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Routledge Handbook of African Social Work Education

Edited by Susan Levy, Uzoma Odera Okoye,
Pius T. Tanga and Richard Ingram

“The *Routledge Handbook of African Social Work Education* is a long-awaited book that adds significantly to the knowledge base of international social work. Most significantly, it is an important milestone on the long road to decolonising social work education, research, and practice worldwide. It contains in-depth, contextualised case studies, research findings, and experience-based contributions from various African countries.”

Tanja Kleibl, Technical University Würzburg-Schweinfurt (THWS), Germany

“This book provides an in-depth exploration of social work education and fields of practice, with practical examples from diverse contexts across Africa. The book is not only relevant for social work educators, practitioners, students, and social policy makers, but also all those interested in decolonial perspectives in social work and social development.”

Janestic Mwende Twikirize, Makerere University, Uganda



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ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

This timely *Routledge Handbook of African Social Work Education* creates a much-needed space to explore what makes social work uniquely African as well as shaping, informing, and influencing a new culturally relevant era of social work. The specific focus on social work education offers approaches to transition away from the hegemony of Western literature, knowledge, and practice models underpinning African social work education. The authors identify what is relevant and meaningful to inform, influence, and reconceptualise culturally relevant social work curriculum.

Covering Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the Handbook comprises both empirical and conceptual chapters, multiple approaches, case studies, and key debates on social work education. It is structured in four parts:

- Approaches to Indigenising, Decolonising and Developing Culturally Relevant Social Work Education
- Social Work Education: Evolution across Contexts
- Embedding Field Practicum into Social Work Education
- Knowledge Exchange between the Global South and Global North.

The range of indigenous, local knowledge that the Handbook presents is crucial to social work evolving and facilitating for reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange between the Global South and Global North. Whilst the context of the Handbook is Africa, the topics covered are relevant to a global audience engaged in social justice work across social work, social welfare, social development, and sustainability.

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The origins of this *Handbook* date back to 2019 and the first meeting between Levy and Okoye in the Social Work Department, University of Nigeria. The meeting covered many issues, including the challenges faced by Nigerian and, more broadly, African scholars in publishing their work and the dominance of Western literature in social work education. Over the intervening years we have been collaborating and working to address the challenges identified in that initial meeting. This has been achieved through a number of initiatives, including British Academy funded African Social Work Writing Workshops, an edited special edition of *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, and this *Handbook*.

We thank the British Academy for funding the African Social Work Writing Workshops that brought together early career researchers from across Africa. All the workshop participants have published at least one paper since the workshops, and most have a chapter in this *Handbook*. We also want to thank Taylor and Francis, the publisher of 'New Directions in Social Work Education in Africa: Challenges and Prospects', the special edition of *Social Work Education: International Journal*, for giving us permission to republish the paper by Kaloga and Camara on social work in Guinea, as Chapter 17 in this *Handbook*. Finally, our thanks are extended to all of our authors for their commitment to this *Handbook* and for driving change and influencing the future of social work in Africa and across the globe.

FOREWORD

Mel Gray

Following on from the special issue of *Social Work Education: International Journal* (Levy and Okoye, 2023), this *Handbook* expands on the diverse discourses influencing contemporary social work education in sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is a vast geographically and culturally diverse continent that has had a marked impact on international social work education. It has initiated various discourses, from launching the worldwide indigenisation debate in the north to introducing developmental social work in the south and, most recently, gifting the concept of Ubuntu to the profession's Global Agenda. The influence of social work education in Africa cannot be overstated. It preceded and shaped practice. As in the West, prior to social work education, volunteers and charity workers and, in Africa, missionaries performed many functions social workers later claimed within their professional repertoire. Though many scholars point to traditional helping and indigenous community care as early social work in Africa, social work, as accepted internationally today, is the professional domain of university-educated practitioners with a four-year bachelor of social work degree. African educators constantly strive to meet internationally prescribed values and ethics, and education and practice standards, and to shape the profession in accordance with international social work definitions. They also replicate and adhere to a professional organisational structure shaped by international social work organisations, constituting one of the five world regions.

Most importantly, social work education is an industry within a knowledge economy that spawns lucrative publications for thriving publishing companies that continue to absorb smaller locally based outlets. These publishing houses play a huge role in internationalising social work with social work educators their main contributors. Likewise, myriad influences shape the practice domain, which, in the face of minimalistic public welfare provision in many African countries, give non-government organisations a major role in the social service sector. Again this is a sector where international organisations exert huge control over policy and areas and methods of service provision, and who provides those services. These two contexts are the main employers of social work practitioners in Africa. There have been constant complaints that social work education does not prepare social workers adequately for practice, that what universities teach them does not fit the requirements of the practice contexts in which they will work. The lack of appropriate, properly supervised field placements exacerbates this situation. Several chapters collectively provide an in-depth account of the challenges of fieldwork education, including resource constraints, non-

recognition of the profession, the dearth of social work placement agencies and suitably qualified supervisors, and recommendations to respond to this situation. As Gray et al. (2017, 2018) found in their research on fieldwork in southern and eastern Africa, these persistent issues for African social work educators require innovative solutions.

Equally, social workers complain about poor working conditions, extremely low salaries, their poor status and lack of recognition of the value of their services, retention issues and high staff turnover, and the exodus of social workers to more lucrative foreign countries, creating a large diaspora in North America, Europe, and Australasia. The latter provides evidence that social work education programs train social workers in Western social work theories and methods, which are not suited to culturally diverse African contexts. Nevertheless, universities continue to produce thousands of social work graduates each year, many of whom will leave the profession due to the difficulties of working in the poorly resourced social services sector.

