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TRANSFORMING SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION: NEW INSIGHTS FROM PRACTICE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP
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The Current State of Developmental Social Work Theory and Field Education in Africa: A Scoping Review

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Social work is an emerging and evolving scholarly discipline in many African countries, although it remains a field generally informed by Western social work theories and approaches (Mabvurira, 2020). Social workers apply the person-in-the-environment perspective in addressing human problems. They also engage the social, political, and natural systems to ameliorate people's distress conditions (Stoeffler, 2019). The main goal of social work in Africa is to enhance human well-being and to help individuals and communities meet their basic and complex needs; however, Afrocentric social work scholars have argued since the 1970s that the casework approach to social work does not adequately address the needs of people in Africa (Mupedziswa, 2001). They suggest that what is needed is the blending of casework and social development social work paradigms so as to align practice with socioeconomic context and objectives of the 2030 *Sustainable Development Goals* (Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019). Consequently, there is a call for a major paradigm shift whereby social work educational institutions are encouraged to promote the incorporation of development models within the casework and field work pedagogies (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018; Smith & Rasool, 2020).

The transforming from Eurocentric to Afrocentric social work pedagogies has the potential to influence Africa's social work theory, policy, and practice. A growing number of studies are exploring the various dimensions of development social work pedagogies and practice. For instance, some scholars are delving into the history of development social work practice in Africa (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000). Other scholars are focusing on the conceptualization of developmental social work practice, while others draw attention to the relevance and conceptualization of developmental social work practice in Africa (Muleya, 2020). A growing number of studies are exploring ways in which development social work competencies are being promoted through social work theory and field education in African universities (Hochfeld et al., 2009).

Despite this overall progress, there has been to date no current study that has consolidated the literature on the status of developmental social work pedagogies in African tertiary education. A scoping review was conducted of the literature to address this gap in knowledge and to highlight the implementation of developmental social work pedagogies in Africa. This chapter reports the findings of that exercise and intends to stimulate debate and document the application of developmental social work pedagogies in African tertiary education.

Conceptualizing Clinical and Developmental Social Work

According to Goldstein (1996), clinical social work is the professional application of social work theories and approaches to the identification, treatment, and prevention of biopsychosocial problems usually focused on the individual, the family, or small-group level. In Africa, clinical social work has been criticized for its stance and overemphasis on the remedial approach, which medicalizes social problems that need socio-structural interventions (Muchacha & Matsika, 2018). These critiques are shaping and strengthening social work theory and field education pedagogies in order to develop competent professionals who can address the challenges that are unique to the continent. As such, the focus of developmental social work is social work practice at the mezzo- and macro-level and is primarily on the application of social development theories (Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019). The result has been the conceptualization of a hybrid clinical-developmental social work model.

Clinical-developmental social work is the combination of the clinical and social developmental social work methods which aims to avert the incidences of diseases, diminish disease burden, and deal with socio-structural issues that impact clinical issues (Chigangaidze, 2021). Clinical-developmental social work includes valuing the drivers of human well-being within the micro, mezzo, and macro systems. The paradigm involves the analysis of the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors that influence human well-being. It is argued that in Africa, clinical-developmental social work should be mainly concerned with addressing the biopsychosocial factors that predispose and exacerbate human poverty and disease burden (Kurevakwesu & Maushe, 2020). Therefore, it is indispensable that education institutions in Africa should also pay much attention to developmental social work practice that has the potential to empower social work professionals to address local community problems.

Situational Analysis of Challenges that Affect People in Africa

Africa is a continent with approximately 1.3 billion people across 54 countries (Dang & Dabalen, 2019). Most African nations experience severe social problems that undermine people's well-being. This section focuses on common problems that affect people in Africa, the theory and practice of social work pedagogies, and the study objectives.

Research has shown that poverty is one of the main drivers of social problems in Africa. According to the international poverty line whereby an individual disposes of less than US$1.25 per day for their livelihood (Crespo Cuaresma et al., 2018), it is estimated that about 490 million people (36% the African population) experience extreme poverty. Poverty in Africa is exacerbated by social factors such as corruption (Riley & Chilanga, 2018) and nepotism that are not checked due to poor governance structures, weak constitutions, and political instability. Other scholars suggest that neocolonial policies, such as structural adjustment programs, exploit economies in Africa and impoverish its citizens (Durokifa & Ijeoma, 2018). Consequently, there is a high level of poverty in Africa which is coupled with high and ever-increasing levels of unemployment

(Salecker et al., 2020). This means that to overcome the structural factors that perpetuate poverty among Africans, social workers need to have theory and field practice competencies that can support communities.

