis Center (OCC), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Rehabilitation Center for Destitute Women, Day-care Centers and so many others (DSS, 2012; Prodhan & Faruque, 2012). The list of these government organizations is quite large. Social work graduates apply social work skills and knowledge one way or the other while serving the help seekers in these organizations. But the social workers employed in these organizations are neither recognized as social workers nor are their activities considered as social work practice. Social work graduates are not exclusively recruited in these government organizations, rather their number is lesser compared to non-social work graduates employed. No preference is generally given for social work graduates during the time of recruitment in these social work agencies. A big chunk of social work graduates work with thousands of non-government organizations (NGO) functioning throughout the country (Samad & Das, 2014, p. 76; Das, 2012). The activities of these NGO’s are multifarious and multidimensional. Social work graduates have ample opportunities to practice social work with different segments of population as being employed in NGO’s. For example, social work graduates employed in Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC, an internationally applauded NGO) can apply social work skills and knowledge while working under its ‘education program’ for those who remain excluded from ‘education for all’ policy of the government. Social workers employed in Grameen Bank apply social work skills and knowledge when micro credit is given to women's groups for their socioeconomic empowerment. Association for Social Advancement (ASA, an internationally reputed NGO) has also employed many social work graduates who are directly involved in its myriad socioeconomic development programs for the marginalized communities. Social workers in ASA too practice social work one way or the other while working with the downtrodden (Hossain & Mathbor, 2014; Prodhan & Faruque, 2012; Samad, 2009). Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST, an NGO) provides legal aid to those poor and vulnerable women who are the victims of domestic violence or couple conflicts. Apart from providing legal aid, BLAST officials are involved in counseling, negotiation, arbitration, awareness building etc. which are related to social work practice (Bhattacharyya, Das, Alam & Pervin, 2018). Most of the officials working in BLAST are lawyer, though they have certain training on counseling and other social work related practice. But again the activities of all NGO’s which are similar to social work practice are not recognized as social work or the contributions made by social work graduates working in these NGO’s are never considered as activities of professional social workers. NGO’s also don’t give any priorities to the social work graduates for its social work activities. Quite a few social work graduates are employed in different international organizations like UNICEF, UNDP, Save the Children, UN Women, ILO, WHO etc., but again they are not recognized as social workers or their activities are not considered as social work practice, though much of their activities are directly or indirectly similar with social work practice (Das, 2018, p. 35). Social work graduates are nowhere recruited as social workers, rather they are treated as good as any other graduates recruited in any organization. This is one of the reasons because of which the familiarity of social work as an academic program or a profession is still low among the masses (Das, 2018, pp. 33-34; Das, 2012). Social work practice is very much found, but indeed not seen.

Why social work?

Most of the students seeking admission in undergraduate program at university level do not know the name of social work as an academic program. They first know about it during admission test. Since they have never heard of this academic program, they are not sure about the prospects of social work graduates, which prevent them from preferring admission in social work program (Samad and Das, 2014, pp. 74 & 86). Their preference centers on economics, English literature, public administration, political science etc., as they perhaps consider their prospects could be better with these academic programs. Those who take admission in social work program, eventually do it by chance but generally not by choice. Therefore, many of the students after taking admission in social work programs remain depressed for quite a long time because of mostly family members, relatives, friends and neighbors underrate this academic program, even in some cases students of social work are being ridiculed for being admitted in an unfamiliar and obscure academic program. The students often fail to perceive the available fields of social work practice or the possible areas of employment for social work graduates.

Is it sociology?

There are numerous misunderstandings around social work academic program. Many highly educated persons think social work similar to sociology, or a branch of sociology, or something like sociology, or it is something below sociology (Das, 2012). There is perhaps nobody outside social work who has ever heard of social work as profession. Non-social workers do not understand the meaning of professional social work. They generally feel confused when social workers compared with lawyers, doctors or any other professionals. People generally consider social work merely a voluntary activity, not based on any academic training. Social work is considered as altruistic, humanitarian and pious activity, but not a profession as such. The state does not see any reason to recognize social work as a profession.

