

Issues and challenges of social work practicum at developing countries in comparable with developed countries

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Abstract:

This article focuses on the nature of field practicum at developing countries particularly in Egypt and Arabic countries in comparable with developed countries. The goal of this article is to highlight the challenges and problems that passively affected the quality of field practicum in developing countries, and suggest some recommendations in attempting to develop this critical component of social work education. The main element of this article are theoretical framework of field practicum, Comparison between social work practicum in developed and developing countries.

Keywords: social work practicum, Developed Countries, Developing Counties, Field Education.

Introduction:

Social work is a profession, and social work education has always contain both academic and practical components. Social work education comprises of a theoretical component taught in the classroom and field- based education-involving integration of the academic aspect and practice. Fieldwork, which is also known as field instruction, field placement, field education, practicum or internship is therefore an integral component of social work education (Dhemba, Jotham, 2012, P. 1)

Social work practicum is a fundamental aspect of social work education that provides students with the opportunity to apply the theoretical foundations of the profession to the practice arena. The preparation of BSW social workers requires an integrated curriculum of academic theory, current practice theory, and field practice opportunities. The principle role of the field practice experience is to provide an opportunity for the student to integrate theory and practice Gitterman (1989) noted that a major task of the social work profession was "to transform knowledge and understanding into practice, principles and behaviors (Rick Csiernik and Mary Lou Karley, 2004, P.2).

A career in social work requires many abilities. Social workers must have competence in relating to individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities; in assessing needs and problems; and in planning and intervening appropriately. Social workers have to be skilled in carrying out various helping roles such as advocate, broker, educator, group leader, mediator, clinician, community planner and organizer, administrator, and so forth.

Placement in an agency allows students opportunity to observe other professionals and to learn from their actions. Students can learn from any of the staff around them—all play a role in helping students to become more proficient (Garthwait, Cynthia. L, 2013, P.3)

Fortune and Abramson (1993) found that multiple factors are associated with the success of a field experience. The relevance of the students' learning goals to the setting, the quality of field instruction, connection of theory to case material, the students' input regarding practicum sites, and preparation of and support to field instructors, were all found to be predictors of student satisfaction while in practicum. (Rick Csiernik and Mary Lou Karley, 2004, P.2).

Although field practicum as a basic component in social work education at all institutions of social work education over the world it vary from country to country in respect to the criteria of developed and developing countries. There are several countries classifications from many international organizations either humanistic or economic. Some of these organizations classified countries on the base of economic and finance criteria (Lyng Nielsen 2011, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2013, Timothy Goodspeed, et al, 2010), and others classified it on the base of human resources criteria such as education and social welfare (Gote Hansson et al 1998, Adam Szirmai, 2007, Paul Glewwe, Michael Kremer, 2005). As the conclusion of these criteria, they classified countries into developed countries that contain European countries, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and United States. In addition, developing countries that contain African countries, most of Asian countries, Caribbean countries, Mexico and Central America, and South America. (The Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2013).

Social work profession in developed countries has certain elements that regarded as hallmarks of a profession. These elements summarized as first, a profession have a reasonably identifiable arena of practice, within which a body of knowledge associated with the profession is applied. Second, the profession must have a training and educational structure in place both to expand and refine that body of knowledge and to disseminate it to future and current practitioners of the profession. Third, it must exercise a degree of control over the application of the practice of the profession by means of credentials,

tioned to licensure or certification, which in turn are recognized through legal or conventional agreements (Richard L. Edwards et al, 2006, P. 28). At the same time, these countries attempt to increase the capacity of schools of social work and the profession to plan for the future (Wes Shera and Marion Bogo, 2002, P. 188) in response to rapid social and economic changes that have an impact on social work practice and education.

While social work educators and practitioners at developed countries look forward to the future, social work practice and education in developing countries suffer from many challenges and problems. The development of social work education and practice in these countries is very slow. Soliman, Hussein, Abdel Maguid, Hesham (2010) indicated that the drastic shifts in social and economic conditions which had started in Egypt at the 1970s with globalization and the expansion of technology were not used by social work educators as an opportunity to examine curricula and introduce new initiatives to develop programs (P.104). Mokhtar, A (2006) discussed problems that affect the quality in social work education in Egypt. These problems related to educational policies, preparation of social work students, curricula, faculties qualifications, researches in social work, text books, and field practicum. Rambabu Botcha (2012) focused on the challenges of social work education at India and summarized it in fifteen challenges, some of them are; Lack of Indigenous Materials or literature in social work knowledge, missing the national council of social work education to maintain the uniform standards of education and give accreditation to institutions as well to practitioners. Social Work Educators are not Practitioners, No activity for Continuous Professional Development (P.P 204- 209).