Another factor that continues to plague social work education in Africa is poorly prepared academics, many drawn from related social science disciplines, without any professional training or practice experience in social work. Many begin teaching social work as postgraduate students and, once qualified, carry huge teaching loads. Due to excessive workloads and administrative, educational, and student demands, many educators complain that they do not have time for research and writing, or even for preparing culturally relevant curricula, courses, and teaching materials. They are on a treadmill, trapped in Western knowledge and pedagogical methods, with libraries filled mainly with out-of-date Western texts. Thus, the ongoing themes in the discourse on social work education in Africa: The lingering colonial legacy and dependence on Western curricula; lack of indigenous teaching material and outmoded teaching practices; struggle to reorient the curriculum from remedial casework to community-centred and culturally relevant practice; and underproduction and underuse of social research. Gray et al. discuss these issues in the opening chapter.

I have painted this bleak picture so you can better understand and appreciate the sterling work of social work educators and scholars and the tough challenges they face. This book attests to their stout efforts to improve social work education in Africa. It attests to their important role as critics and commentators, holding politicians and decision-makers to account, questioning unjust policies and practices, and seeking the best for their students and socioeconomic sector.

Traversing 13 of Africa's 54 sovereign African countries, the chapters cover many of the regions and countries where social work education has a presence, including in Cameroon in Central Africa; Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in East Africa; Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in southern Africa; and Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria in West Africa. Absent are Muslim countries in northern Africa, like Egypt, with a long history of social work and from which the indigenisation debate began. Brought to Africa by European colonisers, most countries where social work has obtained a foothold have equally embraced Christianity and, as several of the chapters in this collection show, this is extremely important in African cultures heavily embedded in spiritual beliefs and practices. Social work's Judeo-Christian values are consistent with African cultures heavily steeped in the philosophy of Ubuntu. Absent then are issues relating to Islamic social work's development in northern Nigeria and Egypt, for example.

This aside, the chapters show the huge variations across the countries covered that make the concept of 'African social work' and 'African social work education' as problematic as notions like 'Western social work'. Africa is a linguistically, culturally, ethically, and religiously diverse continent, with divisions that have spawned violence and conflict, and humanitarian problems relating to poverty, hunger, AIDS and HIV, migrants, refugees, trafficked and internally displaced people, and gender-based violence. These are 'wicked problems' that social workers in humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) encounter, while those in public services

are frequently locked into statutory child and youth services. The chapters reflect social work's presence in health and the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and its growing role in environmental interventions, especially disaster responses. They show the broad range of issues and problems for inclusion in the social work curriculum. Collectively, they comprise a sound contribution to the discourse and growing literature on social work education in Africa. Most importantly, they highlight persistent problems with professional knowledge transfer and the challenges for those seeking to decolonise African social work education by increasing local content in teaching social work and preparing students for culturally relevant practice. However, African social work educators need to be knowledgeable about, and mindful of, global social work and global issues, by working and developing interdependent relationships with colleagues in the West. Many Northern academics court African universities eager to give their students international social work placements. Resultantly, Northern academics become a voice for African social work education, reinterpreting their experiences through a Western lens. African educators need to be more vocal. They need to make their mark on the global stage, highlighting the complexities of transferring and imposing outside knowledge to address internal problems. African educators and scholars can take the lead in conceptualising social work from an African perspective and blaze a path in social work's response to, inter alia, environmental events, human trafficking, internally displacement, and political and gender-based violence. This collection is a step in this direction as African educators find their voices and speak from their local experiences to a global audience.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AASOGUI	Association of Guinean Social Workers
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AfrIPEN	Africa Interprofessional Education Network
AfDB	Africa Development Bank
AGTS	Association Guinéene des Travailleurs Sociaux (Guinean Association of Social Workers)
AIK	African Indigenous Knowledge
ANAS-Guinée	Association Nationale des Assistants Sociaux-Guinee
ANPPCAN	African Network on Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ASASWEI	Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions
ASSWOT	Association of Schools of Social Work in Tanzania
ASWEA	Association of Social Work Education in Africa
ASWM	Association of Social Workers in Malawi
ASWNet	Africa Social Work Network
ATR	African Traditional Religion
AU	African Union
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBWCY	Community Based Work with Children and Youth
CCPA	Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
CCPWs	Community Child Protection Workers
CDOs	Community Development Officers
CENAFOD	African Centre of Training for Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CIRD	Center Internationale de Recherche et Documentation
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (<i>SARS-CoV-2 virus</i>)
CP	Collaborative practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPSS	Child Protection Sub-Sector
CRA	Children's Rights Act (2003)

Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSWE	Council of Social Work Education
CSWZ	Council of Social Workers of Zimbabwe
DCPWS	Department of Child Protection and Welfare Services
DSC	Department of Correctional Services
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSW	Department of Social Work
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
ENAAS	Ecole Nationale des Assistants des Affaires Sociales
ENAM	Ecole Nationale d' Administration et Magistracie
ENSK	L'Ecole Nationale de la Sante de Kindia
EPAS	Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FIDS	Faculty of Integrated Development Studies
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMWASD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
FOGUIReD	Italian Guineo Fund for the Reconversion of Debt
FRN	Federal Republic of Nigeria
FSW	Faculty of Social Work
GCCHI	Ghana Cross-Cultural Healthcare Immersion
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
HKMU	Hubert Kairuku Memorial University
IAC	International Association of Counsellors
IASSW	International Associations of Schools of Social Work
ICSW	International Council on Social Welfare
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IFSW	International Federation of Social Work
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
INFTS	Institute National de Formation en Travail Sociale
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IPCAGHP	Interprofessional and Collaborative Applied Global Health Practice
IPE	Interprofessional Education
IPECP	Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice
ISW	Institute of Social Work
LASAG	Sonfonia's Laboratoire d'Analyse Socio-Anthropologique de Guinée
MASCFE	Ministry of Social Affairs, the Promotion of Women and Children
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MENRS	Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MoHCDGEC	Ministry of Health Community Development Gender, Elderly and Children
MSW	Master of Social Work
NACTE	National Accreditation Council for Technical Education
NAJASOGUI	New Guinean Association of Young Social Workers

Acronyms and abbreviations

NASW	National Association of Social Workers
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework for Zimbabwe
PACA	Protection and Affordable Care Act
PE	Practice Educator
PGDSW	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
PWLE	People With Lived Experience
REPSSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
SACAP	South African College of Applied Science
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SRD	Social Relief of Distress
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
SSW	Schools of Social Work
SSWIM	Supporting Social Work in Malawi
SWA	Social Welfare Assistant
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
TASWO	Tanzania Association of Social Workers
TCU	Tanzania Commission of University
TESWEP	Tanzania Emerging Schools of Social Work Programme
UB	University of Botswana
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDS	University of Development Studies
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UGLC	Université General Lasana Conté
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNN	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Acronyms and abbreviations

VVF	Vesical-Vaginal Fistula
WIL	Work-integrated learning
WHO	World Health Organisation
WLU	Wilfrid Laurier University
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

Susan Levy, Uzoma O. Okoye, Richard Ingram, and Pius T. Tanga

Abstract

The Introduction to the *Routledge Handbook on African Social Work Education* contextualises the book within contemporary global shifts to creating social work education that is responsive to local conditions and is culturally relevant. Approaches to transitioning away from the hegemony of Western literature, knowledge, and practice models currently underpinning African social work education are introduced. Ways of working with different knowledge systems and worldviews, different ways of knowing, doing, and seeing social work, are introduced as a foundation for reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange between the Global South and the Global North. Chapters covering Central Africa: Cameroon; East Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; Southern Africa: Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe; and West Africa: Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria are introduced under the four themed sections in the *Handbook*: 1. Approaches to Indigenising, Decolonising, and Developing Culturally Relevant Social Work Education, 2. Social Work Education: Evolution across Contexts, 3. Embedding Field Practicum into Social Work Education, and 4. Knowledge Exchange between the Global South and the Global North. The context of the *Handbook* is Africa, yet the topics covered are relevant to ongoing debates in social work, social welfare, social development, and sustainability across the globe.

Social work education across the globe is constantly evolving, reflecting, and aligning with developments in practice, knowledge, and understanding as well as adjusting to social, cultural, and political contextual changes. This responsive and reactive element of social work education occurs in a myriad of ways, sometimes local in nature whilst at other times it can have a global character. This *Routledge Handbook on African Social Work Education* explores, contests, and provides unique insights into contemporary social work education in Africa and the prevailing dynamic process and challenge of knitting the local with the global (Levy et al., 2022; Ragab, 2017). Throughout the *Handbook*, the reader will find the content and focus of African social work education in transition or at a crossroads, as new paths are forged to create a new culturally relevant era of social work. Indigenous knowledge and decolonising curricula are central points, from which the chapters radiate out and coalesce, making visible and connecting social work with the environment through ecosocial work; the arts through traditional cultural practices; development and engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs); and through bringing to the fore religion and spirituality as core to everyday African lives. Contemporary and traditional issues are intertwined as discussions cover what is relevant and meaningful for current social work as well as what makes social work uniquely African.

This is a timely book with a unique focus on social work education in Africa with relevance to social work, social welfare, social development, and sustainability in Africa, the Global South

more generally, as well as the Global North. Geography does not delineate or divide interest in decolonising and diversifying social work curricula and understanding ways to teach and engage students in issues around race, ethnicity, power, social justice, and cultural understanding. These issues are present across the globe, and they are made manifest through the voices, challenges, and arguments presented here. The book contributes to shaping ways to build a foundation of indigenous literature to facilitate the transition away from the hegemony of Western literature, knowledge, and practice models (Midgley, 1981; Osei-Hwedie, 1995; Shawky, 1972).

The *Handbook* traverses the vast and varied continent of Africa, providing the reader with multiple approaches and insights into social work education in 13 countries with each chapter distilling pathways for change through recommendations. The chapters cover Central Africa: Cameroon; East Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; Southern Africa: Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe; and West Africa: Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria.