In Africa, food insecurity is recognized as one of the main predisposing factors of biopsychosocial challenges, particularly among vulnerable groups (Amungo, 2020). A significant number of people in Africa experience chronic starvation despite the continent being endowed with rich natural resources that could exponentially increase food production. It is suggested that food insecurity in Africa can be mitigated by addressing diverse environmental and socioeconomic factors. These include erratic weather conditions, poor food security policies, high costs of farm inputs, prohibitive transportation costs, lack of credit facilities for farmers, and competition for markets (Kerr et al., 2016). Hence, social work pedagogies in Africa should be tailored to equip students with clinical-development competencies that can address the underlying factors which drive food insecurity.

In addition, epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and COVID-19 are either perennial or emerging threats that are affecting the socio-economic well-being of many Africans (Chilanga et al., 2020; Dzimbiri et al., 2022). It is documented that Africa, mainly in the Sub-Sahara, has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was intensified in Africa mainly owing to most African leaders' denial of the presence of the disease and their unwillingness to take urgent public health action. Millions of people have become infected and millions have died (McGee, 2020). Since the onset of COVID-19, the livelihood and well-being of many people in Africa have deteriorated. For instance, studies have shown that the pandemic has increased poor mental and physical health due to the infection itself and the negative impacts of preventative measures (Posel et al., 2021). Social work education in Africa should be geared to address diseases that affect the quality of life of many people on the continent.

Theory and Practice of Social Work Pedagogies

Social work is a practice-based profession that entails a combination of theoretical and practice learning. Field practicums provide an interactive context where students learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and

values of the social work profession (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). However, the field of social work is not well established on the African continent, partly because of its colonial heritage and the lack of unified social work regulatory bodies (Mwansa, 2011). The foundation of social work education in Africa is grounded in Eurocentrism that assumes a neoliberal value system of social control (Mwansa, 2011). Hence, many social work educational institutions in the region continue to apply Western-oriented social work pedagogies that are focused on casework to address social problems.

Of late, however, scholars are advocating that the indigenization of social work education in Africa would better address its social problems (Zvomuya, 2020). Clinical-developmental social work theory and practice education curriculum is regarded as an effective education model that can mitigate challenges that undermine the well-being of Africans (Muleya, 2020a). Developmental social work is a form of social work that departs from an entirely clinical social work (residual, service-oriented) model that is directed at specific groups of people in need, to broader development approaches that place people and human rights at the heart of social organizing. The theory and field education curriculum of developmental social work is designed to empower social workers to advocate for economic development and confront structural systems that perpetuate social problems. The practice focus is at the mezzo and macro levels where practitioners work with political actors to build a conducive environment for socioeconomic development (Rankopo & Diraditsile, 2020). The approach also equips students with critical social work skills, such as community organizing and empowerment. Hence, development social work practice is claimed to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG), which aims to facilitate human development in Africa (Muleya, 2020).

Objectives

Despite compelling evidence that social work educational institutions in Africa should recast their curriculum towards social developmental pedagogy, there is no scoping review that has highlighted how the curriculum is being implemented through theory and practicum pedagogies. There is also a dearth of broader knowledge on factors that are enhancing or undermining the implementation of the curriculum in social work theory

and field education (Manomano et al., 2020). Therefore, this study examines how social development pedagogy is being implemented in social work tertiary education on the African continent. This scoping review is guided by a set of questions that were used to explore approaches in which development social work pedagogies are promoted in theory and field education. The following questions guide the review of the literature:

- What criteria are used to assess the promotion of social development pedagogies in social work theory and field education in Africa?

- How are social development-oriented pedagogies taught in social work theory and field education in Africa?

- What are the common aspects of social development being promoted in social work theory and field education in Africa?

- What factors undermine the implementation of developmental social work pedagogies in social work theory and field education in Africa?

Methods

Systematic Scoping Review

This study adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses — Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) checklist and guidelines to ensure a robust and replicable process (Tricco et al., 2018). The checklist contains 20 essential reporting items and two optional items to include when completing a scoping review. The goals of scoping reviews are many. They are used to examine the extent, range, and nature of the evidence on a topic or question. They are also used to determine the value of undertaking a systematic review on a given topic. In addition, scoping reviews are used to summarize findings from a body of knowledge that is heterogeneous in methods or discipline. Finally, they are used to identify gaps in the literature to facilitate the planning and commissioning of future research (Tricco et al., 2018). The protocol is presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: The Study Protocol
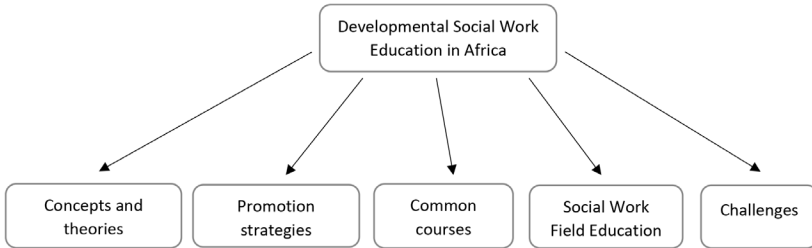
Data Collection