As mentioned earlier field practicum is a core component of social work education most of social work educators and practitioners in developed countries indicated that we have serious problems and challenges in field practicum. The main challenge of field practicum in India derived from the idea that most of the knowledge of social work in India is borrowed from the West; it is difficult to directly apply the theory that is based on a different culture to India (Johnson, Emmanuel, et al, 2012, P. 24). In addition, there are many challenges of field practicum in Africa; these are the shortage of qualified and experienced supervisors, shortage of suitable fieldwork agencies,

inadequate funding and timing of fieldwork (Dhemba, Jotham, 2012, P. 12)

Therefore, this article focuses on the nature of field practicum at developing countries particularly in Egypt and Arabic countries in comparable with developed countries. The goal of this article is to highlight the challenges and problems that passively affected the quality of field practicum in developing countries, and suggest some recommendations in attempting to develop this critical component of social work education. The main element of this article are

- 1- Theoretical framework of field practicum
- 2- Comparison between social work practicum in developed and developing countries
- 3- Recommendations and suggestions

Theoretical framework:

As defined by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2014) the social work is

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work." (P. 5)

The social work practicum is a fundamental aspect of social work education that provides students with the opportunity to apply the theoretical foundations of the profession to the practice arena.. It considered a central aspect of social work education and has even been described as the "signature pedagogy" of the profession (Council of Social Work Education, 2008, p. 8).

Field experience provides students with the opportunity to apply what they learn in classroom instruction including the ability to integrate theory and practice. Students often struggle to apply theories from class with working with actual clients. They highly value observing experienced social workers model their practice and decision-making skills, and then having a chance to test their own skills with constructive feedback (Edmond, Tony, et al, 2006).

The new educational policy and accreditation standards (EPAS) from the Council on Social Work Education (2008) emphasize competency-based education. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The

goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities” (P. 3). Students must acquire the following core competencies:

1. Identify themselves as professional social workers and conduct themselves accordingly;
2. Apply social work ethical practice principles to guide professional practice;
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice;
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice;
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research;
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment;
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services;
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice; and
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Field education is considered the signature pedagogy in social work. “Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner” (CSWE, 2008, p. 8).

A practicum is an experience that requires the practical application of theory or conceptual knowledge. Most types of professional education—whether in medicine, nursing, law, pharmacy, speech therapy, or social work—wisely employ some form of practicum or internship to help the student learn how to apply knowledge and general principles to real situations, problems, and concerns. Many social workers, agency supervisors, and social work educators use the terms practicum, fieldwork, field education, field practicum, and internship somewhat interchangeably. This book will use the term practicum. (Garthwait, Cynthia.L, 2013, P. 2)

Accreditation Standard 2.1-Field Education

The program discusses how its field education program (CSWE, 2008, P.P 54- 76)

2.1.1: Connects the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practice setting, fostering the implementation of evidence-informed practice.

B2.1.2: The program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate the core competencies

2.1.3: The program provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and 900 hours for master's programs.

2.1.4: The program admits only those students who have met the program's specified criteria for field education.

2.1.5: The program specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings; placing and monitoring students; maintaining field liaison contacts with field educational settings; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the program's competencies.

2.1.6: The program specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program competencies. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.

2.1.7: The program provides orientation, field instruction training, and continuing dialog with field education settings and field instructors.

2.1.8: The program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

3.4.5: The program identifies the field education director.

3.4.5(a) The program describes the field director's ability to provide leadership in the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.

3.4.5(b): The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program

and at least 2 years of post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience.

B3.4.5(c): The program describes the procedures for determining the field directors assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field at least 25% assigned time is required for baccalaureate programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

M3.4.5(c): The program describes the procedures for determining the field director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field at least 50% assigned time is required for master's programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient

International Federation of Social Workers sets standards of field practicum including fieldwork supervisors, instructors, agencies, and recourses as follow: (IFSW, 2014, P. 9)

3.7 Field education should be sufficient in duration and complexity of tasks and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for professional practice.

3.8 Planned co-ordination and links between the school and the agency/field placement setting

3.9 Provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.

3.10 Appointment of field supervisors or instructors who are qualified and experienced, as determined by the development status of the social work profession in any given country, and provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.

