Title

Social Development Approach among childcare residential facilities: A case of Alpha Cottages, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The paper evaluates the applicability of the social development approach in the delivery of child welfare services in residential childcare institutions. The social development approach was used as a theoretical guide with an aim to promote the well-being of children living in institutional facilities after exiting these homes through the harmonisation of economic and human development imperatives. This will enable them to function in society, be self-reliant, empowered and resourceful. A qualitative research design was used to assess the applicability of the social development approach in childcare institutions. Data were gathered using focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews in order to establish the different understanding of what social development is by participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The research findings suggest that existing child welfare institutions including residential care facilities need to be reoriented towards a more developmental focused model which is sustainable, resilient and progressive in nature. In addition, study established that participants have different understanding of what is social development with others refer to it as respect of human rights, participation and empowerment of people. The study recognised that institutionalised children had different speculation of what is social development as compared to caregivers. Also, caregivers shared different views of what social development is as compared to social workers. Participants shared their various understanding of the social development approach in relation to their area of interest, specialty and along their line of thinking. The paper concludes by recommending that the social development approach be adopted by institutions so as to provide the children they harbour with relevant human and social capital that better equip them for living outside of the institution upon attaining age of majority and exit. There is need to set attainable goals within institutions to measure their progress in relation to resources used. It also recommends that institutions should hire social workers or train caregivers in special education and social development to successfully apply the approach within childcare institutions.

Key words

social development, childcare institutions, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

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Introduction

There are a growing number of orphans and other vulnerable children in Zimbabwe due to Human Immune Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic. This is largely attributable to the period from 1996 to 2007, where limited access to effective anti-retroviral treatment and stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS positive people resulted in unprecedented loss of life. UNICEF (2004) recorded that one of the most disastrous consequences of the disease has been an orphan crisis, which has seen some 1,200,000 Zimbabwean children losing one or both parents to the disease giving an unprecedented boom on the number of orphaned children. As a response to the burgeoning number of children orphaned by HIV and AIDS, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) formulated the National Orphan Care Policy of 1999. The policy was designed to deal with all matters that involve orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs). Its main thrust was to buttress the traditional and community methods of orphan care and discourage institutionalization that removes orphans from their community and family environments. In this regard, the six tier system was developed as a hierarchy of safety nets for child care. The care of the child, upon the parents meeting a life contingency such as death, is to be transferred sequentially from the family to the extended family then to the community, with fosterage being the alternative where previously mentioned systems have failed. The policy recommended foster care and adoption as more desirable alternatives to institutional care, a resort it admonishes should only be utilized after efforts to attain alternative care arrangements has been exhausted (Powell et al., 2004:1). The system is designed so as to safeguard the protection of children and engender access to all the rights such as the right to be loved and cared for, the right to shelter, food, medical care, identity and education (Chibwana, 2019). However due to family break down and the fragmentation of traditional forms of orphan care systems, children end up being placed in residential care facilities where they are being looked after by external caregivers.

After realising the increased in in flow of children into care institutions, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) developed the National Residential Childcare Standards of 2010 through the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare (MOPSLSW). The government learnt that despite the National Orphan Care Policy which encourages family and community-based care systems of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs), more orphaned children were being directed towards childcare institutions. As such, residential childcare standards for these institutions were needed to ensure that minimum rights and care standards were observed. The standards are aligned to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC), the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and the Children's Act. These legal instruments entrench the right of a child to grow with in a family environment, with an atmosphere of happiness, love and respect. The orphan care policy conceived that residential care is not a permanent safety net for children, but a temporary care facility for children who lack parental care while efforts to reintegrate them in the community are being made. A perusal of the National Residential Child Care Standards reveals that the government strives to provide sound social welfare services to orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs) living in residential care institutions.

