

# ***Practice Reflexions* Volume 6, No. 1 - December 2011**

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## **Editorial: *Critique and strategy not ‘business as usual’ practice***

**MARG LYNN**

It seems to me that social and community welfare work still struggles with identities around specialism and genericism. If you are yawning that that old chestnut is well and truly buried, please bear with me. I have editorialised before (Vol 4, no 1, 2009) that I believe that funding bodies force compliance with a specialist, silo-ed model of service delivery. I further maintain that if workers do not acknowledge their need to push the boundaries of their employment to operate more holistically they are in danger of losing their critical edge. This push may involve simply (or not so simply) becoming fully and critically acquainted with the legislation and policies under which they work, the rationale for their service agreement, the processes by which their perspective and their experiences can be heard by management, and their ability to share information with their network peers, and also thinking through how they respond to the contradictions that are thrown up by any of these issues. It may involve acting assertively. It may involve challenging ‘business as usual’ that can encourage a degree of complacency and satisfaction with organisational silos. It may involve recognising the power of collaborative action. It may produce outcomes that don’t increase the workload but change it in the interests of more, not less time with clients and communities.

This *Practice Reflexions* issue presents a gratifying spread of perspectives from diverse fields of practice. They all illustrate the strategic necessity of challenging received ideas (Rojek, Peacock and Collins 1988) and seeking further reaches of integration, cultural understanding, personal efficacy and organizational integrity. They can all be seen as critiques that argue for a shift in emphasis towards a practice that more justly, holistically, and knowingly meets its purpose.

Helen Cameron speaks to those of us who have experience as teachers or learners in an educational setting (I think that is most of us!). The social, demographic and technological changes that contextualise contemporary pedagogy have some students asking ‘did I miss anything?’ when they don’t attend lectures, and some lecturers asking ‘what are they learning if they don’t attend?’ If teaching methods adopt and rely increasingly on the technological media that students use, arguably with an emphasis on information transfer, and sometimes exchange, more than understanding and skill development, where is the space for social welfare-specific learning requirements and challenges? Is self efficacy still central to developing quality practice? Are students learning to take responsibility for their own learning so that they can take responsibility for maintaining and sharpening their critique through a lifetime of practice?

Barry Higgins shares his expertise in international community development, mindful of the decolonizing critique of western imposition of values and attitudes, and the need to develop culturally relevant and indigenised processes, practised by local people and validated by local people and institutions. He positions himself within the human rights stance that regards violence and abuses of power as always requiring opposition and challenge, not acceptance as fitting within culturally different power structures.

Community development is also explored in its relationship to casework practice and the synergies and distinctions between them are compared in detail by Rebecca Filliponi. She argues for their greater integration, and the wider appreciation by social/welfare work practitioners of the value of community development. This is a theme extended by Olga Bursian's book review where she observes that a theme of *Social Work in Extremis* emphasises the 'effectiveness of community development knowledge and practices and ... the unfortunate predominant focus of social work curricula on micro-level issues'. Only through an understanding of the profession as strategically integrating (at least) the personal, social and political can social/welfare work 'demonstrate that it can open up possibilities that traditional local systems cannot provide by themselves'. This emphasis allows social work to make a unique contribution in post disaster circumstances that appear to be increasingly manifest in the face of global financial and climatic crises and national revolutions. Maria Huddleston and Deborah West identify a missing element in practice as the lack of sufficient awareness of young carers negotiating the adult world of disability service delivery and personal service. They highlight the narrowness of some agencies' definition of their client as the caree only, thus excluding and making invisible the young family member who, at worst, is sacrificing their youth to the care of loved ones without sufficient support, recognition and respite.

In remembering Ian Murray, as Jan Richardson has so eloquently encouraged us, we honour a man who always challenged the 'business as usual' model, was never satisfied that the organisation he worked for so tirelessly had 'arrived', and was always seeing the possibilities for the profession and the education process to facilitate the quest for excellence and relevance.

The Editorial Board has decided that from 2012 we will publish articles progressively throughout the year, as many e-journals are now doing, and will bring out a complete and editorialised issue at the end of the year. We will start with Ian Murray's examination of the essence of human services training in which he challenges received wisdom about the nexus between significance of education and the length of the course. It is fitting that *Practice Reflexions* publish Ian's paper, his final research project, considering his seminal role in its creation, or more precisely, the revival of *Welfare in Australia* in new garments. As Jan has indicated, he brokered the marriage between AIWCW (now ACWA) and Monash University, and ensured that the relationship was grounded in mutual interest, understanding and respect.

We hope that more regular publication will provide wider opportunities for authors to share their work and we encourage you to consider writing about your practice (and praxis), your research, your interesting projects, your successes and failures, your reflections. We can offer assistance in the writing and welcome ideas about writing projects on which we can provide feedback. We look forward to hearing from you.

## **Reference**

Rojek, C, Peacock, G, and Collins, S. (1988) *Social Work and Received Ideas* London Routledge

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## **Obituary: Ian Gordon Murray 1942-2011**

**JAN RICHARDSON**

Indefatigable to the end, champion of the welfare and community work profession, Ian Murray lost his struggle against cancer on 12/7/11 in Caritas Christi Hospice, Melbourne. It was typical of Ian during that terrible time that he continued giving to his beloved wife Anne Carson and his son Evin Harley-Murray, his other family and friends and his research interests - not denying his suffering but creatively engaging with the people and issues that gave his life meaning.

Ian combined a great sense of fun with an equal sense of the serious, and he used his gifts to advantage the profession to which he was committed from the age of about 26 when he began a Social Work degree at Sydney University. This followed a change from his original plan to enter the Methodist Ministry. His enquiring mind led him in 1970 to travel through Europe and Asia with his then wife Gayle Duncan. In USA he was employed as a psychiatric social worker before returning alone in 1975 and entering academia from 1976 until 1998, when he retired from the paid workforce. During that time his marriage from 1991 to 1999 to Anna Harley produced his treasured son, Evin.

As a lecturer in Welfare Studies and later the BA Human Services at the Caulfield Institute of Technology, which amalgamated with Monash University, he honed his research skills and developed in-depth knowledge of the industry. Living out its ideals of contributing to society in a voluntary as well as paid capacity, Ian also put energy into developing the professional organization, AIWCW. He joined the Vic/SA/Tas Branch in 1988 and immediately became involved as a committee and Executive member. From 1988 until his retirement from voluntary work in 2010 he was the vigorous intellectual leader of AIWCW at both Branch and National level. It is possible that his retirement coincided with his meeting Anne Carson, whom he married in July 2010!

Ian's work through AIWCW for the human services profession is easy to recite and hard to believe – difficult even if he were fully employed to do the work that he undertook. Knowing that it was all voluntary adds to our astonishment at the rate of his productivity and depth of his thinking. He was a prodigious worker, forgiving of us lesser mortals who liked to sleep at normal times and balance our work/private lives, but secretly impatient. At Branch or National Executive meetings he continuously stretched the organisation's representation of its members' interests and the needs of welfare services clients, both on an individual and national level. A primary interest was the education of new workers. His input was based on

sound research or intuition about future trends, and could not be ignored by those of his fellow committee members who wanted the meetings to end within the scheduled two hours. Ian would come prepared with copious evidence and arguments followed up with proposals for action. Even his busy role as National President 1996-98 did not inhibit his creativity and enquiry into issues that he perceived would become significant, often well before the State bureaucracy tasked with managing them. Some of these issues were:

- (1) Assessment of equivalency of standards of English for migrants against qualifications recognised in Australia for migration purposes.
- (2) Setting up assessment standards for accrediting welfare and community work courses at TAFE colleges and universities, which he managed as Chairperson of the assessment panel.
- (3) Challenging the Community Services Training Packages, about which he prepared a submission endorsed by the National Executive and submitted to the National Industry Training Board arguing that the courses needed to include field work.
- (4) Searching for a central office for AIWCW instead of using his office at Monash. In 2000 this resulted in the office at Ross House in Collins St Melbourne and ultimately the full-time employment of Deane Welsh as Office Manager who could then provide a wider range of services to members and students than volunteers were able to do.
- (5) The English language problem for international students – Ian’s perseverance initiated AIWCW’s engagement of a consultant to examine the issue and recommend the IELTS level necessary to study AIWCW-accredited courses.
- (6) The unrecognised but supported equivalence in value with social workers of the work done by university-educated welfare and community workers, a goal that was not achieved.
- (7) Creating this e-journal and AIWCW’s partnership with Monash University in that enterprise – Ian’s role was pivotal to the successful negotiations.
- (8) Incorporating AIWCW – Ian was President during the process that finally achieved incorporation in 1998.

Throughout Ian’s membership of AIWCW he provided stimulating, original ideas and inclusive leadership. In 2001 and 2007 he conducted surveys of members to ascertain their needs and so influence the direction of their professional association. He researched and wrote papers on topics that were vitally important to the industry but which otherwise AIWCW would not have had the capacity to address. His many journal articles, conference papers, specialist committee representations and other public campaign materials are discussed in AIWCW’s 2010 history *Working for Welfare* by Fay Woodhouse.

Ian’s constant research of trends in the industry and determination that AIWCW should be current and actively involved in working for change to benefit its members, courses and

clients of services, often rendered his colleagues exhausted, all of whom were volunteers and most of whom had demanding jobs. But Ian's tenacity and irrefutable arguments based on sound scholarship usually convinced any unbelievers and resulted in an organisation managed by volunteers having influence beyond reason. Thanks to Ian's unusual capacity to talk and write at the same time, and his trade-mark note-taking of everything he and others said or read, his observations were always astute and his recommendations highly respected. In his 22 years of voluntary work for AIWCW and the human service field, Ian made a remarkable contribution for which he was awarded Life Membership of AIWCW (now ACWA). A Scholarship will be established in his name.

As a former volunteer with AIWCW whose admiration for Ian only just exceeded exhaustion caused by his unquenchable energy and instigation of new projects, I hold him up as an outstanding representative of our profession. I weep for the loss of this beautiful man.

***Dr Jan Richardson is a member of Practice Reflexions Editorial Board, a former member of the AIWCW (now ACWA) executive and a current ACWA member***

# Did I miss anything? Students and university lectures

HELEN CAMERON

## Abstract

*As a cultural object, the university lecture has withstood the passage of time despite challenges to its value. This paper reports on results from student based studies in the School of Psychology, Social Work & Social Policy, focused on perceptions about the university lecture. It emphasises that certain factors support students' learning from lectures whereas others obstructs this. It also uncovers a range of reasons for first year students attending lectures or staying away and their use of online resources. Based on these research outcomes, other findings from the literature and reflections about these sources of data, the paper makes some suggestions about how processes surrounding the lecture could be adjusted to better support current first year students to become better engaged in their learning. As well, it suggests that developing self-efficacy is important to both current learning and to students' future professional practice in social work, psychology and other human service. Relevant literature shows that in general, university students appear less engaged in their learning than in the past but they also have firmer expectations about what they want from lectures and other learning processes. Students are also 'time poor' as many hours of paid work and other responsibilities mean they may question the need to attend lectures at all especially if teaching and learning processes do not capture their interest. As a consequence, lecturers may feel increasing pressure to attract students' attendance by employing a range of other media. Literature from Australia and other countries however, critiques the value of both traditional and more innovative approaches to lecturing in universities.*

**Key words:** University lectures; engaging students, developing self-efficacy, maximising learning

## Introduction

This paper explores factors influencing internally enrolled students' attendance at university lectures and presents ideas about how to increase their active engagement in learning from these. There are two key areas of research reflected in this paper – one concerning how to maximise commencing students' learning from lectures and what factors interfere with this, and a second about how to help academic lecturing staff members to better support students' learning from their lectures. The primary research basis of the paper was conducted through the administration of a Tell-Us survey (an on-line anonymous process) of 180 students in

three undergraduate programs within the school of Psychology, Social Work & Social Policy in the University of South Australia. These data are contextualised within a range of other findings as reported in Australian and International literature and from the author's own extensive research and teaching experience.

Students are expected to derive learning benefit from attending their lectures and Stanca (2006) suggests this is generally so. However, the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement - AUSSE (ACER 2008) reveals that less than a quarter of students in Australia and New Zealand spend significant amounts of time on campus – in lectures or in other ways. Some studies found that 60% of students do not attend *all* lectures (Shannon 2006), a widespread tendency noted also by Cleary-Holdforth (2007, p.1) who suggests, non-attendance at university lectures is ‘an on-going problem that appears to transcend country, university and discipline’. Dropping attendance figures suggest students’ lives are getting in the way of good intentions to attend, despite costs for not doing so. At times, students may question if they really miss anything of importance by not attending the lecture.

Sleigh & Ritzer (2001) surveyed over two hundred US students and found that only 8 percent of these considered that gaining notes from a missed lecture was just as useful as attending the class. It was significant in this study that ‘those who thought borrowed notes were as good as attending class had significantly lower reported grade point averages than those who valued attendance’ (Sleigh & Ritzer 2001). It was also found by Sleigh & Ritzer (2001) that students see stronger reasons for attending lectures if they also appreciate the extent to which their grades may be negatively impacted by being absent. Meikle (2006) suggests coercive tactics like students signing contracts to be present at lectures and awarding marks for being present may increase attendance, although many Australian universities do not include student assessment for attendance at lectures or even tutorials. Rogers (2002) also makes the point that compelling students to attend does not necessarily correspond to better student learning or academic success as it does not seem to encourage good study habits. Respect for adult learning principles suggests that many first year students need to be supported in learning to accept responsibility for their own learning, to develop self-efficacy (Bandura 1993) and to appreciate the connection between their own behaviour, such as attendance at and engagement in classes, and their academic outcomes.