As a profession, social work is at the forefront of driving and achieving social change and social justice, and addressing the UNSDGs across the globe. The contributions in this *Handbook* evidence similarities and dissimilarities across Africa in terms of social work education, and the same can be said for within the countries covered where consistency is not necessarily the norm. There are chapters based in countries where there is currently no social work training, and where there is little, if any, published literature on social work (Guinea and Cameroon). For others, social work is more established, and the impact and effectiveness of the profession is the key priority (for example, South Africa and Nigeria). The variance across countries is visible in terms of levels of social protection and social welfare, the evolution and status of the social work profession, and the impact this then has on the priorities and pressures facing educators. Some authors question the dominance of urban social work when the majority of Africans live in rural locations (for example, Bhangyi et al. and Lemkuka), whilst, for others, the lack of regulation and professional status leave social work vulnerable to legislative and structural interpretation, whereby the role and purpose of social work is not reserved or protected (for example, Malawi and Ethiopia). As documented in this *Handbook*, the ambition for professional recognition and status is mirrored in academia, with social work courses frequently located within wider academic discipline groupings such as sociology, social policy, criminology, and psychology. This can leave social work education with a less prominent voice within established academic environments, thus adding an additional challenge when seeking to evolve and change.

Social workers wherever they are located in the world are in a privileged position to be able to enter the lives of a range of different people, build relationships, understand diverse lived experiences, and collaboratively co-create positive outcomes. Effective and meaningful change at all levels, whether at the individual, family, community, society, or policy level, emerges from knowing your subject and its context. Social work education is fundamental to building a foundation for future practitioners. That is social workers who can work with complexity, uncertainty, and diversity, but who can also understand cultural touch points and are orientated to what is familiar and local. A central narrative running through the chapters of this *Handbook* is the need to Africanise and indigenise social work education, to break the hegemony of Western knowledge and practice models that have not, and are not, providing a foundation for future practitioners to know their subject and their context (Mwansa, 2011). The language of indigenising, decolonising, diversifying, or developing culturally relevant curriculum all require a base of African research and literature to enable change to happen. This requires new knowledge that is rooted in contemporary African social issues that can lend a greater sense of relevance and applicability to practice (Gray et al., 2008; Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie, 2011; Twikirize and Spitzer, 2019). Whilst centring on

Africanism and the need for African solutions to African problems, the authors present a future that transcends the juxtaposing of Western and African knowledge in binary form through acknowledging the strengths, learning, and change that can be achieved through working with different knowledge systems and worldviews, different ways of knowing, doing, and seeing social work.

Along with exploring and providing examples of how African social work education is being indigenised, the *Handbook* advances the discourse on this topic. Through engaging with the emerging tensions arising from traditional cultural practices coming face to face with global social work values and ethics, the book contests what it means to indigenise. Traditional ways of being and doing have a temporality, a social dimension, and spatial roots. Whilst some traditional practices transcend time and place, others now appear out of place in a continent that has experienced colonialism/post-colonialism and globalisation. A key challenge for social work educators is finding ways to work with the given reality through combining African and Western ways of being. The authors acknowledge that Western theory and practice models have proved inadequate in addressing social work educational and practice needs in Africa; however, rather than dismissing Western social work knowledge, the *Handbook* argues for reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange between the Global South and the Global North (Nuttman-Shwartz and Ranz, 2014). This is relevant for social work across the globe as the profession seeks change through the development of more inclusive and culturally relevant curricula based on interdependency, which is the essence of Ubuntu.

We live in a global world, which requires an awareness of, acknowledgement of, and engagement with living and working with interdependency, whether that be between different knowledges and world views, between people, across political borders, or with the environment. Many social problems have origins that are located at a global level but require a local response, and this includes the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022). COVID-19 provides a vivid and recent example of a global event which triggered a range of pedagogical challenges for social work education in terms of online provision, compromised field education, ways to respond to disasters, and exacerbation of prevailing social issues. The timing of this *Handbook* offers valuable insights into responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that avoided large fissures in students' learning, and provides examples of ways of working with uncertainty, and in times of large-scale disasters.

The *Handbook* comprises both empirical and conceptual chapters, and it is framed around four parts:

Part 1: Approaches to Indigenising, Decolonising, and Developing Culturally Relevant Social Work Education

Part 2: Social Work Education: Evolution across Contexts

Part 3: Embedding Field Practicum into Social Work Education

Part 4: Knowledge Exchange between the Global South and the Global North

As editors we have worked with the authors to encourage the use of examples to provide you, the reader, with a feel of what social work looks like and how it is experienced as well as key issues that currently make African social work education not only unique, but also familiar and similar to social work in other geographies. We offered authors the choice of submitting an abstract in a local language as a means through which the *Handbook* could engage in the power of language, to contest the prevailing dominance of English in social work education, and to role model alternative ways to present social work knowledge. Abstracts are presented in 14 languages. In addition, we asked authors to move beyond identifying prevailing challenges, to be outcomes orientated, leading to each chapter ending with three recommendations to progress and work towards change in African social work education.

Before moving on to introduce each of the chapters, we want to reflect on some absences, the areas of silence created by things that are not covered in the chapters and yet are ripe for further exploration. These centre on:

1. Theory: there is a growing literature on social work in Africa yet theorising and the development of new ways to conceive of African social work remains peripheral within the literature.
2. Practice Models: following on from the need for more African social work theorising, to enable practice to fully respond to local, contextualised issues, there is also the need for more culturally relevant practice models.
3. Regions: the *Handbook* covers sub-Saharan Africa (Central, East, Southern, and West Africa); we were unable to include the voices and insights from social work in North Africa.

Highlighting these areas of absences is designed to stimulate and drive future developments to extend the work presented here. The *Handbook* creates a much needed space to explore current social work education and to shape and influence its future, as well as to deliver an openness to discuss the persistent challenges and precariousness of social life and social work in the fascinating continent that is Africa.

