FROM PATHOLOGY TO PARTICIPATION?:

REFLECTIONS ON LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMMES IN BOSNIA AND CROATIA

AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

Community development approaches have been relatively underdeveloped in Bosnia and Croatia dispite the often stated axiom that social work is work with individuals, groups and communities. A legacy of pathologising, individualistic, frameworks, dominated by psychologists and defectologists has combined with dominant political trends to make social perspectives seem like socialism and therefore bad. The conflicts since 1991 have produced an unholy alliance between local and foreign psychologists which has emphasized expensive, professionalizing, and centralized psycho-social work rather than community development. The impetus, ideology, and practice of community development could emerge from 'Western' countries (e.g. US

Paul Stubbs 2

and UK) where local community development is part of a politicized social work seeking to challenge poverty and oppression, from the developing world where social movements involve social workers in promoting social mobilization and advocacy, and in Central and Eastern Europe where people power, allied to concepts of civil society, has produced profound social changes, and may lead to new definitions of social work. Local community development approaches are more effective than other approaches because of their non stigmatizing features. However, community development is primarily an approach and an attitude and not a set of hard and fast rules which can be applied in all situations and all cultures. There are examples of projects in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which, at least implicitly, adopt a community development approach. These include an NGO working in a deprived area of Zagreb with a large Roma population and an international volunteer project in Gornji Vakuf, a divided Croat-Bosnjak town in Central Bosnia, which combines local social development and peace building. Questions are asked about how such projects should be evaluated, and about the balance between local, international NGO, and public provision. The true community development social workers in Croatia and Bosnia who are human rights activists, workers in emerging women's groups, and so on, rather than those with a Diploma

Paul Stubbs 3

whose role is primarily one of administrative relief of poverty, individualistic work, and/or being the servants of psychologists.

INTRODUCTION

The suggestion, from Hungarian sociologist Zsuzsa Ferge (1995), that the collapse of state socialism in Central and Eastern Europe came too late for the values of the left Enlightenment or for socialism with a human face to challenge a wholesale new right, free-market shift, has its parallels in the development of different approaches to social work in the region. Community development approaches, which entered into Western discourse in the hiatus of 1968, and which were central to demands for radical social work throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, play only a marginal role in contemporary professional developments in the region. The role of professionals, including social workers, in times of transition, ethnicised nationalism and war, has to be located in its historical and structural context. Professionals are implicated, if only by their silence, in many of the more problematic aspects of transition. Indeed, as evidenced in Croatia and Bosnia, the uncomfortable fact that some professionals have gained from

Paul Stubbs 4

individualizing, psychologizing and medicalising the effects of war must be confronted.

In raising these issues as a foreigner from Western Europe, I risk breaking the taboo of the prism of cultural relativism through which most discussions are refracted and distorted. A cultural relativist perspective, however, is no less problematic than its converse, cultural absolutism, in which an implicit or explicit 'West is best' colonialism is applied to all 'Other' cultural phenomena (Csepeli, Orkeny and Scheppele, 1996). The indisputable fact that power relations structure all interactions between the West and the East should not inhibit critical scholarship and debate about power relations *within* the East between professionals and their clients. What is needed is a greater openness and willingness to acknowledge one's own value position and, indeed, biography, and how this structures one's understandings of, and commitments to, professional social work.

My own biases clearly derive from involvement, from 1980 onwards, in radical social work and critical social policy debates in the UK. I trained as a social worker at the University of Warwick in 1985 and was influenced greatly by Peter Leonard's continued engagement with the possibilities of social work's involvement in socialist change, and Lena Dominelli's work on feminist and anti-racist social work (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978; Dominelli, 1988; Dominelli and McLeod, 1989). My PhD, (Stubbs,

1988), and much of my published writing on anti-racist social work (Stubbs, 1985, 1987), tended to approach social work as a set of professional ideologies and practices, from a sociological perspective, much as one would approach other complex power structures.

In memoriam Paulo Freire, 19 September 1921 to 2 May 1997;

My skepticism about the role which social workers tended to play in relation to radical change, led me to the literature on community organizing of Saul Alinsky and, even more, to Paulo Freire's work on oppression and liberation (Freire, 1972). Working from 1993 onwards in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina deepened my commitment to community development and critical social policy more than it did my belief in professional social work *per se*. This article does not purport to be the whole story, nor does it pretend to understand the complex historical underpinnings of social work in the region. Instead, it presents a particular argument, probably taken too far, in order to explore options for different forms of social praxis less willing to tolerate the intolerable.