Other encouragement to attend, to concentrate and to remain engaged may be influenced by the use of information technology (IT). Most academics are now expected to employ a variety of IT processes to supplement other information presented in the traditional lecture format, such as PowerPoint (PPT) slides, *U-Tube* and DVD’s to illustrate and entertain. As well, either before or after the lecture, it may be podcast or media streamed to maximise students’ access to it. In addition to the attraction of such technological bells and whistles, Clay & Breslow (2006) also suggest the lecturer’s ability to engage and entertain students is a stronger factor in students’ decision to attend or not. Phillips, Gosper, McNeill, Woo, Preston & Green (2007) believe that availability of web based lecture techniques such as

video streaming or podcasting are only a minor influence on students' attendance. Instead they note other student factors such as 'changing lifestyles, their attitudes to learning and their perceptions of the teaching they encounter when they do attend' as determining attendance patterns (Phillips et al 2007).

Certainly, according to many commentators, university students' prior life experiences and their preparation for tertiary study have changed (Dobson, Sharma & Haydon 1997; James, McInnis & Devlin 2002; Oblinger 2003; Porter & Swing 2006; Mason Webber, Singleton & Hughes 2006, Wilson & Lizzio 2008; Cameron 2008). Because of students' pressured lives, Oblinger (2003, p.6) suggests lecturers often find themselves attempting to 'inspire students with zero tolerance for delay'. Whilst acknowledging this presents diverse challenges for today's academics, Ramsden recommends however, that rather than blaming students for their limitations, instead these are reasons to teach more effectively and that we do this 'by studying our students' learning' (2003, pp.5-6). Lawrence (2002, p.9) also makes the point that diversity of student background has to be accepted as the norm and not as any justification for unsuccessful educational practices. On the other hand, Wilson & Lizzio (2008, p.1) suggests it is necessary to first acknowledge students' lack of preparation before it is possible to attempt to address the 'incongruence between staff and commencing students'.

Accepting students lack of preparation for study, this paper then attempts to identify ways in which first year students' learning from lectures can be more deliberately cultured than in the past and how this role can be taken on as a major obligation by staff conducting first year lectures. McInnis and Krause (2002) agree that student identity is now, more than ever, a negotiated one so that students' engagement with their learning needs to be carefully and deliberately cultivated. Nine years ago, McInnis, James & Hartley (2000) noted a developing trend of lower attachment, engagement and commitment by students, both to study and to the more general aspects of university life, and according to other recent research, these trends have extended further into the student population (Porter & Swing 2006; Mason et al 2006).

For some students, not attending, being disengaged from their learning or even dropping out may be related to perceptions of the university as an alienating and rejecting space. As found by White (2006, p. 235) many students 'feel they don't matter' especially when their study experiences include lectures with large numbers, where no one knows their name or notes their attendance and where 'they are part of an anonymous mass' (White 2006, p.236). New students may need help to process their own idealised perceptions of the university lecture as demonstrated in a previous study (Cameron 2004) where one student said, 'I had this view of university from what you see on the television - huge lectures where the lecturer walks backwards and forwards for three hours'. Most first year students are part of an anonymous crowd, and this encourages perceptions that their attendance, or lack of it, will go unnoticed. In most instances, this anonymity is guaranteed when first year lectures are delivered to hundreds of students en masse by established and relatively permanent staff (with salaries

paid from main budget sources) having little other contact with the students. Most tutorials are delivered by casual staff whose status is tenuously supported by the softer funding basis of a yearly casual budget. On one level, this suggests tutorials are less important than lectures, despite student opinion to the contrary (Cameron 2008). Meanwhile university lecture theatres have become better equipped, with most having at least *PowerPoint* technology. Yet few of these high cost permanent staff members appear to have received specific training, either in using this technology or in teaching students how to maximise their learning from lectures.

This paper then also seeks to define some ways to encourage staff to make better use of their lecture time. The ability of staff to encourage *all* students' engagement in learning has been recognised as a lynch pin of excellence in academia by others (Ramsden 2003; Lawrence 2002). Skene, Cluett & Hogan (2007, p.2) suggest however that some academic staff describe a sense of 'just keeping their footing on the edge of a slow moving landslide' as they struggle to 'engage a class as students fail to show for lectures, preferring to access the recorded version online in their own time'. Some academics find it a challenge then to produce learning conditions in lectures that consistently catch and maintain students' interest and engagement in their own learning and to foster study processes that provide a strong foundation to their further study. Bandura (1993) discusses the complex relationships between self esteem, self concept, locus of control – and self-efficacy. Students lacking in the development of these characteristics may blame others (staff, the system) for their difficulties. Students' self-efficacy beliefs have been correlated with motivational constructs related to their successful academic performances and achievement (Bandura 1993).

The committed and engaged students in the study described in this paper, see that lectures provide invaluable sources of information about assessment as well as about wider intellectual issues. Engaged students then are more likely to make time and have energy for their studies and feel a personal commitment and sense of responsibility to do their best. But not all students have developed 'sufficient self-regulation and problem solving capacity' (Wilson & Lizzio 2008, p.1) and this has deep implications for their academic success. Despite a growing emphasis on online resources for most courses, over 70% of first year students in a previous study, said they did not consistently use these services (Cameron & Tesoriero 2003). Some mature-age students did not own or use a computer before they started university (Cameron 2007) presenting sharp learning curves for them.

It should not be presumed then that all students know how to make use of learning resources. Rather, it needs to be seen as a central process to deliberately encourage commencing students' use of university support services, to demonstrate how to use online processes, to directly teach how to prepare for and to learn from lectures and to discuss self-efficacy issues. Wilson & Lizzio (2008, p.2) note 'the pervasive paradox that students often most in need of assistance do not seek it' and this means that many first year students requiring extra

guidance go unnoticed. First year students, who do not attend lectures nor use the resources provided, miss out on important opportunities for engaged learning.

The professional importance of engagement and self-efficacy as factors in good social work practice are of key importance, so emphasis on these aspects of student development have wider implication. As an example, Petrovich (2004) suggests that 'references to self-efficacy in the helping professions are increasing in frequency', underlining its importance in professional practice. Students studying social work, psychology and other social services are seen as best prepared for the work if they develop self-efficacy before they encounter its challenges. This paper however notes the gap in targeted investment in academic lecturers' skills, especially in ones that maximise first year students' learning from lectures in ways that assist the development of self-efficacy in learning and it goes on to suggest ways to address this need.

## **Research Design**

### **Methodology**

This student-based qualitative research was approached in the spirit of modern hermeneutics in seeking awareness and understanding of the current conditions that surround students. In the study, data were gathered through an online questionnaire. Writing is socially constructed and resonates with what Garfinkel (1967) terms *reflexivity* and so it is in the telling (the writing) that the interpretation of students' experiences takes shape. Multiple lines of sight were employed to analyse student data. The results were considered in comparison with other literature and the reflections on the considerable lecturing experience of the author, thus providing layers of meaning. In doing so, the researcher remained part of a 'mutual gazing' (Heron 1996:1), with mindfulness in engaging in this inquiry with proper integrity.

### **The research instrument**

The questionnaire comprised 15 questions using either single or multiple choice response patterns with several free text opportunities. The focus of the research instrument was on key factors influencing students' attendance and their learning from lectures. The anonymity of this online instrument enabled a level of distance between the researcher and respondents and was intended to provide students with confidence that they could respond honestly without divulging their individual identity.

### **The sample**

The student sample was gained through sending an email with a link to a *Tell-Us* online survey attached. Only students studying internally were solicited as the overall focus was lecture attendance and learning from lectures. In all, 180 students submitted it but in fact only 174 students fully completed the survey. The sample size comprised around 25% of the total undergraduate students internally enrolled in the school and as such, is large enough for some valid conclusions to be made.

## Results

This was a primarily female group of students with the question about gender revealing an 8:2 female to male split, an unsurprising result in light of the continuing gender bias in social work and similarly focused study fields in the sample group. The span of student ages was from 18 – 60 years, but there was a clumping of the majority in the 20's, 30's and 40's. Most were studying several courses and were full time, with some even over-enrolled. The full-time nature of study brings added pressure at assessment points where four or more assignments may be due within a week of each other and skipping lectures at these points becomes a real temptation, especially when other life pressures are present. Data indicated that learning opportunities from lectures were blocked by lack of attendance, poor concentration during them and limited use of resources.

### Attendance at lectures

To learn from lectures, first students first need to be there and so participants were asked to estimate how many lectures they attended. A group of 20% said they 'attended all of them'. A majority group (60%) agreed they attended 'most and only missed a few'. A smaller group of 16 % said they 'missed about half of them' and only 4% admitted they 'missed most of them' or attended 'only a few'. No one said they attended 'none'. The number of students who say they attended most lectures does not match the observation of staff in the school who have regularly complained to the author that less than 10% attend some lectures, particularly at points of assignment pressure and also toward the end of a course. As Cleary-Holdforth (2007, p.1) notes, some overestimation derives from their ambition to attend rather than the reality.

In the data, non-attendance was linked to two main issues - 'life pressures on due assignments' and 'the qualities of the lecturer'. Assignments due at the same time was a commonly cited influence against attendance as was a range of intersecting personal pressures such as 'family health problems', 'transport problems' and 'child care pressures'. Other issues like 'the time of the lecture' and 'the number of hours between the lecture and its tutorial' were seen as mildly influential. A set of comments focused on negative lecturer qualities as discouraging their attendance – no passion for the topic; poor delivery (boring; talking too fast, too softly, unclear, going off the topic); unskilled with IT, fumbling about; just reading the PPT slides or textbook; and badly organised slides – e.g. crowded print. Annoying behaviour of other students (chatting during the lecture) was a discouragement to attend, especially if lecturers were unable or unwilling to manage this. These all appear to reflect some students' lack of self-efficacy (Bandura 1993) in that for many their non-attendance is linked to external forces rather than to their own choice.

In the data, factors that encouraged their attendance were also linked to lack of self-efficacy as they cited factors such as 'the lecturer's entertaining style of delivery' and 'effective use

of Audio Visual (AV) or IT'. Clicker technology was popular. This is software called TurningPoint, where quizzes are imbedded in PowerPoint presentations. Students answer questions by using individual clickers, which reveal answers in a graph on a PowerPoint slide. They felt this helped keep them focused on the key points from the lecture.

### **Concentrating in lectures**

Even when they do attend, staying focussed in lectures is clearly a problem. Just over 70% of participants agree they often have trouble concentrating for a range of reasons such as boring lectures with only 30% suggesting they 'concentrate really well on what is being said all the time'. Some accept they 'miss a lot, because my mind is usually on other unrelated things' or they 'often have trouble understanding unclear lecturers and then cannot concentrate very well'. A few admit they do other things in the lecture like catching up on reading or writing, do some phone texting or go to sleep. Again it is apparent that learning is compromised by loss of mental focus (or even consciousness) but that this is frequently attributed to outside factors such as life's pressures or to the lecturer's lack of entertaining style, again reflecting some lack of self-efficacy (Bandura 1993).

### **Benefits to learning of online *PowerPoint* slides and podcasting**

Most first year students (70%) said they made good use of online PPT slides by printing them and taking them to the lecture to aid concentration or looking at them later for revision. A smaller percentage (30%) did not use them - either because they preferred just listening or because they have never bothered to view or download them. An International student commented 'Sometimes I can't manage to follow the lecture by my writing, so I can use online slides to help me'. Podcasting is not used across all courses yet so around 60% of students had no lectures offered in this way. A small group have used Podcast lectures and liked them as they can make up for missed lectures when and where they wish to listen to it. A few saw podcasts and/or online slides as obviating the need to attend any lectures. However, many students saw slides, other IT or AV resources as supplementing their learning from the lecture. One commented 'You can't replace listening to a lecturer as they explain things in more detail than the slides but the slides are great for revision and to add to'. Another student suggested PPT slides 'can enhance the subject; and provide material to reflect on before and after the lecture and for assignment preparation'. Comments like these demonstrate self-efficacy and engagement in these students.

Several students, who seemed very engaged in their learning, also raised self-motivational issues – feeling committed, being keen to learn and not wanting to miss anything important. As one commented, 'I know that I can get the most by preparing for and attending the lectures and ultimately this helps with my assignments and the exam.' These students made the connection and saw how using resources and attending was the first step in maximising their learning from lectures. The considerable group of students not attending consistently or using PPT slides miss any opportunities for contextualised understanding. Some also thought

that they missed little when they were absent from lectures, especially if they could get the slides and notes online.