Search Strategy

The author conducted a systematic search of the following 10 Social Work electronic databases for articles published from 1980 up to June 2021: CINAHL PsycArticles (APA); PsycINFO 1987- (Ovid); Social Services Abstracts (ProQuest); Social Work Abstracts (Ovid); Ebsco; eScholarship@ McGill; MEDLINE(R) (OVID) ALL; 1946-, Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) (Web of Science); SocINDEX with full text (EBSCO); and Google Scholar. An iterative search using the combination of the following terms was conducted: "development* social work," "social development social work," "education," "field education*," "field practice*," "theory class," and "classroom lessons." Since the review focused on studies that were conducted in Africa, the following search terms were also included: "Africa," "Botswana," "Malawi," "South Afri* Zimbabwe," "Lesotho," "Namibia," "Zambia," "Tanzania," "Kenya," "Ghana," "Uganda," "Mozambique," "Nigeria," etc. The following Boolean operators 'OR' and 'AND' were used to connect the words. These terms were informed by a priori knowledge and were intended to capture the breadth of the nomenclature used in social work theory and practice research pedagogies. Restrictions were set based on language as only English journal papers were considered.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were based on studies and reviews that were presented in English. To include more papers with relevance-based evidence in regard to implementation of developmental social work pedagogies in theory and field education, both qualitative and quantitative studies were included in the search. Articles were excluded if they failed to fulfil the following two criteria: (1) to primarily delve into developmental social work; and (2) to feature at least one African Country.

Data Screening and Charting

All records were screened by the author using the eligibility criteria. After reading titles and abstracts for their relevance to this scoping review, full papers were retrieved and exported to Zotero (Kratochvíl, 2017) before being downloaded to a personal computer. This was followed by a screening of full text articles. Data charting was completed by the author with a focus on level of developmental social work pedagogy implementation in Africa, key concepts, challenges, and outcome variables. Methods were categorized as either qualitative or quantitative. The data charting form was piloted on a random sample of 11 articles.

Results

In total, 58 documents published between 1982 and June 2021, including journal articles, books, dissertation, and reports, were considered as shown in Figure 4.2.

Criteria Used to Assess the Promotion of Social Work Development Pedagogies in Africa

This scoping review has identified three papers that focused on developing a criterion for evaluating the degree to which social development pedagogies are promoted in social work theory and field education in Africa (Hochfeld et al., 2009; Mupedziswa, 2001; Mupedziswa & Sinkamba, 2014). The criterion is divided into two broad subcategories which are curriculum and extracurricular related activities (Mupedziswa, 2001). Five critical curriculum-related activities have been identified to adequately assess the extent to which developmental social work pedagogies are promoted in social work theory and field education in Africa.

Figure 4.2: Literature Search Results
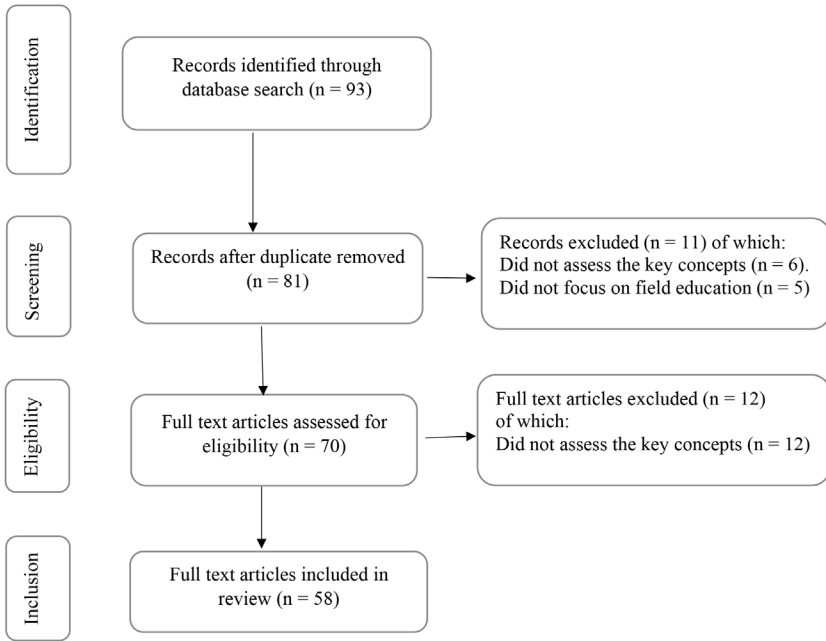
Curriculum-Related Activities