Where is the contribution of social work?

Is there any contribution of social work visible in Bangladesh? It would be difficult to find out. The practitioners and academicians could not contribute anything special which might be described as sole contributions of social work in Bangladesh (Samad & Das, 2014, p. 81).
Rather, non-social workers working in the fields of social work have made tremendous contributions to empower the marginalized population that has been well recognized worldwide. To name a few, Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank or Fazle Hosen Abed of BRAC have indeed made a breakthrough to address the situation of poverty in the country. Their contributions are naturally not regarded as something from social work, rather considered as NGO activities for the empowerment of downtrodden. Social work academics and researchers could not do much justice to present social work as vibrant academic program that produces competent professional social workers. They did not contribute substantially in terms of generating valuable literature that can enhance the possibility of establishing social work as an independent discipline and a profession (Samad and Das, 2014, p. 75; Das, 2012). The academicians have still failed to prepare a manual for field practicum for the students of social work which is considered much required to learn as to how to practice social work in the fields. As a result, students do feel depressed at times because of confusion they confront while being placed for field practicum as apprentice social workers.

Conclusion
The prospects of social work as a human service profession in Bangladesh seem to be tremendous. Social work is obviously practiced in different settings by different qualified individuals including social work graduates, but the practice is more of informal and scattered (Das, 2012). Most importantly, public recognition of this practice of social work is zero. Even the social work graduates employed in different organizations work under multiple designations like development worker, project manager, project coordinator, program organizer, counselor, trainer, teacher, welfare officer and so on. Many of them have gained enormous reputation for their excellent performance in the respective fields. But people hardly know that those who excel in their assigned duties and responsibilities are mostly social work graduates. Since social work is not recognized as a profession and its familiarity is low, graduates cannot practice it independently. Many social work graduates having been well placed in different organizations do not identify them with social work background. Some of them try to hide their academic background as social work because of its low status in the society (Das, 2018, p. 34). Common people feel that social work is something voluntary and charity-based religious services to serve the weakest section of the society. Practitioners, academicians and researchers are yet to prove the strengths, effectiveness and essentiality of social work education, practice and profession.

Profile of social work department:

Addressing the demand of professional social workers in the development fields of Sylhet region, the department of Social Work formally started its academic program with three faculty members and two non-academic staffs from the session of 1993-1994 at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST). Professor M. Habibur Rahman, who later became the Vice-Chancellor of this University, shouldered the responsibility as the founder head of the department. From its inception the academic activities of the department started drawing attention of different stakeholders including development organizations and social work academia of different universities in the country and abroad. It was mainly possible due to the effective international training received by faculty members and their team spirit guided by the founder head. The first MSS graduates came out in 1997 and their contributions to the local communities and in the national level attracted the whole academic community in the university and the employers in different sectors (https://www.sust.edu/d/swc). The school has so far produced around 15000 social work graduates, who have been employed in different government, non-government and international organizations at home and abroad.

References

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This article aims to present a theoretical-methodological and ethical proposal that can respond to the challenges imposed today on the Social Work profession at national and international level, understood as "Popular Erudition". This proposal is based on the understanding that the ideology, expressed in the form of religion and fascist practices, is the main weapon used by the "Rightist International" for its action of dismantling of the social and human rights in all countries of the world. The article also presents the trajectory of our professional practice, especially in the context of professional development, that has been concentrating since the nineties, in the creation and strengthen of forms of international articulation, highlighting the Interchange Movement between the Brazilian and the Italian Social Work; and from 2017, in the theoretical and practical combat to ideology, especially in the context of ethical reflection; and finally our IASSW/AIETS participation proposal.

Introduction
Brazil acquired a condition of "State of Rights" after a period of twenty years of military dictatorship, with the 1988 Constitution, legally ensured political and civil rights and many social and human rights. Even if the governments that followed immediately would have tried, because of its still conservative position, to deny these rights, social policies were gradually being affirmed to implement them since the constitutional order required this implementation, and the left forces, associated with those of the working class and the Social Work itself (especially from the elaboration of LOAS - Organic Law of Social Assistance) tried to put into practice what had been achieved in the process of re-democratization.