### **Overall student commentary about lectures**

A consistent student theme focused on the qualities and abilities of the lecturer as impacting on their learning from lectures. Several reiterated general appreciation of lecturers that inspired and uplifted them and had passion for their topic. They especially liked ‘entertaining and/or humorous lecturers who make me think’ and those who use ‘You-Tube clips, videos/DVD and clicker processes’. Students also liked lecturers who make good links to tutorial activities. A pragmatic few commented on getting value for their financial outlay on HECS fees by going to lectures. Some however noted the lecturer’s style as justifying their non-attendance. Again the emphasis on the lecturer as responsible for their learning shows lack of student self-efficacy.

### **Blocks to learning from lectures**

From the data, students noted several apparent blocks to their learning from lectures. Students’ lack of self-efficacy (Bandura 1993), is reflected in comments reflecting their views that life factors block both their attendance at lectures and their learning from these. When they do attend, concentration flags, at least some of the time for all, but especially when lectures fail to entertain or inspire them. and a basic one is the actual attendance problem. Research indicates poor attendance is linked to students’ general preoccupation with other aspects of their lives where they have limited time for study, despite good intentions. That most participants in this study are full-time students points to the pressured nature of their study.

Students who were critical of lecturers who appeared unable to use IT or AV processes efficiently and who fumble about in trying to load or activate these, saw this also blocked their learning. Most preferred online PPT slides to be provided in advance as this enables them to listen rather than trying to write down everything. For some PPT notes meant they could justify their non-attendance. The data in the study indicated that some students attend sporadically, if at all, make limited use of online slides and appear not to appreciate how to use these to facilitate learning during lectures - the students that Wilson & Lizzio (2008, p.2) say are ‘most in need of assistance’ and require targeted intervention. Yet these are the students who miss these learning opportunities due to their absences and lack of focus.

### **How lecturers can maximise students’ learning**

Lecturers are central in influencing students’ self-efficacy and engagement in learning. Fostering this engaged learning in lectures is a key obligation and includes talking about this as a concept and how it operators in students’ lives. This may mean actively teaching students about the benefits to them of being an engaged student who knows how to make use of

information provided in lectures. Practical things may need to be taught, like demonstrating to first year students how to make use of online PPT slides, how to download and print these in ways that provide room for note taking to maximise more active learning in the lecture and why this matters in terms of their academic results. It may also involve directly teaching about the importance of self-efficacy and how becoming a responsible and responsive learner produces material benefits in students' lives and may also translate into better academic grades. Emphasising the importance of self-efficacy as a professional quality in social work practice will underline the importance of developing this. Self-aware students in the survey acknowledged that they know they do better on assessments and get better grades when they consistently attend lectures, as Sleigh & Ritzer (2001) also note. These self-motivated students are not the ones Wilson & Lizzio (2008), Porter & Swing (2006), or Mason et al (2006) are concerned about.

Lecturers may also need support in knowing how to use PPT slides to add structure and focus to a lecture, and how to provide learning hooks and tags to key content and knowledge issues. Links between lecture material, assessment activities and tutorials need to be made explicit by the lecturer to maximise students' learning from both lectures and tutorials. Providing clear contextual links between lectures, assessment, grading and feedback provides an aligned foundation for students' understanding as 'without this alignment, assessment becomes merely a postscript for learning and teaching' (Orrell, 2006, p. 441). In lectures, assessment activities need to be linked to content points and to related marking criteria so all students are clear about these. Tutorials, usually well attended and seen by students to provide key sources of academic support (Cameron 2008), need to be linked to lectures so they underline key aspects of the assessment activities, such as essay topics or other requirements. Lecturers may need help in learning to use TurningPoint and individual clickers to quiz students on lecture content issues, with answers followed up both during the lecture and by tutors in tutorial sessions. Clicker technology used well can better involve students by highlighting key learning points from the lecture, relating these to assessment tasks and breaking up the lecture to assist their concentration. Clicker technology, as well as encouraging learning and keeping students better focused, can also be used to record who is present at the lecture and consistently used, this may encourage better student attendance.

Training in presentation skills for lecturers, at least in how to speak clearly and with energy and how to use IT processes, is essential. The data in this study demonstrate that most students also expect to feel inspired. The most consistent student commentary strongly underlines the appreciation of lecturers who have energetic delivery, passion for the topic, good organisation and who can effectively use PPT, TurningPoint clickers and other AV processes. Training in presentation skills for lecturers, at least in how to speak clearly and with energy, how to link lectures to assessment activities and to tutorials and how to use IT processes, is essential. In-service training can take the form of workshops with other more skilled lecturers, or with specialists in IT and AV processes, and can provide opportunities to share techniques and to develop teaching excellence. Many lecturers have had little training

in public speaking or in how to use IT procedures and without this, may just keep doing the same ineffective things.

Woolfolk Hoy (2004) asserts that highly efficacious teachers tend to be more open to new ideas, more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students, and more committed to teaching in way that develop student self-efficacy. So as well, part of any in-service training for lecturers needs to include techniques for developing self-efficacy in students, emphasising the importance of this quality in effective professional practice in social work, psychology and other related fields, as suggested by Petrovich (2004). As well, Petrovich describes the need to nurture self-efficacy through effective skill development as this ‘has been found to be especially important to the retention and transfer of knowledge, and emphasizing variety in practice appears to enhance the transfer of skills to new situations (Gagne & Medsker, 1996), an important issue for social work educators’ (2004, p.2). Greater investment in the skills of the lecturer in this range of areas is clearly indicated as a factor in maximising students’ learning from lectures. This theme is also named as contextually important by Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas & Metrey (2002) who state that ‘(s)elf-efficacy is a construct with a vast amount of theoretical and empirical support. It is also a construct consonant with social work values, social work educational traditions and a strengths perspective (2002 P.132). The development of student self-efficacy is an investment not only in social work education but in professional skills that will support them as future human service practitioners.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, suggestions about how to maximise students’ learning from lectures was based in part on first year students’ opinions about these matters and on related literature from a range of sources around the Western world. The results indicated that students expect academic staff to present their lectures with passion, creativity and IT savvy even though many lecturers lack specific training in these areas. Students vote with their feet in a world where the battle for space in their lives means many do not prioritise lecture attendance as a key feature of their learning. In the university, lectures seem to remain prioritised over other sources of learning support. But have we got the balance right? Are lectures - now better served by many IT processes – more important than tutorials, which are usually better attended and which are seen by students to provide key sources of academic support (Cameron 2008)? This paper shows that students need to be actively encouraged to become engaged and responsible learners, and to develop self-efficacy as consumers of education and as future human service professionals. A range of unique pressures within modern universities, combined with first year students’ diverse needs, will continue to place demands on academic staff in achieving these aims. Orrell (2006, p.454) points out that ‘Institutional procedures and practices are required to support constructive, non-defensive teaching reform and collaborative action by teaching groups’ and this is central for universities concerned

about the engagement of first year students, especially where the battle for space in their lives means many do not prioritise lecture attendance as a key feature of their learning.

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## **Planning for family dispute resolution in Cambodia - A quest for contextual relevance**

**BARRY HIGGINS**

### **Abstract**

*In this paper I outline a planning and evaluation proposal designed to sustain contextually relevant alternative dispute resolution practices for resolving family conflicts in three Cambodian districts. It is a mock proposal I designed for 'Peace Bridges', a Cambodian peace building organisation that trains and mobilises family dispute resolution practitioners across Cambodia. It is a means to support Peace Bridges in reflecting upon their planning approach for facilitating the development of a new program cycle for 2013-2015. The proposal begins with a problem description that accounts for the interplay of personal, relational, cultural and systemic factors contributing to the current prevalence of dysfunctional family dispute management in Cambodia. Following this is a needs analysis of stakeholders relevant to the target districts. This analysis is multi-focused, including indirect actors at the national and international level as well as more direct stakeholders at the project partner and community level. The planning proposal is also concerned to identify theories of change or hypotheses operant in the design. This includes awareness of values that inform such theories. There is concern to ensure program implementers operate with mindfulness of these theories and values so as to enable continuous reflection, not simply on practice, but on the assumptions underlying practice. The paper concludes with some reflections on the benefits and challenges of such an approach to planning.*

**Key words:** Planning; evaluation; alternative dispute resolution; family mediation; peace building; cultural context; Cambodia.

### **Introduction**

This mock proposal was designed for *Peace Bridges*, a Cambodian peace building organisation that trains and mobilises family dispute resolution practitioners across Cambodia. The proposal is a planning and evaluation process for the development of culturally effective alternative dispute resolution for families in three districts of Kompong Cham province, Cambodia. The design addresses the need for family dispute resolution practitioners to be more conscientised to

the impacts of family violence in Cambodia. It also offers a way to scale up impacts through a more comprehensive approach to planning with one priority partner. The approach is consistent with *Peace Bridges*' values, staff assets and strategic direction and it is based upon lessons I have garnered from a decade of practice in Cambodia, including a former role as the founding director of *Peace Bridges*.

The proposal was developed to support staff reflection upon practice for the planning of a new three year program cycle (2013-2015). To assist staff reflections the proposal assumes a partnership with a fictional organisation called '*Hands Together*'. Whilst fictional, this organisation closely resembles a number of *Peace Bridges*' current partners. Furthermore all descriptions of *Peace Bridges* and the Cambodian context they operate in are real. Whilst the context of readers may be significantly different to that which is described here it is assumed many of the planning, intervention and evaluation principles have a wider application than the context described.

The planning principles outlined have been strongly influenced by the emerging field of international peace building (Jantzi and Jantzi 2009) which emphasises a holistic approach to problems. This includes being mindful that a conflict context is continuously changing. As a result there is a strong emphasis on the need for continuous reflection not only upon practice, but also upon program hypotheses and underlying practice (Lederach, Neufeldt and Culbertson 2007).

### ***Peace Bridges***

*Peace Bridges* supports partners to build sustainable peace programs within their own communities. The organisation was established in 2003 at the request of Cambodian community leaders from a network of faith based organisations concerned by the manner in which inadequate dispute resolution processes were undermining the network's humanitarian development initiatives. The original program design aimed to train and develop a pool of dispute resolution providers, yet reflected my own Western assumptions about the value of outsider-neutral dispute resolution practitioners (Wehr and Lederach 1996). It quickly became clear that this was not an effective model in a context where disputants generally sought help for dispute resolution from trusted people within existing relationship networks (Lucio 2002). As a result *Peace Bridges* changed its approach to building the capacity of 'natural' insider dispute resolution practitioners (Wehr and Lederach 1996). This included a concern to build resilience to manage disputes fairly before they escalated, as well as developing services for situations of significant dispute escalation.

*Peace Bridges* is now a Cambodian led local non-government organisation employing twenty staff who support the capacity development and mobilisation of over one hundred and fifty dispute resolution practitioners. These men and women provide a variety of services in their own circles of influence, with some specialising in family dispute resolution (*Peace Bridges* 2011).

### **Problem identification: Exploring challenges to equitable dispute resolution in Cambodia**

My first intention in this mock proposal was to provide the *Peace Bridge's* team with a problem description based on an awareness of how personal, relational, cultural and systemic aspects of the problem of family dispute management in a village context in Cambodia are inter-related (Lederach et al 2007). My concern was to emphasise that all these dimensions contain constraints and enablers that require consideration in a program design. I was also concerned to emphasise the importance of a design considering access, levels of vulnerability and specific concerns of subgroups in the target population (Taber 1988). What follows now is a problem identification description based upon these concerns.

There is significant violence and conflict within many Cambodian families, yet options for sustainable reconciliation or equitable divorce are very limited (UNDP 2008). In theory, all families have access to the municipal or provincial court for legal settlement in cases of divorce. In practice, the majority of families, some of whom live on less than a dollar a day, cannot afford court application fees and travel costs, let alone the cost of legal representation. In addition to this, Cambodian citizens may lack a sense of entitlement to call upon government services, or may view them with suspicion (UNDP 2008).

The vast majority of Cambodian citizens rely upon informal dispute resolution processes for family conflicts. There is a strong preference for containing conflict within close family and relational circles, in part for fear of a loss of reputation and subsequent loss of social capital in the village. In a country with virtually no social welfare system, social capital is important for sustaining favours in extended kin groups and patron-client village networks (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002).

When conflict in a family is perceived as significant enough to require intervention beyond immediate family circles, the village chief may become involved. As an appointed official of the locally elected commune council, the village chief is the most accessible government authority to the majority of people. The village chief is paid AUD\$5 a month to undertake a variety of responsibilities including family dispute resolution. In this role he also receives unofficial

payments for family mediation, as well as positional advantage for business dealings (UNDP 2008).

If disputants are dissatisfied with the village chief they can call upon commune councillors to resolve their dispute. Again, these councillors are generally too busy undertaking duties related to local governance. Yet they are often resistant to referring disputes because of the potential for receiving unofficial payments (UNDP 2008).

The process of finding appropriate DR is further complicated by a strong patron-client system beginning at, and often extending beyond, village level. This means individuals or families associated with influential patrons can often exercise undue influence on outcomes. Furthermore, the political affiliations of members sometimes play into this patron-client system (O'Leary and Nee 2001).

The context of patron-client relationships, combined with the importance of a family's reputation for social capital often leads to extreme avoidance of anything contentious (Lucio 2002). Thong (cited in Santry 2005) claimed that this kind of avoidance often results in conflict suppression in some cases eventually leading to explosive violence, since solutions based upon exploration of needs are not found. This tendency has been confirmed in *Peace Bridges'* own research on conflict in Cambodian families (Ketchum, Ketchum and Ma 2009).

