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From the Editor’s Desk

Michael Lauderdale, PhD, Michael Kelly, PhD and Noel Landuyt, PhD.3

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education has reached its first decade of publication. The editors provide a history of the journal and recount the journal’s mission in context of the changing trends in both social work employment and the continuing challenges in social work education.

Achieving Desired Outcomes by Privatizing Child Welfare Service Delivery: Lessons Learned through the Kansas Experience

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A decade ago, the State of Kansas privatized its child welfare services delivery system in an attempt to achieve desired outcomes. Within a couple of years, all family preservation, foster care, and adoption case management and service delivery was carried out by private agencies. Thus, the reform was comprehensive and implemented relatively quickly. This paper summarizes key reform elements and how these have evolved over the last decade. It also explains the many factors which complicated the reform’s intended objectives —politically, fiscally, and administratively. Along the way, many important lessons have been learned that can help inform other efforts to privatize child welfare services delivery and introduce performance measurement.

Is Social Work Education Relevant to Child Welfare Practice? A Qualitative Analysis from the Adult Learner Perspective

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Social work education has become increasingly challenged to provide relevant curricula for child welfare practitioners. This study presents results of a qualitative evaluation of one Title IV-E-funded program for MSW student/workers of a public child welfare agency. Data analysis identified several themes that were used to develop a conceptual model of how social work education may impact worker retention in public child welfare with practice implications for the structure and process of IV-E-funded MSW programs.

Gender Inequality and Lack of Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women in Ghana: Implications for Social Work Education

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Decades after the first international conference on women and the United Nations’ conventions for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, inequalities between women and men still exist in Ghana. This phenomenological study made visible Ghanaian women’s experiences of their lack of reproductive and sexual rights. A purposive sample of 68 female participants -- all with different educational, socio-economic, and occupational backgrounds, and from both rural and urban settings -- took part in six focus group discussions. The participants were asked only two questions, both related to their right to demand safe and protected sex and to practice family planning and birth control without permission from their spouses. Textual analysis, based on an adaptation of Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, (1999) interpretative phenomenological analysis, was used to develop two major themes, namely, “Reproductive Decision-making Is Not Easy for Us,” and “Demanding Safe Sex Is a Thorny Issue.” These themes are illustrated with commentary and direct quotations to depict a general sense of the experience of the phenomenon. Implications for social work education and policy advocacy are discussed.