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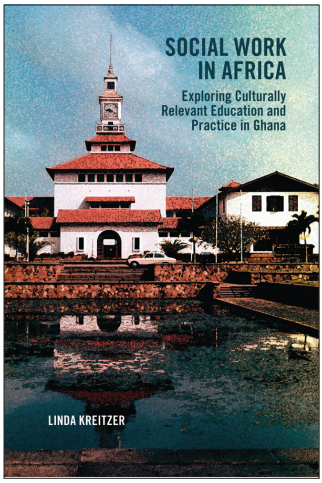

SOCIAL WORK IN AFRICA: EXPLORING CULTURALLY RELEVANT EDUCATION AND PRACTICE IN GHANA
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I. Historical Context

> In Ghana, the Adinkra symbol SANKƆFA is the bird looking back which means to "Go back and take" and it "signifies the importance of returning in time to bring to the present useful past cultural values, which are needed today. It is believed that progress is based on the right use of the positive contributions of the past." (Agbo, 1999, p. 3)

A. Historical influences affecting social work education in Africa

There are many historical influences that have affected the introduction and evolution of social work in Africa. The influences that shaped African universities, the institutions that influenced the importation of

the profession into Africa and the institutions that struggled to define the professions place on the continent will be discussed. An example of how social work evolved in Ghana will finish the chapter.

1. Sub-Saharan African universities – Historical context

In my conversations with African social workers, I have come to realize that Sub-Saharan African university students are mainly taught the history and practice of social work from a European perspective with little attention paid to how social supports evolved in Africa. This Eurocentric approach to social work training and more broadly to African university education, is not surprising. Historically, many Sub-Saharan African universities were developed to meet the needs of the colonizer and the colonial institutions that were exported from the motherland (Ashby, 1964; Boateng, 1982; van Hook, 1994). The colonizer understood that controlling education, particularly in universities, was a way to control Africans. Curriculum could influence consciousness and awareness, and, if the colonizer's knowledge was taught, conflict with students would be minimized (Gaventa & Cornwell, 2001). There was a need to produce a class of Africans that were black on the outside but European on the inside to serve in these institutions (Ashby, 1964). Van Hook (1994) speaks about Zimbabwe's educational system as "designed to maintain the monopoly of power and resources by the whites" (p. 320). The British educational policies supported the following strategies: 1) control the pace and direction of social change; 2) maintain law and order and not foster social action; 3) discourage talk of racial equality; 4) educate African elites, who were fit, upright, and of good character and ability, to uphold the colonial administration; and 5) keep Africans in subserviant roles (Ashby, 1964; Austin, 1975; Maravanyika, 1990). These strategies helped the colonizers maintain their relationship of power over the local population (Amonoo-Neizer, 1998). These strategies were successful in that once independence was achieved many of the African intellectuals refused to support any progress towards the Africanization of universities.

Some resistance to this Eurocentric university education was promoted in the early years before independence through the activist work of James Johnson, Africanus Horton, and Edward Blyden (Ajayi et al., 1996).

Blyden saw missionary education as "slavery of the mind and worse than slavery of the body" (p. 19). Lebakeng (1997) describes the apartheid-colonial curriculum "with its reliance on scientific racism, as seeking to disprove the humanness of Africans and to prove both their inferiority and defective character as subhumans" (p. 5). This criticism of European education was not taken seriously by the early western developers of education. For example, missionaries had only to answer back to this criticism that, since "Africa has no past, how can race instincts be respected which either don't exist or are fatal and soul destroying to the Negro" (p. 22). These activists wanted a "secular African-controlled university" (Ajayi et al., 1996, p. 17).

Eventually, the colonial administration did take note and through a compromise created Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1826. Although not what many activists for African universities would have wanted, it was a start. It began as a college for the Christian Missionary Society and, eventually, in 1876, became a university institution. There were many conditions on which the college was created. It had to affiliate with an English university and this was the University of Durham. Courses were drawn up in Durham and most of the courses offered were courses needed to become a Church of England minister. One non-examining course was offered in Arabic and Islamic studies, but courses such as law, medicine, science, agriculture, economics, engineering, architecture, and African studies were missing. In other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, universities were created from funding from Europe and course content was European. For example, the University College of Ghana, established in 1948 as an affiliate college of the University of London, was based on the Cambridge style of teaching, emphasizing the superiority of western curriculum and favouring European university format over practical African structures and African-centred curriculum (Ashby, 1964). In 1961, it was reorganized as the University of Ghana to award its own degrees. When walking through the University of Ghana, Legon, the distinctly Mediterranean (see book cover of the Balme Library) and British influence is everywhere, including the presence of senior common rooms, high tables in the old cafeterias, and the president and important people in the university housed on the top of the hill in the 'Ivory Tower.' In fighting long and hard for African-centred education, the universities became,

for Africans, part of the "status symbols conferred on the new states in anticipation of the granting of political independence and international recognition" (Ajayi et al., 1996, p. 69). Ajayi et al. (1996) identify four areas of the colonial legacy in higher education that needed to be changed once African universities were under their own control:

- Educate people to uphold and respect traditional systems instead of training elites to uphold colonial administrations and in return exploiting their own people;
- Deliver African-centred curricula that address the needs of the country instead of keeping European curricula that don't address the needs of the developing country;
- Reduce the hierarchy of the university structures and management instead of keeping university structures and management as replicas of European universities;
- Provide education for all Africans instead of just the elites.

Once Sub-Saharan African universities were independent of direct European control, the issue of autonomy dominated the African university colleges in the 1960s and 1970s. Austin (1975) defined 'autonomy' as "a guarantee of and the protection of the freedom of thought and of speech, or reading and writing" (p. 244). It was thought that, through autonomy, progress could be made to reverse the influence of colonialism. This proved to be an idealistic view. Both international and national factors came into play that would challenge university autonomy and freedom. International factors contributing to the continual growth and westernization of the universities included the Cold War (many Africans were educated in Russia and Africans exploited Russian and U.S. rivalry to expand higher education); America's growing economic, political, and educational influence in the world and on African higher education; and the United Nations involvement and support of the internationalization of education. African university autonomy was also challenged at the national level by political groups and government control (Boateng,

1982). New governments realized that if they controlled the teaching and activities at the universities, this would help their political cause. This was certainly the case in Ghana (Austin, 1975). Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, used his position as chancellor and head of the university for political purposes by getting rid of expatriates and any Africans opposed to his political beliefs. "He was concerned that the university was in political opposition to his party" (p. 240).

2. Sub-Saharan African universities – Current state

The current state of Sub-Saharan African universities reflects many of these historical events which have hindered universities attempting to be African-centred, autonomous, and productive. "The euro-centric system of university education has hampered universities in these countries (non-western) in releasing endogenous creativity and seeking their cultural roots. There is thus a tension between the orientation toward indigenous values and problems, on the one hand, and addressing global problems, on the other hand, a tension that can only be alleviated or resolved by communication across cultural boundaries" (van Wyk & Higgs, 2007, p. 68). These authors distinguish between "the concept of an 'African university' as opposed to a 'university located in Africa'" (p. 61) and feel this distinction should be critically examined. The university located in Africa is usually a European university with the following characteristics:

> … a more or less sharp distinction between theory and practice; it has put a premium on autonomy and aloofness to the extent of complete irrelevance; it has been both socially and intellectually an elitist institution; and it has tried to be an 'ivory tower,' as an institution whose main purpose is to 'seek the truth.' (p. 65)

A former student at the University of Ghana, Legon, gave his own experience as an example. As part of their university education, they were made to take African studies. He and the other students were not interested in African studies and couldn't understand why this should be taken. Their education was mainly western and that was good enough. Van Wyck &