Continuous Curriculum Review Exercise. Continuous curriculum review exercise is the first category that has been documented for ensuring that social development competencies are incorporated in social work curriculum in African tertiary educational institutions. One article argued that if social work educators are engaged in rigorous developmentally focused curriculum review exercises, they can tailor social work theory and field education to address the challenges that confront people in Africa (Gray et al., 1996). It is advocated that the review process should ensure that courses are analyzed horizontally, with emphasis on the depth of the content of each course, and vertically, with the emphasis on each course linking in well with those at the levels below and above it. It is

also acknowledged that there is a need for carrying out a rationalization exercise for the courses, and new additional courses should be introduced where necessary to make the education curriculum more sensitive to the needs of any given country (Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019).

In addition, the literature suggests that social work curriculum developers in Africa should periodically organize fieldwork workshops during which both fieldwork matters and issues pertaining to the relevance of the entire curriculum should be discussed (Osei-Hwedie et al., 2006). The field workshops can ensure that social work stakeholders such as students, field educators, and agency service providers and users are involved in the curriculum development process.

Social Work Field Education. Social work field education is a second curriculum-related activity which has been identified as a critical category for determining the level at which developmental social work pedagogies are promoted in Africa (Amadasun, 2021). Field education refers to an intentionally designed set of experiences occurring in a practice setting that aim to move students from their initial level of comprehension, skills, and attitudes to levels associated with autonomous social work practice (Dhemba, 2012). Field education provides students with an opportunity to apply the theoretical content covered in the classroom to real life situations as part of their preparation to become professional social workers.

This review identified that social work training institutions in Africa use one of four forms of field education. These are concurrent, block, a combination of both concurrent and block, and in-service placements (Schmidt & Rautenbach, 2016). In-service field placements refers to a practice in which a serving lay trainee social worker participates in field education in their own work agency (Kagee, 2020). Each of the field education approaches has its own strengths and limitations.

The general agreement in the reviewed literature is that institutions should reorient field education to make it consistent with the developmental social work goals (Amadasun, 2021). One way of reorienting field education that is suggested is to place students in rural field agencies (where the majority of underprivileged population resides) that can equip them with development competencies (Thurlow et al., 2019). It is also recommended that students should be placed in some development-related urban placements when rural placements are not feasible. To make developmental

pedagogies attainable, some scholars underscore that at least one rural field placement should be mandatory to students (Smith & Rasool, 2020). The aim is to introduce social work students to under-privilege areas where they can appreciate, from a social work perspective, the nature of the problems that most of the African marginalized population face.

Application of Social Development Themes, Perspectives, and Concepts. The reviewed literature suggests that the inclusion and application of specific social development themes, perspectives, and concepts is one of the curriculum-related approaches that are used to assess the promotion of social work developmental pedagogies in Africa (Patel & Hochfeld, 2013). There are several concepts that have gained popularity in this respect.

The reviewed literature shows that indigenization is one of concepts that African social work curriculum should inculcate in students. Indigenization refers to a worldview that states that the theories, values, and philosophies of social work practice must be influenced by local factors such as cultures, beliefs, cosmology, and social milieu (Ugiagbe, 2015). Therefore, indigenization aims to develop social work competencies among students that are appropriate to the needs of different communities in Africa.

Other notable concepts include the reconceptualization of social work concepts to more community-oriented approaches in order to empower marginalized groups in society (Raichelis & Bravo, 2021). This reconceptualization aims to make room for social workers to adapt and modify old ideas, knowledges, and processes of practice, as well as the emergence of new ones in a concerted efforts to develop competent social work professionals.

Authentication and recontextualization are also terms that are advocated in social development pedagogies (Hugman, 2009). These terms focus on the identification of genuine and authentic roots in the local system, which can then be used for guiding social development social work practice through a marked departure from the Eurocentric models in order to affect changes that consider existing local views, behaviours, and conditions.

