

COMPILED BY JOAN KELLEHER

The following recent Australian materials in the Stronger Families Learning Exchange collection may be borrowed from the Australian Institute of Family Studies library, via the interlibrary loan system. Contact your own library to arrange interlibrary loans.

For further information, see the catalogue at [www.aifs.gov.au/sf/index.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/sf/index.html)

#### Action research

**When action research and practice collide, the role of action research when there is a conflict of interest with stakeholders**, by H. Garman Johnsen & R. Normann, *Systemic Practice & Action Research*, vol. 17, no. 3, June 2004, pp. 207-235.

The problems faced by the action researcher when there is a conflict of interest with the stakeholders are discussed in this article. A case study from a region of Norway is described. A radical solution to the problems is presented for consideration.

#### Adolescents

**First you have to see them, youth-friendly practice in mental health work**, by A. Crago, C. Wigg & K. Stacey, *Youth Studies Australia*, vol.23, no.2, Jun 2004, pp. 38-45.

Youth-friendly approaches to mental health work require stepping outside of common practice in mental health services. This paper takes a practice based focus to what it means to "see" young people experiencing mental health concerns, set within the context of contemporary issues that shape the context of youth mental health services. (Journal abstract)

#### Community development

**Building stronger communities, "risky" business in an environment of rising public liability insurance?**, by F. Verity, *Just Policy*, no.32, Jun 2004, pp. 21-27.

Current interest in strengthening communities is encouraging and positive, this article argues, but to what extent is there a contradiction between the notions of taking risk to effect change and the logic of risk management? The article considers examples of current community development practice in South Australia, looking at organisational approaches to risk management and public liability insurance pressures.

#### Community health

**Community health services, creating a healthier Victoria**, by T. McBride, *Health Issues*, no.79, Winter 2004, pp. 6-7.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) distributed a framework paper on the future of Community Health Services in Victoria in early 2004. The paper provided a rationale for building strong Community Health Services, a vision and a set of principles for guiding future service development, and a plan of action to achieve it. This article gives Health Issues Centre's response to the framework paper. (Journal abstract)

**Community development in health - a Scottish perspective**, by J. Muir, *Journal of Community Work and Development*, iss. 5, 2004, pp. 9-29.

A recurring theme in both consultative and policy papers from the Scottish Executive (SE) has been the aspiration to "place communities at the heart of its policies" and a consequent demand that those involved in policy planning, development and service delivery find ways to engage more effectively with individuals and the wider community. Although the spectrum of that engagement may range from formal consultation to devolution of decision-making, there can be little doubt that this insistence can and does mean considerable challenges for those involved - challenges to professional attitude, value base and skill base and to understanding the methodologies and resourcing necessary to support and sustain such engagement. The NHS and the wider health sector in Scotland have not been exempt from these demands and face similar difficulties in responding to this new agenda. This article seeks to demonstrate that the understanding and application of community development practice should be an essential approach for those charged with driving forward the modernising agenda. It will identify examples of current good practice and the clear and measurable benefits that

community development can bring, as well as some of the tensions and issues raised by moving toward the use of the methodology.

#### Conflict resolution

**For the sake of the children**, by L. Crisante, *Australian Mosaic*, vol.6, no.2, 2004, pp. 37-39.

What is the impact of family conflicts on leadership and advocacy roles for mothers and young people in migrant families? This article looks at how intergenerational conflict can be viewed as a potential basis upon which leadership and advocacy can be built. It describes how mothers can support the aspirations of the next generation and how young people must master paradox and compromise.

#### Ethnic women

**Is there a place for me at the table? CLDB women and political leadership**, by J. Nkrumah, *Australian Mosaic*, vol.6, no.2, 2004, pp. 23-248.

What can be done increase the numbers of women from ethnic backgrounds in decision making positions in Australia? This article discusses the following barriers to women's involvement, women's economic status, rules about women's place in the family, the conflict between femininity and competence, and access to institutional mechanisms.

#### Family structure

**The obligations and expectations of couples within families, three models of interaction**, by M. Maclean & J. Eekelaar, *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2004, pp. 117-130.