CHALLENGING THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ORTHODOXY

Ten years of involvement in the theory and practice of social work in the UK did not prepare me for the orthodoxy of psycho-social work, the dominant frame for all projects in response to the effects of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, which greeted

me on my arrival in Croatia in May 1993. Much of my subsequent work has been an attempt to understand the phenomenon, critique it, and suggest alternatives. What became very clear was that, the term psycho-social, describing a complex relationship between individual and collective experiences, was a misnomer. Instead, what was being offered was a particular psychological reading of the effects of war, framed in terms of a crude understanding of war trauma or PTSD, in which a social perspective, and hence social workers themselves, played only a residual role at best (Stubbs and Soroya, 1996).

In attempting to explain the phenomenon, at least in Croatia, I tried to piece together a number of different pieces of the jigsaw. The only social work training programme at University level, the four year Diploma in Social Work in the School of Social Work in the Law Faculty of the University of Zagreb, did not have its own Master's and Doctoral tracks. Hence, those who taught social work and contributed to its vision came from other disciplines; their backgrounds were in psychology and defectology. The discipline of defectology, as a science of measuring 'deviance' from 'normal' functioning, no longer has influence in the West, just as the term 'invalid' to describe people with disabilities has also long been rejected (Oliver, 1990). The continued promotion of these terms trouble me, and as is all language, seems indicative of wider social processes.

The dominant discourse within social work practice was a classic pathology models in which a sub-group of people are seen as different at best, and inferior at worst. Energy is spent on classification, measurement, and treatment of this individual disorder rather than looking for wider social causes and solutions. Indeed, it is only since having a small baby, and confronting the self-image of experts in white coats, that I have come to understand the importance of a professional identity as a kind of social status. I have started to ask questions about the importance of this identity under the old system, recognizing that the nature of professional ideology under different kinds of socialism is an under researched subject. It would suit the regime, and its class of professionals, to conspire together to argue that there were no social problems and that anti-social phenomena basically lay in individual pathology. The way in which this thinking has adapted to the new situation, to maintain professional power and privilege, is an important part of the psycho-social story.

What is less often realized is the fact that, throughout the 1980s, mainly in Slovenia but also in Croatia, particularly Zagreb, there was a kind of radical mental health movement, concerned with personal growth, gestalt therapy, encounter groups, and so on, which, in its refusal to equate personal life with politics, a kind of anti-social celebration of the self, fitted into an oppositional movement, if only by default. This group also had international links although it is interesting how much these tended, in Croatia, to over-intellectualise and theorize aspects of anti psychiatry rather than to

construct innovative practices, as happened in Slovenia, where there were links with the radical mental health movement in Italy (Zavir and Flaker, 1994).

Whilst the denial of the social in the current context has served to continue to emphasise only the psychological dimension of suffering, it has also opened the door to a wider range of therapies and approaches than might otherwise have occurred. Often, divergent approaches to psycho-social work co-exist in the same project, with the more progressive elements benefiting workers rather than users of services, and being used rhetorically to gain funding from diverse sources. This professionalizing of radical psychology is also an important phenomenon, given that there has been no connection whatsoever with radical social work. It has also been important in asserting that groupwork approaches are of immense importance in social work with people who have been through war stressors and, indeed, more generally.

The third element of the oft-repeated axiom that social work is work with individuals, groups and communities, has been least able to assert its value. There are a number of reasons for this. Community work is the most fully social of all of the approaches, is seen to be too close to dreaded social planning, and is therefore often equated with socialism and, seen as bad. Some noted proponents of community development approaches in the 1980s have switched their political allegiance so that they now support the notion of a national community as a central organizing feature of society.

Often, this has co-existed with a retreat into an esoteric philosophical understanding of social work so as not to soil one's hands with day-to-day social work practice. Others see the Catholic Church base of social work as a more desirable starting point. The irony is that there would have been little problem in professionalizing community development approaches, and splitting communities between good/normal and bad/pathological, and this is not lost on a smaller number of intellectuals who are now beginning to advocate this approach much more.

The meeting between an emergency-based international response to the effects of war, through humanitarian aid agencies, and this professional base explains the massive proliferation of psycho-social projects in Croatia and Bosnia, from 1992. These attracted huge funds which, for local intellectuals who formed their own NGOs (the Zagreb-based *Society for Psychological Assistance* being the most prominent), and professionals who were able to work on a contractual basis, represented at worst, a way of offsetting the huge insecurity and loss of income which war produced and, at best, became lucrative private enterprises masquerading as non-profit organizations (Stubbs, 1995).