Teaching Methods. The reviewed papers consider that an assessment of teaching methods is one of the ways to authenticate if a social work

institution is committed to promoting developmental social work pedagogies (Hochfeld, 2009). The literature supports that, apart from commonly used teaching strategies such as seminars, role plays, guest lectures, field visits, and video films, actual classroom instruction must be characterized by dialogue, discovery, and exploration. These teaching and learning methods are known by different names in other parts of the world, such as self-directed learning, small group teaching, and use of small groups (de Bruijn & Leeman, 2011). To achieve discovery learning, some scholars suggest that social development-oriented classrooms should be organized in circular sitting patterns as opposed to conventional sitting patterns in which the teacher is at the front (Hochfeld, 2010). This sitting pattern can give room to a problem-posing teaching approach, a strategy which is more suitable for enhanced interaction and dialogue among students and a teacher.

Student Projects and Assignments. The nature of student projects and assignments is another common critical curriculum-related feature that is used to evaluate the degree to which an education institution is promoting developmental social work competencies (Mupedziswa, 2008). The reviewed papers emphasized that instructors should ensure that student projects reflect key areas of concern in the communities where the students will serve. Some scholars stressed that evaluation projects should focus on empowering students with skills to enable them to play a significant role in improving conditions of ordinary people in the community (Anucha, 2008). In particular, the reviewed papers noted that student projects should focus on broad issues such as unemployment and underemployment, hunger, inadequate shelter and homelessness, illiteracy, diseases, and local development.

Extracurricular Activities

Social work extracurricular activities have also been identified as a critical aspect in the promotion of a developmental approach in social work education in Africa (Mupedziswa, 2001). In the field of education, extracurricular activities are optional activities that are designed and carried out after classes to develop and enhance students social skillsets (Buckley & Lee, 2021). The reviewed literature indicates that there are eleven extracurricular activities that are documented to be used in gauging if social

work in education institutions are promoting developmental social work competencies (Hochfeld et al., 2009). The following paragraphs delve into selected extracurricular activities that are promoted in social work education in Africa.

Generation and Use of Indigenous Teaching Materials. The reviewed literature suggests that developmental-oriented institutions should encourage educators and students to engage in extracurricular activities that generate and use Indigenous teaching materials such as clay models that can be used to represent ideas (Ugiagbe, 2015). The authors acknowledge that most students shy away from producing and utilizing Indigenous resources that can address local problems and needs, as the legacy of professional imperialism is claimed to undermine the use of local resources. As such, social work scholars are encouraged to sensitize African students to be proud of local resources (Mabvurira, 2020b).

Generation and Use of Relevant Local Research. Generation and use of relevant local research are among the extracurricular activities that are documented in the reviewed literature as a criterion for promoting developmental social work competencies in Africa (Canavera et al., 2020a). Notable scholars, such as Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo (2009), have argued that local research must be promoted to ensure that social work education is relevant in solving Africa's unique challenges. Scholars suggest that the focus of research efforts should be on aspects relating to societal values, social institutional arrangements, and major social problems affecting the majority of people in African countries (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). Therefore, they propose to draw attention to diverse areas of research that can promote developmental social work. These include informal sector activities, social security for the rural poor, survival strategies of the marginalized population, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in poverty alleviation, AIDS home care, the social impact of structural adjustment programmes, and issues pertaining to refugees and other displaced persons (Gilbert et al., 2009).

Networking with Other African Institutions. Development of strong linkages among public and private welfare stakeholders has also been proposed as an important aspect of the extra-curriculum that can promote developmental social work competencies among scholars and students in

Africa (Osei-Hwedie et al., 2006). It is suggested that this mission can be achieved if deliberate initiatives are put in place where there can be an exchange of literature on teaching materials as well as the exchange of faculty members and students. Nevertheless, it is also suggested that social work scholars and administrators in Africa should promote scholars to be engaged in professional publications, workshops, and conferences that share relevant themes to developmental social work (Canavera et al., 2020).

Localization of Staff Complement. The localization of a substantial percentage of social work instructors at a given institution is one way of ensuring that a social developmental social work approach is being promoted (Mwansa, 2011b). The claim is that an African institution cannot possibly assert that it is promoting relevant social work if most of its instructors are expatriates from outside the continent. It is assumed that the majority of expatriates lack comprehension and appreciation of the local situation and, hence, they are marginally equipped to address social problems that affect many Africans (Pellebon, 2012).

Common Approaches to Teaching Social Work Development Curriculum in Africa

The reviewed literature suggests that the development approach to social work practice is taught through mainstreaming, specialization, and ad hoc undergraduate curriculum (Canavera et al., 2020a).

Mainstreaming Curriculum

The first approach is that the social development pedagogy is mainstreamed throughout the social work degree programme roadmap. For example, a regional study in Africa (Eastern and Southern Africa) observed that 24 universities apply social development as a fundamental approach to social work (Nhapi & Dhemba, 2020). This means that the curriculum is designed in such a way that social development competencies are mainstreamed in the curriculum.