The study was conducted at Alpha Cottages Children's Home in Masvingo urban. Alpha Cottages is a community-based institution owned by members of the public within the area. It is under the prime control of Masvingo city council and it is located 1,5km north-west of Masvingo Central Business District (CB) along the Mutare highway. The institution largely receives its children from across the country through the Department of Social Development- Child Protection Section, formerly the Department Of Child Welfare And Protection Services. The institution is staffed by less experienced members who do not have qualifications in special care and social work trainings. The home caters for orphans and other vulnerable children with an age range of zero to eighteen years. However, the study targeted children from eight years up to eighteen because they had the ability to grasp life enhancing skills.

Theoretical framework

The study adopted a social development approach which Kaseke (2001:1&2) clarifies as follows: "The starting point for the social development model is that the modernisation approach has failed to transform developing countries. The benefits of economic development have not trickled down to the majority of the people. Instead the wealth is concentrated in the hands of few people while the majority live in absolute poverty…Thus the social development model represents a shift from the model. A social development model sees the role of social work as that of facilitating social change and ultimately enabling individuals to realise their potential." Kaseke provides a more detailed account of what an African social development model looks like. Dominelli (1997:29) says social development as "a dynamic way of organising resources and human interactions to create opportunities through

which the potential of all peoples - individually and collectively, can be developed to the full'. This puts the light on social development as a pro-poor utility model towards the eradication of the poverty, access to rights, and addressing underdevelopment. Emerging as a result of dissatisfaction with development models that lay emphasis on economic growth imperatives at the expense of social ones, it seeks to improve the welfare of citizens by also drawing attention to social factors necessary for development (Kaseke, 2001). Midgley (1995: 25) sees social development approach 'as a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development' (p3). This emphasizes the approach as a model of practice that is aimed at changing, via policy and programming, those conditions which limit groups and communities from attaining their full potential. Social development rests on five pillars, namely, a rights-based approach, the harmonization of social and economic development, democracy and participation, partnerships in welfare and bridging the micro-macro divide in interventions (Patel, 2005, Midgley, 2010; Patel and Hochfeld, 2012; Midgley, 2014; Van Breda, 2014). The approach was used to evaluate the relevance of social development approach in improving the functioning and well-being of institutionalised children.

The principles of social development are associated with social work in that what they seek to achieve and this has seen a lot of impetus to translate the model into what has been dubbed developmental social work. Patel (2005: 206) defines developmental social work as the 'practical and appropriate application of social development knowledge, skills and values to social work processes to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, households, groups, organizations and communities in their social context'. As a result, the approach engenders that social workers be change agents of social environments as opposed to status quo or stability maintainers, an orientation belonging to the remedial approach. Particular emphasis is given to facilitating change in the tangible living conditions of people, such as creating employment opportunities, skills development, literacy and taking measures that promote upward socioeconomic movement. This helps them make their work appeal towards sustainable and fundamental changes of people's social functioning.

Similarly, this commitment to change engenders social investment into people's strengths so as to improve clientele's capabilities, talents and natural endowments. In that sense, the social development approach infuses the ideas that fall below resilience, capabilities and strengths approaches, making it a wholesome approach for work in institutional care facilities which have been criticized for remedial

tendencies to assisting incumbents. Thus, by adopting the approach, social workers working in child care institutions or homes can base interventions on strengths, assets and resiliencies against adversity rather than the eradication of deficits. This enables them to move from any approach to social work that nurtures dependence and strongly encourages independence and self-sufficiency of the children upon exit from institutional care, (Midgley, 2010; Saleeby, 2008, Van Breda, 2001 & Ankrah, 1986).