1. The "Rightist International" and the dismantling of the rights
The governments of Lula and Dilma Rousseff - representatives of the Worker’s Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT), from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, expanded this path of social policy making and focused on the process of
reducing social inequalities and confrontation poverty, in order to eradicate extreme poverty. In the same vein, programs were created to repay the debt that Brazilian society has historically had with the population of black people by instituting the quota program in the field of higher education and affirmative action. In this sense, the direction given by these governments allowed the expansion of access to social rights in the areas of health, education, housing, social assistance that covered the various generations since childhood, youth and the elderly, with the creation of the Elderly Statute in 2003.

The advance of social rights provoked a discontent among the national bourgeoisie which, in articulation with the "Rightist International" (which was already promoting a dismantling of social rights in countries where the welfare state was established, and the disassemble of socialism in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union), started to build the same process of decommissioning here in Brazil. It is within this perspective that a work of a markedly ideological nature has been triggered, especially using the media (television, writing, electronic and virtual, also using the Fake News), to deconstruct the image of the Worker’s Party and its main leadership, which led to the impeachment of President Dilma in 2016 and the arrest of ex-President Lula (2018).

The instrument par excellence of this work of the left image deconstruction and rights conquered, was aired especially from the actions of “Lava-jet operation” which brings together representatives of the judiciary reportedly made right. The conduct of this process was responsible for the election of President Jair Bolsonaro (2018) who publicly took from the campaign, a contrary stance to social and human rights, with the ideological support a fascist speech, false moralist and anchored in religion and Protestant stand which, for a few decades, was articulated both at the grassroots of society - especially in the slums - and at the legislature with its conservative tendencies. In this sense, Brazil currently has the three powers - executive, legislative and judiciary - fully controlled by representatives of the right who act daily to defend the interests of the national and especially international bourgeoisie, to the detriment of national interests and the working class.

The measures taken in this direction is presented on the first day of term with the approval of bearing arms of the law by the population, triggering a climate of violence, announcing what was and still is to come towards the materialization of the fascist tendency, focused particularly against “blacks”, “poor”, “communists” and “gays”: in a blatantly racist, classist, homophobic and unscientific campaign. Such a campaign, beyond its immediate goals of dismantling of all social policies, has, as its objective, the ideologization of Brazilian society to destroy its potential for struggle and its progress in the process of social transformation and building a society truly emancipated.

The synthesis of our scenario analysis therefore indicates that the main enemy of the working class, at the present time is the “International Rightist” and its ideological and mass alienation weapons.

2. “Popular Erudition” and Social Work

It is precisely in this sense that we are developing a work of “deideologization” of the population and of building a process of “Popular Erudition” that equips users and professional category to defend this media attack, unveiling the theoretical and practical meaning of ideology and elaborating pedagogical alternatives of intellectual formation of the bases that imply the knowledge of the historical determinations of domination to overcome it and establish a real situation of social and human emancipation at all levels of social relations and that represents a scientific advance in the intellectual, social, ethical and economic level. Thus, since 2017, even before the Bolsonaro presidential elections, we have concentrated our actions in the field of professional education, research, knowledge production and action with the representative entities of the professional category, at local level, regional, national and international.
Within the scope of Education Professional and, in articulation with entities representing the professional category, we have developed:

- Course “Ethic, Ideology and Media: Conservatism and Reactionarism in Society and Social Work” (2017 - Fortaleza / CE and 2018 - Recife / PE), with the support / effective participation of Postgraduate and Graduate, CRESS’s (Regional Councils of Social Work) and of the professional category, with the purpose of offering training subsidies for understanding the meaning of ideology and its forms of expression, mechanisms used for its diffusion, both nationally and internationally.