3.11 Provision for the inclusion and participation of field instructors in curriculum development.

3.12 A partnership between the educational institution and the agency (where applicable) and service users in decision-making regarding field education and the evaluation of student's fieldwork performance.

3.13 Making available, to fieldwork instructors or supervisors, a field instruction manual that details its fieldwork standards, procedures, assessment standards/criteria and expectations.

3.14 Ensuring that adequate and appropriate resources, to meet the needs of the fieldwork component of the programme, are made available.

Types of Field Practicum:

Social work programs can organize the required field instruction in different ways as long as degree programs are educationally directed, coordinated, monitored, and meet the requirements of the Council on Social Work Education. The most common types of field practicum are:

Block type:

Under the block placement arrangement, a student is placed in a social service agency with an approved learning plan for a block of time— for example, a whole academic term, two full terms, or a summer term. The students devote full time (four or five days per week) to experiential learning in the agency. Under a modified block model, students participate in field instruction in a social service agency four days each week while the fifth day is reserved for taking courses.

While the block placement allows students to immerse themselves in the work of an agency and is more conducive to the pursuit of intellectually and professionally stimulating tasks, it also has its weaknesses. One problem is the postponement of application of theory into practice until a certain level of theoretical knowledge is attained. Additionally, there is a clear separation of the timing and context in which theory and practice take place as students are away from the training institution for a period ranging from one month to a year. (Garthwait, Cynthia.L, 2013, P. 7)

Concurrent type:

Under the concurrent placement, the students' time is divided between classroom learning and fieldwork experiences. (Typically, students are expected to be in the agency for two or three days per week and to take classes for two or three days.) The exact proportion of time devoted to each set of learning experiences varies, depending on the type of academic term, the number of academic credits, and whether the students are undergraduates or first or second-year graduate students.

It appears the rationale for using concurrent placements initially at first or second year levels or both levels and then blocks at higher levels is to offer students an opportunity to gradually acquaint themselves with the profession. This is so considering that in the first or second year of the course expectations are not very high. Students are required to observe the supervisor in action and to perform tasks

befitting their level. Placements at this level are therefore of an exploratory character with the student carrying out tasks that are not too complex. However, at higher levels the student is expected to be active at a practical level, carrying out tasks that have considerable scope for increasingly independent execution of duties and skills.

Selection of field placement criteria:

There are wide ranges of agencies used as field placements. The specific criteria used in the selection of field placement agencies are: (Horner. D, 2010, P. 5)

- (1) Social work must be the principal function of the agency or be recognized as an ancillary service (e.g. a hospital).
- (2) In keeping with the program's aim of educating the generalist, a balance is sought among the agencies in terms of practice setting and the opportunities available in each setting to familiarize the student with a variety of interventive modes.
- (3) Structured learning opportunities must provide for (but are not limited to) (a) direct work with client systems of various sizes and types, (b) opportunities to use agency and area resources, (c) contact with community services and other human service professionals.
- (4) The majority of the student's time must be directly with the client system (i.e. individual, family, group, community). However, contacts with systems must not necessarily all be problem centered (i.e. contacts with individuals may be for data collection or for planning change). The individuals may not necessarily be part of the client system; they could be in the target or action system.
- (5) There must be evidence of acceptance by agency personnel of the need for professional education for professional practice and recognition of the value of social work services that can be offered by beginning level, generalist practitioners.
- (6) Each student must have a regular place to work which is always available when she/he is at the agency, is comparable to that of full-time staff, and is sufficient to the needs of the learning situation.
- (7) Students must have opportunities to meet and interact with other staff members (i.e. attending staff meetings, observing administrative sessions, participating in staff training sessions and consultation sessions), and must be designated to staff and clients as social work personnel.

(8) Agencies are expected to allow sufficient time and supports to field instructors in order that they may instruct and supervise the student's work and participate in the necessary field instructors' meetings.

Educational instructor and supervision:

In most programs, students are placed in a public service agency under the day-to-day supervision of a field instructor who is a social worker employed by the agency. It is the responsibility of the field instructor to provide students with opportunities for contact with various client systems and to oversee students' performance with assigned tasks. Field instructors considered members of the extended teaching staff of the school and may be granted faculty privileges such as the use of the university library facilities or discounts at the university bookstore.

Field instructors should be well aware of the social work program's philosophy, the content and sequence of courses, and the expected level of student performance. Often there are special training sessions for new field instructors—this ensures that assignments given to students are consistent with students' abilities and the program's expectations. In addition to the supervision students receive from field instructors, social work programs usually assign faculty members as advisers to students and as liaisons between the agency and the school.