Higgs (2007) continue by describing an 'African university' as one that has an

> 1) African identity and vision; 2) providing an overarching education philosophy that is concordant with the culture of the majority, that is human rights, non-sexism, and non-racism that are critical to the promotion of citizenship; 3) representing a critical point of departure from the current colonial-christian-western identity that are no longer suitable nor compatible with our new dispensation; and 4) that creates a new paradigm that locates the African condition, knowledge, experiences, values, world-view and mindset at the centre of African scholarship and knowledge-seeking approach. (p. 68)

In order to achieve the above description of a true African university, understanding Africa's place and role in the world is needed and how these historical influences, colonization, modernization, and globalization have shaped the university's purpose. This includes content and style of teaching. It is here that the Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire, may be of some help. Freire (2007) offers a metaphor explaining traditional education as being like a bank machine in which a card is put into a slot; information is fed in and is received and then spat out at the end. Much of traditional education is like this machine whereby students are given information to memorize. They are given the information; they receive the information and then reproduce it on the exam at the end of term. "The scope of action allowed to the student extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (Freire, 2007, p. 72). This type of education doesn't promote critical thinking; it is reproducing what was exactly, word for word, presented in the classroom and what has been deemed as important by the professor. He describes further the philosophical underpinnings of this type of education:

> Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and

> knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students … accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence … never realizing that they educate the teacher as well. (p. 72)

My initial experience as a teacher at the University of Ghana was similar to this metaphor of the bank machine. The lecture style teaching was used in the classroom and students wrote word for word what the lecturer was saying. However, this didn't work for me. When I began my teaching, I was told rather quickly that I spoke too fast and my accent could not be understood and therefore the students could not write word for word what I was saying. It was clear that the normal one-hour lecture by the professor was out of the question. So, I had to adapt to the situation. Instead of being the sole deliverer of knowledge as described above, I started each class with a ten-minute lecture and the rest of the time was devoted to adult education techniques that encouraged students to draw from their own life experiences and accumulated knowledge. Through creative group work, group projects and role-play they were encouraged to critically look at the topic through their own experiences and not the experiences of the lecturer. The problem came at exam time. The students panicked because they didn't have any notes from which to recite word for word the 'answers' on the exam. The exam I presented was a case study with questions in which they had to assess a problem and use an intervention. After the exam, the students complained that it was so hard because they didn't have the answers they thought I wanted them to reproduce in the exam. Although I had prepared them beforehand by telling them that the exam would be a case study that needed an assessment of the problem and an intervention, they found the exam difficult. The following year, the students were better able to cope with the exam because they understood that there was not necessarily a right answer and they would be graded on how they thought through the assessment and the intervention process rather than on what they could recite. In this case, students were empowered to think for themselves and were rewarded for this creativity instead of living under the assumption that they were absolutely ignorant and that the only right answer was the lecturer's answers. Freire (2007)

offers a challenging statement to the bank machine type educational system. "The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (p. 73).

In 2002/03, during my PhD research process, our research group invited Professor Glover, a well-known Ghanaian artist to talk with us about art and culture. His message was clear. In the present education institutions in Africa, people are being trained to carry on with the existing colonial culture. Things have become stale and the educational system does not provide an environment for creative thinking. Others in the group confirmed that current education is socializing students not to challenge the status quo. Glover went on to say that "We must train people who must be dreamers … training people who can look at things and see something else other than what everybody sees" (Kreitzer, 2004a, p. 22). Part of seeing things differently is to disagree. "Disagreement brings about creative thinking. People must be nurtured within the educational system to begin to dream wild dreams … if we are going to talk of development in any society in many situations then you must have dreamers" (p. 21).

In the past, the Association of African Universities (AAU), supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), tried to set up funds to create a more African-centred curriculum. They encouraged intercontinental contact between African universities and supported conferences and seminars looking at African higher education. Although, the AAU has been somewhat successful, it has been plagued by lack of funds and inadequate communication. The United Nations and the World Bank became less interested in educating people at the university level and international financial institutions imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)[1] that have left vital money for university education unavailable (Sefa Dei, 2005). Their concern has been mainly with primary and secondary education, as can be seen by the Millennium Goals. Caffentzis (2000) links the policies of the World Bank and the IFI directly to the deterioration of African universities. "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's) conditionality's included the removal of subsidies to students for food and accommodation, a currency devaluation that inflated the cost of educational materials and cuts in government funding of education. But the most devastating impact was on the average family income, which made

it difficult for parents to continue to send their children even to primary school" (p. 4). Federici (2000) goes further by stating that these policies are impacting African academia by promoting intellectual recolonization. "This means that conditions are being created whereby African academics cannot produce any intellectual work, much less be present in the world market of ideas, except at the service and under the control of international agencies" (p. 19). In order to turn this scenario around Sefa Dei (2008) argues that schooling

> … should move beyond the traditional dichotomies of difference and look critically at how colonial relations get produced, reproduced and sustained in educational processes. It is important to recognise the legacy of colonial influence and historical context as they apply to African education and how groups, regions, and communities were pitted against each other relative to the differential allocation of resources and goods. (p. 234)

It is also important to critically look at what is influencing universities today. He offers important questions for educational institutions to ask of their departments: "1) How is politics mediating schooling in African contexts?; 2) How are the different bodies in schools acknowledged and validated?; 3) How does schooling promote, sustain or challenge dominant and colonial relations?; 4) How does schooling create possibilities for rupturing dominant forms of knowledge and thereby create pedagogical and curricular spaces for indigeneity?" (p. 234). Looking at power relations in the university setting is important so that the "dynamics of power as well as those oppressive patriarchal relations embedded in educational structures and systems" can be addressed (p. 242).

In 2009, the World Bank saw 'the light' and "the name of the game now is knowledge-intensive development" (p. xxxi). The World Bank report (2009a) highlights some of the problems with tertiary education and now asks that development include "a rebalancing of the relative attention given to primary, secondary and tertiary education in light of where countries are with respect to their primary education goals, the state of tertiary education and the anticipated role that knowledge and skills are expected to have in their future growth" (p. xxxii). This is good news;

however, there is little mention that past policies of the World Bank and the IMF that have contributed to the crisis in tertiary education, that in fact African universities have tried to keep up with the times but due to these international policies have seen the disintegration of universities and the brain drain of teachers. They offer six ways to help bolster the universities: 1) encourage private, public, and specialized training centres; 2) strengthen the governance and autonomy of institutions by creating competition between universities; 3) establish quality-based accreditation requirements, evaluation, and monitoring; 4) address low pay scales, hire retirement rates, and curriculum development; 5) increase research; and 6) support reforms consistently through funding from public budgetary sources. What is important to this topic in social work is the encouragement to

> … offset impending retirement of a large fraction of faculty members in public institutions and to simultaneously begin augmenting the supply of instructors, as well as bolstering their caliber, through better pay scales and other professional incentives. This needs to be complemented by an overhaul of pedagogic practices, curricula, and access to libraries, laboratories and IT facilities. (p. xxxi)

An interesting advice from the report is the use of online teaching, particularly with Africans now teaching abroad. There is no fleshing this out as to the appropriateness of this online teaching to the African context. An African social work teacher in the UK may still be teaching western curriculum that may or may not be appropriate to the African setting. However, the goal of this change in emphasis towards tertiary education is to "establish education and training systems based on learning needs rather than on student age, and to replace information-based rote learning with educational practices that develop a learner's ability to learn, create, adapt and apply knowledge" (p. 110). Ife (2007) and Midgley (2008) both question this trend towards online teaching that continues to perpetuate a western curriculum.

The question is whether or not the World Bank will financially help these countries in updating and encouraging better tertiary education that is African-specific and meets the needs of African countries.

Some universities have critically looked at their structures, policies, and curriculum in light of the African context. An example is Makere University in Uganda, which has turned its university around from a depleted university to one that is less hierarchical, has more private investments, encourages autonomy, and is no longer in decline (Court, 1999). More universities need to change their ways of working in order to support and educate Africans who have pride in their continent and will increase its important place in the world today.