Research methodology

The study adopted an qualitative research approach which enabled the participants, who are familiar with institutional care under study to air out their view and speak the realities of the functioning within the system (Berry, 1989) it lays emphasis on self-reflection and self-determination (Ibid), consistent with the dictates of the theory of choice in this study. Consequently, the study placed premium on the voices of the adolescents in institutional care, Alpha cottages staff and probation officers from the DSD. Data collection was done. The participants were purposively sampled as they are intrinsic to child protection and institutional care in particular. Six (6) in-depth interviews were done with adolescents who are nearing their exit from Alpha Cottages as they are about to attain the age of majority. According to Alpha Cottages staff, their policy as a children's home is to exit those incumbents who turn 18 as they are no longer constitutionally children. As such, these adolescents were selected as they better understand the need and use of the social development approach at the institution as they were about to lead a self-reliant life if they do not have any relatives to be reconciled with. A focus group discussion was also conducted with 10 adolescent Alpha Cottages inhabitants, in line with Flick (2009)'s recommendations that the composition of such interviews should be between 8 and 12. To improve the reliability of the data accumulated, 4 expert informants, 2 staff members from Alpha Cottages and two Local probation officers, were interviewed so as to get epistemologically correct information about utilising the said model during institutional care. The reason for targeting probation officers was that they oversee the process of placing children in institutional care as well as carrying out regular supervision to households where children are in foster care.

The sample size was determined through data saturation where the researcher came to point where after a period of collecting data, no new themes nor information was observed in the data gathered. To improve the reliability of data collected the researchers also utilised secondary data sources such

as journals, social development texts, the National Orphan Care Policy, the home's care policies and standards amongst other relevant data. This enabled the researchers to sufficiently analyse the home's activities, the impacts thereof and formulate recommendations. Data were analysed thematically, in line with research ethics of not exposing the participants to any physical, social, emotional and spiritual harm or potential harm of any nature, the study ensured that none of the respondents were exposed to any harm by not asking private and sensitive questions. The anonymity of all participants was safeguarded by use of pseudonyms, whilst each participant gave their consent to participate in the study after being briefed about the purpose and implications of the study.

Research findings and Discussion

Understanding of the social development approach by participants

The Alpha Cottages Staff and probation officers shared their various understanding of the social development approach in relation to their area of interest, specialty and along their line of thinking. Information was concurrently corroborated into themes regardless of where they emanated from. Similar views and perceptions of participants were categorised together for easy presentation of data gathered. The following discussion elaborates the understanding of the social development approach by key informants both institutional staff members and DSD officers. A basic, at best limited, understanding of the social development approach by was also comparatively analysed and discussed together with the views provided by key informants to discover similarities and differences in their understanding of the approach in relation to child welfare service delivery.

Social development approach as the empowerment of people

Social development approach seemed to be very familiar among participants' especially institutional staff members and DSD officers. Participants elaborated that the approach was limited in its application within the institution although some milestones had been noticed. Research findings from key informants indicated that the idea of the social development approach was a familiar concept and the overall participants supported the approach. They revealed that the idea of the social development approach was beginning to take roots in child welfare delivery within and beyond the institution. Participants were asked to explain in

their own words what social development approach mean. They were also asked to explain some of the core tenets of the approach. Responses from key informant interviews reflected that most frequently used terms include empowerment, self-reliance and independence. Institutional staff and DSD officers believed that the social development approach was directly and indirectly informing service delivery within the institution. Most frequently word that appeared from key informants which they claim to be equivalent to the social development approach was 'empowerment' of children to be independent and self-reliant. This was discussed in relation to the efforts of the institution to empower children so that they can become independent adults when discharged from the institution. Chenai (pseudo name) a key informant said:

Social development approach is all about the empowerment of people and training of children to be responsible for themselves, others and their communities. It is about developing skills that encourage children to be independent and you know this is the main mission of this institution. Children will not permanently stay here; they will be discharged one day. Thus the only way we can teach them to be self-reliant, responsible and independent is by using this approach…. social development, and we are on track in applying it here as you see from our projects and stuff…

She referred to developmental projects carried out at the institution which meant to generate income and empower children with life sustaining skills which will benefit them in the future after discharge. From her understanding, the social development approach was quite like empowerment, self-sustenance and independent life. These were core tenets of the social development approach as given by some participants and they referred income generating projects practiced at the institution as practical examples of the approach.