Educational supervision focuses on professional concerns and relates to specific cases. It helps supervisees better understand social work philosophy, become more self-aware, and refine their knowledge and skills. Educational supervision focuses on staff development and the training needs of a social worker to a particular caseload. It includes activities in which the supervisee is guided to learn about assessment, treatment and intervention, identification and resolution of ethical issues, and evaluation and termination of services.

The qualifications for an approved social work supervisor are specified in the licensing statutes and regulatory standards of each jurisdiction, and may include specifications for each level of social work practice or be universal, with one set of qualifications for all practice levels. The general qualifications for supervision may include the following: ((Horner. D, 2010, P.P. 9-10)

- a current license to practice at the specific level or above the level in which the supervision will be provided, and in the jurisdiction in which both the supervisor and the supervisee are practicing

- a degree from an accredited school of social work
- specified coursework in supervision, a minimum number of continuing education hours in supervisory practice as required by the jurisdiction, or both
- a minimum of three years (or more if required in licensing statutes) of post licensure practice experience
- continuing education hours as required for maintenance of supervisory credentials in the practice jurisdiction
- being free from sanction of the licensing board for violation(s) of practice standards.

In addition, social work supervisors should have experience and expertise in the practice arena and with the population of the supervisees' practice, such as addictions, children and adolescents, mental health, and community organization. Supervisors should have competencies in the theories and various modalities of treatment and maintain currency through the use of professional journals and continuing education.

Effective supervision requires knowledge of the principles of supervision and the ability to demonstrate necessary skills such as addressing both strengths and challenges of the supervisee, modeling and discussing ethical practice, and providing support and encouragement in the learning context. Supervisors should be familiar

With the administrative and organizational structure of the agency or practice domain of the supervisee.

Second: Comparison between social work practicum in developed and developing countries:

As we mentioned earlier, field practicum as a main component in social work education is differ from country to country in relation with its development. The researcher tries here to analyze some writings and studies to identify the main challenges and issues of social work practicum at developing countries including Egypt in comparable with developed countries that have advanced system of social work education.

The main criteria that we must guide this comparing are educational social work associations, placement agencies criteria, kinds of practicum, educational instructor and supervisor, student's skills evaluation, agency participation in practicum programs, and evaluation of training outcomes

Educational social work associations.

All schools of social work education in developed countries have councils of social work education that organize the processes of theoretical and practical education in a base of policies and standers of accreditation programs that are missed in developing countries. Both US and Canadian social work education programs are subject to rigorous accreditation procedures. In the US, the accrediting body is the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which was created in 1952. The Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) was founded in 1967, and soon afterward assumed the responsibility for accrediting Canadian programs (Richard L. Edwards et al, 2006, P.36).

As we informed previously, council on social work education defined the number of hours the students must completed in field education "a minimum of 400 hours for baccalaureate programs and 900 hours for master's programs. All schools of social work at USA adhered with these criteria (e.g. school of social work The University of Kentucky, department of social work Utah State University). At Germany Fieldwork is a significant component of your preparation for professional social work practice. Four of the 17 required social work courses are field courses and total a minimum of 590 hours of supervised practice. Beginning Field Experience is a 3 1/2 week experience of 140 hours, and Supervised Field Experience is a semester long placement of 450 hours. Students may elect two additional May Term field experiences (Wartburg's undergraduate social work manual program, P.24). On the other hand, in developing countries at faculty of social work Helwan university- Egypt, we can estimate the total number of training hours in BA approximately more than 600 hours divided into 10 hours per week in the first year (agency visit). 10 hours per week in the second year at classes and scientific labs. 10 hours per week in the third year at different social agencies such as schools, hospitals, juvenile delinquency agencies, mental health agencies, and community agencies. In contrast, we can estimate the total number of training hours in MA with 3 credit hours/week for approximately 12 weeks, decreased to 6-7 weeks at summer course (faculty of social work, Helwan university, manual of faculty programs). The total number of training hours in MA do not satisfy the criteria of council on social work education.