What kinds of family structures emerge after a couple relationship is formed? How are obligations perceived towards the family of origin and the family of the partner? How are obligations perceived towards the older generation and towards children? How are conflicts of interest approached or resolved? How are the obligations arising from these personal relationships affected by

gender, ethnicity, culture and religion? This paper reports some findings from a qualitative study of 39 men and women aged 25-40 which investigates the social context for the legal regulation of couple relationships, whether marriage, cohabitation or civil partnerships.

#### Grandparents

**Grandparents raising grandchildren, a new class of disadvantaged Australians**, by M. Fitzpatrick & P. Reeve, *Relatwell*, vol.8, no.2, Jun 2004, pp. 3-6.

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Study investigated how grandparent carers deal with various issues involved in raising their grandchildren. This article explains how most of the children came to be in the care of their grandparents, and presents some findings from the study related to legal and financial issues, aged parenting, lack of children's and family services, and grandparents' relationships and health.

#### Homeless

**Family Homelessness Prevention Pilot**, by M. Cvjeticanin, *Parity*, vol.17, no.5, Jun 2004, pp. 21.

The Family Homelessness Prevention Pilot (FHPP) aims to prevent homelessness through prevention and early intervention services for families. This article explains how Centrelink works with the program to maximise employment and training opportunities and minimise other Centrelink issues for families at risk.

**"Home first", a longitudinal study of outcomes for families who have experienced homelessness, final report**, by V. Kolar, South Melbourne, Vic., Hanover Welfare Services, c2004.

"This final report on the findings from the Hanover Family Longitudinal Outcomes Study, is an integrated account of the changes that families experienced over the two-year period of the study ... It focuses on the changes experienced in... housing, income, employment and education, use of welfare services, support networks, child development and parent wellbeing". (p. 1)

**Tools to support homeless families, a community study develops a service system strategy in Western Sydney**, by S. Kaczorek, *Parity*, vol.17, no.5, Jun 2004, pp. 22-23.

The Hawkesbury Penrith Service System Strategy focused on collaboration and partnership as tools to support homeless families with children under eight years old. Three levels of intervention were developed, prevention and early intervention, crisis, and post crisis intervention. This article describes the study outcomes and strategies.

**13 days and counting, a mutual support model for young, homeless women in crisis**, by R. Green, R. Mason & A. Ollerenshaw, *Youth Studies Australia*, vol.23, no.2, Jun 2004, pp. 46-50.

An innovative program in rural Victoria matches young homeless women with older homeless women and provides them with a range of support services. The result, as outlined in this article, is more stability in the accommodation setting, mutual benefit and satisfaction for clients, and impressive rates of permanent housing outcomes. (Journal abstract)

#### Indigenous issues

**Aminina Nud Mulumuluna ("You gotta look after yourself"), evaluation of the use of traditional art in health promotion for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region of Western Australia**, by B. Davis, ...[et al.], *Australian Psychologist*, vol.39, no.2, May 2004, pp. 107-113.

This research documents an evaluation of preventive health resources developed for Aboriginal people in the west Kimberley region. The project was a collaboration between The Jean Hailes Foundation for Women and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health workers, educators and artists from Looma, Pandanus Park, Derby and Mowanjum. Traditional art and language provided a basis for cultural identity and imparting modern health knowledge. Two health booklets and a video (Aminina Nud Mulumuluna – "You Gotta Look After Yourself" and Wungai Ngunga – "Women's Business") were produced. Qualitative research suggests that the resources were well accepted, fostered health discussions and contributed to the pride and self-esteem of local people. Collaboration and the integration of traditional and modern health knowledge contributed to a contemporary view of Aboriginal health. (Journal abstract)

**Family history research project**, by E. McEntyre, *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, vol.28, no.3, May-Jun 2004, pp. 8-9.

A pilot program was delivered at Emu Plains Correctional Centre in New South Wales in which Aboriginal women were trained in family history research methodology. This article explains how the program worked, what the aims and benefits are, as well as some feedback from participants.

**Hebersham Aboriginal Youth SAAP, interim service project**, by M. Knox & W. Matthews, *Parity*, vol.17, no.5, Jun 2004, pp. 8-10.