Part 1: Approaches to Indigenising, Decolonising, and Developing Culturally Relevant Social Work Education

This opening part of the *Handbook* of eight chapters addresses indigenising, decolonising, and developing culturally relevant social work education. The chapters offer ways to rethink and reimagine African social work education through engaging and reflecting on what and how social work is currently taught in Africa, and where changes could be introduced to unsettle and challenge the legacies of colonialism. The chapters offer innovative and creative approaches from changes to pedagogy, the language/s used in social work teaching, the literature students engage with, and curriculum content.

The starting point for decolonising curriculum is having an alternative, non-Western body of literature that is culturally relevant. Chapter 1, by Gray, Levy, Okoye, and Amadasun, contests the narrative that there is little published literature on Nigerian social work that could be used to create a culturally relevant curriculum. The authors reviewed published literature on Nigerian social work and found 308 papers. With a focus on communal and cultural ways of being, ethics, and ethnicity, they highlight some of the complexities around developing a culturally relevant curriculum.

In Chapter 2, by Bhangyi, Kiconco, and Chui, the authors explore approaches to incorporating traditional informal ways of being and doing social work into social work education. They highlight that the reach of social work is limited across Africa, being largely centred in urban areas, when the majority of the population live in rural settlements. They call for embedding an informality paradigm into social work education, which, they argue, will better prepare students to work more closely with rural communities at a more localised level. Chapter 3, by Obeng and Tadesse, retains a link between the social and the spatial. This time the focus is on ecosocial work and the strong connections African's have with the physical environment and the spirit world. Drawing on data from social work curricula in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, Obeng and Tadesse demonstrate that there is little integration of the social connections with the environment in social work education, and they highlight the importance of this as a route to indigenous social work.

Chapter 4, by Mamaleka, introduces African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) and four African theories, which, it is argued, can be used for understanding African social work and the development of culturally relevant interventions that are responsive to local needs. She highlights how indigenous knowledge has been passed down orally through traditional art forms, including storytelling and folklore through the use of local languages, and she calls for the use of these languages in social work education. In Chapter 5, Makhanya and Levy return the reader to the topic of language and how the delivery of social work education in English disempowers. The chapter is situated within South Africa, a country with 11 official languages, and where the majority of people requiring social work support do not have English as a first language. The authors address translanguaging and epistemic injustice, with a focus on the language policy at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, which encourages the equal use of English and isiZulu, as a successful pathway for decolonising and creating culturally relevant social work education.

The next three chapters (Chapters 6–8) all cover the importance of religion and spirituality in African's day-to-day lives and the need to integrate this into curricula. Baynesagn, Abye, and Mulugeta focus on Ethiopia (Chapter 6); Veta on Nigeria (Chapter 7); and Rapholo and Zimba on South Africa (Chapter 8). The latter explore ways for social workers to work more closely with pastors who are seen as more accessible and central to supporting people through challenging times. All three chapters focus on Christianity, a religion of colonialism; however, it is an area of people's lives that has been transformed over the decades to become uniquely African, reflecting the deep spirituality of people across the continent. An emerging theme in these three chapters centres on the ethics of using ingenious knowledge when it conflicts with social work values, with calls for ways to develop strategies for social work to blend African and Western approaches that align with global social work values and ethics.

Part 2: Social Work Education: Evolution across Contexts

Part 2 comprises ten chapters, and the chapters are united by their keen sense of a need for change and the complexity of charting a steady course through the turbulent and, at times, contradictory priorities that are faced by social work educators. In many ways this theme reflects the wider messages contained within this *Handbook* in terms of the fluidity and flexibility required of social work practice and the academy. The purpose of social work is to reflect and address contemporary social issues and challenges within the contexts that they arise. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) definition of social work that is referenced regularly throughout this *Handbook* provides a firm foundation for the profession and for social work educators, but the ways in which the vision is delivered and understood varies and evolves in response to external factors and nuances.

The chapters in Part 2 are united in their accounts of how social work education has responded to local and global phenomena. They speak of the need for educators to interface with practitioners, policymakers, and legislators to ensure that the content and pedagogical approach of social work education reflects and facilitates the ever-evolving focus and status of the profession. It is interesting that such responsiveness requires looking forward and backwards as social work educators seek to innovate, whilst maintaining a keen eye on the importance of the cultural context as well as wider social work values. It is inevitable that some of the chapters in Part 2 reference the COVID-19 pandemic and the direct and indirect impact that it has had on requiring change and prompting action. Such need for responsiveness was globally felt, but it is fascinating to see how such a global phenomenon was felt and experienced by social work educators in a range of

contexts. Indeed, it has heightened the focus on the social work role in terms of taking a lead at times of profound change and disasters.

Part 2 opens with Osaiyuwu's Chapter 9, which explores the challenges facing child protection in Nigeria. The narrative vividly identifies the need for social work to define itself in the context of a multidisciplinary environment whilst holding onto and articulating its values and purpose. This challenge is viewed through a lens of reaching towards traditional communal conceptions of care whilst also identifying the need for governmental clarity and direction to ensure the safety of children. In Chapter 10, Buhori, writing from the context of Tanzania, similarly identifies a gap between current legislation and workforce capacity and the complexity of social needs requiring intervention. Indeed, the challenges facing social work education in terms of status within the corridors of academia are mirrored by the challenges of status in practice contexts. The traditional construct of *Msaragamba* is identified as a way of understanding the role of community elders in terms of a social work approach that is embedded in indigenous knowledge and, in turn, acts as a way of raising and clarifying the status of social work practice and education in a culturally relevant manner.

