Professional Development:
The International Journal of
Continuing Social Work Education

From the Editor's Desk

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	*From the Editor's Desk*
Author(s):	*Michael Lauderdale, Michael Kelly, Noel Landuyt*
Volume and Issue Number:	*Vol. 14 No. 1*
Manuscript ID:	*141003*
Page Number:	*3*
Year:	*2011*

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is a refereed journal concerned with publishing scholarly and relevant articles on continuing education, professional development, and training in the field of social welfare. The aims of the journal are to advance the science of professional development and continuing social work education, to foster understanding among educators, practitioners, and researchers, and to promote discussion that represents a broad spectrum of interests in the field. The opinions expressed in this journal are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the policy positions of The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work or its Center for Social and Behavioral Research.

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published two times a year (Spring and Winter) by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at 1 University Station, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. Journal subscriptions are $110. Our website at www.profdevjournal.org contains additional information regarding submission of publications and subscriptions.

Copyright © by The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work's Center for Social and Behavioral Research. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org **Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact**

From the Editors

The Next Two Years

The profession of social work is closely identified with changes in the American economy and society. The profession came into existence with the decline of the self-sufficient farming world of the 19th century that included migration to urban areas, the growth of factory work as employment, increased out of the home work for women and large scale immigration from Europe. Social work's dual beginnings were both voluntary activities concerned with the welfare of children, homelessness, poverty, street crime and disorder and the vulnerabilities of the young, handicapped and aged in a society dominated by the philosophical thought of Social Darwinism The Settlement House Movement accepted the same challenges from a concern for integration of migrant and immigrant families into American society. Education and professional development initially was based upon experience and, in time, independent self-supporting institutes developed that provided an early basis of professionalism and much of what those graduates did was to organize, find resources and direct the efforts of volunteers. Thus the original basis of the profession was organizing, securing resources, planning and directing the work of others.

Yet there was also at the beginning an effort directed at the individual and seen in the aggregate as the Charity Organization Societies. Here the causation of the social problems noted by the Settlement House Movement was seen as within the individual. Driven by the Flexner Report in 1915 that stimulated the development of medicine as a profession with standard training and accreditation and the movement of most training to university-based settings, social work developed similar attributes with the masters degree in social work being seen as the standard of professionalization much as the medical degree for medicine and the LLB for lawyers. Independent schools of social work began to disappear and professional preparation moved to college and university settings. The growth and visibility of the profession paralleled the urbanization of the country and was accelerated by the Great Depression and the creation of Federal funding to provide monetary assistance to the aged, handicapped and mothers with dependent children. During these years as those at the inception the core work of the profession was organizing and directing efforts for the most needy.

While Federal funding had increased the numbers of social workers during and after the Great Depression, more substantial increases occurred during the War on Poverty years and Federal creation of programs of Medicaid, Medicare and Title XX. These increases were possible because of the great wealth that the United States developed in the 20th Century along with an increasing social commitment to seek to prevent, ameliorate and correct a larger set of social problems. They included the original social work concerns but were now extended to delinquency, mental health, maternal and child health, efforts to prevent and correct many types of discrimination, addictions, obesity, exploitation and many other concerns. While many if not most of these concerns had been implicit in the earlier formulations of social work especially after the 1960's they became explicitly addressed in governmental programs, social work curricula and in specializations in the field. This trajectory reflected a "scientific" perspective with an emphasis on the individual also occurring in medicine and flourished in the setting of the modern university where scholarly specialization was endorsed and made specialization in fields like social work and medicine more possible. It also led to a workforce continuum in social work with much of the direct client contact in government services being done by a new type of social worker educated at the bachelors level replacing volunteers and supervised by a master's level social worker. Social work also began to see some persons educated at the masters' level create means of work and compensation as characteristic

of many in law and medicine and that was private practice where the focus shifted from organizing and planning to direct service to clients. Social work like law and medicine became active in efforts to secure individual client payment mechanisms through government programs, insurance mechanisms as well as private pay and included legislative efforts to create state licensure exams and boards.

One important thread running through this several decades of development of social work was the increasing wealth of the American economy providing voluntary contributions and tax revenues to support more social workers and the specializations of social work. However at the very point that specialization began to move most rapidly in the 1970's, a fundamental shift began in the American economy. There are several components to the shift. One was that great improvements and innovations in communication and transport permitted more free and rapid movement in trade than had occurred in history. This initially saw manufacturing that had originated in states like Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois moved to states with cheaper labor like Georgia, Alabama and Texas. It then saw much of this manufacturing move to other countries to the extent that markets largely created and dominated by the United States like consumer electronics, automobiles, textiles and clothing are now dominated by other countries. Two was a depletion of many of the natural resources that provided much of the initial wealth of America. Fisheries in the Great Lakes and the Banks off the East Coast, copper mines in the west, coal seams in Appalachia and petroleum deposits in the South and West, while not fully depleted, are harder to secure and more expensive and dangerous.