Placement agencies criteria:

As accreditation standard 2.1.5 of council on social work education "The program of social work education specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings". Most schools of social work at USA and other developed countries specified the criteria of agencies selection (Department of social work at Missouri Western State University, school of social work York university, School of social work University of Regina- Canada, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) at the University of Toronto, Canada, College of social work university of Kentucky.....).Some of the criteria that used in selecting field agencies are:

Missouri Western State University	College of social work university of Kentucky
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The agency is able to provide appropriate learning experiences that are compatible with the learning objectives of the field instruction course(s). 2. The agency is able to provide a climate that encourages the students to pursue their interests and to develop professionally. 3. The agency is able to provide adequate workspace, equipment, and appropriate supportive services, to enable the student to carry out social work tasks. 4. The agency is willing to provide time for field instructors to attend on-campus seminars and time to plan and supervise the student’s field experience. 5. The agency has sufficient staff to carry out its program without dependence on a student to increase the quantity and quality of services. Student practice should contribute to the agency’s primary purpose of service, but it should not be depended on as a substitute for regularly needed staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · agency has a signed Memorandum of Agreement with the College and University · agency field instructors have a current resume on record in the Field Education Office and have been certified by the Field Education Office · agency has a BASW/MSW with two years post-graduate professional experience to serve as field instructor(s) · agency field instructor(s) can provide a minimum of one hour weekly field instruction · agency can provide varied and increasingly complex tasks for students to master throughout a semester · agency has adequate physical facilities (e.g. desk space, telephone access) to accommodate 15 students · agency has a commitment to provide students with a conducive learning environment · agency’s policies are in compliance with the Social Work Code of Ethics

In other hand the criteria of choosing field work placement (agencies) in developing countries is different from criteria in developed countries. For example at Eastern Africa (Tanzania, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe), there are flexibility in the criteria used to select fieldwork agencies. They give students opportunity to choose their field work agencies, so that the first choice for students were those that pay allowances and other incentives. As most students did not get allowances for fieldwork, the need to minimize costs on transport and other expenses prompted them to choose agencies within close proximity to their places of residence and not necessarily those with the greatest potential for provision of learning (5: P. 10). In addition, there are no evidences about the existence of criteria using to choose agencies at Arab countries. As Abu El Maaty, Maher (2013) points out, most of social work agency with their current position don't supply appropriate opportunities of education and training for the students of social work. No explicit plans and trainings for most social work agencies, or no professional social workers able to play the roles of instructor or supervisor to students of social work. (Abu El Maaty, Maher, 2013, P.422)

Types of Field Practicum:

Most of social work education at developed countries apply two kinds of practicum (blocked and concurrent). Social work department at college Brockport, State University of New York has the two kinds of field practicum (combined). Most students complete field practicum using fall and spring semester concurrent model. Students complete 220 hours of field instruction at the assigned agency. Two days per week (16 hours per week) over two semesters for 440 field instruction hours. Students may apply for consideration of a Block placement. Block placements are structured as a one semester field instruction and weekly seminar class. Students do the same level of work and assignments in one semester as completed by concurrent field. Field Instruction is four days per week (32 hours a week) for a total of 440 field instruction hours (7: P.3). In Wartburg's social work department at Germany, they divided field practicum into two sections; Beginning Field Experience This can help the student determine if he/she is suited for this profession. The May Term experience consists of three and one half weeks or 140 hours. The second required practicum is Supervised Field Instruction and consists of thirteen weeks of social work practice in an approved social service

agency. This experience is a block placement of 450 hours, which means working in an agency for 35 hours per week, returning to campus only for an afternoon seminar each week. (8: P. P. 24-25)

School of social work York University Canada has more flexible system of field practicum that permit to students to choose suitable kind of practicum for them. Students are able to complete the 700 hours placement in the following formats:

Block placement – i.e., four (4) or five (5) days/wk. for approximately six (6) months

Concurrent – i.e., two (2) or three (3) days/wk. for approximately ten (10) months (BSW Practicum Manual, York University, 2011: P. 23)

In developing countries, there are no explicit attitude in applying any type of practicum. For example in India during the first and second years of university training, undergraduate social work students attend practicum on two days per week practicing their skills while being exposed to the theoretical aspects of the programme (concurrent). During the third year (the final year of university training), practicum continues in social welfare agencies according to the student's choice of course. In the third year of training, students attend a block placement of 30 working days. So schools of social work in India apply the mixed type of practicum concurrent and block.

In contrary African schools of social work use one of the three types of fieldwork. The block placement arrangement is used at the three institutions, the school of Social Work; University of Zimbabwe uses the block placement system with fieldwork occurring in the second and third year for a period of three months and three weeks. At the National University of Lesotho, the block fieldwork occurs in the second year for a month and in the third and fourth year for two months respectively. (5: P.6)

The schools of social work at Egypt and most Arabic countries use concurrent type of practicum at undergraduate and graduate levels. Concurrent placement system with fieldwork occurring in the third and fourth year for a period of about five months, three days per week. Only the institute of social work at Tanzania uses both concurrent and block. Concurrent fieldwork at the ISW occurs at the second year level placements.