B. Institutions affecting social work education in Africa

The remnants of western teaching, the wish to be on par with European universities, and the desire to be black on the outside and European on the inside all resonate with the issues concerning African social work education. The contributions of African social work are often ignored within the African social work classrooms, and international social work books spend little time looking at African social work as an important part of social work development worldwide. There are many reasons for this, including: 1) the lack of exposure to African social work history; 2) language barriers between former anglophone and francophone colonial countries in regards to social work history; and 3) more generally, the lack of importance placed on African history as opposed to European and U.S. history throughout primary and secondary school systems. These perpetuate, often sub-consciously, the devaluing of the continent generally. No wonder African social work education reflects a Eurocentric perspective.

There have been several key organizations that have worked to introduce the social work profession to non-western countries. At the international level, the United Nations Surveys were one of the first and encouraged countries all over the world to incorporate social work training at a post-secondary level. The United Nations assumed that western social work curricula were transferable and appropriate to all countries. The United Nations Monographs looked at social welfare issues in the

African context. At the continental level, the Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) seminars met to discuss ways that the profession could be integrated into the African context. An example of work at the national level was the Ghana Association of Social Workers (GASOW) seminars that discussed national changes taking place in the 1970s and how social work could respond to these changes.

I have taken the opportunity to explain some of the content of these documents for several reasons. Firstly, I have yet to see any of these documents thoroughly analyzed by Africans. If there is no in-depth analysis then the social work profession will not understand their contribution to the profession worldwide. (These documents are now available online at http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventory.php?iid=9014). Secondly, I hope that through a brief summary of their contents, researchers will be inspired to conduct a document analysis and write about them in the professional social work journals. Finally, between now and the time the analysis and writing happens, I have given academics and teachers a bit of information about the documents so they can use this information as a resource for teaching and research. The following provides a brief summary of these documents.

1. International level

United Nations Survey. The United Nations was supportive of exporting social work education worldwide (Healy K., 2001; Midgley, 1981), particularly as a way to address social concerns due to the effects of World War II and the various movements towards independence of colonized countries. They completed five surveys between 1950 and 1971 concerning social welfare training throughout the world. Titled "Training for Social Work," they laid out the state of the profession in hopes that it would grow and develop after independence. There was an assumption by the UN that social work was about assisting individuals, families, and groups, focusing on social ills and providing appropriate remedial and preventive services (Yimam, 1990). In fact, in the early stages of social work in Africa, nation-building and raising the standard of living conditions of the population were equally important (Yimam, 1990). The purpose of the UN's First International Survey was to "provide the Social Commission

and the Economic and Social Council with a detailed description and analysis of the methods of training in educational institutions that have been evolved by the various countries for the professional preparation of social workers" (UN, 1950, p. iii). This came out of a concern and urgent need for staff of "competent men and women who possess the qualities of personality, the knowledge and the skill required for solving problems around social welfare" (p. 1). At the end of this survey, a table was produced, showing schools of social work and other educational institutions offering social work training. General characteristics of social work in all countries of the world were highlighted and country summaries of their own definitions of social work were given. Only four summaries were from African countries: Egypt, the Union of South Africa, Liberia, and Ethiopia. The report concluded that there had been an increased interest in the profession since the end of the war "as a means of raising the standards of living and thus promoting a greater measure of social and economic well-being for their peoples" (p. 87).

The Second International Survey, published in 1955, was a follow-up to the first survey but limited its research to the years 1950–1954. This survey was needed due to the "growing concern of Governments for a more rapid increase in the supply of social welfare personnel trained at different educational levels" (UN, 1955, p. 1). The survey identified "trends and problems that appear to be significant for the further development of training for social work … and described the curricular and non-curricular aspects of training programmes and identifiable trends in the countries in each region" (p. 2). The report concluded, in part, that it was the responsibility of international organizations (UN, International government agencies [IGO]) and international non-government agencies to "assist countries in establishing, coordinating, extending and improving training facilities and programmes in the field of social work" (p. 160). Interestingly, Ghana was left out of the first and second surveys, even though social work training has been available there since 1945.

In 1958, a Third International Survey was published with the purpose of

> … reviewing problems of social work training and to set out in some detail for the use of government agencies, schools of

> social work, voluntary social agencies and others, the range of subject matter and the educational method, which is coming to be considered desirable at the present stage in the development of training for social work. (UN, 1958, p. 2)

The report was extensive and covered all aspects of the social work profession, including current trends, the nature of social work, the field of social work, community development and social work, the historical background, and current trends in training for social work. The training section covered non-professional training of auxiliary workers, the content of training for professional social workers and the educational method of training for social work practice, including curriculum planning, course content, and fieldwork. One of the issues identified in this survey was the universal lack of local textbooks, as well as published reports of research projects, case records, and films. "It is recognized that western social work training texts are helpful as background and historical teaching … but they do not suffice for teaching courses on social problems of Asian countries and for the appropriate use of methods of dealing with such problems" (p. 17).

Forty-six years later, this issue continues to be a problem in many parts of the world, including Africa.

The Fourth International Survey, completed in 1964, was "designed to identify significant developments and trends in training for social work at all educational levels" (UN, 1964a, p. 1) and relates to the years 1954 to 1962. It is interesting to note that the African section on Social Policy and Social Services refers only to Uganda, Tanganyika, Morocco, Kenya, and Ivory Coast. The survey contains cursory references to social work training in different parts of the world and information on objectives and patterns of training. In light of the significant number of surveys during the period between 1950 and 1962, it is surprising that many African countries like Ghana were not mentioned or assessed.

The Fifth International Survey (UN, 1971a) "drew attention to the unintended consequences of development and the critical role that social welfare personnel must play in ensuring that the social objectives of national development are kept in focus" (Asamoah, 1995, p. 227).

After these surveys were published, it was decided that many ex-colonial countries needed the profession of social work in their countries. Therefore, the United Nations sent many western consultants to non-western countries in order to help create social work curricula. As Kendall (1995) suggests, these consultants went with the understanding that western social work knowledge was transferable to other cultures. Thus, it was believed that duplication of the western curriculum would lead other countries to acquire this same knowledge that would create excellent, prestigious social work programs. "The implicit assumption was that developing countries were incapable of finding their own models … and were inferior to Western social work knowledge and practice" (Gray, 2005, p. 235). Through the setting up of new social work programs in many non-western countries, experts promoted western social work theories and methodologies, with little understanding of the relevance of these theories to those countries (Midgley, 1981; Rodenborg, 1986). Faculties of western social work institutions also helped set up social work programs in non-western countries and continue to do so today (Asadourian, 2000; Driedger, 2004; Ife, 2007; Midgley, 2008).

One of the first official challenges to the universality of western social work knowledge was made at the United Nations Fifth Conference on Social Work Education (UN, 1971). Ten years later Midgley's (1981) seminal book *Professional imperialism: Social work in the Third World* challenged the social work profession worldwide in its assumption that the profession is transferable to all countries of the world and that western social work education and practice is appropriate to developing countries (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2008). Subsequent articles and books have continued this debate.

United Nations Monographs. Along with the surveys, the United Nations published monographs between 1964 and 1971 concerning various issues related to social welfare in Africa. These monographs give an historical account of this period of time when the profession was evolving in African society. The first was a *Directory of social welfare activities in Africa* and a second edition came out in 1967. The purpose of the first edition was to "compile significant steps towards meeting the ever-growing need for regular exchange of information and available resources in social

welfare" (UN, 1967a, p. v). Forty-eight countries of Africa were included and it was hoped that the revised edition "would give an indication of what experience is already available within the region itself and what is available outside" (p. vi). The document is divided into two parts: 1) country reports; and 2) the Economic and Social Council resolutions concerning the following: i) ESC's role in social development of developing countries; and ii) social welfare services, including social policy and development, training for social work, rural life and community action, social defence, establishing an expert committee on social development, campaign against illiteracy, mobilization of youth for national development, and co-operation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the economic commission of Africa. The document ends with a comprehensive list of the activities of the social development section of the Economic Commission for Africa, and a list of international voluntary organizations in the field of social welfare. What is most interesting about this forty-year-old document, are the priority actions it identified for the coming years:

> 1) Establishment of minimum standards for schools of social work including professional requirements, curricula, practical field work and textbooks; 2) operational research evaluating teaching content and methods to suit Africa; 3) establishing an Association of social work education to help with the implementation of recommendations; 4) production of indigenous teaching materials; 5) arrangement of ad hoc training courses and seminars for staff; 6) exchange of professors and teachers and 7) development of sub-regional training centers. (p. 95)

Some of these goals were reached over the years but many have still not been achieved.