The Hebersham Aboriginal Youth Service (HAYS) project, in the Mt Druitt area of New South Wales, is an interim project that aims to establish a self determined Indigenous youth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) service. This article outlines the project's design, roles and responsibilities, staffing, timeframe, development, initiatives and partnerships.

**Home**, by L. Behrendt. St Lucia, Qld., University of Queensland Press, 2004.

"A story of homecoming, this absorbing novel opens with a young, city-based lawyer setting out on her first visit to ancestral country. Candice arrives at 'the place where the rivers meet', the camp of the Eualeyai where in 1918 her grandmother Garibooli was abducted. As Garibooli takes up the story of Candice's Aboriginal family, the twentieth century falls away. Garibooli, renamed Elizabeth, is sent to work as a housemaid, but marriage soon offers escape from the terror of the master's night-time visits. Her displacement carries into the lives of her seven children - their stories witness to the impact of orphanage life and the consequences of having a dark skin in post-war Australia. Vividly rekindled, the lives of her family point the direction home for Candice." (Book Jacket)

**A new model for inclusion? Centrelink's development of income support service delivery for remote Indigenous communities**, by W. Sanders, *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, no.111, Mar 2004, pp. 17-21.

When Centrelink was established in 1997, it inherited from the Department of Social Security a model of service delivery for Indigenous communities in remote areas

built around relatively large social security offices based in urban centres and agents based in Indigenous communities. Some dissatisfaction with this model has led Centrelink to experiment with additional ways of delivering services to remote Indigenous communities. In particular it has piloted the development of some very small Centrelink offices, or Customer Service Centres (CSCs), located in some of the larger Indigenous communities. This paper reports on a consultancy undertaken in 2002 which provided a formative evaluation of the first two such small CSCs. It also outlines plans for the establishment over the next four years of another twelve such small CSCs servicing Indigenous people in remote areas. (Journal abstract, edited)

**Ngang-kak to Koories kila about degaia (Listen up to Koories speak about health)**, by J. Vickery, A. Clarke & K. Adams, *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, vol.28, no.3, May-Jun 2004, pp. 3-5.

An oral history project is underway to document Aboriginal people's experiences of their involvement in the setting up of Aboriginal health services in Victoria. This article discusses the importance of oral history research in understanding Aboriginal experiences, research issues and methods, cultural sensitivity and understanding, and the methodology of the project.

**Re-thinking Indigenous homelessness**, by P. Memmott, ..[et al.], *AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin*, no.42, May 2004, pp. 1-6.

Mainstream concepts of homelessness do not adequately encapsulate the needs of Indigenous homeless people. This study examined agency responses to Indigenous homelessness in order to identify good practice responses. The paper identifies categories of Indigenous homelessness and discusses policy implications.

#### Interagency collaboration

**Being, becoming and belonging**, by J. Mullett, K. Jung & M. Hills, *Action Research*, vol. 2, iss. 2, June 2004, pp. 145-165.

This article describes a new type of action research and interagency collaboration known as co-operative inquiry. This new model uses the experiences of community members and the inquiry methods of individual and collective agencies to provide a new metaphor for living and working in the community.

#### Narrative therapy

**The getting of wisdoms**, by C. Ingram & A. Perlesz, *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, no.2, 2004, pp. 49-56.

An action research project was conducted by a public family therapy agency, in Melbourne, Australia, to investigate the impact of the writing of client stories and the subsequent reading of these stories to others in similar circumstances. This paper describes some of the effects this process had on individuals and families who authored their "Wisdom Narratives" in the hope of inspiring and supporting others. Going through the process of putting their story/struggle into words on paper enabled people to recognise their own agency and influence, while reading stories out loud back to the author engendered self-compassion. In conclusion, the creative process of penning narratives of change might now be considered as having an important impact in generating self-worth and sense of agency. (Journal abstract)

**Narrative therapy and research**, *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, no.2, 2004, pp. 29-36.

There are rich connections between narrative therapy and practices of research, and considering these links has been a source of creativity for many practitioners. This short piece seeks to describe how narrative therapy first began to be described as co-research, and describes some of the common research practices that are engaged with by narrative therapists. It also considers the powerful challenges that Indigenous researchers are making to the field of research. The paper has been collaboratively created. Marilyn O'Neill, Shona Russell, Makungu Akinyela, Helen Gremillion, David Epston, Vanessa Jackson and Michael White all responded to questions, and David Denborough then wove their responses into a final form. (Journal abstract, edited)

**Transforming the story, narrative applications to a stepmother support group**, by A. Jones, *Families in Society*, vol.85, no. 1, Jan-Mar 2004, pp. 129-138.