Specialized Developmental Social Work Curriculum

The second approach is that developmental social work is offered as one of the specialization areas of social work curriculum in African tertiary education (Hochfeld, 2009). In this case, students are registered in the developmental social work stream during the program application. Hence, they acquire broader development social work competencies upon satisfactory completion of curriculum milestones. In the Sub-Sahara African region, less than 25% of the tertiary education institutions offer specialized social development social work curriculum (Kurevakwesu & Maushe, 2020).

Ad Hoc Development Social Work Curriculum

The reviewed literature has shown that in some tertiary education institutions in Africa, developmental social work is taught on a more ad hoc basis where it is not specialized or mainstreamed (Hochfeld et al., 2009). In this approach, developmental social work concepts and skills are integrated and conveyed through certain core course syllabi. In this case, students attain the concepts of social development through teaching methods such as case studies, examples, or guest lectures.

Common Developmental Social Work Course Content in Africa

The reviewed literature indicates that there are common developmental course content offerings that are taught in the sampled 61 African tertiary educational institutions (Canavera et al., 2020; Hochfeld et al., 2009). The most common courses include community development, HIV/AIDS, gender studies, social development, and poverty. These courses are considered relevant as they can stimulate and enhance the socioeconomic development of people in Africa. Figure 4.3 illustrates the proportion of Schools of Social Work in Africa in which particular social development topics are taught.

Figure 4.3: Common Developmental Social Work Courses
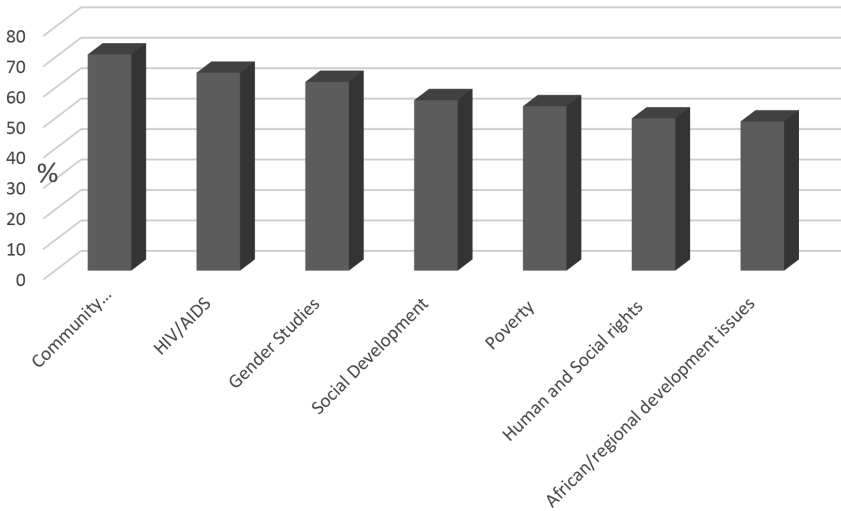
The Role of Field Education in Promoting Development Social Work Competencies in Africa

The reviewed papers suggest that field education is a mandatory component in many social work tertiary institutions (Canavera & Akesson, 2018). It has been observed that there are three models of supervising students during field practicum. The most common approach involves a shared supervision between the practitioners at the field agency and the school instructors. Almost 71% of the social work tertiary education in Africa follows this joint supervision model (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018). The second approach involves field practitioners having sole responsibility for supervising students. About 26% of social work field curriculum in Africa follows this approach. Finally, supervision by field faculty from the school is the model whereby students are placed in an agency but are entirely supervised by the school supervisor who may be a professor or field practicum coordinator. This is a less common approach as only 3% of the programs follow it (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018).

The literature suggests that in Africa, students and instructors agree that field education is a critical component of social work education as it provides opportunities for students to develop clinical and development social work skills (Dhemba, 2012). There are four common approaches that are effective in supporting students to acquire social work development competencies during field education. The first is when students are assigned to experienced social development practitioners who can mentor them. The second approach is when students are offered the chance to attend lectures that are related to social work skills during the field education. The third approach that enhances acquisition of social development field competencies is when students are involved in experiential field education program in small groups. The notable experiential programs include supervised role plays, simulations, and engagement with stakeholders. The fourth effective approach for acquiring developmental social work competencies during field education is when students are given opportunity to observe social work professionals during direct practice. This may include giving students opportunities to observe a counselling session, or getting students involved in development projects such as proposal writing and consciousness-raising campaigns.