The second monograph, entitled *Patterns of social welfare organizations and administration in Africa*, includes a clear identification of the lack of local culturally relevant structure and services:

> In the tradition of little or no consultation with indigenous elements, the resulting administrative structures for social welfare services were a direct imitation of those services already provided in the home countries.… The social services to be found throughout Africa accordingly reflect the differences in structure, traditions, intellectual values, and concepts of the colonizing countries and not of the indigenous African societies. (UN, 1964b, No. 2, p. 7)

Ghana, Ivory Coast, and the United Arab Republic were highlighted concerning their administrative structures. The third monograph concentrated on *Training for social work in Africa*. It describes the various types of training programs and in-services training then happening in different countries concerning social welfare. Over fourteen African countries produced information concerning the history of their schools of social work curriculum (UN, 1964c, No. 3).

The fourth monograph, *Social reconstruction in the newly-independent countries of East Africa* (UN, 1965) looks at trends in social reconstruction in East Africa. Researching six East African countries, the researcher set out to

> … explore and examine the peculiar features of rapid social change and adjustment resulting from the quick political transformation in that sub-region; how these have evolved, the problems and tensions which have followed the change-over from colonial administration to national sovereignty, and the various efforts of the individual national governments, both to achieve satisfactory readjustments and to transform their economic and social systems. (p. 1)

The four areas that came up as concerns were: 1) desegregation (the crumbling of racial barriers and banning legal discrimination); 2) rectification (equalizing living standards between town and country and of bridging the gulf that separates rich from poor. It is about restoring a just balance between the rural areas and the urban areas.); 3) the racial pyramid (non-Africans earn ten times as much as Africans, and variables to consider are

social class, educational level, life expectancy at birth, occupation, and residential location. These all produce a race-linkage pyramid.); and 4) the new order (it's attributes being national, nationalist, planned, non-racial, nation-wide one-party solidarity, co-operation, and re-development of human resources).

In 1966 the *Family, child and youth welfare services in Africa* monograph was published emphasizing the mother and the family, health problems, food and nutrition, and social welfare for children and youth, including the rural exodus of youth (UN, 1966, No. 5). In 1967, *The status and role of women in East Africa* was published looking at all aspects of women's issues, including education, family life, work, community development, legal and political rights of women, and the participation of women in community life (UN, 1967b, No. 6). *Youth employment and national development in Africa* was the next monograph, and it concentrated on the problems of youth unemployment and youth training schemes (UN, 1969, No. 7). In 1971, *Integrated approach to rural development in Africa* was published, documenting factors influencing rural development, problems of rural development, present strategies for rural development, and an integrated approach to rural development (UN, 1971b, No. 8). These monographs are important in documenting the social development of African countries and the important dialogue that took place concerning social work education. They are indigenous to the African continent and are thus important to the historical understanding of the evolution of social work and social services in Africa. It is unknown whether these documents are used in social work history courses in African Schools of Social Work. They should be. Possible reasons they may not be used are that these monographs are not available in many parts of Africa and ordering them through the UN is expensive. However, they are important documents to critically analyze as part of the history of social work in Africa.

2. Continental level

Association for Social Work Education in Africa. The social work profession came nearest to being accepted by Ghanaian society during the era of Kwame Nkrumah (1951–66). One pioneer of social work in Ghana, Dr. Blavo, recalls those years:

> The aim of the country at that time was a welfare state. So they tried to recognize social work as a profession. And for the first time in the whole of West Africa, a meeting was held in these same premises [the University of Ghana] concerning social work.… But even then it [the welfare state] was not done because the man [Kwame Nkrumah] was ousted and we went back to square one. (Kreitzer, 2004a, pp. 49–50)

The conference mentioned above was preceded by other conferences concerning urbanization and industrialization and their effect on African social issues. They were held in various places in West Africa. The first was held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in 1954; another took place in 1961. Still others were held in Accra–1960, the Congo–1961, Abidjan–1962, and Dar-es-Salaam–1962 (Drake & Omari, 1962).

In 1962, a conference was held at the University of Ghana, Legon, entitled "Social Work in West Africa." The president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, asked the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare "to explore the possibility of convening a conference in collaboration with the Department of Sociology of the University of Ghana for the purpose of discussing problems confronting social workers throughout West Africa" (Drake & Omari, 1962, p. 2). Fifty-three delegates came from five West African countries: Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Ivory Coast. The purpose of the conference was to "a) discuss present methods of social work, particularly in West African countries, b) make concrete proposals for improved methods of social work and c) foster inter-territorial co-operation" (p. 3). The introductory comments spelled out the situation in West Africa at that time:

> With the recent changes in political and economic structures in West Africa, it seems timely to consider the attendant social problems, their causes and what solutions we have for them. The African Way is no less relevant in the field of Social Welfare than in other areas, but it should conform to the internationally accepted principles and practice of social work and we do not wish to be found wanting in this respect. (p. 3)

Recommendations were made in the areas of creating a journal of social work, professional training, the professional status of social work, appropriate legislation concerning social issues, research and different areas of vulnerability in society.

In 1963, an important conference was held in Lusaka, Zambia, on social work training in Africa (ASWEA, Doc. 6, 1974c) that "created a number of chain reactions and several developments took place in connection with social work education" (p. 17). This conference instigated the monographs described above and focussed on preventive rather than remedial practice. The common problems of social work education were identified: "a) general shortage of trained social workers at all levels, including teaching staff, b) lack of adequate local literature for teaching purposes, lack of adequate financial backing to improve and expand training facilities and c) problems of determining curricular content" (p. 17). The main concern expressed at this conference was that social work and social work education was not working for Africa because of its western origins and there was a need to redevelop African social work for Africa. Other issues identified in this conference were the differences between anglophone and francophone countries concerning social welfare and the need to "concentrate more on the preventative than the remedial.… Social welfare programs should be concerned more with developmental or educational activities of the community in order to raise the standard of living of the total population instead of special groups" (ASWEA, Doc. 6, 1974c, p. 18).

Creation of ASWEA. The above conference set the stage for a further conference in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1965. Sixteen African schools of social work were represented, and the purpose was to "examine the content of training programs and syllabuses and to make a critical survey of existing trends in training for social work" (p. 18). In 1969, the Expert Working Group of Social Work Educators met to further discuss the issue of social work training in West Africa. The Second Expert Working Group met in the same year with the intent of establishing the Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA). The Third Expert Working Group, in 1971, formally established ASWEA (Asamoah, 1995). The purpose of the organization was to "serve, among many other functions, as a forum

where social work educators will discuss and resolve common problems that face Schools of Social Work in Africa" (p. 20). From the first United Nations Surveys to the monographs and these earlier conferences, the stage was set to create an organization that would bring African social workers and academics together to discuss issues surrounding the evolution of social work education in Africa. One pioneer of social work in Ghana, Dr. Blavo, explained to the research group the importance of the ASWEA seminars:

> We were attending ASWEA seminars and the reports from these conferences were being used as teaching material. ASWEA motivated or got money to get a casework booklet, collected caseworks from the whole of Africa, which we were using … so indigenous teaching materials had long been started in 1960s here to the 1970s in ASWEA where the United Nations Economic Commission (UNEC) started and are doing all these things to help social work to be accepted by the society. (Kreitzer, 2004a, p. 52)

From 1971 to 1989, ASWEA produced an impressive twenty-one documents. A social work journal was established in 1974 and eight issues were published. ASWEA offered the institutional backup to put the issue of social development on the agenda in Africa (ASWEA, 1986). The momentum of the 1960s to the 1980s offered a good start to an effective organization to bring social work into the forefront of African issues.