Like families around the world, Cambodian families can suffer from significant dysfunction and violence. Arguably the extent of this dysfunction has been exacerbated by more than three decades of civil war, including the genocide of 1975 to 1979 (Yale University 2011). During this time the policies of the Khmer Rouge regime resulted in the deaths of up to one fifth of the population, the breaking up of families, the execution of most people with education and of previous leaders, and an attempt to destroy Khmer culture and religion (Santry 2005). With armed conflict having only ceased in the mid 1990s, deep psycho-social scarring in Cambodian families is not uncommon (Ketchum and Ketchum 2008). This traumatic history may in part explain the findings of an extensive survey in which one third of respondents stated that the use of extreme violence against a wife (for example burning, choking, acid throwing and shooting) may in some circumstances be acceptable 'punishment' for transgressions (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2005). For example, 58% of the respondents stated that a wife arguing with her husband, not obeying him or not showing respect might justify throwing acid or shooting (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2005). Respondent perceptions about circumstances where this may be acceptable appear to indicate alarming attitudes about violence against women. It should also be noted that '[v]iolence by wives toward their husbands was also viewed as sometimes acceptable.

But every type of violent behaviour was considered less acceptable for a wife than for a husband.' (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2005:21).

The above problem underlines the vulnerability of many women and children who are unable to access dispute resolution services or full protection before the law to meet their needs for safety and economic security. It also exacerbates a further problem of viable long term options for women once they separate (Lim 2009). Whilst the situation of women is arguably moderated by a matrilineal tradition where the husband begins married life in the home or village of his wife's family, the strong tendency to blame a wife for any failing in a marriage reduces the influence and support a wife's family may be willing to provide (Ebihara 1968; Santry 2005).

The challenges of women's' rights are further exacerbated by a traditional mediation process which strongly favours reconciliation. According to a UNDP study (2008:6) a 'disturbing number of...[village chiefs] did not consider domestic violence serious and would try to get the husband to sign an agreement to foreswear violence, only to see him continue where he left off... Other Village Chiefs made serious efforts to call the police to arrest repeat offenders, only to be refused any reasonable backup, and to have the complaint dismissed as a family matter.'

### **Needs analysis: Building appreciation of stakeholder needs**

The needs analysis I presented to *Peace Bridges* was multi-focused. I was concerned to exemplify a holistic stakeholder analysis consistent with Lederach et al's (2007) multi-levels approach. Brody's (2007) concern for responsiveness to 'external markets' including stakeholders who do not receive direct services was also factored in. Since *Peace Bridges* seeks to develop projects to communities through partners I was concerned to ensure the needs analysis focused both on one selected priority partner and the communities they targeted. To avoid making judgements about which partner should be selected among existing partners I created a fictional partner called '*Hands Together*' yet sought to make the characteristics of this partner very similar to some of *Peace Bridges* most resilient partners. All information related to the context of this partner is real. The needs analysis I presented now follows.

### **Needs analysis: national and international level**

Recent research into alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Cambodia identifies a significant lack of resources for ADR competency development at the national level and a strong interest from key national and international stakeholders for the development of such competencies throughout the country (UNDP 2009; Ramage, Pictet, Chhy and Jorde, 2008). The research findings also confirm the value in *Peace Bridges*' approach of working in close cooperation with local government leaders, public servants and the international bodies supporting them, whilst maintaining independence (McGrew and Doung 2010).

### Needs analysis: project partner level

'Hands Together' (HT) based in rural Kompong Cham province is selected by *Peace Bridges* (PB) as a priority partner to implement this pilot proposal. The selection of *Hands Together* for this pilot was based on an overall needs and asset assessment of five main partners. According to this assessment Hands Together has the greatest capacity to successfully implement the pilot project consistent with the vision and values stated. This selection was based on three main criteria:

- a. The capacity and motivation of the partner to work with PB in offering strategic capacity development supports to local ADR practitioners.
- b. Relationships (Lederach et al 2007, Taber 1998) to key civil and informal stakeholders deemed to be influential in determining ADR outcomes for families at the local level. The partner HT has a very good reputation and working relationship with the majority of village and commune leaders as well as access to the provincial governor. Furthermore, the partner is well acquainted with community based organisers seeking to advocate for the needs of some of the most vulnerable in the target community (Taber 1998), and has a volunteer network of over 150 villagers able to provide potential support services.
- c. A demonstrated need for the pilot project in target communities. The pilot will target three main districts in which HT already has strong connections: Kampong Cham (population 42,583), Prey Chhor (population 136,307) and Srei Santhor (population 108,174) (NCDD 2008). According to a PB/HT needs assessment<sup>1</sup> of 124 commune and village leaders from these districts, less than 5% of these leaders had received any training in ADR or family dispute resolution, outside of an average of five hours of gender education undertaken by 26% of this population. Eighty nine percent (89%) of respondents stated that training in family ADR practices was a very high priority. Consistent with national data (Ninh and Henke 2008) it appears the mediation of domestic conflicts is second in frequency only to small land conflicts.

### Needs analysis: community level

A second critical step is for *Peace Bridges* to understand the dynamics of the target community (Lederach et al 2007). This will require the project team building upon HT's existing knowledge of:

- a. Formal and informal family ADR practitioners perceived by villagers to hold the interests of families and communities above political as well as personal interests.

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<sup>1</sup> Fictional but consistent with findings of the 2005 national survey on commune councils in Ninh, K, and Henke, R. (2008) and PB's own research.

- b. Formal and informal community organisers perceived to be working for the interests of families and communities.
- c. A baseline of existing values and competencies in family ADR of a purposive sample of potential trainees from formal and informal leaders of influence.
- d. The timing and types of forums most likely to attract participation of those most involved in ADR among families.
- e. Impacts of existing patron-client networks in targeted communities.

It is anticipated that such locally based findings will be triangulated with existing research conducted by PB, including baseline studies of other ADR trainings with civic leaders. Members of HT will work with the PB Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Team to collect, analyse and discuss findings with the project design team.

### **The target group: identifying primary stakeholders**

A third step for PB is to identify appropriate stakeholders. Five main stakeholder groups targeted by this program will be:

- a. The total population of the three target districts of Kompong Cham Province, who often lack ways of resolving family disputes that meet individual and collective need.
- b. Influential men and women who are respected leaders in their families. This group will be targeted for individual formation of Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Habits (KASH) (Sparrow and Knight 2006) for resolving disputes peacefully, with the intention that they spread this KASH throughout their families and wider circles of influence. It is proposed that at least 40% of those targeted will be women.
- c. Influential men and women who have formal and informal responsibility for mediating family disputes outside their own family circles. This group will be targeted for individual formation of KASH for effective alternative dispute resolution (ADR) with the intention that they spread this KASH throughout their families, the families they mediate and wider circles of influence. This group will include village chiefs and commune leaders responsible for formal family mediation, police responsible for enforcing certain family dispute resolution agreements as well as respected religious and citizen leaders also called upon by families to mediate disputes. At least 20% of those targeted will be women.

d. Employees or volunteers of community based organisations or local government and non-government organisations concerned to offer a variety of services to support families in dispute. At least 50% of those targeted will be women.

e. Employees of HT, whose capacity will be developed to manage the second three year phase of the program (2016-2018).

## **Values clarification and philosophical underpinnings of the design**

The following section was written to encourage Peace Bridges' planners and wider staff to identify theories of change (Lederach et al 2007) or hypotheses (Taber 1988) underlying planning. There was an additional interest to promote development of an ethical framework built upon personal, relational, cultural and structural factors (Lederach et al 2007).

### **Theories of change underlying the overall program direction**

This program design is largely based upon 'growth with equity' peace building theory (Jantzi and Jantzi 2009). This theory argues that alternative dispute resolution processes are best grounded in individual change in people of strategic influence in communities so they can advocate changes to others that they have discovered as personally and communally liberating. From this stance, bottom up changes (Leeuw 2003) in ADR practices at the community level may provide sustainable alternatives to a wider population, as these practices are ideally transferred to others through organic relational connections. The concern here is not simply to influence more people, but to consider the most strategic ways of influencing key people at the community level who have the responsibility of mediating family conflict and who, through their circles of influence, eventually seek to influence policy makers (CDA Collaborative Learning Project 2009). Such an approach is predicated upon a view that individual change must include values and attitudes supportive of agreements addressing the needs of all stakeholders impacted by a dispute. However this approach is counter cultural in many Cambodian dispute resolution contexts, which are characterised by 'high power distance' leading to extreme authoritarianism which places the rights of the vulnerable well below those of the powerful and well positioned (Berkvens 2009). This can significantly impact the impartiality of ADR practitioners. It is held that attitude changes are often a prerequisite to skills and knowledge impacting ADR practitioner practices and habits. ADR processes that do not seek to find solutions based upon respect for the needs of all parties, including women and children, will lead to agreements that are both unjust and unsustainable.

Yet the program design also assumes that the transfer of 'modern' ADR technologies largely developed from Western contexts cannot generally be transferred into the Cambodian context.

Contextualisation processes based upon discovery of indigenous practice and hybrid practices that can be indigenised in the Cambodian context is essential (Santry 2005). This requires ensuring the development of 'new' ADR technologies grounded on community dialogue (Lederach et al 2007). Below is 'a schematic representation of core elements underlying the program logic' (Leeuw 2003) which reflect key program hypotheses (Lederach et al 2007; Taber 1998):

**Figure One: Core elements underlying the program logic**

*Key actors that influence family ADR at the community level are family leaders, village chiefs, commune leaders, police, respected religious and citizen leaders, and community advocates*



*The problems with current individual and collective ADR approaches by these actors are both values and competencies based*



*These actors make up an interconnected community system that is not easily separated and so a holistic approach is needed.*



*The most effective way to deal with these attitude and competencies deficits is through in depth and experiential learning approaches that:*

- a. Build healthy relationships and connections between these actors so as to assist the process of breaking down divisions and prejudices that contribute to ADR problems*
- b. Lead to individual change in actors that sufficiently motivates them to spread these changes to others who impact ADR and are impacted by ADR.*
- c. Are sufficiently indigenous or indigenized to be transferable and culturally effective, which assumes a dialogue learning process with a balance of competency elicitation and transference processes.*
- d. Are long term and gradual (beyond the three year pilot which is only stage 1)*



*Program participation by these actors will be significantly impacted by:*

- a. Ownership of the program by key patrons and community leaders*
- b. Program design based on a realistic assessment of circumstances that will constrain and enable involvement*
- c. Relational supports through respected community networkers committed to strengthening and reinforcing the process of change through ongoing individual and group dialogue*



*Changes brought about in these community based actors should:*

- a. Trickle down to families in dispute at the village level leading to ADR processes and outcomes that consider the needs of these families*
- b. Trickle up to other actors in ADR, both practitioners and those influential in broader policy development, leading to a spreading of the vision and values of family need-centered ADR*



*The program will be localised by Peace Bridge's focus on handing over the program to Hands Together and building ownership in key community based actors*

### **Values around family ADR practices**

The following values (Pearson in Ketchum et al 2009:15) outline the program's understanding of what constitutes 'healthy family' in instances where the goal of ADR processes is reconciliation:

- '1. Commitment to each other as a family and to the well-being of individual members.
- 2. Fairness among the spouses (equitable sharing, respect and support among spouses).
- 3. Parenting that nurtures, protects, and guides children.
- 4. Respect for individual differences and needs [as well as collective needs.]
- 5. Trust, supported by predictability and stability in family interactions.
- 6. Flexibility in adapting to both internal and external demands of life.
- 7. Understanding and open communication between family members.
- 8. Effective problem-solving strategies, allowing for conflict resolution.
- 9. Shared life values.
- 10. Networking with larger social circles (relatives, friends, community, other social systems), thus providing resources for both physical and psycho-social support'.

Because of the prevalence of violence within many Cambodian families (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2005) the program recognises the importance of conscientising family ADR practitioners towards a systemic understanding of this violence. For example the design is informed by Walker's (1999:21) theory that 'the interaction among gender, political structure, religious beliefs, attitudes towards violence in general, attitudes to violence against women as well as state-sponsored violence, such as civil wars and conflicts and the migration within and between countries ultimately determines women's vulnerability and safety.'

### **Other approaches considered**

a. The option of working more formally with the Royal Government of Cambodia to develop capacity and policy for ADR was not considered as beneficial a use of resources because PB is not sufficiently positioned with the government for this approach, as compared to much larger actors like the United Nations Development Program or Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (German Company for International Cooperation). Furthermore, as has been argued, a bottom up approach better fits PB's strategic positioning, values and philosophical assumptions. This includes a concern for independent selection of ADR practitioners for training based upon an assessment of potential to form values congruent with PB's approach. The goal is the creation of alternative grassroots movements within existing institutions and community structures.

b The option of setting up ADR centres which communities could access was not considered economically or culturally sustainable.

c. The option of PB acting alone without a partnership with HT does not fit with PB's mandate to develop partners' capacity and localise services within communities that already have relational access to key stakeholders, which requires years of trust building. Furthermore, the chosen approach allows PB to use its limited resources to support similar projects with other partners in the future, thus increasing PB's capacity to scale up outputs and outcomes (Lederach et al 2007).