This conceptualisation of the social development approach by key informant interviewees tally with Pandey's (1981) understanding of the social development approach as the improvement of people's quality of life and measures that enable marginal groups and communities to move to the mainstream. This was concurrently discussed with the efforts of the institution to empower children in gardening and poultry which are largely practiced at the institution. The initiatives by the institution to empower children were key to the promotion of human potentials and capabilities. In his capability approach, a theory from which the social development approach adopts many concepts, Sen (1995) avers that human well-being and development is neither utility nor resources. He referred to 'utility' as happiness, desire fulfilment or the widening of human choices. Resources were

conceptualised as the available opportunities that drive an individual towards the attainment of his or her dreams. Social development approach as the empowerment of institutionalised children involves the inculcation of self-helping skills within these children as elaborated by the key informant. This appeals to the idea of investment into the human capital, a keystone to sustainable economic growth (Midgley, 2014). She reiterated that the institution partook development projects that meant to empower children and to assist the home in meeting its daily needs of food and income. Development projects were a sustainable source of income for the institution and as a way of training children in becoming good project managers. This was further explained by one of the children who participated in in-depth interviews. He indicated that:

Inini ndinoziva zvinhinji pane zvekurima izvi, actually am a good farmer. Handiti murikuona that row iyo from your right, ndini ne gurupu rangu tirikuririma and am the head of the group. Tinorima kuti isu tidye pamba uye tionototengesawo tichiwana mari dzemabhuku nedzekuma sports. (I know a lot about farming, actually am a good farmer. As you see that row from your right, it is my group who are doing this and am the leader of the group. We grow crops to eat at home and some we sell for money to buy our books and to enjoy during sports days).

The researcher was captivated by the sense of ownership among children as shown by how they addressed their projects and the institution at the home. The expressions of children indicated that the social development approach was taking roots in the institution. Children indicated that they participated in the management of development projects carried out at the institution. This involvement of children in farming and gardening helps to improve their sense of belonging to the institution and the community they serve. Children participation in generating income for the institution helps to remove the dependency syndrome among them. Dependency syndrome, also known as 'hand-out mentality', by Midgely (1995), was defined as the attitude or belief by a person that he or she cannot solve personal problems without external help. A study by Muguwe et al (2011) reports that children in institutions grow up with a feeling that the society owes them, and they should receive benefits from donors or community members in the form of charity. Muguwe et al (ibid) argue that institutionalised children are sceptical about their potentials and capabilities. From the findings elaborated, children at Alpha Cottages knew that they had a role to play for themselves, others and the community at large. This improved the sense of entitlement to themselves and to their future after discharge.

Social development approach as popular participation

Participants from key informant and in-depth interviews revealed that the social development approach was similar to popular participation and skill development of institutionalised children. They believed that children should be involved in decision making in matters that affect them. One institutional staff member narrated that:

You know these children are just like our biological children at home, they have similar needs as those we left home. We value their decisions in matters of paramount importance. Like you see many children here go to Helen MaGhee primary school because it is close to home, but at secondary level, others go to Victoria High while others chose to go to other schools such as Ndarama High, we do not force them all to a single school, they choose their best schools.

The exclamations from the key informant clearly spelt out that children were given chance to decide on their school preferences, however at secondary level. This promotes the inclusion of children in decision making. This improves the autonomous of children in making choices that shape their daily lives in the institution and their long term demands after leaving the care system. One child, a grade seven boy stated:

Ini hangu kuVictoria High School handifariri kukuenda ini, ndinoda kuMucheke kune shamwari dzangu dzakawanda. Pandichapedza zvidzidzo zvangu zve grade seven ndoda kutaura nababa (mukuru wemusha) kut ini ndoda kuMucheke. (I do not like to go to Victoria High School, rather I need Mucheke where I will be with many of my friends. After finishing my grade seven I need to talk to my father (superintendent of the institution) so I can go to Mucheke).