Details of the documents. The first five ASWEA documents were published in 1972 and only one is still available. They are as follows: 1) An effort in community development in the Lakota Sub; 2) Community services, Lakota Project Methodology; 3) The important role of supervision in social welfare organizations; 4) The use of films in social development education; and 5) Guidelines for making contact with young people in informal groups in urban areas. The only one available is document number 3 (ASWEA, Doc. 3, 1972), and this document laid out the important part that supervision can play in "promoting continuous and progressive learning" (p. 8). It included the process of supervision, the structure of

supervision, and the qualifications of a supervisor. Special reference was made to the importance of the supervisor in fieldwork.

Following the above documents, compilations of case studies in social development were completed; one from West Africa and one from East Africa (ASWEA, Vol. 1, 1973; ASWEA, Vol. 2, 1974a). Funded and supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the case studies project was launched and seven East African countries were selected to develop case studies. These countries were Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (ASWEA, 1973). "From each country, a set of ten cases in group work and community development activities were compiled" (p. ii) because there were no African case studies available and social work students and teachers continued to rely on western case studies that didn't always fit within an African context. There was an urgent need to compile these for classroom use. "These cases are believed to be more realistic and comprehensible to the African students than the ones they are used to in most cases – excerpts from western written textbooks" (p. iii). Analysis of each case study and questions for classroom use are provided after each scenario. In 1974, a similar compilation was completed for West Africa that included the countries of Ghana (English), Sierra Leone (English), Maurice (French), Togo (French), Ethiopia (French), Madagascar (French), Malawi (French), Uganda (French), and Zambia (French) with French translations. These documents provide a wonderful and rich teaching resource for social work classrooms in Africa.

In 1973, the General Assembly for ASWEA was convened in Togo and looked at the *Relationship between social work education and national social development plan* (ASWEA, Doc. 6, 1974c). Four papers were given, including one from Dr. Shawky, in which the complacency of social work educators and practitioners regarding influencing the development of social policy was highlighted. One of the major discussions at this conference and throughout all future conferences was the use of the terms 'social development' and 'social welfare.' There was a strong move to replace the term 'social welfare' with 'social development' and as a result social welfare workers were encouraged to call themselves 'social development workers.' This debate reflected the tension between the emerging capitalist/socialist trends in Africa and the need for solid social policy that was

developmental as well as the need for social development workers to advocate for social development. The traditional social welfare role of remedial social work was too dominant on the continent and the need for social development workers for the whole country was paramount. The influence of western curriculum, complacency of educators to change the curriculum, and the imbalance of financial support for urban development at the expense of rural development were also highlighted.

The next document published was *Curricula of schools of social work and community development training centres in Africa* (ASWEA, Doc. 7, 1974b). This was a comparative study of the curricula of relevant schools and training centres (nineteen countries were represented) so that a "cross-referencing of training curricula" could be used in order to "later, modify and strengthen curricula so that the training would be in harmony with the over-all objectives the respective National Development Plan" (p. i). It highlighted the need for a good exchange of information and sharing of experience among African countries.

The *Directory of social welfare activities in Africa* (3rd ed.; ASWEA, Doc. 8, 1975a) provided a list of activities and projects of national social welfare agencies in forty-one different African countries. The purpose was to: 1) promote the exchange of information related to social work/development; 2) establish a better flow of information between ASWEA and other social welfare agencies; 3) provide information on existing resources and experiences already available within and outside the region; and 4) serve as reference material for Schools of Social Work and training centres. Following the country-specific activities of these countries, the United Nations activities were listed followed by international voluntary organizations and professional organizations in social welfare. The document finished by including a chart listing basic information on schools of social work and community development training centres in Africa.

In 1974, a workshop in Ethiopia was held concerning the *Techniques of teaching and method of field work evaluation* (ASWEA, Doc. 9, 1975b), with ten African countries represented. The aim was to divert from the same lecture style of teaching and to bring creative styles of learning to the workshop. Techniques of teaching included: 1) relationships between teachers and students; 2) use of case studies; 3) use of role playing; 4) using media for developing ideas; and 5) planning the teaching process. The

second half of the workshop looked at methods for fieldwork evaluation. A similar workshop was held the following year for French speakers in Cameroon (ASWEA, Doc. 10, 1976b).

In 1976, *Realities and aspirations of social work education in Africa* was the theme for the third ASWEA conference in Ethiopia (ASWEA, Doc. 11, 1976a). This conference was marked by the support of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and followed the theme of the XVIII IASSW conference in Puerto Rico. This support brought Africa into the international professional arena. Forty-three representatives from fourteen African countries attended. Five issues were highlighted by the rapporteur's report: 1) the involvement of schools of social work are crucial to national development; 2) social work services need to be indigenized and foreign models of service provision need to be changed so that services meet the needs of Africans; 3) research should be an important part of understanding what is needed in Africa and a regional research and training centre should be established for local social work educators; 4) family planning needs to be a core part of social work curriculum; and 5) national governments need to support the work of the schools of social work. The debate concerning a social development approach to social work progressed during this conference.

A regional workshop was also held after the ASWEA conference with the theme of *The role of social development education in Africa's struggle for political and economic independence* (ASWEA, Doc. 12, 1977). Four main objectives were: 1) to broaden the teaching skills of African teachers, instructors, educators and supervisors of schools of social work and community development courses; 2) to identify common problems of social work and community development training and reflect on how to minimize these problems and how to indigenize training methods and materials; 3) to acquaint participants with the role, objectives, and programs of ASWEA; 4) to strengthen professional associations; and 5) to "acquaint the participants with the objectives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), instil the idea of pan-African solidarity, and encourage them to propagate the idea in their respective institutions" (p. 12). Dr. Tesfaye's address highlighted the following issues with curriculum:

> The dearth of teaching materials related to the particular culture of the respective countries of the continent had been a chronic problem. As basic social service materials adapted for classroom teaching are in short supply, there has been a heavy reliance on books and other materials produced in the industrialized countries in the West. (p. 52)

> Why are schools of social work in Africa so shy in radically reorganizing their curricula? Is the problem within or outside the schools? … Social welfare training in Africa draws its objectives and strategies from the socio-economic needs of African peoples and also from the development strategies adopted by African Governments. In order to develop sound social welfare curricula, social welfare policies in African countries must be clearly spelled [out]. (p. 53)

Revolutionizing social work training and practice was suggested as far back as the 1970s.

The next two documents published were from the ASWEA Expert Group meeting in Addis Ababa in 1978. Unique to this workshop was the presentation of country statements concerning *Guidelines for the development of a training curriculum in family welfare*, the title of the conference. Ghana was one of six countries to make statements concerning training they had developed in family welfare (ASWEA, Doc. 13, 1978b). The five areas of interest around the topic were as follows: "1) basic demographic situation of African countries; 2) health aspects of family welfare problems; 3) policies and programmes on population and family welfare in Africa; 4) social development programmes and family welfare; and 5) the role of social development and social welfare workers in population and family welfare and incorporation of these questions in social development education" (p. 21). Two main discussions centred on national policies with regard to population and family welfare and social work curriculum, social theory, and practice. In 1978, a similar workshop was held in Addis Ababa for francophone countries (ASWEA, Doc. 14, 1978a).