Chapter 11 by Maphosa and Sobantu uses the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that this had on the pedagogical approaches utilised within social work programmes in South Africa. The chapter charts the historical evolution of social work pedagogy, rightly placing these recent challenges within a continuum of progression and responsiveness of social work education – whereby pedagogies evolve and become embedded whilst holding onto core values and intended outcomes. Hendricks and Ingram in Chapter 12 chart the experiences of educators and students in South Africa in terms of the pivot to the online delivery of social work education during the early stages of the pandemic. They argue that this universal response to the crisis was not equitable in its effectiveness and accessibility. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is further explored in Chapters 13 and 14 by Heunis, Joubert and Ncube, and Tutu-Danquah and Murphy, respectively, which cast a light on the implications for practice and the need for social workers to develop a skill set that helps them to respond to profound social disruptions as well as the potential shift to online modes of relationship building that may arise in such circumstances. Both chapters underline the symbiotic relationship between social work education and the external context and the need for adaptations and changes in focus to emerge and be embedded in real time.

Chapter 15 by Nhapi considers the maturation of social work education in Zimbabwe through the lens of developmental social work. This participative community-based approach vividly places social work as a 'front row witness' to social phenomenon and crucially underlines the need to lower barriers between academia and practice to enable social work education to deliver the knowledge and skills that will be most relevant and effective to meet contemporary challenges.

This need for evolution and relevance is further explored in Chapters 16 and 17, which are situated in Francophone Africa: Cameroon (Tanga and Ekobi) and Guinea (Kaloga and Camara). Neither country currently has a social work degree programme, yet the authors provide rich historical context, highlighting the limits of the European roots of social work in the two countries, and they call for an Afro-centric refresh for the future of social work education to reflect the realities of the local context. From the Guinean perspective, Kaloga and Camara frame this transition in the Transmission, Indigenisation, and Authentisation continuum.

The role of culture is further explored in the final chapter of Part 2, Chapter 18 by Muhingi, Warria, and Otieno, which focuses on the complex cultural considerations that need to be incorporated into medical social work education and training in Kenya. The chapter once again stresses the need for indigenous knowledge to be brought to bear on contemporary issues and debates emerging within practice and social work education.

Part 3: Embedding Field Practicum into Social Work Education

Field practicum (field education, practice placement, and internship) is an integral component of social work education connecting theory to practice, and, as such, it is core to social work education. Part 3 provides insight into field practicum in Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Botswana. Whilst central to social work training, the current situation of field practicum across Africa comes with numerous challenges. These include the processes of field practicum, assessment of student learning and competence, and the training of field instructors. Combined, these challenges are presented as constituting a ‘crisis’ in field practicum in Africa. The authors argue that if these issues are not addressed, they pose a threat to the profession across the continent. Along with highlighting challenges, the chapters in Part 3 also demonstrate the salience of field practicum as a source of indigenous knowledge that students can develop whilst in the field and integrate into their learning journeys.

There are eight chapters in Part 3, and whilst there are chapters in other parts that are jointly written by African and non-African authors, all of the chapters in Part 3 are solely authored by Africans.

The first chapter in Part 3, Chapter 19 by Wizi-Kambala, explores the experiences and challenges of social work field practicum in Malawi where the profession is evolving and developing. The chapter discusses arrangements for field practicum at two of the countries universities, along with outlining challenges confronting field work practicum, focusing on resource constraints and the non-recognition of the profession in Malawi. Chapter 20 by Onalu, Nnama-Okechukwu, Agbawadikeizu, and Chukwu examines the dearth of standard social work agencies for field practicum as stumbling blocks for social work pedagogy in Nigeria. The authors recommend the placement of students during vacations within their localities and regular retraining of agency supervisors to mitigate some of the challenges.

Lemkuka’s Chapter 21 deals with the situational analysis of social work field practice in Tanzania Mainland, with a particular focus on rural and developmental social work. The chapter echoes some of the challenges that are encountered in most African countries as well as highlighting concerns that students on field practice frequently undertake low-skilled and routine tasks that are not directly related to social work. The cause of this is situated within the shortage of qualified social work instructors, and the impact on students’ future readiness for practice is discussed. The chapter by Omoroguiwa, Chapter 22, is based on a case study of the University of Benin, Nigeria. She introduces the reader to the structure and methods of field education at her university as well as discussing some of the limitations bedeviling this vital component of social work education. Suggestions for change that are presented include enhanced training of staff to support students in field practicum.

From Nigeria, we move to Ethiopia, and the perspectives of Ethiopian stakeholders. Chapter 23, by Kassaye, touches on the exposure of students to the complexities of culturally rich yet sensitive settings with diverse and at-risk populations. He highlights the opportunities for students, through field practicum, to be introduced to indigenous Ethiopian knowledge and traditional communal practices of care. From Botswana, Malinga, in Chapter 24, focuses on the use of a family genogram as an experiential method to enable students to gain an in-depth understanding of people’s lives. She presents the genogram as a tool to enhance social work field practicum through using it to address the over-reliance on didactic teaching methods, to support students to build meaningful relationships with clients, to conceptualise concepts, as well as to train students in self-introspection in preparation for field practicum.