The boy set out that he had freedom to decide on his high school preferences. This level of participation in decision making about children's educational issues revealed that they were given room to communicate their views. This reinforces their self-esteem and confidence when confronting adverse situations in later life after discharge. According to Erick Erikson's fourth stage of his psychosocial stages of development where he looked at children at their school going age of five to eleven years. Erikson named the stage industry versus inferiority where children can establish social interactions that are useful in their life. He believed that during this stage, children begin to develop a feeling of pride in their accomplishments and abilities. Erikson believed that parents, teachers or caregivers should maintain a balance, comment and encourage their children to strengthen their competences and a belief

in their skills. Thus, the choice made by the child to go to a certain school with friends reflected the ability of the child to be independent and capable of making relevant choices. This even improved one's problem solving abilities in the future.

Further, findings from key informant interviews supported the point of popular participation as a determinant of the social development approach. This was emphasised by a male interviewee who contributed in relation to the detention of children within the institution. He argued that children are not being forced into the institution, rather they liaise with them, their parents or guardians when children appear to be in difficult circumstances. The guy indicated that:

Basically, we do not force children to go into our institution, rather we discuss with them if they want or not. If they want to be part of our family, we then detain them but if a child refuses to be institutionalised, we find another alternative within the community like foster care……… However, there are some instances where abandoned children are detained without any excuse because they are not able to decide.

Popular participation is one of the characteristics of the social development approach. Midgely (2014) argues that citizens should be involved in the development of their communities and their livelihoods capacities. The findings revealed that children are not only vibrant in decision making pertaining to their school preferences. In fact, they also participate in maintaining livelihoods capabilities of the institution such as gardening and broiler keeping. This helps to inculcate their sense of belonging to the home and the community they save out of their labour. This builds their responsibility for self, others and the community which have some benefits to their later life as adults.

Social development as poverty reduction and socio-economic development

One participant recount that the key priority of the social development approach was reducing poverty among institutionalised children. The approach strives to devise strategies that enhance children's social and economic development. She emphasised poverty reduction in relation to skill development and training in income generating projects. She argues that within the institution, children are taught to engage themselves into some income generating projects and musical trainings that meant to ensure their resilience in the future. The lady asserted that there was a local NGO called 'The Missing Voice' which trained children to play 'mbira', a traditional musical instrument. She reiterated that institutionalised children should be provided with further skills that are helpful in the future to equip

them with skills to lead an independent life after discharge. The lady noted that:

…… we also receive help form the Missing Voice team who train our children mbira and marimba…….The institution should expand and continue providing children with life sustaining skills in other fields such as motor mechanics, carpentry and welding. It must work hand in hand with training colleges and technical institutions so they can absorb our children when they complete their ordinary levels. There must also be some networks that link children with employment programmes such as public works programmes that create the opportunity for children to be part of the labour force."

This was found to be a loophole in the institution since there were no sound post-secondary school trainings that impart children with life enhancing skills. However, credit was given to a certain NGO that train children music through playing Mbira. This was found to be a practical lesson which discovers talent among children and helps them to pursue their dreams. This view of the social development approach by participants as skill development, poverty reduction and socio-economic development was in line with Midgely's (1995:50) definition of the social development approach. Midgely argues that "social development approach is a planned process of social change designed to promote well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development". The approach was seen as a human-societal transformation process that sought to build distinctiveness among children, the institution and their respective communities. This helped to foster individual development which later trickle down to community and national development.