The next ASWEA seminar in Lusaka, Zambia, highlighted the work of the expert groups with the topic *Guidelines for the development of a training*

curriculum in family welfare (ASWEA, Doc. 15, 1978c). The seminar was a follow-up to the previous seminars concerning family welfare. The purpose of the seminar was to give the opportunity for ASWEA member institutions 1) to evaluate their experiences and programs in regards to family welfare; 2) conduct an examination of relevant materials, country statements, and resource papers to see if family planning was effective; 3) review curriculum, and 4) make appropriate recommendations about the incorporation of the proposed curricula into the existing curricula of social development training institutions. An extensive curriculum on family welfare and planning was designed for use in African schools of social work courses. In Lome, Togo, the following year, a francophone seminar was held on the topic of *Principes directeurs pour I'établissement d'un programme d'étude destine à la formation aux disciplines de la protection de la famille* (ASWEA, Doc. 16, 1979).

The fourth ASWEA conference was held in Ethiopia in 1981. Eighteen African countries were represented to look at the theme *Social development training in Africa: Experiences of the 1970s and emerging trends of the 1980s* (ASWEA, Doc. 17, 1981). The objectives of the conference were to

> … examine and discuss social development in the continent and its potential role in the promotion of social development programmes … examine country statements to determine the impact of social work education in the overall development strategy of Africa, and to identify resources, opportunities, limitations and constraints and make appropriate recommendations for the indigenization of social development concepts and approaches. (p. 7)

There was concern about the "neglect of the social dimensions of development both in the colonial and post-colonial eras" (p. 24). These social dimensions were: 1) demographic characteristics of African populations; 2) deficiencies in the formal educational system; 3) low rate of female participation in the labour force; 4) plight of physically disabled persons in Africa who have to fend for themselves through begging; and 5) displaced persons like refugees, victims of man-made and natural disasters. The conference recommended: 1) pushing governments to promote the

role of social planners and to support a more highly trained workforce in social development; 2) that curricula be more specific to the needs of Africans in different countries and that teaching materials be produced to help in the curricula development; 3) that research capabilities be intensified; and 4) international cooperation be promoted and in particular ASWEA representatives need to sit on United Nations, government, and OAU meetings and projects. In 1982 another *Survey of curricula of social development training institutions in Africa* (ASWEA, Doc. 18, 1982b) was produced with twenty-eight countries providing information about their social work programmes. The objectives of the seminar was: 1) to show similarities and differences between the curricula of the anglophone and francophone training programs; 2) to show what courses are being taught at the intermediate and higher levels of training; 3) to assess courses to their effectiveness and appropriateness for African realities; 4) to evaluate teaching material and methods; and 5) to stimulate further discussion about social development training.

An ASWEA seminar was held in Egypt with the theme *Organization and delivery of social services to rural areas in Africa* (ASWEA, Doc. 19, 1982a). In highlighting the issues of rural development, it examined course content of rural development and the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and recommendations concerning rural development. In particular, the role of women in rural development was discussed. Recommendations included: 1) making structural and infrastructural changes to social development; 2) taking a multi-disciplinary approach to rural development using research as a guide; 3) making rural development a component of national planning, including rural development in social work education; and 4) recognizing the role of women in rural development. The fifth ASWEA conference was held in Ethiopia in 1985. The theme was *Training for social development: Methods of intervention to improve people's participation in rural transformation in Africa with special emphasis on women* (ASWEA, Doc. 20, 1985). Six areas were examined, including: 1) community participation; 2) research; 3) curriculum; 4) women and development; and 5) population and regional cooperation. "About 80% of the African population lives in rural areas where social services are either inadequate or totally non-existent. It is therefore recommended that African governments

give top priority to Rural Development" (p. 9). A curriculum for rural development was created for social work courses.

The final document was a selection of readings (ASWEA, Doc. 21, 1989) from the previous conference. The readings included issues around: 1) giving faculty the chance to examine operational implications of the concepts of social development and integrated rural development for practice; 2) identifying areas of activities that social service agencies are involved in; 3) examining the content in existing curricula and seeing what needs to be added; 4) exploring training in research and evaluation methods in social development curricula; and 5) examining staff development and training and teaching material to see if it is adequate to the task. Concerning curricula, guidelines should be developed in the areas of "rural development, women in development and child survival and development" (p. iii). By the fifth conference, "ASWEA had a membership of about 55 Social Development Training Institutions and 150 social work educators from 33 African countries" (Tesfaye, 1985, p. 17). From these conferences and workshops two culturally relevant course outlines were developed in family planning and rural development.

The sad fact is that few African social work students and academics are aware of these documents and little analysis has been completed on them. Whether these documents were buried for political reasons or lost due to wars, the destruction of infrastructure and the closing of the School of Social Work in Addis Abba are unknown but these documents contribute to a knowledge base that needs to form part of the emerging identity of social work in Africa and international social work. Midgley (1981), Asamoah (1995), and Yimam (1990) are exceptions to the above statement and have mentioned these in their writings. Most of these documents are in the United States and a 2009/2010 joint Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA)/International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, project brought these documents back to Africa. Students, practitioners, and academics can analyze them and use them for teaching in the classroom. These documents are crucial to understanding the history of social work in Africa.

The African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development *(ACARTSOD).* The United Nations Surveys,

the monographs, and the ASWEA conferences were instrumental in engaging the continent in developing the profession of social work. Other conferences emerged that continued this engagement. One was the Conference of Ministers that was first was held in 1968 (Asamoah, 1995). "This conference challenged the international social work community to pursue a dynamic agenda that would put social work out front on issues of development and make it, as a profession, more relevant to current realities" (p. 225). The second conference, now called the Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs, was held in 1977; the third in 1980. They "continued to press the issue of reorienting social welfare services to a developmental model and training key personnel accordingly" (p. 226). The African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD) was formed out of these conferences, and together ASWEA and ACARTSOD highlighted issues concerning social work practice and training through their work and publications.

> A systematic study of the gradual development of social work education in Africa indicates that certain amount of dynamism has been generated since the early 1960s. The various national and international seminars, conferences and expert group meetings on social work education and practice that have been taking place throughout the continent are good testimony. (Tesfaye, 1973, p. 16)

The above gives an overall picture of the kinds of activities that took place between the 1960s and the 1980s in North, East, and West Africa. Many of the issues raised through the literature and social work conferences are still being debated today. This raises the question as to why progress has been so slow (Asamoah, 1995). A fourth set of documents conclude this section on historical documents relating to social work in Africa. These are national documents from seminars organized by the Ghana Association of Social Workers and paralleled the ASWEA seminars. The seminars are progressive for their time, practical to the situation in Ghana, and come from grassroots issues confronting social work and Ghanaian national development.

3. National level

Ghana Association of Social Workers. The Ghana Association of Social Workers (GASOW) was established in 1971. Members active in planning their own seminars and publishing these seminars as part of indigenous education material for teachers and students. The purpose of GASOW was to

> a) promote activities that strengthen and unify the social work profession as a whole, b) stimulate sound and continuous development of the various areas of social work practice as a contribution to meeting human needs and c) contribute effectively to the improvement of social conditions in the country. (GASOW, 1972, p. v)

Mrs. Nana Apt, secretary of GASW was instrumental in organizing these seminars and publishing their content. The first seminar was in 1972, ten years after the conference on Social Work in West Africa encouraged by Kwame Nkrumah and after over twenty-five years of organized western professional social work in Ghana (GASOW, 1972). This first seminar was held at the University of Ghana, Legon, and the theme was *Social welfare education and practice in developing countries*. Sponsored by the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, the seminar featured Mr. Walter Karberg, the Director of Information, ASWEA, and Dr. Jona Rosenfeld of the Hebrew University School of Social Work. "It was felt that Ghana could learn from Israel's experience in development" (p. vi). The speaker from ASWEA spoke of changing the term 'social welfare' to 'social development' in order to "highlight the future perspective of social welfare in Africa" (p. 11). The seminar identified several sources of social workers' discontent, including discontent with the profession, social conditions, and national priorities. Recommendations were made and are very interesting:

> a) the name social welfare be replaced with social development, b) the term social worker be replaced with social development officer, c) investigate the basis of differential treatment accorded to social workers in different areas of work, d) GASOW

> be the voice of social protest through professional publications etc. (pp. 66–67)

The second GASOW seminar was held in 1973 with the theme *Social planning in national development* (GASOW, 1973). This conference addressed many of the national issues facing social planning in Ghana, including the resettling of over 80,000 people displaced by the Akosombo Dam on the Volta River and the planning of the new town of Tema, created as a result of the building of Tema Harbour. A wider question of the conference spoke to the need to collaborate with other countries; this point came from guest speakers from Tanzania and Mali.