- Articulation of the content of the subjects taught under the undergraduate and postgraduate (Professional Ethic, Social Gerontology, Frameworks of Social Theory and Social Issues) with research activities and meetings to socialize the results of these research with the professional category, students, teachers and users. In this regard, we highlight our role as coordinator of the Group of Studies and Research on Ethics - GEPE, which has promoted the Meetings “Ethics and Gerontology” (2018 and 2019), the Course on the “Code of Ethics of the Social Worker - 1993 and the research “Structural Inequality, Inequalities and Human Rights in the World”.

The “Ethic and Gerontology” Meetings have taken place in order to construct a new vision on aging, understood as the synthesis phase of life, with a potential for maturity and understanding of the Social Being, in its breadth and its meaning in the process of existence and ability to carry out projects. Thus, “aging is seen as a privilege and all conditions must be given for it to be experienced as such” (MUSTAFÁ, 2019). This new assumption fights head-on against the ideological interpretation that supports capitalism that aging is a “threat” to the development and economy of countries, an argument that serves as the main justification for Pension Reform.

The Course on the Code of Ethic (2019) aims to propose a reflection on the principles and norms of the 1993 social worker code and the theoretical-methodological foundations of the profession (its theoretical frameworks), in order to contribute to the understanding of the historical construction of knowledge in the social sciences, from the perspective of developing a pedagogical instrument in the context of “Popular Erudition”. It also aims to provide the professional category with subsidies to reflect on the potentialities of professional practice, from the identification of the need to adapt the theoretical-methodological and ethical contribution of the profession to the conjuncture challenges. This initiative stems from the understanding that professional practice after 1993 Code was particularly directed to institutional practice, to implement social policies (as discussed above), participation in the spaces created in councils and forums that act under the State’s tutelage (which are strongly attacked at the current juncture) for the management of social policies themselves. It emerges from this finding, the reflection of the need to rescue the practice of working with the grassroots, users, communities and the strengthening of social movements in a perspective that works popular education for conscientization and organization, but transcends this dimension with contribution of the “Popular Erudition”, capable of subsidizing from the theoretical, scientific and practical point of view, the action of the social worker and the population itself.

Our role in the Internationalization of Social Work dates from the nineties, when Alexandra Mustafá did your PhD studies, when Lucio Mustafá studied in Classical Letters at the Salesian University of Rome (between 1994 and 1999, at the time we created the Cultural Movement for the Interchange between Brazilian and Italian Social Work. This movement currently has the active participation of important Brazilian universities (besides UFPE [Federal University of Pernambuco], the universities: UFES - [Federal University of Espirito Santo - with Professor Salyanna Souza] and UERN - [State University of Rio Grande do Norte - with Prof. Gisele Anselmo]. In addition, the movement entertains good academic activities with the following Italian universities: Roma TRE (with the Professors Roberto Cipriani and Claudio Tognonato); Milano Bicocca (with the Professor Annamaria Campanini) and Ca’Foscari di Venezia (with Professor Fabio Perocco).

The exchange with Italy aims at deepening knowledge about Social Work in both countries and it aims to create joint alternatives to confront the national and international conjuncture. To this end, we created the notion of “Popular Erudition” in order to strengthen the exchange at the level of graduate and postgraduate degree in Social Work, based on joint research and the elaboration and dissemination of the intellectual production of Italian and Brazilian intellectuals, either in existing communication vehicles or in the consolidation and creation of new communication vehicles, such as the GEPE Notebooks (Cadernos GEPE). In the first and last instance, it is about filling the gap, already identified by Paulo Netto in Dictionary and Social Work (Didatuta e Serviço Social): it is about “unlogging the communicative channels between the intellectuality and the Brazilian culture and the world culture”, obstruction that created by the military dictatorship and updated by the “Rightist International”, personified in Brazil by the Bolsonaro government. It was the creation, and the theoretical maturation achieved in these years of Interchange, to foster the understanding of the need for an expansion of this action, now proposed at the level of participation in the Board of IASSW / AIETS.

It is in this context that we are conducting the Project of the Binational Training Course for Brazilian and Italian Social Workers, which is underway involving all participants of the aforementioned Movement for Interchange and which will have its implementation phase more properly in this second half 2019.