### **Three Year Program Implementation and Evaluation Plan 2013 - 2015**

A detailed program implementation and evaluation plan was presented to staff including a logical matrix framework. There is not sufficient space to provide such a plan here. Instead a selection of key principles that may be of interest to readers are outlined below.

Consistent with an efficiency model (Brody 1995), the plan proposes causal connections and feedback mechanisms. For example the program goal is to increase the extent to which family dispute resolution leads to solutions that meet the needs of all family members. The means to do this is outlined in four program objectives which focus upon formation of competencies in three key community groups: informal family leaders, formal ADR practitioners and local community organisers. The goal and objectives are all linked to verifiable indicators. For example, following phase one, representatives of the three key community groups should be able to explain how their approach to ADR has increased their competence to consider the needs of all, especially the safety and security of women and children. Means of verification include semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Yet the planning process also emphasises Taber's (1988) and Lederach et al's (2007) additional concern for continuous reflection on the hypotheses that led planners to decide on a particular

means to the desired program end. For example, embedded between the above noted program goal (end) and objectives (means) is a hypothesis that the three key groups are the most influential for the delivery of family ADR at the community level. Yet it is possible that this theory is incomplete or incorrect. Furthermore the program outputs, building off the objectives, contain hypotheses on processes most effective to build attitudes and competencies that are presumed to be deficits. Whilst noted research appears to support these ideas, a reflection on practice should include reviewing the validity of these and other program hypotheses or theories of change. As Lederach et al note (2007: 48) ‘Even when projects are successful, it is important to dig deeper and ask why. The first question is: Was the project successful? The answer may be “yes, because...” or “yes, but...” Following up the “buts” and “becauses” can lead to significant learning. Examining theories of change is a process of critical analysis and learning.’

The schematic representation of core elements underlying the program logic above (Figure One) identifies the key theories upon which the program is built. This planning process assumes staff are conversant in this approach so as to be able to critically reflect upon ways, objectives and outputs that may require change to better serve program ends.

### **A critical reflection upon design assumptions - are my theories of change sufficiently aware of frames of reference undergirding them?**

An additional reflection for readers of this article relates to potential for significant tension between my design claims for contextual relevance and stated values counter to cultures in that context. For example readers from a de-colonising school of development might question the sustainability or even ethical appropriateness of seeking to advocate for a model of family equality to replace the authoritarianism of a high power distance culture. It could be argued that what is offered here is a Trojan Horse style of development where a Western message is delivered by insiders to make it more palatable. At the very least it is important that foreign program designers like myself reflect on the extent to which our ethnocentric biases limit awareness of cultural enablers already present in cultures (O’Leary 2006). This also includes awareness that values such as gender equality may be expressed in different ways. For example can it always be presumed that male family leadership equals gender inequality? Furthermore offerings of new planning ideas should always be understood as a dialogue that allows cultural insiders to make counter responses (Santry 2005). Yet the de-colonising school of development critique may also need a hermeneutics of suspicion around the manner in which cultures are formed, especially where they lead to systemic oppression of women and the poor (O’Leary 2006). Furthermore in a globalised context it is important to recognise a multiplicity of cultures and not to under-estimate the sophistication of insiders to adopt, adapt and discard program elements to suit each context (Peterson 2009; Higgins 2011).

## Conclusions

The gradual development of *Peace Bridges*' reputation for effective peace capacity development within established partners and among wider stakeholders places it in a unique position to scale-up its impacts through an intentional longer term partnership, such as the mock proposal described. A key challenge for *Peace Bridges* is to ensure the growing focus on a range of partners does not preclude being selective in choosing one or two high priority partners with capacity to deliver a more substantive and integrated peace program in their specific context. This proposal provides a pathway for such an approach, building upon the assets *Peace Bridges* has developed over the past eight years.

A pre-requisite to the success of this design is sufficient lead time for collaborative stakeholder involvement in planning. This must include assessing the potential starting points for effective intervention (Lederach et al 2007). While donors often focus upon calculations of effectiveness using numbers of direct service outputs against the cost of these outputs, it will be necessary for them to become more open to the importance of less direct outputs, focused upon building trust and networks among a broad range of stakeholders. Without significant time and resources allocated to this endeavour the participation of high and middle level community leaders with substantive influence on family ADR processes and outcomes will be lost. This loss would significantly reduce the capacity of the design to trickle down to families in dispute at village level or to trickle up to other actors in ADR, including those influential in broader policy development of family ADR in Cambodia.

Finally cross cultural design advisors like myself need to be ever mindful of the potential of our ethno-centrism to blind us to examination of frames of reference underpinning our theories of change. At the same time sustaining a robust suspicion for oppressive elements in all cultures should be sustained. The importance of viewing planning as a dialogue with indigenous actors including awareness of any restraints to actors voicing opposition to ideas is vital for the ongoing process of developing contextually relevant programs.

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## The hidden young face of care

MARIA HUDDLESTON AND DEBORAH WEST

### Abstract

*Young people who provide unpaid care to someone with an illness or disability in their households can remain unrecognised by practitioners within the health and social care system as the focus is usually on the presenting individual or those who require care. Practitioners working in the health and social care system should have knowledge and awareness of who young carers are and their circumstances. This article seeks to raise the profile of young carers so that practitioners are able to recognise and provide holistic care to the family and provide resource and support opportunities for young people who provide care.*

**Key words:** *Young carers, practitioners, health and wellbeing, human service system*

### Introduction

This article will explore the phenomenon of unpaid, informal care in Australia, with a focus on young people providing family care. Young people who provide care in their home are vulnerable to being overlooked and remain hidden in Australia, as informal family care is often interpreted as an expectation of family commitment (Becker 2007; Cummings, Hughes, Tomyn, Gibson, Woerner and Lai 2007). This can create structural domination and oppression within service provision.

### Background

While the unpaid caring phenomenon has existed for centuries, informal care has only really been acknowledged in Australia through initiatives and policies in the last few decades, including the Carers Recognition Act 2010, the National Carer Recognition Framework, Carer Payment and Allowance through Centrelink, National Carers Week, and specifically to the Northern Territory: the Carer Concession Scheme and The Northern Territory Carers Charter.

Within Australia informal care comprises 77% of total community care (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003; Carers Australia 2001), and while this is an extremely vital contribution within the community, it is largely unrecognised and undervalued (Duckett 2000). The value

of informal care provided by Australians is estimated at a total replacement cost of \$30 billion annually (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009) and is estimated at a relative value of 0.6% of the gross domestic product (between 2004-2005) (Eagar, Owen, Williams, Westera, Marosszeky, England and Morris 2007). Within an ageing population and with individuals living longer with an illness or disability it is likely the contribution of informal care by family carers will increase in future years.

The focus of this article centres on young carers in Australia who are defined as a young person aged between 5 and 25 years who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who suffers from a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, or who is frail (Carers Australia 2009). Approximately 10% of the Australian population aged between 15 and 25 years provide unpaid, informal care (Carers Australia 2001), and two thirds of this population are the main or only source of care and support (Carers Australia 2001). When considering the ages and developmental stages of children and adolescents, it is quite alarming to think that a large percentage of Australian children provide care during a significant developmental time.

A large proportion of young carers are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Hill, Smyth, Thomson and Cass 2009), and within Australia Indigenous Australians are 1.8 times more likely to provide informal care than non-Indigenous individuals (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). Indigenous young carers account for the largest proportion of young people who provide care in the Northern Territory and other remote parts of Australia (Hill et al. 2009). While almost a third (32%) of the Northern Territory's population is Indigenous (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006), it is evident that these individuals are overrepresented as informal carers. This may be attributable to the early onset of chronic illness within the Indigenous population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008), and a cultural outlook of providing care responsibilities as an extension of family duties (House of Representatives 2009).

The prevalence of young carers is further expected to increase with an ageing population, advanced medical technology allowing people with an illness or disability to live longer, changing social structures (individualisation and privatisation of health care), changing family structures (one parent households), and changing economic conditions (working parents). As young people often cannot contribute to the family financially, they are sometimes given no alternative but to assume a carer role within their household (Aldridge and Becker 1993).

Young carers assume adult-like responsibilities which include: shopping, cleaning, cooking, managing finances and dealing with financial issues, attending health appointments, taking care of and raising other siblings, and negotiating with service providers (The Carers Association of SA 2005). Young carers also assist the care recipient with personal care needs including dressing, bathing, toileting, assisting with mobility and administering medication (The Carers Association of SA 2005). These children are often depended upon to listen to

medical problems, understand psychosocial difficulties, and interpret where English is not the first language (The Carers Association of SA 2005). It is evident that young carers may assume complex and quite confronting tasks while they are young and that they will likely be depended on by other family members to assist with aspects of health and social care.

Care responsibilities become more involved and acute as young people grow (Dearden and Becker 2004), and these are likely to advance above and beyond age appropriate responsibilities (Hill et al. 2009). Children and young people who provide care find they make sacrifices which impact on their education, social interactions, health and wellbeing (Heron, 1998). These individuals are more likely to live in low-income, rental and financially insecure households as few adults who receive care from their children hold paid employment (Hill et al. 2009; Aldridge and Becker 1993). Many young carers may also not have the support and nurture from family members as the focus is on the care recipient. Increasing responsibilities within the household may impede young carers' opportunities to explore a personal identity (Berger 2005).

While many practitioners and the broader society remain unaware of the responsibilities and tasks of young carers (Thomas, Stainton, Jackson, Cheung, Doubtfire and Webb 2003), families of young carers have voiced reluctance to disclose information about children's roles in the household. Parents often feel that such disclosure could lead to the involvement of child welfare services in questioning parent capacity to care for their children (The Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills 2009). Human service practitioners can also be unaware of the situations of these families, concluding that parents have exploited or neglected their children (Moore and McArthur 2007).

As the role of caring falls on young people due to inadequate formal support and intervention from external social structures (Bursnall 2003; Aldridge 2008), this hidden face of care urgently requires attention and acknowledgment by human service practitioners. It is evident that providing informal family care has the potential to impose restriction on adolescent development, and social and educational opportunities (Becker 2003). Care responsibilities can leave individuals socially isolated, suffering poor physical and mental health, and experience a loss of control over daily living which impacts on individuals' diet, self-care, rest and the relationships around them (Gahagan, Loppie, MacLellan, Rehman and Side 2004). This is further exacerbated by the findings of a recent national study which speculates that family carers account for a large proportion of individuals who suffer from depression (Cummings et al. 2007).

These potential negative outcomes of providing family care leave young carers vulnerable. They may experience negative impacts on mental, emotional, and physical health alongside the developmental changes encountered during their transition into adulthood. It is therefore likely young carers will encounter health and social difficulties as a result of their care circumstances before they reach adulthood.

## The Human Service System

As previously discussed, young carers may be required to manoeuvre through the human service system to secure resources and support for the care recipient. As a result of their age, appearance, experience and confidence in interacting with practitioners and navigating the system, these young people are vulnerable to marginalisation and structural oppression. They may be perceived by practitioners as too young to be heavily involved in family affairs or undertake complex adult roles, or may be overlooked as having any involvement at all. This silence is likely to be further enforced particularly as family members may not disclose the young person's involvement in care. This is despite the young carer being ideally positioned to provide information to practitioners concerning daily routines (e.g. diet, physical activity and pain management) which can be used to inform health care plans, monitor progress and provide a holistic picture of home care.

There are also service provision gaps where young carers are overlooked as being affected or impacted on by their care and family circumstances. While organisational funding guidelines and policy restrictions prohibit assistance and support to family carers (Moore and McArthur 2007), it is crucial that young carers do not fall through service provision cracks. Human service practitioners hold an ethical responsibility and duty of care to support and assist children and young people with whom they have contact. This can be extended within practice to include young carers. Identifying young carers within families assists in dismantling the barriers which contribute to hidden family care.

Within regular practice practitioners can ask whether children in the home are affected in some way by the care requirements of the presenting individual. This provides a starting point for conversation around children's involvement in family care. While service provision is bound by organisational roles, funding and policies, practitioners can nevertheless make referrals or provide families with information about local carer-specific organisations which support family carers.

One such organisation which provides direct support to informal carers and their families across the states and territories of Australia is *Carers Australia*<sup>1</sup>. This non-government, not-for-profit organisation is the national peak body for informal carers (Carers Australia 2009) which liaises with all levels of government, policy makers and the general public to provide a voice for carers.

By providing families and young carers with information of available resources and support within the community this could assist and support young people to continue providing effective care within their home. Practitioners within the human service system are ideally positioned to provide families with the opportunity to gain further carer-specific support and

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<sup>1</sup> Carers Australia website: <http://national.carersaustralia.com.au/>

raise the profile of the widely hidden phenomenon, gaining acknowledgement of young people providing care, and their potential structural oppression and silencing. By further understanding and recognising the responsibilities and tasks young carers assume, as a society we begin to appreciate the contribution these young people make, and their aspirations, hopes and dreams which are impacted on by circumstances beyond the control of surrounding individuals. A study reveals that young carers felt alone, did not know where to go for help, nor were they aware that there were other young people in similar situations (Kambouris 2011). Providing the opportunities for young carers to access carer-specific support and resources works toward alleviating these feelings of loneliness, social exclusion, and helplessness.