In this paper a stepmother support group that uses group functions and narrative applications is described. The dilemmas faced by stepmothers are exemplified in the narratives. How and why narrative techniques are useful for this group and in this context are examined.

## Poverty

**Participatory approaches to research on poverty**, by F. Bennett & M. Roberts, *Poverty*, iss. 118, Summer 2004, pp. 5-8.

This article describes a recent UK "participatory" research programme on poverty. It outlines the various stages of participatory research and examines what can happen when theory turns into practice.

**Voices from the bottom**, by K. Serr, *Australian Social Work*, vol.57, no.2, Jun 2004, pp. 137-149

Despite many years of poverty eradication programs in numerous countries, 25% of the world's population continues to live in poverty. In the light of this global crisis, it is clear that anti-poverty strategies have not been as successful as they should have been. This paper argues that continuing poverty may be related in part to the fact that policies developed to alleviate the problem are mainly based on monetary definitions developed by "experts", rather than by the poor themselves. Thus this paper will demonstrate that expert definitions invariably neglect the more qualitative aspects and experiences of poverty. In contrast, it is argued here that the poor are the "real" poverty experts and their voices should be included in the definition of poverty and the formulation of solutions. While there is increasing recognition of this latter approach in developing nations, often taking a human needs perspective; this response is only in its infancy in Australia. After a discussion of the conceptualisation of human needs, this paper reports on a small pilot study that presents the voices of 10 disadvantaged men, identifying what poverty is for them in Melbourne. (Journal abstract)

**Working for families, the impact on child poverty**, by B. Perry, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no.22, Jul 2004, pp. 19-54.

The Working for Families (WFF) benefit reform package was the centrepiece of the 2004 Budget announcements of the Labour-led coalition government in New Zealand. The package is targeted at low-to-middle-income families with dependent children. One of its core goals is to improve income adequacy for these families as one of the key means of reducing child poverty over the next three years. In this regard, it is an example of the

government implementing many of the poverty alleviation strategies outlined in the 2002 Agenda for Children, which committed to eliminating child poverty. This paper gives an account of a modelling and analysis exercise that provides estimates of the likely impact of the WFF reforms on income poverty through to 2007, with a major focus on the impact of the Family Income Assistance (FIA) component of the WFF on child poverty.

## Resilience

**A time to simply "be", building resilient and happy children through relaxation techniques**, by P. Thomas, *Every Child*, vol.10, no.3, Winter 2004, pp. 24-25.

Western society is slowly coming to understand that health and well being are more than an absence of disease or illness. This article outlines how relaxation techniques can empower children and help them to develop and maintain a positive balance in their lives.

## Rural issues

**Australian farm inheritance, new patterns of legal structure in property rights and landholding**, by J. McAllister & B. Geno, *Rural Society*, vol.14, no.2, 2004, pp. 178-191.

New circumstances in Australian agriculture require new legal arrangements for landholding and for people who have new aspirations for retirement and succession planning. A recent Australia-wide farm survey of landholding patterns creates space for consideration of these changing property concepts and relationships as they relate to inheritance patterns and the engagement of the next generation in farming. Early studies of land tenure predicted a gradual progression from tenant or share farmer to full owner as aspiring young farmers aged and became more involved in farming and raising a family. This pattern has come under scrutiny as corporate involvement in agriculture accelerates in Western societies. This paper investigates Australian family farmer intentions to pass farm assets on to chosen heirs so that the present family farming system continues intact. Survey data collected from a broader study of a variety of farming industries is used to tease out whether new patterns of legal structure in land and job inheritance are emerging. The findings indicate that different legal structures of property ownership are utilised as legiti-

mate means of protecting farmer values concerned with property, family and inheritance. Further research on inheritance patterns and legal structure in Australia is indicated. (Journal abstract)

**Outside - looking in, evaluating a community capacity building project**, by P. O'Meara, J. Chesters & G. Han, *Rural Society*, vol.14, no.2, 2004, pp. 126-141.