And it is in this same direction that we propose to compose the direction of the International Association of Schools of Social Work - IASSW / AIETS, understanding that the Brazilian Social Work, especially at the level of formation, cannot be absent from this space, as that if this entity can strengthen us, we also have much to contribute to our capacity for reflection / analysis / creation of alternatives to respond to the challenges of the conjuncture, whose global determinations were listed above and presented as the action of a Right that is above of everything “International”,

References


Within this process, the theoretical-methodological principles of the new curriculum and the social direction of professional education were defined, considering the demands of the labor market, the hegemonic ethical-political project of the profession and the profile of the graduate.

The elaboration of the new curriculum has become imperative due to:

- The changes that occurred in the national conjuncture that placed new demands on the Social Work professional and caused changes in the traditional demands on the profession; requiring different answers from those presented by the category so far.
- The theoretical and methodological maturation of the profession, which allowed a more qualified reading of the reality and the demands posed by the various social factors present in the Brazilian conjuncture and the professional formation itself.
- The capacity developed by the professional category to create the necessary answers to confront the social issue in the country.

The final version of the minimum curriculum proposal was built at the II National Workshop on Professional Education and approved at the General Assembly of the Brazilian Association of Social Work Education - ABESS - held on November 7 and 8, 1996 in Rio de Janeiro.

The curriculum was then called the General Guidelines for the Social Work Course and presented to MEC / SESU for consideration.

While the proposed Curriculum Guidelines proceeding through the competent bodies, the ABEPSS and Social Work Education Units, and monitor the process and position itself as the demands and proposals of the MEC / SESU, started the Pedagogical Projects preparation process for Graduate Courses, with local and regional workshops.

Therefore, the Pedagogical Project of the graduate Course in Social Work at the Federal University of Pernambuco is the result of a collective discussion process, coordinated and systematized by the Graduate Collegiate, appreciated and approved by the Departmental Plenary.

Core Nodes

According to the Curriculum Guidelines for the Graduate Course in Social Work, the Education Professional Projects to be built and implemented in the Teaching Units must promote the articulation of a set of inseparable knowledge that translates into Core Nodes which are:

1. Core of theoretical and methodological foundations of social life that comprises a set of knowledge that allows the treatment of social being as a historical totality.
2. Core of the foundations of the socio-historical formation of the Brazilian society that provides the theoretical contributions to the knowledge of the economic, social, political and cultural constitution of the Brazilian society.
3. Core of professional work that focuses on the understanding of Social Work as a profession registered in the socio-technical division of work, the discussion of the theoretical and methodological production of Social Work, as well as providing the conditions for the technical-cooperative training necessary for professional performance.

Principles

Such contents should be treated according to the principles of:

- Flexibility and dynamics of full curricula;
- Strict theoretical, historical and methodological treatment of social reality and Social Work;
- Adoption of a critical social theory that allows the apprehension of the social totality in its dimensions of universality, particularity and uniqueness;
- Establishment of the investigative and interpretative dimensions as formative principles and central condition of education training;
- Presence of interdisciplinarity;
- Inseparable dimensions of teaching, research and extension;
- Exercise of pluralism as a proper element of academic and professional life.

Objectives

General:

Promote the theoretical-methodological, technical and ethical-political qualification for the exercise of Social Work as a specialization of collective work.

Specific:

- Understand bourgeois society in its contradictory movement.
- Critically analyze Brazilian society in its regional and local diversity, understanding the particularities of the development of capitalism in the country.
- Understand the dimensions that permeate the social meaning of the profession and the constituent elements of Social Work as a specialization of work.
- Understand the ethical, historical, theoretical and methodological foundations of Social Work and the work processes in which it operates.
- Identify and analyze the demands to the Social Work, building answers that potentiate the tendencies of confrontation of the social question in the Brazilian reality.
- Develop competences and technical-operative skills according to the law of regulation of the profession of Social Work - Law No. 8.662 of 06/07/1993.
Bachelor Profile in Social Work
The course is expected to generate a professional with:

- Theoretical-methodological capacity for a critical apprehension of the historical process as a totality, which implies understanding it mainly in its dynamic and contradictory movement, in its universal, particular and singular constitution, in the mediations and spheres of social life.