Within a society where more young people will be called on to provide family care, where young carers will increasingly care for more individuals and where they are likely to grow in to adult carers due to changing social and family structures, it is critical that these young people are acknowledged, understood and supported. If young people are to have the best opportunities to grow into well adjusted adults they need (and have the right) to be nurtured, supported and understood in their journey. This is particularly important for young carers whose contributions and circumstances otherwise remain hidden.

## **Conclusion**

This article attempts to raise the profile of young carers within the Australian society through a brief description of their roles and responsibilities. While children have provided family care throughout time, it is important the human service system and its practitioners acknowledge the contribution these young people make to society. Furthermore it is critical that practitioners provide vehicles for these young people and their families to gain specific resources and support to assist young carers to grow into healthy adults with the best opportunities for life. This is possible without making drastic changes within service provision, but by merely making a referral or providing families with information of local carer-specific resources or support. Young carers of today are the future family adult carers.

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# Integrating social work and community development? An analysis of their similarities and differences and the effect on practice

**REBECCA FILLIPONI**

***Key words: social work and community development, integrated practice***

## Introduction

Community work and social work have many similarities and differences in theoretical background and practice interventions. There are numerous perspectives for and against the greater integration of social work and community work. Some workers feel this would increase the success of interventions with clients, others feel that it would increase unnecessary constraints due to differences in theory and practice.

To understand this issue more comprehensively two research tools were utilised, two interviews and four case studies. Interviews were conducted with a social worker working in a community development role and a community development worker, whose names and organisations were changed to comply with confidentiality. Julie is a social worker employed by a not-for-profit organisation working on community development projects for the bushfire affected community in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. John is a community development worker and an affordable housing worker for a local government in Victoria. The second tool was an analysis of four constructed case studies evaluating the benefit and appropriateness of social work and community development.

## Issues of Integration

An integration of social work and community development in practice is difficult because there are numerous issues that inhibit this process from occurring effectively and being supported by workers, organisations and professional bodies. These issues include: difference in values, lack of understanding of each others' profession and role, difference in and importance placed on professionalism and qualifications, and finally, many community development workers and social workers do not want to be professionally identified with each other.

### **Issue One: A difference in values and approaches**

Community development workers work within the community at a micro and macro level. Firstly they aim to develop personal networks, create social capital at the neighbourhood level

and work at resolving inequalities at the structural and political level (Scott, 2001 and Mowbray, 1996). Furthermore many community development workers use a conflict based theory approach which enables them to have the potential to facilitate change effectively. Some community workers see social workers, in comparison, ignoring this macro level and perpetuating existing inequalities (Mendes, 2003). Another difference is that social workers focus on professionalism, qualifications and refining skills and knowledge which can assist their clients. In contrast community development workers are traditionally against professionalism per se. Moreover community development workers value skill sharing and feel that the community is the expert in their own situation. These differences create an incompatibility between the two professions.

Julie indicated that at times she finds there is no difference between the two professions and they are interchangeable. However there are numerous times when she finds she carries out her community development role very differently to a community development worker without a social work background. She focuses on the people, their needs as a community and the individual. Furthermore since she has no other social worker in her office and therefore very limited supervision with a social worker, she has found that her learning has been reduced, though at times she thinks about aspects of certain situations very differently to her community development co-workers. Social workers value supervision very highly as they are always wanting to learn from all their experiences in a personal and professional way. She finds that if there are conflicts in the expectations of either the community, colleagues or funding organisations, even though she uses many community development approaches, she always makes her decision and justifies herself based on social work theory. This has been effective especially with the funding bodies as they are aware she is a social worker and find it is a justifiable rationale.

In contrast John never works directly with individuals as clients. He also does not focus on his own ideas or expertise; he prefers to allow the community and groups of people from the community to drive the ideas and focus of all the community development activity he oversees.

### **Issue Two: Community development workers and social workers do not understand the role of each others' profession**

When asked if community development workers and social workers should be further integrated, John stated that he believed that more community development workers should be employed in service provision agencies. Furthermore he believed that a community development worker's role would be to bring individuals and families together in consultation with social workers, as social workers work with families and individuals and community development workers interact with a wider client base. It is evident that John believes that community development workers work on the ground with the people in the community and social workers are a profession which receives referrals from other disciplines. It is also apparent that John believes that community development workers are more in touch with the

members of the community and general population.

A misconception that has been noted by Mendes (2006) regarding social work is that the profession assists individuals to fit into current inequitable systems, rather than create a better situation for the client from the outside in (Mendes, 2006). There are many negative views of social work by community development workers, and Mendes (2003) states that the understanding of social workers held by many community development workers is distorted and not an accurate reality of modern social work (Mendes 2003). In contrast the reality is that social workers focus on numerous areas of clients' lives rather than purely focussing on counselling and individual needs. Social workers have a broad focus on the community and the individual as well as focussing on self-determination and encouraging the client and the community to work for their own results, empowering the client and creating more sustainable change.

The perspective of some social workers is that community development workers are untrained and lack professional qualifications and skills. Furthermore it is believed that they also lack judgement and detachment when working with clients (Mendes 2006). Moreover this lack of detachment is evident through being too invested in the community and not keeping a professional distance from clients. It is thought that community development workers loose some of their professional integrity when getting too invested in one's cases. This perception is incorrect as community development workers have the qualifications, knowledge and skills to be successful in facilitating community development, which is their focus. In relation to the perception that community development workers lack detachment when working with clients it is evident this is a misconception of the profession. The reality is community development workers aim to involve community members in the process of change, they are client-focussed *or* community-focussed and aim for sustainable change by involving the client, which is not to be confused with detachment issues (Mendes 2006). Being real and invested in one's clients is an important feature to have as clients can sense whether a worker is engaging with them because it is their job or because they genuinely care and this has a great effect engagement and should be viewed as an important value.

### **Issue Three: A difference in importance placed on professional qualifications**

Social workers place high importance on professional qualifications. One can not be a social worker without a social work degree attained from university. Furthermore there is a regulating body that a social worker can register with once the appropriate qualifications are attained. Julie has a Bachelor of Social Welfare. She found that with this qualification she could not attain the type of position she wanted so she went on to attain a Bachelor of Social Work. In contrast community development workers require qualifications to gain a position, however they may gain these qualifications from university, TAFE or life and work experience. To clarify, social workers and community development workers often attain the same positions and are equally successful in these roles, however to have the title of a 'Social Worker' one must have a social work degree but to have a 'Community Development' title

one does not require a community development degree. John is well qualified with a Bachelor of Arts, Masters of Environmental Science and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment but this is not always the case with all community development workers. The view of community development workers is that the worker should not be held in higher regard than the client or clients regardless of educational status, as the client is the expert and the worker's role is to assist the client to create their own sustainable change. This allows all members of society to take part in community development action including lower socio-economic members of the community. In this area social work differs and has an underlying value that those that are professionally educated are somewhat more equipped to assist those in need than those that are not educated in the field. Further to this, social work can be seen as a profession of middle class citizens serving middle class communities (Mendes 2003), whereas community development aims to assist the disadvantaged and not estrange them. Therefore as community development focuses on empowering all members of society, it can be seen as a more inclusive profession than social work.

#### **Issue Four: The two professions do not want to be associated with each other**

Although Julie and John are quite happy for a greater integration of community development and social work to occur, neither of these professionals would like to stray from their core values and approaches. Moreover Julie already encompasses community development approaches in her role however John would prefer not to utilise social work skills and approaches but would prefer to just work more closely with other social workers in his role.

This issue makes it very difficult for a supported integration between the two professions to occur. Previously in Australia community development has been seen by social workers as a branch of social work, although this was not necessarily supported by community development workers. In past years however, the two professions have become more independent (Mendes 2003). Many community development workers see themselves as radical and see social workers as conservative. Moreover community development workers want to remain independent so these differences can be enhanced, which therefore perpetuates independence between the two professions.

#### **Positive aspects of integration**

There are however numerous reasons why an integration between social work and community development would have positive outcomes for the workers and the clients. Society is an interwoven tapestry of individuals, relationships, organisations, institutions and groups (Coulton, 2005). Because society is so complex, the more skills and diverse approaches a worker can utilise, the better the chances of a positive outcome for the client. Positive reasons why a greater integration would work include: it will allow the benefits of social work approaches and skills to profit a greater number of people, social work and community development have more in common than many workers think therefore would be more

compatible than currently thought and finally, a greater integration will ultimately benefit the clients and communities.

### **Using an integrated approach can benefit the greatest number of people**

If social workers focus on the community or groups within the community it can provide a more holistic approach and benefit a greater number of people than a casework approach. Social workers in Britain have embraced this integrated approach and have found that they have gained a greater ability to assist their entire community and achieve greater reach in their work (Mendes, 2003). Furthermore social workers that utilise community development provide long-term benefits as they focus on the cause of the issue in the external environment rather than the consequences the issue has on the individual. This point can be demonstrated in the following example. In some communities illiteracy is a major issue and it inhibits individuals from gaining jobs and financially supporting their families. A model of intervention that focuses on the individual would be to assist the individual to gain a job in a position where illiteracy is not an issue. A community development intervention could create a literacy program for members of the community from children to adults. This would decrease the overall illiteracy of the community and would in turn give individuals a greater chance of securing employment. Reaching a greater number of community members is important for Julie as she is only employed on a temporary basis and needs to serve a large proportion of the community. Because of this she finds that integrating the two practices gives her the greatest short term and long term outcomes. This is because she can focus on individual needs and counsel those in distress by utilising a social work model but can create sustainable change when using the community development model by establishing ongoing support and focus groups. Furthermore community development aims to change structures which support inequality, empowering whole communities to make positive change. Again the literacy example can be used to demonstrate that if the source of the issue is targeted, illiteracy, then the overall quality of life can improve. Moreover those who are illiterate are more likely to be unemployed and remain in a lower-socio-economic geographical area, and because of this their children are more likely to be illiterate. If this issue is changed then they can move to a different area and it will break the cycle of poverty. Finally many people suffering from issues do not ever seek help. In a traditional casework approach these people would never experience the benefits of an intervention, however by utilising a community development approach and targeting the source of the issues, these people would also receive the benefits.

### **Community development and social work are more similar than many people currently believe**

Community development workers and social workers currently share many of each others' skills and strategies in their core interventions (Mendes, 2006). Postmodern and reflective radical approaches, which focus on the broader context, are used by both professions. This is demonstrated through one main point that community development workers feel differentiates them from social workers, which is their focus on disassembling inequitable structures,

however in many areas modern social workers claim to already fulfil this role (Mendes, 2003 and Goldsworthy, 2002). Many community-focussed social workers and community development workers are employed in identical roles in the community. Furthermore the way in which they achieve goals in their position can be interchangeable. For instance when John sees a need in the community he meets with community members to discuss the issue and to facilitate the community members' establishing an initiative. Once the idea is formed his role is to locate others who can connect with the initiating group and support the community members in its development and implementation. This is similar to the approach that Julie uses. She meets with her mothers' coffee group to discuss needs in the community. They then think of ways that this need can be met and the women link other suitable community members into the initiative. Julie often uses this process in schools as then the parents and teachers can continue the implementation and evaluation once Julie has left the area. Another similarity is that in some contexts both professions can be seen as taking a conservative view, ignoring the external broader issues and encouraging individuals to conform to current societal expectations (Goldsworthy, 2002).

### **Integration will ultimately benefit clients**

It is suggested that a social work approach with community development values and strategies encompassed within it can create more positive outcomes for clients (Mendes, 2006). These community development values create a community continuum rather than a hierarchy as used in traditional social work, and include empowering casework, community building and social action, which are used in a decentralised strategy and are altered depending on the needs of the client (Goldsworthy, 2002). Moreover an integrated approach allows clients to take an active role in the intervention, being the expert in their own issues and situation. They are empowered to take control of their lives (Goldsworthy, 2002) and in doing so will learn the skills and strategies to continue dealing with their issues long after the professional relationship has ended. This is the aim of both social work and community development but unfortunately because of organisational constraints it does not always occur. However if not only individual social workers and community development workers, but organisations employing these professions, adopted this integrated philosophy then it would be more likely that worker would have the opportunity and be encouraged to use this approach.

Overall Julie feels that a further integration of social work and community development would be positive for her clients. She states that community development workers undertake research assessing the communities' needs before implementing programs and initiatives. Therefore in her experience it has been more effective and has had positive outcomes as well being better accepted by the community as a whole. This can be demonstrated through a community mothers' group that meets each week for coffee. She asks this group for advice regarding her ideas for future projects in the area. She finds that getting these women involved in the projects strategically and practically, by telling their friends and families and assisting in running the programs, the programs have greater success and a greater number of community members participate. She feels that a greater integration could be positive in

numerous fields, however there is still a need to differentiate the two approaches as different means of practice, as in some instances there is a need for one on one counselling sessions and the use of social work micro skills. However in other instances she has found it best not to use a predominantly social work focus as the community development approach has been more effective. For example the Labour Government uses a paradigm of social inclusion to assist vulnerable members of the community in Australia. This focuses on improving the community as a whole to enrich the lives of the individual rather than simply focusing on individual needs. John implements this paradigm in his affordable housing role. John could try to find housing for individuals, however he focuses on making a greater number of houses available to the community by organising meetings and information sessions for developers, housing providers, council staff, landowners, service providers and councillors, to discuss new public and private housing projects. This approach adopts the social inclusion paradigm and benefits many members of the community, as they have greater access to housing if more housing is available, and it benefits the community as a whole as there are a lower number of homeless people in their area. Therefore as long as each worker has the capacity to choose the approach that will best work in their situation for their particular clients' circumstances, then a further integration between social work and community development would be a positive occurrence for the community.