The Alberton Project was a three-year community capacity building project that ran from 1999 until 2002. It aimed to revitalise the local community surrounding the small Victorian town of Yarram. Evaluation of the project involved participant observation, monitoring of media reports, surveys and interviews. Outcomes are reported with reference to four capacity building domains of vision and leadership, structure and partnerships, community engagement, and resources. The Project demonstrated a high level of administrative competence and an ability to build a strong profile. While members showed themselves to be well motivated and ethical, they battled to engage a wide range of community members. Limitations were identified with the project's bureaucratic structure compared to alternate social models of organisation that reflect how people interact in a community. Other rural community capacity building projects should consider the value of open organisational structures that invite a more diverse membership from the community. (Journal abstract)

**Power, status and marginalisation, rural social workers and evidence-based practice in multidisciplinary teams**, by A. Murphy & J. McDonald, *Australian Social Work*, vol.57, no.2, Jun 2004, pp. 127-136.

The present paper examines how evidence-based practice (EBP) is impacting on the professional status of social workers working in multidisciplinary health teams in rural Victoria. Questionnaires and interviews were used to investigate the use and perceived appropriateness of EBP and the implications for the professional status of social workers. The results indicated that social workers have the lowest levels of knowledge and application of EBP. The qualitative data revealed a fundamental incompatibility between social work practice approaches and the science of EBP. The key themes identified were, how undergraduate and professional training shapes

practitioner perspectives around EBP, divergent knowledge of EBP and how this influences team perceptions around the validity of social work practice, the ways EBP validates and reinforces existing power hierarchies, frequently to the exclusion of social work practitioners, the power of EBP as a mechanism for practice legitimisation, the marginalisation of social work as a discipline resisting the science of EBP, and the way the rural context shapes the impact of EBP in the practice setting. (Journal abstract)

**Retaining rural social workers, an Australian study**, by B. Lonne & B. Cheers, *Rural Society*, vol.14, no.2, 2004, pp. 163-177.

Problematic staff turnover of social workers and other human service professionals has plagued rural communities, employers, employees and their families, and led to significant financial and human costs. This paper reports the findings of a two year longitudinal study of 194 Australian rural social workers and the high staff turnover they experienced during 1994-1997. Regression analyses of survey data revealed that employer-related factors were strongly associated with premature departure, while community and personal factors tended to influence retention positively. Social workers who were well provided with social, emotional and financial support by their employers and colleagues tended to stay long enough for the lifestyle attractions of rural practice to take increasing effect. On the other hand, unsupported practitioners tended to depart early. Hence, problematic staff turnover can be addressed with different approaches from employers, educators and staff. A range of remedial strategies is generated including preparatory briefings, increased training, better -targetted recruitment, and enhanced support and supervision of staff. (Journal abstract)

## Social capital

**Surviving and thriving in North Queensland, social capital in action**, by A. Woodhouse & S. Janssen-May, *Sustaining Regions*, vol.3, no.3, Winter 2004, pp. 31-38.

The Business Retention and Expansion program (BR&E) uses a number of strategies to assist small communities to survive in the global economy. This paper documents the implementation of the program in the small northern Queensland community of Malanda. It discusses

the accumulation of social capital within a community and the way the BR&E program taps into all the elements of social capital.

**Understanding social capital within community/government policy networks**, by A. Walker, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no.22, Jul 2004, pp. 1-18.