The final two chapters in Part 3 come from South Africa and discuss different responses to and perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on field practicum. In Chapter 25, Matsea examines the

impediments that confronted social work institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of adopting a hybrid form of field practicum compared with delivering campus-based hybrid lectures. This chapter reiterates the need for social work to remain agile and receptive to creative and innovative ways of implementing field practicums during future pandemics. Chapter 26 by Westhuizen, Davis, and Adonis discusses students' mental health issues that became apparent during the pandemic and the impact of this on students' readiness for practice. The chapter presents findings from an analysis of students' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the value of lived experiences and experiential knowledge when considering decolonial practice. The chapter recommends changes to fieldwork modules to better prepare students for field practicum when academic life is disrupted.

Part 4: Knowledge Exchange between the Global South and the Global North

In the final part, Part 4, the focus shifts to engaging with the reality that social work education in Africa cannot develop to the level we want it to without collaboration with social work educators from the Global North. Through their chapters, the authors discuss some of these collaborations and the importance as well as the need to bring in local knowledge while imbibing knowledge from the Global North. The chapters (re)confirm that knowledge exchange in social work education is largely one directional, namely, from the Global North to the Global South, which translates into continued dependency rather than interdependency. Whilst some of the authors argue that knowledge produced in Africa can be of benefit to the Global North, there are minimal examples in the chapters of how African knowledge is being used and how it could be integrated into social work education in the Global North. In other words, the prevailing narrative is of continued dependence of African social work on the Global North, which helps explain the essence of the advocacies around decolonisation of social work and reflects why formal social work in Africa has remained emerging and growing despite decades of presence in the region. Rebalancing the wheels of knowledge exchange across the regions of the world must be an agenda for global social work. Trust between regions and the issue of brain-drain through African scholars not returning home after spending time in the Global North is core to this future agenda. It is a conversation emerging from the chapters in Part 4 and should be discussed in subsequent academic platforms.

Part 4 comprises six chapters, opening with Chapter 27 by Parry, George, and Kaypnga, who highlight that social work education in Africa is Eurocentric, with little done to centre the socio-cultural context and distinctive conditions of Africa. Drawing on narratives from social workers in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Zambia, they demonstrate the importance of experiential knowledge gained through knowledge exchange opportunities, and they call for reciprocal learning between the Global South and the Global North through the rebalancing of a heavily theorised Western education model with everyday African experiences. Chapter 28 by Akesson and Mfoafo-M'Carthy provides an example of knowledge exchange and partnership between a Global South Ghanaian university and a Global North Canadian university, with a focus on child protection. The authors discuss the value of this collaboration, including challenging and contesting commonly held perceptions of African children that are frequently viewed through the lens of poverty, famine, and war, and they call for moving the dialogue forward to support the training of a robust social service workforce.

In Chapter 29, Kansiieme, Tusiirew, and Nabbumba draw on personal experiences from studying and working in Ghana and the West. They introduce useful examples of knowledge transfer from the Global South to the Global North and the opportunities for co-constructed knowledge sharing to facilitate decolonisation by social work educators in African culture and indigenous

knowledge. They introduce four channels for knowledge transfer: social work education; research; academic publications; and digital information-sharing platforms. The chapter recommends a review of social work curricula globally to examine the origins of the knowledge taught and co-constructed knowledge sharing to facilitate decolonisation attempts by social work educators in Africa. Chapter 30 by Marovatsanga and Garrett continues the theme of the transfer of knowledge from the Global South to the Global North. The chapter is situated in Ireland and highlights the importance of African scholars producing literature to decolonise and diversify curricula in the Global South as well as the Global North. Drawing on the experience of social work academics in Ireland, the authors highlight how the limited inclusion of different perspectives (African literature) in social work curriculum in Ireland constrains students' understanding and preparedness for working with cultural diversity, and they discuss the wider impact of this on service users and their outcomes.

Chapter 31 by Walker, Cauvain, Kakowa, and Fometu takes us back to Africa, specifically Malawi. The chapter examines field practicum in Malawi through the lens of decolonialisation and Ubuntu to offer an alternative approach to preparing students for practice. The chapter reports on a Malawi-UK collaboration on the training of practice educators and highlights knowledge exchange as a multidirectional process that is critical for addressing global challenges. Chapter 32 by Mills, Boateng, Banks, and Tuggle is the final chapter in the *Handbook*, and it focuses on integrating Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPECP) into social work education. The authors note that even though IPECP is central to the future of integrated working across social work and health, very few social work programmes offer it in Africa. The chapter describes the collaboration between academics in Ghana and the United States to develop an IPECP curriculum centred on the Ubuntu philosophy. The chapter also provides an overview of inter-professional education in Africa and the United States, and it gives insights into the curriculum design process.

The final chapters all communicate an important narrative that is threaded throughout this *Handbook*. That narrative is focused on the synergies to be achieved from bringing ideas together, and from journeying away from dualist narratives that divide and position knowledges, practices, and ways of living in opposition to each other. Reciprocal learning between the Global South and the Global North, and working with diverse knowledges, will be at the heart of the future of social work.

The authors in this *Handbook* provide unique insights into social work education across Africa, building a foundation of literature to inform, shape, and reconceptualise curricula to move away from the dominance of Western theory and practice models. The chapters provide approaches and case studies, as well as identifying challenges to be confronted and addressed in moving indigenous knowledge of African social work from the periphery to the centre of social work education. We hope this work will enrich and broaden the lens of social work education across the continent of Africa and beyond to influence and impact lives across this world we share.

