



## The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher

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**April 2010, Special Issue: “Toward an African Social Development Research Strategy”**

#### **Editorial (pages 4-7)**

*Leila Patel and James Midgley (Guest editors)*

#### **Global debates and the future of social development (pages 8-23)**

*James Midgley*

Over the years, social development scholars have engaged in debates of global significance that have helped to define social development's subject matter, foster systematic research and promote its theoretical growth. Although eclectic and fragmented, social development has now achieved recognition as an interdisciplinary field but many issues still need to be addressed. By filling these gaps, social development's theoretical development and responsiveness to pressing global concerns will be enhanced.

#### **A review of comparative methods of social policy research in the global south (pages 24-38)**

*Marianne S. Ulriksen*

This article makes a case for comparative social policy research. With examples from research in Africa and other developing countries, it is shown and discussed how one can design comparative studies such that theoretical advancements can be made and empirical realities elucidated. Despite some caveats it is contended that we can make great progress in social policy research if we compare across countries or other cases. However, for comparative studies to succeed it is crucial that the research framework is carefully designed – that we know what we want to achieve with our comparison, and why and how. More comparative social policy studies on Africa could greatly enhance our knowledge of social policy development on the continent; such studies can contribute to our knowledge of both the causes and effects of social policies as well as how social policies relate to economic and political factors.

#### **Pointers for future research on gender and care in voluntary organisations in South Africa (pages 39-53)**

*Leila Patel*

As Southern African countries struggle to find solutions to the growing care challenges resulting from the HIV and AIDS pandemic, critical reflection is needed on the gendered character of care services delivered by voluntary organisations. The author argues that gender divisions in the provision of care in the private domain are reinforced in voluntary organisations with the burden of care increasingly falling on women, which in turn mimics the unequal gender relations in the society. An exploratory study of the gender dynamics of care services provided by non-profit organisations (NPOs) in urban and rural settings in South Africa was conducted. The gender profile and service areas; attitudes and motivation and remuneration and working conditions were explored. The study concludes that the gendered nature of care in welfare NPOs remains largely unacknowledged by government, donors and voluntary organisations. The South African case raises critical issues and questions for further research and policy advocacy in the Southern African region.

#### **Social security and human rights in Southern Africa: Challenges and research priorities (pages 54-68)**

*Jean Triegaardt and Edwell Kaseke*

Increasingly, Southern African countries are adopting and implementing a rights-based approach to social security. Policy and legislative frameworks on social security have been introduced as a means of assuring income transfers to the poor. Economic and political factors have direct

consequences for the provision of safety nets. This paper provides an analysis of social security for selected Southern African countries with reference to the rights-based approach to social security. Challenges in the realisation of the right to social security are identified, including recommendations for a further research agenda on social security as a poverty reduction strategy.

**Social development and migration in South Africa: Directions for further research in the region (pages 69-82)**

*Admire Chereni and Ingrid Palmary*

At the time of independence, the majority government in South Africa adopted social development ideas in crafting the country's developmental welfare system. Further, social development is increasingly gaining relevance in other African countries. There is, in the sub-region, a growing recognition that economic development ought to improve the well-being of the population as a whole. At the same time, cross-border migration linking South Africa and the sub-region is on the increase, transforming the demographic structures of populations in both sending and receiving nations. Using South Africa's developmental welfare system as a case, we argue that currently, social development theory does not address migration dynamics largely because of its emphasis on citizenship. We end the paper with suggestions for further research in social development and migration.

**Developing a Southern African research agenda on youth: Reshaping the paradigm (pages 83-97)**

*Lauren Graham*

Much of the research conducted on youth in Southern Africa is framed within a paradigm that focuses on young people's deficits. This is predominantly because much of the literature pertaining to youth is located within the field of risk behaviour. Through drawing on the findings of three literature reviews assessing literature published in the field of youth studies over a period of ten years, this article argues for a reframing of the way in which youth are approached in academic work. It calls for an asset-based paradigm that will not only encourage rethinking of work conducted in the field of risk behaviour, but will also open new fields of enquiry in the sector. This is likely to have positive effects for programming and policy targeted at young people.

**Developmental social work in South Africa and Kenya: Some lessons from Africa (pages 98-111)**

*Antoinette Lombard and Gidraph Wairire*

Africa's governments have made a commitment to both the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Social development has created a platform from which developmental social work could make a contribution to achieving the MDGs. An analysis of developmental social work in South Africa and Kenya reveals that developmental social work could position itself as a major partner in social development, but, to be recognised for its contribution, developmental social work needs to address a number of challenges and have a clear political mandate. Lessons are drawn from the South African and Kenyan experiences to strengthen social work on the continent.

**The social development approach in social work education in Southern and East Africa (pages 112-131)**

*Tessa Hochfeld, Rodreck Mupedziswa and Lisa Selipsky*

Very little research has been done on social work education in the Southern and East African region. What is being taught, how it is being taught, and to whom it is being taught is not well understood, and what is known receives little exposure in the region and beyond. This article reports on a study investigating the nature of social work education in Southern and East Africa. The study focused specifically on the extent to which the social development approach is being implemented in the education programmes in the region. The study used the social development model of social work education developed by Mupedziswa (2001), which recognises the dual importance of curriculum and extra-curricular related activities, as a conceptual framework. The results show that social development in social work education in the region is well established in relation to curriculum related activities, but is less well developed in relation to the extra-curricular sphere. The research results assist in outlining the priorities for research on social work education in the region.