Educational instructor and supervision:

In discussing roles and responsibility in field education through determining the key persons involved in the practicum of social work, we found that there are several key persons at fieldwork process. Those key persons are Director of Field Education, Field Coordinator, Field Liaison, Field Instructor, and Supervisor. (2006)

School of Social Work Florida University	Faculty of Social Work, Regina University -Canada
<p>Field Education Coordinator: who is responsible to the Director of the School for administration of field education and educational programs within the School? The Field Education Coordinator is a member of the Curriculum Committee and Field Education Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Field Education Assistant Coordinators: assist the Field Education Coordinator with the administration of the Field Education Program.</p> <p>Field Liaison: provides the necessary link between the Agency and the School, serve as both consultant to the Field Educator and advisor to the student. The Field Liaison is in a position to share with the Field Educator information on the curriculum and other issues of the School that may influence the student’s experiences in the Agency. Field Educators can share with the Field Liaison changes at the Agency, which may affect the student’s learning experience.</p> <p>Field Educators: are required to have a Master’s Degree in Social Work from a CSWE-accredited program and two years of postmaster’s professional experience in social work. All new Field Educators are expected to attend a</p>	<p>Field Instructor: represents the agency where the student has been placed for the practicum. Field Instructors are employed by human service agencies and provide student instruction, guidance and supervision in the field setting. Field Instructors are vital instructional links assisting students with the practical application of social work practice methodologies, ethics, and theories. Field Instructors will have a minimum of a BSW from an accredited School or Faculty of Social Work.</p> <p>Field Education Coordinator is a faculty member and representative of the Faculty of Social Work. The Coordinator of Field Education is responsible for the overall coordination of the field education program. The Coordinator of Field Education is responsible for ensuring that there is consistency with the Faculty's mission statement, policies, procedures and objectives in regard to the implementation of the field education program.</p> <p>Faculty Field Liaison's primary role is as an educator and consultant to the Field Instructor. Faculty Field Liaisons will have a minimum of a MSW from an accredited School of Social Work. The role includes ensuring that the student's learning agreement is well</p>

sixteen-hour course on supervision.	defined, social work ethics and professional standards are met, assisting with orientation, counseling students as required.
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At developing countries for example in India, there are two key persons in fieldwork education Supervisor and Faculty liaison. Supervisors can be important guides to understanding the network of social services available in a particular region, and can help orient the student to the agency context in which they will work. Clearly defining student learner roles is an important step, so the students can benefit fully from the educational opportunity, while still providing appropriate service to both clients and agencies. Faculty liaisons can help ensure that everyone's needs are addressed and that opportunities to integrate classroom training with "real world" experiences are maximized. A fruitful social work practicum would be the final shaping of the student in becoming a professional social worker. Botcha, Rambabu (2012) found that social work educators are not practitioners. In social work, the holistic view on teaching, practice and research is missing very much, majority Social Work Educators are found to be comfortable in conventional classroom teaching and rarely found in practice and research domains. also he added that The conducted seminar by Association of Schools of Social Work in India (ASSWI) disapproved of the practice of appointing persons who are not trained in social work as members of boards of examiners and board of studies in social work (P.P 207- 208). The study of Dhemba, Jotham (2012) revealed that 52.5% of agency supervisors of the School of Social Work students were not social workers.

In Arabic countries there are many challenges and problems related to the field instruction. Abu el Maaty, Maher (2013) indicated that most of schools and institutions of social work education appointed new graduated people either new assistant lecturers or training supervisions with out any training skills. So they lack the minimum levels of these skills (Abu El Maaty, Maher, 2013, P.422). likewise Edris, El Gawhara (2006) indicated in her study that the lack of training experiences for supervisors at mental retardation agencies at Saudi Arabia is the most challenges and problematic situations in the practicum in this field (Edris, El Gawhara, 2006, P. 2950). El Mewaly, Yehia (2006) contended in his study on the scarcity of training programs for the agencies supervisors that they participate in

the training programs for social work students at Al Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (El Mewaly, Yehia, 2006, P. 3249) So Kasem, Refaat, & Faramawy Mustafa (2006) suggested some steps to develop field practicum in Egypt and Arab Countries such as training programs and workshops for the field instructors or supervisors not only on the professional skills the student must attain, but also to update their professional information and skills cautiously. (Kasem, Refaat, & Faramawy Mustafa, 2006, P. 3615)

Evaluation of Field Practicum Outcomes:

Performance evaluation throughout the field experience is an ongoing process that begins with the student's first encounter with the field instructor during the placement interview and culminates in a final evaluation at the end of the field experience. At department of social work Utah stat University there are Three types of evaluation take place throughout the entire field practicum sequence: (Graham, D, 2013, P.32)

1. Ongoing Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of the student's progress is a built-in aspect of supervision. Students are also expected to develop the ability to evaluate their own practice throughout the Practicum experience.