There is no justification for denying the huge suffering which these projects sought to respond to, nor the progressive nature of many of their international supporters concerned to link trauma with the oppression of women and children, and to broad

human rights issues (Agger, 1995). In arguing that people have been reduced to cases, expressions of hurt to symptoms, and processes of healing to treatment (Stubbs and Soroya, 1996), our concern has always been with the labeling and the pathologising response rather than with any denial of hurt nor minimizing of the importance of meeting more than basic survival needs. Estimates of huge numbers of people suffering from trauma, based on very dubious methodology (Agger, Buus Jensen and Jacobs, 1995), served only to perpetuate the power of the expert definers, however.

Mainstream services tended to be by-passed in the new fashion for creating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some of which became very powerful, at the expense of their users, and most of which proved unsustainable and simply disappeared. As a result, there has been little emphasis on changing the dominant attitudes and values of professionals within public services. Also, trauma became the defining shape so that poverty, human rights abuses, lack of access to employment, and so on became issues which could wait or were sidelined to other agencies.

From late 1993 onwards, Nina Peènik, a psychologist and lecturer in social work, and I, were seeking to explore these issues in forms relevant to the Croatian NGO *Suncokret* (Peènik, Soroya, and Stubbs, 1994; Peènik and Stubbs, 1995). We were hugely over-optimistic in our assessment of *Suncokret's* abilities to adapt and

change into a social development organization. We tended to underestimate the effects of receiving huge income precisely to undertake psycho-social work, the professional self image of psychologists and social workers within the hierarchy and, the real problems of changing realities including the Croat-Muslim war in Bosnia in 1993, and military interventions in Croatia in 1995 (Stubbs, 1996a).

Our attempt to contrast the key features of development projects with those of psycho-social projects (see Table 1) emphasized the way in which the latter tended to promote dependency rather than self-help, growth, and empowerment, however much these terms crept into the psycho-social discourse. The analysis as a useful critique of 'psycho-social projects' much more than it provides an alternative model, despite our attempt to discuss this in terms of three elements: peace-building, integration, and social awareness and social action.

Table 1:

Contrasting Features of Psycho-social and Development Projects

Psycho-social projects	*Development projects*
Expert	Flexible
Pathologising	Empowering
Medicalising	Engaged/social movement
Distanced	Community-based/localized
Professionalizing	Integrating
Inflexible	Transformative
Prestigious for workers not users	Links/connects different levels
Needs defined by experts not communities	Human rights
Disconnected from community needs	Develops skills
Self-maintaining	Democratic
Disempowering	Civil society
Labeling e.g. PTSD	Political
Creates elite:	Action research
foreign experts - unaccountable	Long term planning
local experts - accelerated	
promotion and salary	

Table 1: (cont.)

    Self-fulfilling evaluation:

     narrow, quantitative

      Uncoordinated

       Temporary

       Duplicating

(Adapted from Peènik and Stubbs, 1995; 38).

SOME MODELS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There was little sense, then, that we were seeking to outline the alternative, in terms of community development; we did understand from where this alternative model might derive. Now, I would define community development as **locally-based strategies which promote equal opportunities and social justice and which enhance the dignity of human beings and assist them in regaining control over their lives** (Mayo and Craig, 1995; and Boˆsnjak, 1994). Power relations, however these are conceptualized, are central to this approach, as is the implication that people experience oppression as members of a community. This community need not be spatially defined-ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, and so on, may be salient identifiers. The implication, however, is that collective responses to

collective problems are as valid, if not more so, than individualized therapies or small group work.

The role of a professional community development worker also varies according to different approaches, as does the nature and understanding of the politicization of this role. These debates can be understood in terms of a continuum with community politics at one end, various kinds of community organizing in the middle, and community development at the other end. Viewed in this way, one could argue, at least in Croatia, that the absence of community development workers has left grassroots community politics and community organizing in the hands of two powerful groups--the ruling nationalist party/social movement, (*HDZ)*, and the Catholic Church. The rise of a new (or perhaps old and revitalized) community development profession could be a progressive change in this context. Debates about the role of professionals in local community development projects, in particular whether they functioned as agents to cool out demands from oppressed groups, tended to erode the legitimacy of the many community development projects which grew up in 1970s Britain, and those projects associated with the War Against Poverty in the USA.