This condition is most clearly illustrated in petroleum where until the 1970's the United States went from one of the world's great oil exporters to a net importer. Today 65 to 70 percent of the oil used by the country must be imported. Three has been the great decline and shift of wealth within the society. Most American incomes have been stagnant for a decade, un- and under-employment is at Great Depression levels, net job creation is negative and wealth and income distribution has been concentrated at high-income levels with a decline in the middle class. Tied to incomes is the great increase in debt by all levels of government.

Today we as a society have far less wealth to tackle the problems that have always been the concern of social work. What we will be required is to use different means to address the problems. Much of what we must do and where the opportunities exist are in defining problems, creatively developing organizations to address them, enhance the involvement of volunteers and mobilizing community support.

Social work will be influenced during the next two years by many forces though the most potent will be the route of the economy. Almost all states and the federal government are curtailing services as a weak economy made most serious by the feeble growth of job statistics, both hiring and new job creation, force downward revisions of tax revenues and estimates of future revenues. As most social work positions and services come from tax revenues, we should anticipate a decrease in services for clients and employment for social workers. A worrisome added factor is the reality of strong inflation appearing in the cost of oil products particularly gasoline and food products. Some of the inflation comes from the reduction in oil supplies caused by fighting in Libya but in other cases it is weather disasters in the northern hemisphere from floods to droughts. These will have direct consequences for social work clients as well as agencies that hire social workers.

While the Middle East will serve as an occasional distraction for most Americans the major theme is probably going to be the economy for electoral politics and also for the lives of individuals and families. We shall hear increasing calls for leaders to solve the country's economics prob-

lems. It is unclear how taxation policy, spending programs or various incentives may serve to improve the job market and until new hires for new jobs begin to appear, the increased pressure on recipients and providing agencies will remain serious.

Rather than more jobs for much of the last two decades, America has lost jobs and most seriously in manufacturing. During the 90's and into the past decade 40,000 factories moved from the United States to other areas of the world. That is why un- and under-employment are so stubbornly high. Even our college graduates face the most serious conditions in decades of finding jobs and there is substantial concern about how relevant college educations are to securing employment though careful examination of this relationship continues to show clear advantage to college degrees.

Within these trends of rising energy costs are positives for employment. About four or five years out increased petroleum prices will encourage more domestic manufacturing as compared to imports and that will start a slow process of renewal of manufacturing centers in the United States.

Looking at social work curriculum offerings in the 1970's during the most severe economic downturn other than today's since the Great Depression are topics on cutback management, buyers cooperatives, home energy conservation, and urban agriculture including gardens and domestic fowls. Given that today's problems are likely to be with us for this decade returning to some of these topics may be timely. We will watch carefully the next assessment of continuing education trends to see if these topics grow among CE offerings.

In This Issue

The topics in this issue, Volume 14, Number One, reflect aspects of the international flavor of the Journal. It opens with the Special Issue Editor's overview followed by Irene Carter, Sung Hyun Yun, Connie L. Kvarfordt, and Wansoo Park's "Integrating research activities and field experiences in graduate social work education". Writing from the University of Windsor the article is an examination of the patterns found in Canadian Schools of Social Work of how research and field experiences are presented. Combining a literature review of how these two components are integrated across Canadian institutions they include their own School's experience and argue for the importance of such integration in the preparation of professionals for today and tomorrow.

This Volume has the reported data and discussion from the second survey of CE Programs in Social Work. The study indicates content similar to the 2009 findings. Added were a series of the questions to respondents asked about the financial status of their CE programs. In particular, the survey asked about budgeted amounts for staff salaries, overall program budget, and if program budgets had increased or decreased over the previous year. Investigators felt these questions were relevant in light of the current economic challenges within universities due to the financial and housing market crises within the United States. The average budgeted cost for staffing CE programs was $90,000, and the average overall cost of CE programs was $272,000. As was noted above, most programs indicated their budget had not changed in the last year (n=12, 57.1%). However, a little more than a third of those who responded to the question indicted that their budgets had indeed decreased (n=8, 38.1%). While this trend of decreasing budgets is not surprising, it nevertheless calls to attention the potential need for CE programs to not be supported by their institution but rather to more aggressively market the courses and certificates offered. For those programs supported partially or in full by their hosting institutions, these data could signal that CE programs should provide continued demonstrations of their relevance and effectiveness. Fortunately, such need and effectiveness are likely being captured by programs to some degree.

There are two book reviews. One by Mustapha Alhassan on Steve Hoffman's, *Planet Water: Investing in the World's Most Valuable Resource*.; and a second by Amanda Keys on Nancy Folbre's, *Valuing Children: Rethinking the Economics of the Family* (2009). Taken together they remind us of the quickly changing economic and thus social circumstances of dependent groups and the efforts of social workers to alleviate concerns.

Michael Lauderdale
Michael Kelly
Noel Landuyt

Austin, Texas and Columbia, Missouri

May 4, 2011