There is an increasing need for joined-up government and joint working between agencies and across sectors in order to address "wicked" social problems and improve policy outcomes. Consequently, it has become imperative to understand the nature of policy network settings, and also the endogenous and exogenous factors that positively and negatively impact on interagency and intra-agency collaboration. From senior managers to front-line workers needing to work collaboratively

to achieve outcomes, knowing the types of relationships people have with other agencies may assist in identifying where greater time could be spent improving existing relationships or making new ones. While it is easy to assume that more coordination and cooperation will automatically lead to better and more efficient policy outcomes, collaboration can often be resource intensive, slow the whole process down and actually inhibit the achievement of policy outcomes. Therefore, if agencies are going to invest time and money in collaborative efforts, they need some assurance that such investment will pay dividends. The policy implications for using network analysis within a social capital framework to study policy networks and partnerships are discussed in this article. The paper concludes by describing how

a policy network/social capital framework approach could be used to examine the Strengthening Families interagency case management process used in New Zealand. (Journal abstract)

### Social justice

**The place of social justice in strengths-based social welfare work**, by E. Reimer & D. Nixon, *Children Australia*, vol.29, no.2, 2004, pp. 14-19.

This paper attempts to unpack strengths-based practice in social welfare in order to reveal the location of social justice within such an approach. Firstly, this paper will briefly explore the origins of a strengths approach, including historical development of the approach, mentioning some specific practice theories. The paper will then investigate the concepts, using Jim Ife's (1998) model

of a social justice perspective in community development to achieve this. The two approaches will then be discussed in terms of how they should be used together to support not only positive casework, but effective social action, using the work of UnitingCare Burnside as examples. (Journal abstract)

### Sustainability

**Sustaining community-based programs for families, conceptualization and measurement**, by J. Mancini & L. Marek, *Family Relations*, vol. 53, no. 4, July 2004, pp. 339-347.

This article describes a conceptual model for evaluating community-based program sustainability. The model has three components, elements needed for sustainability, middle-range program results and an ultimate result of sustainability.

## PHILANTHROPY SUPPORTING EARLY INTERVENTION

After just two years, a new charitable foundation is demonstrating how it is living up to its commitment to making a real difference in the lives of children and young people. The Early Learnings report was launched by Telstra Foundation Director, Mr Bill Scales, AO, in Melbourne on Friday 22 October 2004.

Early Learnings reported the study a study of 14 innovative community-based projects undertaken for the Telstra Foundation by a team of researchers from the Stronger Families Learning Exchange at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Early Learnings showcases the positive results that can be achieved when issues are tackled early or when people with passion and commitment see a need and are determined that children have better chances in life.

The report features ten family strengthening projects and four that promote the importance of early literacy and language development. The projects are different from one another in their settings and purposes. However, they all show that establishing trust and developing strong partnerships are the cornerstones of introducing a new way of thinking and doing.

For example:

- A national support network for siblings of children with disabilities has been established in recognition of the family stresses and difficulties that such children are grappling with.
- Children and their carers are dealing with the grief of losing a parent or family member to illicit drugs through an innovative therapy program.



Pictured at the launch of the Early Learnings report are members of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange research team with Telstra Foundation Manager (Fiona Moore) and Telstra Senior Program Officer (Georgia Symmons). From left: Liz Orr, Marlene Burchill, Fiona Moore (Telstra), Colleen Turner, Anne Garrow, Margo Northey, Ellen Fish and Georgia Symmons (Telstra).

- Another organisation has been able to expand a help-line established by a parent of children with disabilities into a nation-wide service. Now parents throughout Australia are supporting each other and reducing their sense of isolation and despair.
- In one region a collaboration between health and family support services is providing ongoing supports for mothers with illicit drug issues, developing a proactive approach that has significantly reduced the number of babies born with withdrawal symptoms and being removed into out of home care.
- In another region, schools are working with community organisations and providing greater coordinated supports for children with complex problems and their families.

Emerging literacy programs for pre-schoolers are much more than just early reading programs.

Such programs are assisting the early detection of toddlers' sensory problems (such as hearing difficulties) that may otherwise go undiagnosed until school, and reducing isolation and linking families with other community supports and services. Literacy programs provide a non-stigmatising way to provide basic resources for all children, and families are confidently using local community infrastructure such as libraries for the first time. Parents involved in an early literacy project have gained the confidence to return to study and gain formal qualifications, and schools are forging stronger links with their communities by making their facilities available for playgroups and parent support programs.

The full Early Learnings report, as well as information about Telstra Foundation grants and application processes, are available online at [www.telstrafoundation.com](http://www.telstrafoundation.com).