> The Ghana Association of Social Workers support the views of our foreign guests in hoping that in the not too distant future, social workers in Africa, East, West and Central shall get together in mutual co-operation to develop social welfare practice in the total African context, and thereby transcend any political and other boundaries that now appear to separate us. (p. ix)

In 1974, the third GASOW seminar was held with the theme *The role of agriculture and rural technology in national development*. It observed "the realization that social workers in a developing country like Ghana ought to break away from traditional welfare practices and be more involved in the economic development of the nation, is gradually catching on" (GASOW, 1974, p. 5). The purpose of this seminar was to

> a) bring together an interdisciplinary group of social workers, community development workers, specialists in the field of agriculture and rural technology and social and economic planners to look at agriculture and rural technology, b) to review research in these areas and c) to develop guidelines for social workers which will enable them to play their role as rural animators and initiators of social change efficiently (pp. 5–6).

Representatives from ten different African countries were present, as well as professionals from other faculties within the University of Ghana at Legon and the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

The fourth seminar, held in 1975, concerned *Popular participation and the new local government system* (GASOW, 1975). The objectives of this seminar continued to be very relevant to the local situation in Ghana and the role of social work in this ever-changing society.

> The objectives were to a) bring together social workers and local government officials from Ghana and other West African countries to examine the structure and functions of the new local government system in Ghana, b) to develop practical guidelines for greater participation and effective utilization of local resources in development and c) to consider the Treaty establishing the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) and its implications for social work and social services. (p. 5)

These seminars were impressive examples of the energy and commitment by GASOW to develop the profession of social work and give it an important voice to the Government of Ghana. The seminars also exemplified the continual attempt to intertwine social work and the important issues facing Ghana in the 1970s. I was not able to find any more publications of GASOW after the fourth seminar. One of the reasons for this was the untimely car accident that the secretary endured, requiring her to go to Germany for a year to recover. No one was able to do the things she had done and GASOW seminars lapsed. Since that time the professional association has had its ups and downs and more recently has not represented the profession of social work effectively. This was part of the action plans for the research project that will be explained in chapter VI.

4. Summary

This section on the United Nations surveys, the United Nations monographs, the creation of the ASWEA and its role, through the seminars, of addressing social issues in Africa, the influence of ACARTSOD and

GASOW seminars highlight the amount of work that was completed in a twenty-year period concerning social work development in Africa. Added to these documents concerning the growth of the social work profession in Africa are the country-specific stories of how social work was developed in those countries and a critical analysis of each country's success with the profession. If the feelings of social workers in countries that I have had contact with through my research, conferences, and personal contact are a reflection of what is happening in other parts of Africa, then the profession is still struggling to find its identity throughout the continent. A case in point is Ghana. The following is a brief summary of how social work emerged in a country influenced by the British but was also at the heart of Pan-Africanism through its first president Kwame Nkrumah.

C. History of social work in Ghana

1. Introduction

The history of the profession of social work in Ghana coincides with the development of a colonial social welfare system. However, according to a pioneer of social work in Ghana, Dr. Blavo, social work "has been in existence from time immemorial in Ghana because we all have problems … long ago, before colonialism, social work was in practice but it was being performed by a different group of people". Another pioneer in social work, Professor Apt, agrees:

> Before colonialism, social problems were solved within the context of a traditional system, which had always been an integral part of social life of the indigenous people. This traditional system was a social institution of extended families characterized by strong family ties, which assured the security of its members. The system dictated its social norms, safeguarded its moral values and conserved its economic base. (Apt & Blavo, 1997, p. 320)

Asamoah (1995) explains that "African social work has historical roots which are value based, indigenous and imported" (p. 223).

2. Colonial period

The need for professional social workers increased with the breakdown of the family institutions. Dr. Blavo explained:

> When Ghana was colonized our extended family system and the power of the chiefs broke down and this also came with its problems so the colonists brought in what they call "social work" to help solve the problems due to the capitalist economy and the broken down extended family.

Before these times, "religious missions to the Gold Coast, working closely with ethnic societies, provided various charities for families in need" (Apt & Blavo, 1997, p. 320).

> In Africa organized social services owes much to the activities of missionaries who pioneered in the medical services, in education and in the care of needy children and mothers … the missionaries were involved in literacy … they did much to bring home to colonial administrations the need to concern themselves with the social welfare of their subjects. (UN, 1964, No. 2, p. 7)

On June 22, 1939, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 on the Richter scale struck the Gold Coast (Amponsah, 2003) and many people lost their homes. Shortly thereafter, veterans from the Second World War began returning to Ghana and families were experiencing problems related to separation due to war. Both of these factors influenced the government to take action to help affected individuals and families. In 1929, the British government passed the first Colonial Development Act (Wicker, 1958). This led to the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. Social development projects were requested by the colonial administration that "maximized co-operation of the local peoples in the initiation and

execution of projects" (p. 182). In the 1940s, a Secretary of Social Services was appointed and given the task of coordinating all existing welfare activities in the country. In 1946, the Department of Social Welfare and Housing was created. Other changes followed. "A social development branch of this department was set up in 1948, which has now become the Community Development Department. In 1951, social welfare separated from housing and a Ministry of Education and Social Welfare was created" (Apt & Blavo, 1997, p. 320). The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development was created in 1952. Due to the many changes between ministries and departments during this time, it was becoming increasingly important to have trained social workers. The first recruits in Ghana for the profession were volunteers and experienced people who had acquired some knowledge of human beings. They recruited experienced and mature people to do the work especially teachers and people who had worked in the villages. The required training was short because these experienced volunteers had the background knowledge of human behaviour, and all they needed was the social work theory and methods subjects.

In the 1940s, in Ghana, both expatriate and indigenous social workers were all trained overseas. A classic example was a well-known social worker and head of the Social Welfare Department in Accra, whom I met when I was volunteering in Ghana. "David was one of seven teachers selected by the new Department of Social Welfare to proceed to the London School of Economics and Political Science to undertake a two-year course leading to the Social Science Certificate in 1945" (Hill House newsletter, 2004, No. 1). These new practitioners formed the nucleus of the administration of social welfare.

In 1948, an indigenous initiative took place in Ghana that used the skills of professional social workers. This was the community development movement (Sautoy, 1958), which grew "during the 1950s as one of the most important factors in the social and economic development of the country" (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997). More importantly, community development depended upon inspired voluntary leaders (Sautoy, 1958) and traditional local leaders who contributed through their knowledge and skills in the area of village development (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997). Community development provided "adult literacy, home economics,

self-help village projects, extension campaign (teaching locals how to improve their lifestyle) and training" (pp. 282–83). Much of the success of community development was due to financial backing from the colonial government and the rise of nationalism. The rise of nationalism not only helped community development; it also helped the profession of social work become public. As one pioneer of social work, Dr. Blavo, explained:

> Social work practice in Ghana, and I am saying we were lucky to be more or less the first to try and start in Africa what we now call professional social work. Because by that time we were free … we had been liberated but the other parts were still fighting for their liberation.