- Investigative training in the search for an explanation of the historical formation of Brazilian society, in order to grasp the particularities of the constitution and development of capitalism in the country and also as a basis for explanation of Social Work in social relations.

- Ethical-political capacity that consolidates the values and principles legitimized in the Code of Professional Ethics and makes it possible to apprehend professional practice in its teleological dimension.

- Training to grasp the demands - traditional and emerging - placed in the labor market and to formulate responses, strategies, tactics and instruments that enhance the coping trends of the social issue.

- Technical and political training for the management of social services at the state and private levels.

Curriculum
The Education Program that we formulated for Social Work Graduate Course of UFPE has a curriculum consists of compulsory and elective courses, workshops, seminars, compulsory traineeship and Work Course Conclusion (TCC) over 8 semesters, totaling 3100 (three thousand one hundred) hours the payment of the workload.

The required curricular components are composed of 29 Disciplines (1740 hours), Curricular Internship (480 hours) and Course Completion Work (TCC), totaling 2220 hours subjects.

The workload of complementary activities refers to monitoring, research and extension activities.

The placement of internships in the various occupational spaces of intervention of the Social Service aims to enable the student to practice, enabling him / her to identify and analyze the demands of the profession and, under the technical and pedagogical supervision, generate answers that meet them.

It is also a curricular requirement to obtain a Bachelor of Social Work diploma, the elaboration of the Course Conclusion Paper, which will deal with a significant topic for the professional debate and will constitute a moment of synthesis and expression of the entire professional formation. This work will be evaluated by an examining board composed of two teachers who will give grade upon written opinion.

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Social Inclusion

Yet another reporting on scavenger deaths while cleaning manholes and septic tanks. The Prime Minister’s speeches on Independence Days and 2nd October promising to eradicate scavenging by a more effective law/s for those engaged in scavenging is a step towards social inclusion of this occupational group. I am reminded of the 1960’s, during my visits to Punjab (state in India) where I was first introduced to scavenging and the scavenger. The structure of the mansion like houses was such that the stairs adjoining the houses led to the terrace where the toilets were located. The mornings buzzed with activity to which got added the voice of ‘Saddho’ (her name), who used to shout from the bottom of the stairs ‘Saddho aa gayee’ (Saddho is here) which was a signal for everyone to clear the stairs for her. She was a strong built, dark complexioned woman with heavy silver ornaments, her head covered and she held a big iron pan on her side. She would leave after some time, the pan now on her head as head load after which the routine resumed. Need to be mentioned that she was greeted by everyone who came in contact with her, as her presence was sort of a good omen. The ‘She’ or Saddho was a scavenger, the person engaged in the manual removal of night soil.

The Census Survey:

Two decades passed and Saddho had somewhere got buried at the sub conscious level of my mind, to resurface in 1992 while conducting the Census survey on ‘Identification of Manual Scavengers and their Dependents’ in the city of Delhi sponsored by the Delhi Scheduled Castes Financial and Development Corporation. The survey was conducted in response to the enactment of the ‘National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents’ in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997) followed by the ‘the Employment of...
Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. 8500 persons were found working as manual scavengers during the 1992 survey. Fifteen years later in 2007, I conducted the Census survey once again for the Delhi Government and found a substantial decline in their numbers, 1085 this time, those who resided and worked in Delhi (the number excludes the 197 who resided in Loni, Uttar Pradesh but worked in Delhi). Briefly, the profession continues to be dominated by women (80%), most of who are married and have children. It is a part time job for them, done in the morning hours, involves lot of walking and the distance is generally covered by foot to save money. The earnings from the profession are low but the women see it as additional income to the family. The residence and workplace areas are primarily North East and East Delhi. A vital change over the period was the shift from carrying night soil as head load to drain cleaning.