Challenges Faced by Tertiary Institutions in Promoting Development Social Work in Africa

As shown in this review, many social work education and training institutions in Africa have heeded the call to move in the direction of developmental social work by incorporating developmental themes in their courses. Universities in South Africa, Lesotho, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Malawi are among these institutions (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018). Although this approach is indispensable in addressing African challenges, the reviewed literature suggests numerous obstacles that undermine the promotion of developmental theory and field education pedagogies in Africa. The following section illustrates common issues that have been documented in the literature, including inadequate local resources, limited research, field education challenges, and lack of social work regulatory bodies (Ioakimidis & Sookraj, 2021).

Lack of Indigenous Materials for Use in Schools of Social Work in Africa

There is a consensus that the lack of Indigenous materials is one of the main challenges that undermines the promotion of development social work theory and field education in Africa (Mogorosi, 2018). It is well documented that social work literature in many African institutions is imported from Europe, America, Australia, and other developed countries. Consequently, the literature used does not reflect African culture, its diversity, and socioeconomic realities (Almeida et al., 2019). Specifically, a study that was conducted in Lesotho illustrates that textbooks used in its social work tertiary education were written by British or American academics (Dhemba & Nhapi, 2020). It also observes that there was an overall shortage of books for social work students in comparison to students from other disciplines. This problem is not particular to Lesotho, as a study in Zimbabwe also indicates that the lack of local production of teaching resources affects the development of evidence-based and adaptable practice (Dhemba & Nhapi, 2020). Consequently, this challenge has hindered the effective learning and systematic indigenization of overseas social work knowledge, leaving Zimbabwe-trained social workers to rely on Western knowledge to support their professionalization process. Hence, there is a continuous call to synthesize the Western literature based on African values and culture to appropriately address African problems (Giliomee & Lombard, 2020). Curriculum that depends heavily on Western textbooks results in a lack of fitness-for-purpose between social work education and the service needs of the African population.

Limited Research to Inform Developmental Social Work Theory and Practice Pedagogies

The reviewed literature suggests that there is limited research that is carried out in African countries that can be used to inform development-oriented social work curriculum (Nhapi, 2021). As a result, the literature which is informed by Western research is used in teaching, despite the fact that study findings are not being replicated in Africa. A significant proportion of the social work assignments and case studies given to students are completely decontextualized from actual scenarios taking place in Africa (Hochfeld et al., 2009). It is noted that this often poses a great challenge

when students are faced with real cases during practice, as some of the theories learned are not applicable in their local context. For instance, some scholars in Africa, including South Africa (Turton & Schmid, 2020), observed that social work training in the region is dominated by theories that are inherited from developed countries that have strong emphasis on academic subjects at the expense of local practical skills of intervention (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018). There is a need to encourage social work scholars in Africa to be engaged in local research that can transform social work theory and practice pedagogies. Application of local research can reorient the curricular and teaching methods to be synthesize with indigenous information, so that social work education in Africa can be relevant to local needs (Osei-Hwedie & Boateng, 2018).

Challenges Related to Social Work Field Education

The reviewed literature suggests that there are some aspects of social work field education training on the African continent that affect the promotion of developmental social work practice. These include the demand for social work field placements that outstrips availability in most countries, due to the limited number of social work agencies (Chitereka, 2009). In addition, most field placement agencies do not have trained social workers to supervise all students, which undermines the acquisition of quality casework and the development of social work competencies. Limited funding for fieldwork supervision, combined to the lack of allowances for students on placement, also reduces the ability of social work tertiary institutions to send their students to remote areas where they are most needed. A study that was conducted in 16 social work programs in Southern African countries documented seven common field practicum challenges. The challenges are depicted in Table 4.1.

Another challenge related to field education focuses on the standard duration students can be placed at an agency to acquire experiential social work skills (Canavera et al., 2020). A limited number of studies in Africa suggest that there is great variation in the number of months for social work field placement. The minimum duration is three months, the mode is five months, while the maximum is six months. The literature agrees that it may be a challenge to prescribe the form and duration of field education as social work tertiary institutions are unique. This review has identified

Table 4.1: Common Challenges Facing Field Education in Africa

Challenge	Schools having the problem (n = 16)
Inadequately trained field supervisors	15
Shortage of relevant placement	14
Problem with timing of field placement	12
Poor quality of field supervision	9
Lack of field supervisors with social work education	8
Part-time students do not have time to fulfill the requirements	4
Experience gained by students does not reflect the reality of social work in the country	3
Other	2

a consensus among students and field supervisors that there is a need for field placement in Africa to be long enough for students to develop and consolidate their skills (Hochfeld et al., 2009).