2. Written Evaluation

At the end of each semester, Practicum Instructors are asked to summarize their thoughts about the progress of students by completing structured evaluation forms that correlate with field practicum objectives and Mission Statement of the Social Work program. Field instructors are encouraged to be candid and direct in their evaluations. If there is disagreement between student and the field instructor concerning the outcomes of evaluation, the Practicum director and/or appropriate MSW field team member, student and field instructor will meet to address these concerns. The Practicum Director will make the final decision on a student's grade. Students will also evaluate the field instructor, the MSW field team member, and the Practicum Director.

3. Oral Evaluation

In addition to the structured forms, the Practicum Director will periodically meet with the student and their Practicum Instructor to review learning contracts and student progress. Students are expected to evaluate themselves in preparation for these three-way meetings and to contribute actively in the discussion.

At school of business and social sciences, social work program although grades are always a subjective matter in field work courses, the evaluation of student progress is an institutional and participatory process. Agency instructors will evaluate student performance twice during the semester The Agency Instructor will recommend a grade for the student on both the mid-term and the final evaluation. The evaluations will be based on how well the student has mastered and performed the core competencies and educational outcomes demonstrated in the expected practice behaviors.

Once the supervisor has completed the evaluation, it will be discussed with and signed by the student before being submitted to the Director of Field Education. The University faculty has final responsibility for assigning grades, but only under special circumstances would the University faculty Director of Field Education change an agency instructor's recommended grade. No grade will be changed without consultations being held among the Student, Field Instructor, University faculty, Director or Assistant Director of Field Education, and the Social Work Program Director. (Horner, Douglas, 2010, P. 15)

In developing countries for example in India the evaluation of the fieldwork practicum is done by conducting a viva voce (oral) examination on the practicum experience involving one external examiner and one internal examiner. This comprises 40% of the final grade. Students also prepare a report at the end of their practicum, which is worth 20% of their grade. Additionally, students are assessed on their regularity at fieldwork; at supervisory conferences, and in submitting the weekly reports (20%). They are also assessed on their initiative, resourcefulness, and utilization of the supervision for professional growth (20%). (Johnson J, Emmanuel, et al, 2012, P. P 23, 24)

In faculty of social work Helwan University, grades of student divided into four sectors: 10% for the agency director, 10% for field instructor, 30% for faculty instructor, and 50% oral examination on the practicum experience involving faculty instructor and two external examiners. (Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University, 1999, P. 10)

Through this comparison between field practicum in developed and developing countries in respect to its core elements, we can summarize the field practicum challenges in developing countries especially the case of Egypt and Arabic countries as follow:

- 1) There are an explicit gap between educational agencies and practice agencies. Abu Almati M (2004) has identified a number of problems that have negatively influenced social work education in Egypt; one of these problems is the lack of coordination between schools of social work and the social agencies that employed the students of these schools. (Abu Almati M, 2004) This gap clearly appeared in many situations such as:
 - a) Although students of social work attend their field practicum at social agencies, there are no effective cooperation at any level (theoretical or practical) between schools of social work and community agencies.
 - b) No effective participation or low participation of social work practitioners in annual social work conferences to exchange experiences with faculties in schools of social work.
 - c) No mutual or combined theoretical or practical projects or programs between educational and practical agencies.
 - d) The role of the organizations of social workers such as union of social workers or Egyptian organization of social workers in Egypt failed in the achievement of integration between social worker as a professionals and academic institutions.
- 2) There is an acute shortage of training programs either for field instructor (supervisor day- to- day with student) who are working as social workers in the agencies that they did not have a program showing how the teaching and learning was to operate. In addition, most of faculty instructors were alumni or graduated and did not have sufficient experiences in teaching and training. In addition, most of faculty members (teacher, assistance professors, and professors) are not practitioners so they missed many of practical skills available to students at field practicum.
- 3) Although there are some efforts at faculty of social work, Helwan University to create a list of criteria for selecting field work placements to students, these criteria not activated until now. Most schools of social work in developing countries particularly in Arab countries and Egypt depends primarily on students choosing for these agencies in the base of its closeness of their houses or areas irrespective of its competency and quality performances.