It is important to mention that the identification of persons working as scavengers specifically requires a very thoughtful methodology because the aim of the survey is to end an obnoxious profession and to rehabilitate those working as scavengers. The 2007 survey had ten steps as part of the methodology, devised to ensure that no person working as scavenger is left unidentified. It culminated in giving an advertisement in four daily newspapers namely- Punjab Kesari, Milap, Dainik Hindustan and Quami Awaz, inviting the public to inform us about any person doing or employing manual scavengers. We received none. The survey produced crucial data which was supplemented with qualitative information collected through informal interactions and group meetings, for the purpose of devising an appropriate and effective interventionist strategy.

Beyond Statistics: Walk the Talk
Elaborating on this, during a ‘walk the talk’ kind of conversation with four women working as scavengers, I asked them if they would like to change their job. The reply was prompt ‘yes’. On further quizzing I asked, ‘What if the same job be converted into a government job? The pause was visibly long and the reply was ‘yes’. They added that that would be dream come true and as who does not want a government job and they were not even equipped to do any other job as scavenging is the only work they know. The point is that while statistical analysis showed that majority want a change in job, qualitative data gave some more insight into reality because the yes was without information on the alternate occupations that would be offered. Among the lesser known disadvantages of the profession shared by them were-- salary is not received on one day as employers pay at their convenience, weekly off is not granted in majority of the cases and any attempt to seek permission for one day leave is met by strong resistance from their employer.; most of the women are not very keen on changing their job as they are comfortably settled with scavenging. They own their mohallas (colonies) and no other scavenger can replace them without their permission. Interestingly, the mohallas are even given as dowry in the marriage of their daughters. The scavengers aspire for a bright future for their children, away from the work of scavenging.

The Ex-Scavengers:
As per the 1992-93 and the 2007 survey, while scavenging in the capital happens to be a female dominated profession, the sample (1050) of ex-scavengers i.e. who had left scavenging to take alternate jobs were mostly ‘men’. Is the Scheme of Self- Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers, 2007 more kind to men or are the women scavengers taking a back seat and paving way for their men to enter better alternative professions? Or is it that those who benefitted under the Scheme did not belong to the targeted population. However, the respondents claimed to have worked as scavengers earlier.

It is not surprising that the ex-scavengers find themselves most comfortable with the broom and thus a large number of them have taken up tasks of cleaning and sweeping as alternative jobs. They have sought employment as sweepers in factories, sweeping and mopping in private houses, sweepers in the offices, schools, dispensaries of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), sweepers with Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Metro and other places. Some have entered as casual labourer and some have got job of peon or chowkidaar (gatekeeper) and half a dozen have taken to drum playing. Reasons shared by them for liking the new job included-- cleanliness, respect, regular salary, better health and a weekly holiday. A few expressed their wish to go back to scavenging as they were in no way financially better off. Any training being imparted under the mentioned Scheme of Self Employment was not in their knowledge which is serious matter as the Government has allocated a substantial amount under training and rehabilitation of scavengers.

Strategy for Rehabilitation:
On the basis of the above mentioned, a three pronged strategy is being proposed for eradicating scavenging and for rehabilitation:
1. ‘Dependents’ of the scavengers should be the focus for rehabilitation without implying that the interested scavengers are left out of the training in alternate vocations.
2. ‘Simultaneous’ conversion of the dry toilets into wet so that there is no going back to the old profession;
3. ‘Penalizing’ of all those who employ persons for manual scavenging and also those who are working as scavengers, because as mentioned scavengers themselves are most reluctant to leave their jobs. Alongside penalty be levied also on those who publicly advertise their traditionally advantageous caste or question anyone else’s caste, irrespective of whichever segment of society they come from.

To strengthen the aforesaid it is pertinent that ‘training’ which is the most vital and the weakest link till date in the earlier schemes be implemented with thorough understanding of the profile of the target group, meticulous planning and good intention so that we enter 2020 without the ‘blotch on the socialscape’.

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