Similar issues have arisen in the social development literature concerned with the rise of participatory projects in countries of the so-called Third World. Stated crudely, it has been argued that small-scale, grassroots projects emphasizing user

participation have distracted attention from the wider structural context of exploitation and global social relations, in particular the livelihood- (and sometimes even life-) threatening imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Mayo and Craig, 1995). In many ways, these debates distract attention from the many and varied levels at which oppression is lived and experienced, and reduce complex arguments about strategies and approaches to a crude either/or model. The extensive experience from Western countries and from developing countries, remain highly pertinent to the development of a value-base for community development elsewhere.

Nevertheless, it is to processes within Central and Eastern Europe, in their diversity and complexity, that an impetus for new approaches to community development can be found. Insofar as community development is premised upon a redefinition of the relation between the public and the private spheres, it is a close relative of the civil society movements which grew up in the 1980s in many state socialist countries and were, in fact, central to the revolutions of 1989 (Prins, 1990). The need to encourage active citizen involvement, from below as it were, remains no less important in the complex processes of post-socialist transition (Verderey, 1996) which have produced economic insecurities, new forms of state authoritarianism, popular racisms, and a rejection of many civic values (Ferge, 1995; UNICEF, 1994).

The dominant form of post-socialist civil society in Central and Eastern Europe appears to be the rise of voluntary organizations, often termed non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or non-profit organizations (NPOs). These organizations 'act as a third force to ameliorate and control the forces of both the economy and the state' (Osborne and Kaposvari, 1996), by promoting active citizenship and civil rights. However, there are dangers that they are becoming a new elite which fails to connect with the needs and demands of oppressed groups at the local level (Szelenyi, 1995).

This is not a simple either/or dichotomy. The need for strong civil associations able to intervene in public policy (Boˆsnjak, 1997) is totally compatible with the importance of local community development initiatives working with those such as Roma groups who have gained little, and in many cases, lost greatly, in the transition. Zavirˆsek's model of social innovation in Slovenia, exemplified in mental health work, and work with women (Zavirˆsek, 1995), offers a basis for a new paradigm in Central European social work close to a community development model which, in many countries although not Croatia, is influencing the direction of social work training (Stubbs, 1996b).

Community development is primarily an approach and an attitude and not a set of hard and fast rules which can be applied in all situations and all cultures. It resists strongly the search for technical solutions and certainties, whilst acknowledging that

certain skills and competencies are most likely to promote successful community development. A key feature would be the need to combine an emphasis on **process** issues with those of **strategy** and **outcome**. Cumulative experience of the balance between different components is, however, more useful than a blue print imported from elsewhere.

A number of international agencies began to for precisely such a blue print as the critique of 'psycho-social projects' aided, incidentally, by their lack of demonstrable effects and their undoubtedly high costs, began to have an impact. The fact that I suggested that this could not be done, that the processes of establishing a community development initiative had to be slow, carefully planned, and involve listening to the local community at all stages, meant that my approach was seen as less useful than other foreign experts all too eager to push their own formulae.

It is very difficult for psycho-social projects to transform into community development projects as many are seeking to do as they realize that this is the new trend area of provision, albeit with considerably reduced resources available. The main reason for this is the legacy of professional power and the stigmatizing features of many such projects.

The growth of trauma centers, counseling centers, mobile clinics, and so on, all of

which require the acceptance of a label by users and putting oneself in the hands of an expert, cannot simply be transformed into community centers. Stigmatizing provision is anathema to a community development approach which suggests that people are willing and able to support each other and that human beings learn and develop precisely through their different needs, skills, and interests. This is not to deny that some individuals may need specialist psychological help; many community projects have experienced problems precisely because of their failure to acknowledge this.

Nevertheless, it is possible to sketch out a framework for local community development relevant to countries experiencing post-communist transition, new forms of ethnicised nationalism, conflict, and mass forced migration. Four key dimensions of this framework (Mimica and Stubbs, 1996; 287-8) can be adapted and developed as follows:

Local economic development which facilitates skills retraining and access to labour markets for marginalised groups including refugees and displaced persons, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women, etc. The possibility of community-based loans and credit schemes could be a key part of this.

Peace-building and conflict resolution which attempts to build/rebuild relationships of

trust between different groups who have been, are, or may be in conflict with each other.

Promoting the legal, social and human rights of refugees and displaced persons whilst seeking to promote integrative provision which breaks down a sense of competition between local and migrant communities (Stubbs, 1996c).