## **Case scenarios of appropriateness of traditional social work and community development approaches**

### **Case scenario one**

A rural Aboriginal Community in Northern Territory has recently received a government grant for a social worker to improve the health and social issues within the community. This particular community is similar to various other rural indigenous communities, as it has high family violence, high rates of suicide, substance abuse and numerous health issues. The majority of the community members are unemployed and in poverty. A social worker has been sent to the community by the Federal Government for two years. The aim of this period is for the worker to educate community members and to facilitate positive change. It is hoped that a worker focussing on one community at a grass roots level will have a larger positive impact than a national program.

### ***Application of the community work approach***

It is important when implementing change that Tesoriero's (2010) idea of change from below is used as much as possible. This theoretical framework values local knowledge and local culture. This may be achieved more easily in such a community as this, as a shift in culture may not mean that the worker has to disagree and oppose the culture, they just may have to strengthen the subculture to overpower and become the dominant culture, as there is a strong subculture of mutual respect and pro-social behavioural expression within this community and numerous other Indigenous communities.

Strategies that will be implemented include citizen participation, popular education and local services development (Checkoway, 1995). The citizen participation strategy is used as an overall strategy and will incorporate an encouragement of all members of the community to be actively involved in the change initiative by encouraging members to not only become involved but also have them encourage others to become involved. The popular education strategy will include various educational groups and programs that will give the community tools in which improved living standards can be achieved in day to day living. These will include parenting classes to improve parent-child relationships, strengthen families and marital relationships and ultimately decrease family violence. Education programs and groups will also be operated to increase the knowledge of issues and possible assistance and increase the awareness of issues including mental illness, substance abuse and suicide risks. Popular education will also be useful to express new acceptable behaviours as well as what the community has decided they will not tolerate in their community in the future.

Finally the social worker will assist the development of local services which will be managed and run by local members in the community to ensure a long-term establishment in the community in the absence of current workers, specific funding and government grants. These will include programs in local primary and high schools for children and youth and community programs for adults and families.

### ***Skills and roles***

Skills that are required by the community development worker are diverse. One of the first skills that a worker would need in this situation is to establish one's credibility. Many Indigenous communities have had numerous workers involved in their community, yet the overall condition of Indigenous communities is still very poor. It would be important to establish that the needs of the community will come first and that the worker has something to offer the community that will benefit it as a whole. Further to this, Kenny (2006) has established six skills that are necessary when working with communities. Facilitation skills are necessary as macro management will allow the members of the community to gain the skills to continue on with the programs and change after the social worker has left. Another set of macro-management skills that are required are organisational skills and strategy skills. Although Ife (1996) states that some of the skills brought to the community by the worker contradict the idea of community work, as interventions are meant to focus on the strengths and knowledge of the community members, these skills are important as they will give the worker the ability to view the bigger picture and direct the ideas and change of the community members in a positive way (Ife, 1996). Networking skills will allow the worker to establish connections with other indigenous communities that have formal assistance and with those communities that are achieving positive change. This will assist the community to feel solidarity with groups outside their primary community and be exposed to continual experiences of pro-social behaviour. Research skills are important as even though the focus of this work is to empower community members to identify their own issues and solutions, they may not have the ability to articulate their needs accurately, and therefore having empirical

knowledge of similar situations, solutions and programs will assist in the brainstorming phase with the community and its leaders. Finally communication skills are of utmost importance as it is not only important to listen, respond and articulate ideas effectively, but this will be required to occur with language barriers, as this particular community's primary language is not English.

### ***Why a community work approach is more appropriate than traditional case work intervention***

The reason why a community work approach is more effective in this case than traditional case work intervention is because every member in the community is affected by the current situation. Furthermore, as the worker is only in the community for two years, the worker needs to create an environment in which the members of the community can benefit from subsidiarity, where decision making is devolved to the point closest to where it impacts (Kenny 2011:6). In the past the government has tried to improve Indigenous communities' social, health and economic problems with a national solution. This has had mixed results. A community development approach in one community will allow the power to be shifted from the government and put back into the community members' hands. This subsidiary, grass roots approach will empower the community to explore solutions that will be most effective for their particular diverse community. This approach would be more beneficial to the community rather than traditional social work because it allows the community to work together and strengthen themselves as a whole in order to continue to produce positive change and support each other in the future.

### **Case scenario two**

In February 2009 fires raged through many rural parts of Victoria. 'Black Saturday' not only had lasting effects on land and houses but emotions, family structures and communities. A woman presented at a community social workers office. The woman stated that she is living with her husband, mother and three small children in a small shed on their property while awaiting their insurance company to approve their claim so the family can start rebuilding. The woman's husband was working on their farm, however due to the fires he is unable to continue this and has been looking for work elsewhere without success. Her father died in the fires so her mother is living with the family for emotional and financial support. Her three children are four years, two years and six months old. She has presented to the social worker as there is mounting stress on the family. She is feeling pressure to make the household run smoothly, manage the bills, comfort her mother, support her husband and care for and entertain her children in a very small space. She is feeling isolated and depressed and does not know what she can do to improve her situation.

### ***Application of the community work approach***

The social worker could take a traditional casework approach and give the woman general counselling as well as grief and loss counselling, information on finance management and offer grief and loss counselling for the husband and mother. The way in which community

work would be applied is that the worker can create a group for mothers and fathers affected by the Black Saturday bushfires to bring their preschool children to. This would allow the children to socialise, play with toys which they may have lost in the fire and exhaust some energy in a large safe place. Furthermore it would allow parents to get out of their small confined residence and socialise with other adults. Moreover it facilitates building support networks and allows parents to speak to other adults in the same situation as themselves. Finally it can encourage community members to take part in social action and advocate for themselves as a group with similar needs. Education into these groups can empower individuals to take control of their situation and empower them to work towards a more positive future.

### ***Skills and roles***

This intervention would require both micro and macro skills. The group would have to be established and logistical items would need to be managed such as finance, program development, implementation processes and report writing for reporting back to funding organisations. Furthermore micro skills would need to be used as certain group members may have been through traumatic experiences and require some informal counselling during the group sessions, and finally facilitation skills would also be used in getting the group established.

### ***Why a community work approach is more appropriate than traditional case work intervention***

This community work approach would be more effective than a traditional casework approach. The reasons for this are as follows: creating a group for the community allows a wide range of people to become involved. Some of these individuals may have approached the social worker for assistance and therefore this will be more time efficient as all of these individuals can be assisted in the same session. Individuals that may not have approached the social worker for assistance will also benefit from the session. Furthermore a community development approach will provide empowerment for the group as they are taking control of their own situation by supporting each other rather than gaining continual assistance from a professional. Eventually the worker will leave the group and allow the individuals in the group to run it themselves. This will provide long term benefits for the community without long term intervention.

### **Case scenario three**

During the Victorian Bushfires in 2009, a young boy, aged seven, lost his father, mother and younger sister in the fires. The family saw the fire approaching but it was too late to escape their property. The mother grabbed the two children and their pet dog and hid in their large metal shed, while their father tried to fight off the fire to save his family. The shed quickly heated up and began to collapse. It filled with smoke and the family could not see. The mother tried to carry the young girl out of the shed while the boy carried their pet dog. Tragically only the young boy and his dog were able to escape out of the collapsing shed.

Once the fire had passed the young boy knew that his mother and younger sister would not have survived. He then began searching for his father. He heard his dog barking and ran to find his father. The young boy stayed by his father's side as he waited for help. Hours later a neighbour came to look for the family. The father was taken to hospital with severe burns and days later, passed away.

### ***Application of the traditional case work approach***

The main area that a worker could assist this young boy is one-on-one grief and loss counselling. Working through the trauma that the young boy has suffered would be the workers primary focus. This would allow the child to work through his feelings regarding the incident and the family members that he lost. The worker would also assist the boy in other ways to satisfy the child's basic needs for food, shelter and care.

### ***Skills and roles***

Knowledge of social work theories that are relevant to this case is vital for the worker. Relevant theories include grief and loss as the boy has suffered trauma and the loss of family members and crisis-intervention as the boy now has no home and has lost his primary caregivers. Because of this he will need to find temporary and permanent accommodation and will need to live with friends or family until a decision is reached where and with whom he will end up living. Furthermore, knowledge of developmental stages is also necessary as understanding where the child is developmentally will assist in assessing his needs and shed some light on reasons behind behaviours and feelings that may arise post-Black Saturday. The worker would play a case management role and a counselling role. The boy now has many needs that must to be considered to ensure that he recovers from this life changing event as best as possible. A case manager would need to be aware of the systems theory to understand what supports the child has and what services may be available to assist him. A case manager would also manage all of the other services and people involved in the case so that the child does not become overwhelmed by the system that will assist him though this time. Finally the worker would need to have an advocacy role. By building trust through counselling sessions, the child may state his wishes in relation to his future. This can easily be overlooked by other services and government departments as he may have limited adults in his life to stand up for his rights and wishes. Therefore providing advocacy to the boy would allow him to feel some sort of power and self-determination through this process, which is an important Australian Association Social Workers ethic.

### ***Why a traditional case work approach is more appropriate than community work intervention***

A community work approach may create programs in which young people can talk to their peers about their experiences or provide activities for children to have fun and forget about the tragedy of Black Saturday. This approach is less appropriate in this case. This boy is not ready to actively participate in society. He has experienced horrific trauma and should not be expected to share this with a group. In cases like this a community work approach could be

very beneficial in several months or even years as re-engaging with his community and peers is an important stage in recovery, however at this particular moment this child requires support and one-on-one counselling. Using social work theories such as grief and loss, crisis intervention and stages of development would assist the child to work through his experiences and feelings.

### **Case scenario four**

A father has been displaying aggressive behaviours towards his wife and children. The mother has decided that although her husband is not physically hitting their children, he is verbally abusive so she wants to leave him. She acknowledges that her children and their father are very close and she can not enforce zero visitations by the father. Because of this she also acknowledges that the father will continue to be aggressive during his contact with the children even after a separation has occurred. The mother does not know how to solve this problem and expresses her concern to her Maternal Child Health Nurse.

#### ***Application of the traditional case work approach***

The Maternal Child Health Nurse could refer the father to a domestic violence men's group in the community, however at this point in time it would be more beneficial for the family to work out their issues together. There are two avenues that would benefit this family, both requiring a willingness to participate. The first intervention plan is one-on-one counselling with the mother and the father separately and the second is a relationship counselling approach. One-on-one counselling could aim to unlock the father's childhood experiences to encourage self-awareness and evaluation of cause and effect relationships of child experiences of abuse and current aggressive behaviours. Working on issues behind current aggression rather than just the surface behaviours would allow the father to make permanent positive changes to his emotional well-being and relationships with his wife and children. Secondly relationship counselling involving the father and mother could assist in repairing the breakdown of their relationship. Moreover it could facilitate conversation in a safe and open environment to allow expression of feelings, fears and expectations and goals for the future.

#### ***Skills and roles***

Traditional case work approaches often utilise numerous theories in order to inform practice. Theories that would be beneficial to use when working with clients in these circumstances include: Attachment – which assesses the attachment of a child to their primary care giver as this has ripple effects on the child throughout their life; Social Learning – people can learn behaviours by observing, imitating and modelling others behaviour; Object Relations – aims to understand the capacity for loving (emotional bonding) and reacting appropriately to another person (Aymer, 2008), Systems Approach – assist in macro analysis of the systems and supports that one has or has experienced in the past; Behavioural and Cognitive Social Approach – assist in micro analysis of a person to gain a further understanding of how a person operates (Victorian Association of Family Therapists (1985). An ability to utilise theories appropriately in practice is as important as the knowledge of the theories.

***Why a traditional case work approach is more appropriate than community work intervention***

Building non-violent communication skills is an important part of overcoming violent behaviours. These skills include conflict resolution, empathy and self-empathy. A development of these skills can assist one to develop healthy relationships post domestic violence and trauma for men and women (Little, 2009). These skills could be developed in a group (community work approach) or in sessions with a social worker (case work approach). However to gain a deeper benefit to a family experiencing domestic violence a traditional case work approach may be more beneficial as although a traditional casework approach does not improve the domestic violence issue in the community, it could have a dramatic effect on this family. In some cases spousal abuse and abuse against children can be attributed to patriarchy and sexism. In these cases where abuse is related to ideas about women and children in general, then a community work approach would be very beneficial as this would target society's views of women and children through men's domestic violence groups. However it is more common that as well as patriarchy and sexism and societal issues, the abuse of women and children is related to earlier experience of abuse as a child or adolescent. Such System causes still have individual effects and individual intervention can be very beneficial. In these cases it is important encourage the development of insight and build skills that facilitate adaptive psychosocial functioning (Aymer, 2008, p1). Furthermore by increasing psychosocial functioning, one can unlock suppressed emotions and allow an understanding of effects of previous experiences of abuse on current relationships (Aymer, 2008).