- 4) While most schools of social work in developed countries focus on the combination of two types of field practicum named blocked and concurrent types, most of schools of social work at developing countries particularly in Egypt focus on one type only concurrent practicum.
- 5) Most of key persons (supervisors, instructors, field directors..) experience high caseload, for example number of student for assistant lecturer as faculty instructor range from 50- 70 students, and the number of students for lecturer range from 30- 40 students. In addition, the number of students at many agencies bigger than its capacity and resources particularly trained social workers.
- 6) No explicitly, roles defined to each of key persons in field practicum process. While these roles are accurately defined in school of social work at developed countries in field practicum manual, we can notice some interferences in our schools of social work at developing countries between the role of field instructor or supervisor and faculty instructor. These interferences appear in the supervision process and evaluation.
- 7) Evaluations of student's performances in most school of social work at developing countries are subjective and depend upon self-evaluation of evaluators. There are no evaluation forms available that contain standard measures for students performances
- 8) Appropriate budgets for most field practicum in developed countries are not sufficient. Meager Salaries to Social Workers who work as supervisors for our students lead to poor quality of practicum process and best training cannot be adopted.

Suggestions and recommendations:

To develop field practicum of social work I suggest the following Ideas:

- 1) It is imperative that schools of social work develop their own fieldwork manuals, covering the teaching and learning content for fieldwork. This is particularly important considering that each institution is unique in terms of the prevailing socio-economic conditions, challenges and experiences, the social work education curriculum in a given country. Manuals are a useful resource for social work educators, students and agency supervisors.
- 2) Social work is a professional discipline that has both theoretical

and practical components. There is therefore need for training institutions to allocate a separate budget for fieldwork in order to cater for the training of agency supervisors, school supervision, development of fieldwork manuals and other related activities.

- 3) Schools of social work may use two types of field practicum concurrent and blocked to utilize from privileges from each. Concurrent type helps students to connect theoretical frameworks that studied in classes with reality of practice, and then try to apply skills with clients under supervision. Blocked field practicum helps client to immerse themselves in the work of an agency and is more conducive to the pursuit of intellectually and professionally tasks,

Grade	Activates	Semester	Total hours	Type	place
Two	- Training skills - Agency visits	1&2	64 32	Concurrent	- Skills Laps - Agencies
Three	Field practice skills	1&2	288	Concurrent	Agencies
Four	Field practice skills	1	144	Concurrent	Agencies
Four	Work as social worker	2	240	Blocked	Agencies
Total			768		

- 4) Schools of social work at developing countries particularly in Egypt must be have training programs for all key persons in field practicum particularly the social workers who work as supervisors day – to – day supervision to the student in their agencies. Particularly most of schools of social work appointed new graduated people or new employed members either new assistant lecturers or training supervisions with out any training skills in field practicum. I try to suggest schedule on meetings and contentions training programs as follow:

Kind of meeting	Participators	Subject	Time	duration
Open meeting Workshops	Field director- Field coordinators- field instructors- liaisons	Discus training plans and programs at all fields. Task distribution for each.	Before meeting with social worker	4 hours
Preliminary and preparation	All key persons	Deliver training plan in the field Discuss expected challenges Define	Before training started	4 hours

		responsibility for each		
Training or workshop	Social workers New faculty instructors	Training skills Supervision and consulting skills	Beginning of first and second semester	8 hours at least
Training or workshop	Social workers New faculty instructors	Professional skills at all levels	End of first semester	16 hours at least

- 5) Schools of social work in developing countries particularly in Egypt must have a systemic and objective student's performance evaluation. This kind of evaluation require the following criteria:
- Grades distribution in the base of the diversity of activities, and fair distribution between key persons in field practicum.
 - Students must participate effectively in their evaluations, with the focus on self evaluation
 - Diversity of evaluation tools (reports- oral exams- written exams- projects design – evaluation of individuals, groups, and communities' intervention.....)
 - The program must have objective evaluation forms used by evaluators such as Evaluation of Intern Performance (for social workers as supervisor), evaluation of intern performance and application of theoretical frameworks (for faculty instructors).
 - At the final semester of training practicum (blocked type) students must pass written skills acquiring exam in order to assure that he attain a minimum level of practice skills. I suggest that exam to be mutable choice, objective, and situational.

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