



The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher

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Editorial (pages 1-3)

Jean Triegaardt and Kathleen Collins

Langa micro business owners' experience of government regulations and support (pages 4-21)

Silje Kristiansen and Margaret Booyens

This qualitative study explored how 20 owners of formal and informal micro businesses in Langa, Cape Town, experience government regulations and support systems. The findings suggest they benefit little from government efforts to support them. The article reveals complex reasons for their non-compliance with government regulations and under-utilisation of government support systems. It acknowledges that some informal enterprises may never make the transition to the formal economy by registering their business with a government department or board. It makes a case, however, for all micro businesses to be supported, regardless of growth potential, since they have a role to play as a survival strategy. The article offers pointers as to how social workers can help support micro businesses, and recommends that government should establish multi-purpose, geographically accessible business advice centres, preferably working through local structures such as traders' associations.

Experiences of secondary school learners of the national life-skills and hiv and aids education programme in the eThekweni region, KwaZulu-Natal (pages 22-38)

Tanusha Raniga

The National Department of Education's life-skills, sexuality and HIV and AIDS education programme is one positive attempt at empowering learners with knowledge and skills relevant to mitigating HIV risk (National Department of Education, 1999). This article documents one phase of a larger study which qualitatively explored the experiences of 114 Grade Nine learners of the National Life-skills and HIV and AIDS education programme taught in an urban formal school, a rural school and an urban informal school in the eThekweni region (formerly Durban), KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Five important themes are discussed in this paper: positive sentiments shared, institutional factors impacting programme implementation, taking the life-skills beyond the classroom, 'we need persons living with HIV to educate us' and the inclusion of social workers in schools. Recommendations are made to Departments of Education, Health and Social Development to strengthen the existing Life-skills, HIV and AIDS education programme implemented in secondary schools.

Community participation in income-generating projects: An evaluative study (pages 39-56)

Victor Chikadzi and Edmarié Pretorius

Within the development discourse in South Africa, the application of participatory methods by development practitioners has become an established orthodoxy. This article examines community participation in income-generating projects that are aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting self-reliance among community members. These projects are managed by a Development Centre, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Gauteng, South Africa. Using a qualitative multiple case study design, the research sought to establish how community participation was promoted by the Development Centre when managing income-generating projects in which community members were involved. The article describes the different phases through which the development process unfolded. Community participation is discussed in each phase of the development process. The research findings showed that the community members involved with the different projects were

participating actively in all the phases of the development process, which gave them ownership, leverage and control of the process.

An investigation into the relationship between community violence exposure and adolescents' psychosocial well-being (pages 57-78)

Serena Isaacs, Shazly Savahl, Candice Rule, Taryn Amos, Danille Arendse, Chernelle Lambert, Nondumiso Majazi, Guia Ritacco and Crystal Samuels

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between community violence exposure and adolescents' subjective well-being in Cape Town, South Africa. Five hundred and sixty-eight learners, between the ages of 13-17 years, were selected from seven public schools within the Education Management and Development Centre (South Metropole) of the Western Cape Education Department. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of the Recent Exposure to violence scale and the Kidscreen-52. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the data. Results indicated that a significant negative relationship exists between community violence exposure and subjective well-being. The relationship between exposure to community violence and well-being was further examined per area and although no relationship exists between low and medium violence areas, a significant negative relationship was found for those who reside in high violence areas. It was thus concluded that the relationship between well-being and violence exposure is not as pronounced as suggested by other literature.

The role of social work supervision in enhancing the level of professional commitment among social workers in Lesotho (pages 79-93)

Liteboho Nono and Pius T. Tanga

This paper examines the extent to which social work supervision can enhance the level of professional commitment among social workers in Lesotho. Data for this study was collected using interview schedules from among 28 social workers from four of Lesotho districts. The findings showed that supervision is essential in social work practice, as supervisors are expected to promote commitment by providing the necessary support, skills and guidance to enhance service delivery. Nevertheless, the majority of social workers appeared to be highly committed to their profession regardless of whether they received adequate supervision or not. They indicated their desire to serve the profession for the rest of their careers and acknowledged the fact that social work is a 'calling'. Hence, their determination to continue in the profession despite the challenges they face. Also, the social workers recognise the need to adhere to the profession's values and principles. Therefore, the findings show no strong relationship between supervision and social workers' commitment to the social work profession.

Gestalt play therapy as psychosocial support with the hospitalised oncology child (pages 94-110)

Melany Constantinou and Munita Dunn

It is the primary aim of this article to investigate how the hospitalised oncology child can be assisted and supported in his/her individual struggle to cope with the harshness of his/her strained reality by using Gestalt play therapy as an intervention. Being diagnosed as a child with a life-threatening illness such as cancer and being hospitalised for extensive periods can bring about innumerable stressful and traumatic circumstances. Gestalt play therapy was conducted with six cases studies to assist the child to express and work through feelings of anxiety and related emotional distress associated with his/her present life experience. Findings indicate that the participants all suffered from low self-esteem and experienced various emotional reactions to the medical procedures, as well as the particular stage of treatment. It was concluded that Gestalt play therapy can be utilised as a powerful medium within psychosocial support to hospitalised oncology children.

Spiritual interventions: Insights from a national study with students (pages 111-126)

Ray Bhagwan

This study explored final year social work students' use of spiritual interventions and their views with regards to its appropriateness in practice. Seven hundred and fourteen students from 21 universities in South Africa were surveyed yielding a response rate of 47%. Findings indicate a high level of use of certain spiritually based interventions and greater support in terms of them being seen as appropriate for practice. Over 40% of the sample was found to use 13 of the 25 interventions investigated. Whilst some of these interventions fall within the realm of ethical practice, there are those which do not. This paper illuminates this difference and concludes with brief guidelines for the use of spiritual interventions in practice.

Book Review (pages 127-128)

Schenck, R., Nel, H. and Louw, H. (2010). *Introduction to participatory community practice*. UNISA Press: Pretoria.

Ann Hanford