**The next step to assist further integration between social work and community development****Education**

Current stereotypes are inhibiting social workers and community development workers from working together effectively (Mendes, 2006). Education will allow these stereotypes to be overcome and an integration to occur more smoothly. Moreover this education will create a more cohesive and cooperative professional system of workers and professions. Ife (1996) suggests that educating both social workers and community development workers in the skills of the others' profession will compliment one's current skills (Ife, 1996), and ultimately benefit the client. It is also important to educate the employers, services and government bodies that an integration of professions is an important step towards a higher quality service provision. Finally educating funding bodies is also a very important step in the process of greater integration. This is because workers and organisations are highly accountable to funding bodies and if they had a greater understanding of the issue and adjusted their requirements accordingly, workers would have increased flexibility and opportunity to tailor interventions to their clients' needs using a combination of community development and social work approaches, either simultaneously or at appropriate times for clients.

## Conclusion

There are many barriers to integration between social work and community development. It is important to understand the history of these professions to gain understanding of why these barriers have arisen and how these barriers can be overcome to create a succinct effective practice that satisfies the needs of the client. Some of the barriers that have been discussed include: differences in theoretical background, differences in values and approaches, a lack of understanding of each other's profession and a lack of desire to be associated with one another. However a greater integration can be achieved by education of all parties involved including social workers, community development workers, funding bodies, the AASW and the ACWA and service organisations that these professionals operate in and alongside.

Overall it is important to focus on the client. It has been established through case studies that an integration of these professions can provide a greater benefit to the clients, as many clients that come to each profession, can be best assisted by one of the two approaches. Furthermore this integration can also benefit the greatest number of people, providing quality assistance to more of the community. In each situation a worker faces, the clients' needs should be at the forefront of their intervention plan. When assessing the needs of the client and community a worker should identify whether a community development approach, a social work approach or an amalgamation of the two professions would be of the most benefit to the client and create the opportunity for the greatest results. However the worker can assess the situation and decide that best practice for this particular client in this particular situation would be a practice approach other than that of their profession, yet the worker is powerless to provide this approach if the organisation they are working in does not allow them to continue along this path. Therefore if community development workers and social workers are to stay true to their core value of serving the need of the client, then organisations need to readdress their acceptance of integration. Barriers need to be tackled and clients need to be advocated for, so that service providers can provide what the client requires. Therefore the question is not whether a greater integration is best for the client, but whether the system that community development workers and social workers work in as well as the workers themselves will embrace the need for change and integration and support a model that will greater serve the needs of the client.

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## Book Review

**OLGA BURSIAN**

***Social Work in Extremis: Lessons for social work internationally***

**Michael Lavalette and Vasilios Ioakimidis ( eds) (2011) Bristol: The Policy Press  
ISBN 978 1 84742 718 2 hardcover**

This is easily the most enjoyable social work book I have read for a decade. In fact, it was nothing short of riveting as each chapter provides a grounded description of recent, or not too distant, world disasters or contexts of war, through the lenses of nuanced social and political overviews and analyses of social work responses.

The editors are known for their radical social work writing and teaching, publishing in the journal International Social Work, participating in the Social Work Action Network in UK and joining in the most recent UK national strikes in protest at austerity measures in response to another looming EU financial collapse.

The book covers four themes: state and institutional responses to crisis or disaster; academic reflections on social work practice; scope for social work, student and volunteer campaigns in post crisis situations; and alternative forms of social work, or ‘popular social work’. An Australian reader can find much of interest here, not only by hearing the local voices behind familiar world news but also in the echoes of familiar social welfare issues around worsening social conditions and growing inequalities, with the same public explanations repeated endlessly by both major parties.

The first chapter provides the context for this collection. Professional standards and university education are partnered in service of a much more regulated, narrow and prescribed form of professional social work in the UK than is the case in Australia. Lavalette notes in the Introduction that the tradition of socially and politically engaged social work has been almost written out of present texts (eg Sylvia Pankhurst, Mary Hughes) (p 3). This book documents the efficacy and indeed, the necessity, of a solidarity based practice, and the importance for social workers of acquiring a clear knowledge of the historical and contemporary political, economic and social injustices and oppressions which have formed the contexts of post disaster recovery efforts.

Disasters can prompt progressive State and institutional responses. Gregory Necleous shows that the Turkish army invasion of Cyprus in 1974 led to the internal displacement of a third of the population. In response to pressure from mobilized citizens, the government hastened to provide progressive services and the welfare state that had lagged behind Cyprus’ European neighbours.

In Uzbekistan, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to widespread poverty and unemployment with approximately a quarter of the workforce needing to leave as legal or illegal migrant workers. The rise in abandoned children prompted the government to import social work help from the West. Western academics and professionals had declared this nation to have ‘virtually no experience with civil society’, the latter defined as the existence of non-government organisations such as those established by current Western social work. The failures of these initiatives are traced by Terry Murphy to a lack of appreciation of the reality of family- and ethnically-based networks of social supports and mutual obligations, imbued with a mixture of Islamic values of charity and older Zoroastrian social practices of the wealthy providing all community physical and social infrastructure. More recently, Communism endorsed neighbourhood based committees overseen by elders which mediated family disputes and ensured the meeting of people’s individual needs. Murphy provides an excellent discussion not only about cultural relevance but also about social work’s strategic need to demonstrate that it can open up possibilities that traditional local systems cannot provide by themselves.

Academics Carmen Hinestrosa and Vasilios Ioakimidis discuss the extreme conditions of Colombia with mass killings, kidnappings, 50 years of civil war and 4.9 million displaced people. The context of mass displacements include the drug lords, armed right wing paramilitary groups, state sponsored disappearances and violence by multinational companies to force peasants and Indigenous people from lands rich in natural resources. Having saturated the outskirts of Bogota’s squatter towns, thousands of Afro-Columbians and Indigenous people have occupied the central park of Bogota, partly as a political act of visibility to the middle classes. Only by spending much time to create a space of trust through democratic and participatory processes which ensured the displaced communities maintained control at all times, were social workers able to use their connections to resources and facilities to meet people’s immediate needs. The authors conclude that social work would not be possible without adopting the goal of the displaced to return to their own lands. This involves working through with people the historical and contemporary structural causes of such mass suffering and building the broad based solidarity movements that will in time, make possible a cessation of current brutal conditions.

Ashok Gladston Xavier unpacks the roles of social and community workers in mediating between Tamil and Sri Lankan rural communities and creating new relationships of friendship after the official end of the civil war. Marla McCulloch shares her experiences as a Red Cross mental health worker in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. She comments on the irrelevance of much American social work practice which remains silent about startling inequalities. Reima Ana Magdalic discusses her journey as a social work student during the war in Bosnia, the UN sponsored social services after the war and the lack of efficacy of these models imposed from above and from outside.

Crises and disasters offer scope for social work, student and volunteer campaigns. Dora Teloni analyses the struggle to protect the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Greece. Maria Pentaraki exposes the scale of the 2007 Greek bushfire in Peloponnesus, as linked to decades of government attempts to open up these public and semi-rural farm lands

to developers. Pentaraki sets up a field education opportunity for final year social work students to experience the link between individual post-recovery policies and pre-existing structural inequalities. Grassroots activists mobilised land owners to demand compensation and continue the struggle against undemocratic tactics of the state allied with developers. Pentaraki illustrates the effectiveness of community development knowledge and practices and comments on the unfortunate predominant focus of social work curricula on micro-level issues.

The final theme of the book concerns alternative forms of social work, or what Lavalette calls ‘popular social work’. The case study activities tick all the boxes pertaining to the domain of professional social welfare: meeting immediate physical needs, ensuring mental and emotional survival, stopping isolation, keeping up the morale of groups, remedial action to counter trauma, and the prevention and reduction of depression and social disintegration. Lavalette calls such processes ‘popular social work’, because they do not necessarily include welfare professionals. Popular social work raises questions about what good practice might be and how to incorporate the transforming dynamics of community solidarity into curricula. It also offers insights about the nature of society and the ubiquitous intersections of politics, economics and state policies implemented often for unjust goals. For example, in the most recent Haitian earthquake, aid was not distributed to Haitians but diverted to the wealthier areas, to tourists and UN compounds. Australians heard daily news reports about the priority focus of Haitian and UN authorities and US troops on the restoration of civil order and prevention of looting. In contrast, grassroots reports show an absence of looting and instead individuals taking necessary supplies to sustain human life (Solnit 2010, cited on p 9).

Chris Jones and Michael Lavalette’s chapter “Popular social work” in the Palestinian West Bank: Dispatches from the front line’ reports on a project to initially interview young people under occupation and discovering instead ‘some magnificent welfare projects’, carried out by unqualified people. Similarly, during a 33 day intensive Israeli bombardment of Lebanon in 2006, as the traditional welfare services of Beirut shut down, a grassroots organisation Samidoun involving 1000 volunteers, created a remarkably effective system providing for the immediate physical needs of refugees and transmitting up to date information through the use of information technologies and mass media. Finally, Vasilios Ioakimidis shares the buried history of the Greek liberation movement during Nazi occupation and civil war, built on citizen rights to work and democratic participation, including an effective network of social work provisions. This popular, labour and human rights inspired movement and home grown social work was crushed post World War II by American military, political, social and cultural interventions, including the importation in 1946 of what became the official social work profession. This model was based on English language social theory and psychodynamic knowledge and focussed on individual casework, assisting the state to establish social control and a military dictatorship for the ensuing decades.

A strength of the book is the wide use of references by authors of historical sources and current social analyses. If nothing else it provides access to rare historical material not only about prominent world events, but about the diverse forms of social work practice around the world. As Vasilios Ioakimidis comments in the Conclusion, the chapters illustrate well

known social and community welfare principles such as the importance of a holistic approach, where physical, cultural, educational and political needs and dimensions interpenetrate each other. In addition, rather than people being primarily self interested, crises demonstrate ordinary citizens' spontaneous willingness to join in collective action and to find new ways of working together. Democracy emerges from below and small-scale localised responses can develop into broader social movements. Although the publishers do not list *Social Work in Extremis* as a text book, I believe that it ought to be included for the teaching of social work and social welfare as an integration of skills and knowledge applied flexibly and creatively to changing contexts.

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## New Community Quarterly

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For those of you who haven't come across the (New) Community Quarterly yet, let me start with a bit of history. *Community Quarterly* started in 1983 by *People's Projects*, a publishing project of Employment Working Effectively Inc. It appeared during the heyday of government attempts to use community development as a strategy to enlist the efforts of activists, volunteers and '*true-believers in the bottom-up approach*' to assist with addressing problems like unemployment (especially amongst young people), multicultural work, environmental involvement, etc. It kept going for seventeen years as the only specialist community development journal in Australia, mostly produced by volunteers, totalling 51 issues. Fading energy and the virtual destruction of community development programs under the conservative governments of the 90s led to its suspension in 2000.

In 2002, a collective of people based at or associated with the Borderlands Cooperative, relaunched the journal as the *New Community Quarterly*.

We start from the premise that the '*development of community*' is something our world, our nation, our local sites and places and we as individuals need fundamentally if we are to survive as a species with a sense of dignity, justice and responsibility. The journal aims to promote education and to stimulate discussion about theories and practices of community development, to foster a sense of community through the establishment of networks of community activists, practitioners and learners in Australia and Oceania. Each of the four yearly issues includes (refereed and non-refereed) contributions to a set theme, a section with other refereed articles related to community development-at-large, network news – local, state-wide and national as well as international, and news about relevant happenings across the world, including new books, conferences and other events, important news in the political and economic realms, poetry, letters, etc.

We just finished publishing the third issue in our volume **nine** (as you can see, we're a bit late... again... as you know, we're just a bunch of volunteers who try to keep the journal going and that applies to many of those who contribute articles and other bits of useful news as well... so thank you for your patience!!!) is on (adult) education with a strong emphasis on Paulo Freire's approach of 'consciousness raising'. The fourth issue – appearing early 2012 – will have some focus on CD in remote, rural and regional areas. The themes of all issues which have appeared since 2003 (as well as those having appeared in our predecessor journal, the *Community Quarterly*, from 1983 till 2000) are on our website, [www.newcq.org](http://www.newcq.org).

The issues for the year 2012 (our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!!!) are planned as follows: #1 **Economic Crises, Social Justice and Community Development**; #2 **Cooperatives, Credit Unions, Social Enterprises and Community Development**; #3 **Sustainability, Local Government and Community Development**); #4 **Community Development in rural, regional and remote areas**.

We strongly believe that **all** community and welfare workers should be – at least – interested in community development theories and practices – even if their job description makes no reference to it. People are always already members of a community and it is imperative that (future) community sector workers become aware of what could be meant by the concept and the reality covered by it.

A full-year 'regular' subscription is \$60 dollars - for a total of over 280 pages of reading per year!!! Students and low-income subscribers pay \$30 and organisations at present pay \$110 per year. As an incentive for members of the ACWA, we keep the regular price for next year at \$50, hoping that many of you may decide to join about 500 subscribers across Australia (and help us increase numbers so that we can do a better job at what we do).

Jacques Boulet, editor.