Encouraging political participation by empowering people for self-organisation in order to articulate their needs and become active in creating the policies of local, national, and even international institutions.

This by no means exhausts the range of issues and themes which might be important: however, it does provide a way into understanding and discussing existing projects in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and prospects for the future.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN BOSNIA AND CROATIA

A number of projects in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina adopt, at least implicitly, a community development approach. Indeed, in the context of the lack of implementation of the refugee return provisions in the Dayton peace agreement

(Dayton, 1995), a network of legal advice centers is being developed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina which may form the nucleus of a community development movement. A project in the city of Banja Luka, now in the Serbian entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is also involved in a range of initiatives which resemble community development (Stubbs, 1997). I will focus on two very different initiatives *Prijatelj Projekt* in Kozari Bok/Put, Zagreb, and the *UNOV Project* in Gornji Vakuf, Central Bosnia. Discussing their aims and objectives, methods of working, and problems encountered may help to make concrete the theoretical treatise of the paper.

Prijatelj is an example of a local, Croatian, NGO which took over the work of an international organization, *Immigration and Refugee Services of America* (IRSA), and sought explicitly to move away from a psycho-social focus towards community development objectives in a deprived part of Zagreb inhabited by local poor, refugees, and a significant Roma population. Its mission is "to support and motivate members of the community towards self-help and community development, thereby promoting creativity, confidence, choice, opportunity, mutual tolerance and respect."

The communities of Kozari Bok and Kozari Put did not directly experience violent conflict in the war. They have been forgotten and remain underserved at best, and oppressed at worst, by all manner of official agencies. The competition for resources between older and younger people, long-standing residents and newcomers,

Paul Stubbs 21

between different ethnic and religious groups; and so on, is acute in an area where many settlements are impromptu and there is a lack of infrastructural services, including water and electricity, for many households only a 20 minute tram ride from the centre of Zagreb.

Working from a community centre which is, in fact, the old community hall, the project offers a range of sporting, educational and artistic activities, targeted primarily at children and young people. In addition, the community worker plays a key role in encouraging and supporting the development of self-help groups within the community, including a women's group, a proposed youth council and, most significantly, a local association of Roma. Other possibilities for the future include collaborative projects with local institutions such as the school, health centre, and Centre for Social Care.

The Project faces many dilemmas which are difficult to address constructively given the lack of guidance on community development from writers and practitioners within Croatia. Indeed, given the ruling party's over politicization of community issues and President Tudjman's naming of George Soros, whose Open Society Foundation is one of *Prijatelj's* funders, as an enemy of Croatia, the project's room for manoeuvre is severely limited. Nevertheless, it was able to be involved in orchestrating press coverage in which a group of residents were able to articulate their opposition to a

plan to demolish their houses which had been built without permission. In addition, it faces a shortage of resources so that it is, in fact, in danger of competing with the *Association of Roma* and other local organizations which it should be in a position to support. Its main funder is the US NGO *IRC Umbrella Grant* which approaches NGO development through a US-based, colonialist, model and, in any case, will only be involved in Croatia for one more year.

The *UNOV Gornji Vakuf Project* began in 1995 and was, in many ways, a larger-scale version of the pioneering *Volunteer Project, Pakrac*, which was an innovative collaboration between the United Nations Office, in Vienna and the Antiwar Campaign, Croatia in a town in Croatia divided by an official cease-fire line (Minnear, 1995). A long-term international volunteer from Pakrac was specifically recruited to implement a new project in Gornji Vakuf, a town in Central Bosnia which was the site of intense, and bitter, fighting between Bosnjak/Muslim/Bosnian Government forces and Croat/HVO forces between January 1993 and February 1994.

An invisible cease fire line still divides the town, with parallel political and administrative structures on the Croat (so-called *Herceg-Bosna*) and Muslim sides, despite the existence of a Croat-Muslim Federation derived from the Washington agreements of March 1994. Few people exercise their right to move freely and there remain large numbers of people displaced from their homes on either side. The

economic imbalance between the Croatian side, to all intents and purposes integrated into Croatia proper, and the Bosnjak side, is very apparent.