Between 1945 and 57, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act was revised to include greater funding and commitments to social sciences; including education, medical and health services, housing, nutrition, water supplies, broadcasting, and welfare. Britain set up a welfare system "that reflected both the ideology and basic structures of the system in the United Kingdom" (Asamoah & Nortey, 1987, p. 22). These structures used primarily a remedial model in which clients problems were identified and immediate needs were sought to solve the problem. Preventive measures, structural changes, and social developmental social services were not addressed. Attention was given to physical and mental rehabilitation, with special attention to homeless children, the disabled, women, and migrants. Asamoah & Beverly (1988) point out the short-sightedness of the colonial welfare policy as: "(a) failure to take a holistic view of the human condition, (b) an overriding importance of political considerations, (c) minimization of the positive effects of traditional structures, and (d) emphasis on economic expediency or advantage for the colonial power instead of benefiting the colonies" (p. 178).

3. Social work training in Ghana

The School of Social Work in Osu, established in 1946, offered a "nine-month certificate course" (Apt & Blavo, 1997, p. 328). One of the important figures during this time was Dr. Gardiner. "He actually started the

School of Social Work and he was then the Director of Social Welfare and Community Development.… [T]hen the University of Ghana came together with the Department of Social Welfare and they moved the program to the University" (Kreitzer, 2004a, p. 27). The University of Ghana, Legon, began social work training in 1956.

> Since 1956 the University of Ghana has taken responsibility for training of social workers at higher levels. A two-year diploma course in social administration was designed for experienced trained social workers who were products of the certificate course … a 10-week mandatory field experience was included. (Apt & Blavo, 1997, p. 328)

Dr. Apt, head of the social work unit for many years, explained the different types of people who enrolled in this diploma course.

> There were the beginnings of a whole lot of interest from different spheres: education, social security, even firms, textile firms. Telephone companies where they would be sending people to come and take the social work course.… I found a whole spectrum of institutions interested to send their workers/employees to come and take the diploma course.

She went on to say that as the social work profession progressed in Ghana, the training requirements became more comprehensive.

> If the university was to recognize a particular study they also had requirements. The training should be scientific and there should be a lot of research. We had to pump into the curriculum research knowledge … and then the profession had international standards that required background subjects, knowledge of man and society … for a trained social worker, theory should match with practice. This was the requirement by the international Association to recognize as a professional training that we should have a strong fieldwork practice.

Thus, fieldwork began with student placements in local and national agencies, with the added task of organizing supervisors for the students. This new undertaking challenged the already-depleted financial support.

In 1989, a three-year undergraduate course in social work was established at the University of Ghana, Legon. Yvonne Asamoah, together with others like Nana Apt, developed a bachelor's program. To date, Mrs. Asamoah is one of the few authors in the western world to publish articles and book chapters, particularly in Ghana and West Africa, which document the history of social work in parts of Africa (Asamoah & Nortey, 1987; Asamoah & Beverly, 1988; Asamoah, 1995).

In 2000, the social work unit separated from the sociology department and became the Department of Social Work. In 2001, the bachelor's curriculum was revised and the master's program was created. In 2003, the first master's program was started, with fifteen students enrolled. In 2004, the revised bachelor's program began, with our project's recommendations contributing to this revision.

The profession of social work was most dynamic during the initial independence years when the government spent time and money on health, education, and social welfare. Since the 1980s, the profession has suffered from the political, economic, and social problems due to many countries plagued by world debt, coups, and general instability. When asked why social work seemed to have collapsed, Professor Apt, a pioneer in social work in Ghana, stated that continual government withdrawal of funding as well as a change in attitude towards how social services should be administered were factors.

> When the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development was set up part of the problem was that in Ghana they seemed to think that if you work in social welfare and this person also works in community development and another in rehabilitation, you who are in welfare can never work in community development. If you are in welfare you can work with youth or family but somebody in community development can never work with youth or family.… I believe that everybody who has gone through a bachelor's degree ought to have the

> competence to work with individuals, groups and communities. (Kreitzer, 2004a, p. 30)

This separation continues today. Community workers have their own educational training facilities, and there continues to be a Department of Social Welfare and a Department of Community Development. Maybe this is why social work continues to struggle to find its proper place in Ghanaian society.

D. Conclusion of chapter

In this chapter I have given an overview of how African education at the post-secondary level has been influenced by colonization and how this has created universities that continue to teach from a Eurocentric worldview. This situation influenced how social work training in many parts of Africa continued during colonialism. With the independence of colonized countries and the entrance into the global economy, international institutions such as the United Nations saw the need for the profession of social work to be introduced to these countries. They were introduced by experts from western countries with the assumption that western social work education and practice was transferable. Continental, national, and local organizations tried to take this western profession and integrate it into the African context. The documentation of these organizations like ASWEA and GASOW were summarized in an effort to conscientize readers as to the important contribution African has made to the social work profession worldwide. As Maathai (2009) states: "What Africans need to do, as much as they can, is recapture a feeling for their pasts that is not solely filtered through the prism of the colonialists" (p. 182). These documents are the work of Africans concerning social work education. A theme throughout these documents and emerging through African social work writings and in my research is that western social work education and practice has not worked well for Africa. Yes, it provided social work training that upheld the colonial social welfare institutions that were needed when capitalism broke down traditional society. It grew and developed through the above local and national seminars. These documents highlight the same themes over and over again, and there seems to have

been little forward movement. These themes are that 1) social work remains on the periphery[2] in Africa; 2) social work education and practice continues to be Eurocentric and not ideally suited to the African social, cultural, and economic context; and 3) attempts to change training and practice have been slow in coming (ASWEA, Doc.12, 1977; ASWEA, Doc. 17, 1981). In summarizing the themes of one ASWEA conference, Dr. Murapa (ASWEA, Doc. 12, 1977), in his rapporteur's report stated:

> A major observation made was the fact that there exists, in the field of social work education and training, a disturbing paucity of innovative teaching methodology and materials. Most of the fields, African instructors, being from the most part products of Western education, have proved either incapable or unwilling to engage in extensive and creative revision of the existing text books, curricula and approaches to make them relevant to the social and other developmental problems and aspirations in Africa. There is a need for social work educators to be original and innovative in developing new and appropriate conceptual framework, which, in turn, would produce relevant social education theories. With the problem and goal pointed out, the question arose as to how to produce the desired type of teacher, curricula and approach. No exhaustive panacea was found there than urging that action be taken both individually and collectively. (p. 32)

Understanding the reasons for this slow pace of change is essential for the design and implementation of future social work education and practice. The lack of a critical analysis as to whether the profession, in its present state, should even remain the same continues.

Williams (1987) speaks to the necessity of the liberation of the African mind from thousands of years of oppression by many different forces in the world. Concerning Africans, he says the following: "Dependence has become comfortable; it frees them from the initiative, responsibility and planning required of independent free men and women. 'Leave it to the white folks' has become their unspoken creed" (p. 317). Continuing a dependency on western social work education and practice may have

something to do with the lack of pride in the profession. A lack of pride in the profession may result from a foreign system intruding upon society. "Social work as it is known today is an '*adopted child*' in the African context" (ASWEA, Doc. 11, 1976a, p. 28). If something is not indigenous but comes from an outside source, there is a feeling that it is not quite right and does not support the culture that it has been placed into, which causes it to be on the periphery of society. This causes a crisis of identity and herein lies one of the key challenges facing social work and social workers in Africa; the loss of cultural identity. As Kofi Annan (Annan 2007) states: "Our narratives have become our prison." How will Africans reshape their narrative in order to break the mental bondages of western imperialism? The president of the Ivory Coast, Laurent Gbagbo, forcefully stated one critical necessity when speaking of the 2007 Ivorian Crisis: "The Ivorian Crisis revealed to me that Africans underestimate themselves and do not have confidence in themselves. Time has come for Africans to have confidence in themselves, to take their destiny into their own hands. Time has come for Africans to have partners and not masters" (Tete, 2007, p. 46). The social work profession reflects the state of the society in which it operates. This crisis of identity is, therefore, directly linked to the success of social work in Africa.