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PART 1

Approaches to Diversifying, Decolonising, and Developing Culturally Relevant Social Work Education



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1

COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA

Mel Gray, Susan Levy, Uzoma Odera Okoye, and Solomon Amadasun

Abstract: English

This chapter discusses findings from an empirical study that explored issues surrounding the development of a culturally relevant social work curriculum for Nigeria. It begins with a focus on conceptualisations of culture within the African social work discourse on indigenisation and culturally relevant social work with reference to ‘indigenising’ social work education. Second, it contextualises this cultural discourse through a discussion of the findings from a literature review of publications on Nigerian social work and from a focus group with Nigerian social work academics. These findings relate to communal and cultural ways of being, ethics, and ethnicity. They show the complexities involved in developing a culturally relevant curriculum that strives to adhere to international social work standards and values in a context with divergent cultural, religious, and ethnic beliefs and traditions. The chapter closes with a reconceptualisation of a culturally relevant social work curriculum and offers three recommendations for progressing towards achieving this outcome.

Abstract: Igbo

Isi nke a tulere nchọpụta ndị sitere na otu nchọcha e mere nke nyochara isi okwu ndị metụtara imebe korikulum amụmamụ mwulite obodo nke na-emetụta omenala na Najjirja. Nke a ga-amalite site n’ilekwasị anya na nghọta ihe bụ omenala dị ka o si metụta amụmamụ mwulite obodo nke metụtara ime ka ihe buru nke ndị, omenala, nnwere onwe na amụmamụ mwulite obodo mbawanye n’Afrika, na-atunyere ime agumakwukwo amụmamụ mwulite obodo ka o buru ‘nke ndi’. Nke abuo, o na-etinye amụmamụ metụtara omenala n’onodu site n’itule ihe ndi a chọpụtara site na ntuleghari zuru oke e mere n’agumagu ndi e biputara maka amụmamụ mwulite obodo na Najjirja, ya na otu mkparita uka ajuju onu nke e jiri ndi okachamara n’amụmamụ mwulite obodo mee. Ihe ndi ahụ a chọpụtara na-emetuta uzọ mbikorita na usoro omenala di iche iche, usoro ebimndu, na ebe onye si. Ha na-egosi ihe mgbagwo so n’ihibe korikulum amụmamụ mwulite obodo na-emetuta omenala nke na-agbalị igbaso usoro ruru ogo amụmamụ mwulite obodo na mba uwa n’onodu ebe e nwere omenala, okpukpere, na nkwenye sitere n’ebe onye si nakwa odinala digasi iche iche. E mechiri isi nke a site n’ighotaghari ihe bu korikulum amụmamụ mwulite obodo na-emetuta omenala ma tunye aro ato, ndi ga-enye aka imejuputa mputara nke a.

Introduction

Africa is a diverse continent that has had a marked impact on international social work education through the various discourses it has initiated, from launching the worldwide indigenisation debate in the north (Ragab, 1990, 2017; Shawky, 1972) to introducing developmental social work in the south (Patel, 2005; Patel and Hochveld, 2012). Gray et al. (2014) documented the attempts of the Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA), 1971-1989, to indigenise the social work curriculum. They noted the evolution of social work education in Africa with the first schools emerging in South Africa in Stellenbosch in 1931, and Cape Town and Pretoria in 1933 and 1934 respectively, though, for political reasons, ASWEA excluded South Africa, due to its apartheid policy. Schools to the north followed, in Egypt in 1936, Algeria in 1942, Ghana in 1945, Zambia in 1950, Uganda in 1954, Tanzania in 1958, Ethiopia in 1959, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) in 1960, and Tunisia and Zimbabwe in 1964. Other countries followed in the 1960s and early 1970s, including Nigeria in 1976, with latecomers Namibia in 1983 and Botswana in 1985. African institutions for higher education based their programmes on colonial models and many started with basic skills or technical training for welfare officials, hence constant reference to social work training rather than professional social work education reflected in much early literature, and the publicly accessible ASWEA documents¹. This colonial bias formed the basis for Midgley's (1981) seminal text that became a pivotal catalyst for the indigenisation debate. Most influential in furthering the discourse on indigenisation in social work education was the work of Kwaku Osei-Hwedie (1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b) and many followed his lead. Midgley also played a major role in the developmental social work turn in southern Africa, while Patel introduced his theory on social development to, and brought it to bear on, South Africa's welfare transformation policy (Patel, 2005). Permeating the African discourse on social work education were persistent themes, highlighted by ASWEA, relating to ongoing challenges to indigenising the curriculum, including the following:

- Lingering colonial legacy and dependence on Western curricula.
- Lack of indigenous teaching material and outmoded teaching practices.
- Struggle to reorient the curriculum from remedial casework to community-centred practice.
- Underuse of African social research.

These issues remain firmly embedded in contemporary discourses on social work education, despite many positive developments, especially in the growth of a rich African literature on social work. Most recently, the international social work community has embraced the African concept of *ubuntu*, undoubtedly through the valuable involvement of African social work educators in the development of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), 2020). In this chapter, attention focuses first on conceptualisations of culture within the African social work discourse on indigenisation and cultural relevance with reference to social work education. Secondly, we contextualise this cultural discourse in Nigeria through findings from a literature review of published work on Nigerian social work, and a focus group with Nigerian social work academics. Thirdly, we discuss the complexities of developing a culturally relevant curriculum in a context where local values and practices often do not align with international social work standards. The chapter closes with three recommendations for progressing towards a culturally relevant social work curriculum.