

ABSTRACTS

Changing the Face of My Local Community Through Waste to Wealth Creations in Lagos State, Nigeria

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There are various or numerous problems facing my local Government in Lagos, ranging from water problem, waste management, roads and electricity among others. The most prominent among them in need of urgent attention is that of waste management. The youth in my community have been taking advantage of this waste to create wealth through recycling. They embarked on a project recycling of what you and I might see as not being useful. Presently I am working with some youth in my community to generate wealth from waste polythene and plastics through recycling. This paper will look at the different stages as well as how they have been carrying out the recycling of scrap metal, which is now being exported out of the country.

The Intertwining of Strengths Perspective with the Rights Based Approach: Experiences of community organisation in India

Dr. Janki Andharia

India has a rich tradition of organizing the oppressed and marginalized communities. Focusing on the process of organization and mobilization, the paper will emphasize the diverse nature and methods of awareness building, which subsume the strengths perspective. This process is based on recognizing individual strengths and collective capacity to negotiate and bring about change in social and political contexts. The paper will present examples of current movements and the active association of the author with several organizations engaged in mobilization processes. Drawing on the conceptual debate on empowerment, access to entitlements and rights based approach in the context of vulnerability and impoverishment, the paper will present a critical reflection on the strengths perspective in community organization in India. The need to answer questions such as which people are the focus of social work intervention and what is the locus of social work practice, remain significant. One implication of enhancing resilience of individual households or families to cope is that we may be absolving the duty bearers to perform their roles. The phenomenal rise in farmers' suicides in rural India due to crop and market failure and steep indebtedness is a case in point. Ironically, in response to this agrarian crisis, besides relief and rehabilitation packages, 'Art of living' courses have been introduced to build inner strength at the request of the state government in Maharashtra. On the other hand the strength may be channeled to build awareness, to increase the repertoire of actions and responses and to assert rights and to suggest policy changes. The strengths perspective is rightly moving away from victim blaming or may even interrogate the problem orientation in social work. However, the issue of positionality and perspective of social workers, a subject which social work has not debated adequately across cultures and social contexts, also assumes significance. These aspects will form an integral part of this paper.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS The "Tipping Point" to a Good Life: The magnitude of valued social roles

John Armstrong (with Chris Radke for the follow-up presentation)

For many generations we have known people in our communities whose lives were characterised by poverty, isolation, rejection and failure. Whether due to generational poverty, disability, stigmatised identity, lack of opportunity, addiction, violence or other causes, the life course for people often descended into ever worsening situations. Research into resilience and role theory demonstrate that people employ strategies that contains universal qualities that are powerful and which have relevance and utility across cultures, times and places about how people come to have a better life. This paper examines that feature which so profoundly contribute to this changed experience and how to bring it about. Using what we know from empirical sources about how people are perceived and treated by others, the paper will demonstrate the major features of roles that provide discrete strategies in assisting a person and their supporters to develop the life they seek. The link between the experience of the "Good Life" and the attainment of valued social roles will be established. The majority of cultures do not positively perceive individuals with an intellectual disability, and few individuals themselves, whether because of their biological condition or because of social stigmatism, have the capacity to alone attain valued social roles. The support persons or service providers therefore play a vital role in assisting individuals to attain a life of their choosing that is valued by their society. This paper serves as a "how to" guide for those who are struggling with how to best support individuals with an intellectual disability in ways that empower them to discover their own strengths and develop their own resilience and capacity for growth. Information about SRV can be found at www.socialrolevalorization.com