Seeing peace-building as inextricably linked to social and community development (Pugh, 1995), long-term foreign volunteers worked with local people on physical reconstruction and a range of social programmes responding to real needs, and working at the community's own pace to re-establish communication, trust and joint programmes. An explicit aim, clearly underpinned by Boutros Ghalli's conceptual framework which first placed peace-building on the UN's agenda (Ghalli, 1992), was to identify and support alternative community leaders and civil society. The project seeks to "undercut the dominant political culture of polarization and division" (Shorr, 1996). A Youth Centre used by young people and staff from both sides, and supported by the International NGO UMCOR, was built and successfully operated with formal political approval which followed extensive efforts to build local support. Key intellectuals and professionals from both sides represent an important constituency which the Project has cultivated and supported.

Three local NGOs are in the process of being registered, in the fields of physical reconstruction, youth work, and women's income generating activities. Whilst it could be argued that these are little more than artificial constructions of the Project, and reflect the current fashion for NGO work, they link directly to the fact that municipal

Paul Stubbs 24

structures do not function. Moreover, the plan is to continue to support these independent NGOs and seek to ensure that their processes model good governance in the wider public sphere.The Project cannot be accused of abandoning such alternative leaders (Duffield, 1996). This is in sharp contrast to the broadly pessimistic picture of NGO development in Bosnia-Herzegovina which is "weak and fragmented, and is largely the creation of external donors and International NGOs in a hurry" (Smillie, 1996).

It is in deconstructing and reconstructing what is meant by local that the project has perhaps had its greatest impact. In sponsoring a local language training workshop in peace building for activists from all over the Federation, led by members of the Anti-war Campaign, Croatia, the Gornji Vakuf Project began to pose important questions regarding the viability of a regional approach to civil society development in ways which other agencies, operating from a top-down, Sarajevo-based, perspective, were talking about but failing. Mentoring from within this network, and from women's groups and other Bosnian NGOs, clearly led to the emergence of skilled local people, including teachers engaged in social mobilization, posing key questions regarding the lack of functioning social and educational services.

The success of the Project in influencing the UN's agenda can also be seen by an external evaluation, carried out for the United Nations Development Programme

Paul Stubbs 25

(UNDP) in Autumn 1996. Initially skeptical of the volunteer approach, the evaluation team recommended increased funding for the project and an extension of the approach to other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In some ways, this represents the greatest challenge for the broad approach, since it is clearly largely incompatible with a technical approach to community development. In some quarters the project is already being criticized for having abandoned its grassroots approach. The need to clarify concepts and terms becomes all the more apparent and necessary. The absence of legitimation of the approach from intellectual circles within Bosnia-Herzegovina is the greatest liability and threat to the sustainability of a community approach to peace-building.

The need to develop criteria for evaluation of community development projects and, in particular, to ensure that participatory evaluation is a central feature, is a key issue which is being addressed in both projects. User involvement in projects has to be seen as central rather than being a nice 'add on' which can be jettisoned at will. In addition, in a competitive funding climate, it is difficult for community-based work to adopt a longer-term perspective, to work at the community's pace, and to take time surveying local needs. These are increasingly seen as expensive luxuries in an output obsessed, project specific, funding environment. The failure of psycho-social projects to go beyond crude, quantitative, evaluations, also indicates their lack of sensitivity to the user dimension and to the broad social impact of their work (Mimica

Paul Stubbs 26

and Stubbs, 1996). It could be that participatory processes within community development projects could be an impetus for a user's charter in more traditional social work projects.

Other unresolved issues concern the likely source of future funding and the balance of provision between local and international NGOs and public provision. Clearly, in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a new welfare mix is far from being in place and, indeed, its development has been seriously affected by the effects of war. Such projects will remain a very marginal part of welfare provision for the foreseeable future without local professional legitimacy for community work.

CONCLUSIONS: VALIDATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES

The true community development social workers in Croatia and Bosnia are human rights activists, workers in emerging women's groups, and so on, rather than those with a diploma whose role is primarily one of administrative relief of poverty, individualistic work, and/or being the servants of psychologists. A group of people, often interrupting their studies because they felt a burning need to do something as the effects of war became apparent, have had over five years experience in a range of work which has given them a unique insight into all aspects of social activism. The skills gap between this group and those who continued to work in public services or

who completed their studies without volunteering with emerging NGOs, is a major problem facing both societies in terms of the development of professional competencies in the future.

Without some kind of rapprochement between these two groups, underpinned by a more solid literature, research, and teaching on community development approaches, the danger of professionalism being at the expense of oppressed groups remains. Without a renewed understanding of the importance of a pedagogy of and for the oppressed, in which new social relations transcend the old orthodoxies, social workers and educators will continue to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

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Paul Stubbs 32

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