REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2010 Visit to the University of Missouri : St Louis

Pursuant to research conducted between the Departments of Sociology at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of Missouri at St Louis (UMSL) in respect of the effects of community violence on learners, it was deemed functional and beneficial to:

a) Conduct research among teachers in the respective areas relating to violence;
b) Compare and contrast the emergent perspectives;
c) Analyse these perspectives in light of earlier research on school children and violence;
d) Submit proposals on how the challenges of violence could be addressed.

To that end it was proposed that a pilot study be conducted in Missouri (USA) and that this process be repeated in Cape Town (SA). It is envisaged that the preliminary results and observations will be used as a basis for an intensive study involving a larger sample of teacher population in both areas during the 2nd phase of this project.

Kathy Nadasen visited UMSL between July-August 2010. Initially, teachers were invited by Prof Nancy Shields to participate in this study. Both researchers also addressed teachers who were taking a graduate course at UMSL in order to secure adequate responses. Individual and focus-group interviews were conducted with those who had eventually volunteered to participate in this pilot study. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed and the researchers identified initial issues that will be categorised and analysed at a later stage.

This process will be replicated in Cape Town and Kathy Nadasen will do the necessary to secure the participation of teachers in the Cape Town area. Prof Nancy Shields will be in Cape Town to assist with the interviews.

From the initial reading of the transcripts of the pilot study in Missouri the researchers believe that this research has potential to identify the nature of the violence experienced by these teachers and it will be interesting to note how this compares with the experiences of teachers in Cape Town. This study will also be important in suggesting proposals towards addressing the issue of violence.

Upon completion of the pilot study in Cape Town a joint research article will be submitted to a peer review journal.

The researchers also discussed the way forward for the 2nd phase of this project.
Additional Initiatives

a) Collaborative / Co-operative Teaching

A meeting was arranged with Prof Robert Keel, from the Dept of Sociology (UMSL), to discuss the possibility of ‘shared’ teaching of courses to students from UMSL and UWC.

Possibilities explored were

i) On-line courses which students can access directly - wimba (UMSL) similar to e-teaching (UWC) ?

ii) video-taped lectures – directly accessible to students

iii) interactive teaching - similar to ‘video-conferencing’

Those who will be involved need to determine whether the above are logistically possible vis-a-vis equipment, compatibility, teaching personnel, time etc.

b) Student Exchange

Discussed with Prof Shelia Clarke-Ekon (Interim Chair of Sociology-UMSL) the possibility of an exchange programme involving both graduate and undergraduate students from UWC and UMSL. Prof Clarke-Ekon was enthusiastic about this possibility and suggested that we investigate what ‘exchange models’ are presently in place. It was also suggested that Prof Persens may be able to shed more light on this issue.

Kathy Nadasen records her appreciation for the funding made available through UMSAEP. Sincere gratitude is also extended to Prof Nancy Shields for initiating this project and for securing the accommodation, to Prof Persens for his unfailing assistance and to Ms Debra Lamson for meticulously attending to all the administrative arrangements.

Kathy Nadasen
August 2010
Note


C) Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms as a Mediating Factor on the Effects of Exposure to Community Violence among Children in Cape Town, South Africa. *Violence and Victim (Under review)*