Finally, the reviewed literature suggests that the lack of structured field education curriculum is another challenge that undermines the promotion of developmental social work education in Africa (Gray et al., 2017). Field placement curriculum is indispensable in social work education as the required competencies to be attained are shaped by the curriculum content. The field curriculum provides structure to students' learning process where simple skills are learned prior to complex skills. In addition, curriculum acts as a benchmark for student evaluation and, as such, it can be used to identify areas of student strength and shortfalls where field instructors can focus their remedial training. The reviewed literature suggests that fieldwork placement forms are the main course material documents that are used in many African field education curriculum. The forms include: background information forms of the students, assessment

forms, guidelines for writing fieldwork reports, contract forms, and letters of introduction for students (Ross, 2018). The available literature suggests that many institutions did not have fieldwork manuals. Fieldwork manuals are necessary since they provide students, agency supervisors, and social work educators valuable reference material on emerging developmental competencies.

Social Work Regulation, Legislation, and Accreditation in Africa

In the reviewed literature, several scholars agree that the regulation of social work education and profession is critical as it can result in a wide array of benefits (Reyneke, 2020). These include improved public safety, higher standards of conduct and accountability, and improved professional development. In Africa, social workers operate in a wide range of settings. These include child protection agencies, refugee centres, and hospitals where social workers offer a wide range of services such as psychosocial support, assessments to clients, and community development mobilization. The nature of social work practice requires the establishment of long-term relationships based on trust, and the human costs of unsafe or unethical practice has been documented in many studies across the world (Farkas & Romaniuk, 2020). This must entail the integrity of the profession, whereby social work is upheld by a high standard of professionalism, safety, and accountability to ensure that members of the public are protected. The dangers of malpractices in social work practice can be alleviated through the institutionalization of regulatory systems, which benchmark and uphold standards of professionalism, and the introduction of formal mechanisms for oversight and accountability (Mthethwa, 2019).

Although social work is being regulated in many countries across the world, the current review suggests that a considerable number of countries in Africa do not have social work regulatory systems in place. It should be noted that some countries in Africa such as Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda are in the process of developing social work regulatory arrangements (Davies & Egbuchu, 2019). According to scholarly research, the process of creating regulatory bodies is facing challenges in the region as it does not have support from policy makers.

It is also of interest that some scholars agree that the mushrooming of unregistered social work colleges and training institutions in Africa poses a threat to the effectiveness of the profession (Mungai et al., 2014). This is because such institutions do not employ qualified social work trained staff, they do not invest in social work required resources, and are not regulated. The absence of these critical resources has generated a laissez-faire attitude towards social work in Africa. The consequences could be disastrous for human development, consumers, and the profession in general.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The reviewed literature suggests that social work education in Africa aspires to address emerging and perineal problems such as poverty, diseases, and food insecurity that are experienced by common people (Chilanga et al., 2020). The main goal of social work education is therefore to produce professionals that can assist countries to achieve human development. The literature suggests that the developmental social work approach is indispensable in Africa as it is tailored to equip students with knowledge, skills, relevant technologies, and an appreciation of local philosophy that can be applied in addressing local problems. There are diverse ways in which stakeholders evaluate the commitment of African tertiary education institutions to promoting developmental social work pedagogies. These approaches are categorized into curriculum and extra-curriculum. Curriculum-related indicators include continuous curriculum review, relevant field placement, the application of relevant concepts, development-related teaching methods, and assigning relevant projects to students. The extra-curriculum indicators include the production and use of local materials, local research, and local collaboration. The developmental social work competencies are integrated through mainstreaming and are offered as specialized course or through ad hoc approaches.

However, it is well documented that the education system is facing enormous challenges to produce social work professionals sufficiently equipped to address local problems such as corruption, disease burden, and poverty (Hochfeld et al., 2009). These constraints include shortage of local teaching resources such as books and research resources, inadequate and irrelevant field placements, and limited social work regulatory bodies.

This scoping review has indicated that the social work is an emerging, but a rapidly expanding profession in Africa. To effectively address African social problems, both social work professionals and social work educational institutions are called upon to adopt the developmental social work approach. To achieve this goal the following suggestions are made:

1. Social work professionals in Africa should prioritize developmental social work research to inform educational pedagogies that are appropriate and suited to the local context.

2. The onus should be put on the redesigning of the social work curriculum with alternative teaching methodologies that resonate with social development principles and local context in Africa.

3. Social work curriculum designers in Africa should pay attention to the specific skillset needs of field education supervisors to improve the overall quality of students' supervision.

4. Lastly, social work professionals should actively develop local teaching materials that contain case scenarios relevant to the needs of African communities.

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