The training of children in playing musical instruments and other self-helping skills shared some commonalities with the idea of empowerment and social investment that the social development approach talks about (Patel, 2005:103). The provision of various projects within the institution helps to widen the horizon of children so they can choose projects that meet their happiness and desire fulfilment. Sen (1995) argues that for participation to be achieved, projects and programs should be derived from the interests, values and norms of the society. Thus, musical training was crucial in understanding the participation of institutionalised children. The involvement of youth in music in the recent years reveals that some of the projects carried out at the institutions are responsive to generational changes. This promotes the capabilities and strengths of the children so as to become more active and relevant in the society. This emphasises more on the strengths and abilities of the children, the institution and the community they belong.

Social development as human rights and social justice

Participants from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions frequently gave hints to social justice and human rights as elements of the social development approach. Children reported that the protection of human rights and social justice was key to the attainment of the social development approach. These children were rights sensitive and challenge all forms of abuse within the institution. Children argued that they must be treated with respect and their concerns should be a priority. They staunchly vowed that there should be no abuse within institutions and their rights should be protected at any cost. One girl child noted that:

Kana ichinzi budiriro yevanhu vose zvinoreva izvo kuti hapana kushungurudzwa, kungave kuchikoro kana kumba. Tinofana kubatwa sevanhu pane vamwe vanhu. Seni hangu handidi kurohwa, kutukwa kana kushushwa. Kana ndatadza zvirinani mundiudze zvakanaka (Social development approach means there is no suppression at all costs, be it at school or home. We should be treated as people with human rights as others. When l has done something wrong it's better to inform me politely than shouting, whipping or abusing me, I personally do not like that).

The narration of this participant was further buttressed by a form four boy who argued that all children should be treated equally with no favour or discrimination. He indicated that:

Kazhinji kacho tonodzvanyirirwa mukufamba umu, kana pano pamba pane vane favour kut kana pakauya mbatya kana machira vamwe vanongotanga kupihwa. Asi hazvina kunaka, zvinopa kusawirirana pamusha. Saka budiriro inofana kutangira pakut chose chauya chofana kupihwa munhu wese zvakafanana. (Most of the times we are abused where we move around, even here at home we are not equally treated. When we receive cloths or blankets, some children are given first always and you know it is unfair and it causes conflicts. Development must start at a point where we must share equally all the things that we receive at the home.)

The boy attacked nepotism and favouritism within the institution where others always get better things from donations. The interpretation of human rights and social justice by institutionalised children was found in other studies to be excessive and detrimental to their reintegration process. Muguwe et al (2011) carried out a study on the reintegration process of institutionalised children where they found that misinterpretation of rights by institutionalised children had some challenges on their integration into the community. This was because within institutions children were treated as persons with special rights which is not the case in the outside world. In communities a child is seen as a child of the whole community as an African adage says, 'it takes the whole village to raise a child.' Thus, the African philosophy of Ubuntu treated children with a collective responsibility where each adult member had his or her expectations over the child's behaviour and welfare. Muguwe et al (2011) espouse that institutionalised children are too restrictive and sensitive to their rights which cause them to view simple contradictions as a threat or abuse instead of a lesson. This complicates the overall reintegration of children into the community because some of the practices reported in the institution are not realistic in the world outside care homes. For instance, corporal punishment, it was banned in schools and childcare institutions, however, in villages and communities (in a nuclear family setting) it was a commendable practice that shaped individual behaviours for the better. Therefore, institutionalised children will find it difficult to cope with life situations after discharge when they are not taught well enough in a hard way.

As a point of discussion, other staff members of the institution reported that they do not understand how to translate the social development approach into practice. They reiterate that although the approach is beginning to take roots in application, currently the institution is somehow remedial in the provision of services to children. This is discussed below on the analysis of the current impediments in the provision of child welfare services within the social development context.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that governmental efforts, social workers' efforts and institution's efforts should be culturally competent. This helps to achieve a care system that is responsive to the needs of children and the communities where they belong after discharge. This will help to promote indigenous development and be able to equip children to the real-life situations after discharge. That is, instead of depending much on the donor world and western policy initiatives, services should be driven by local knowledge of how to tackle problems. This includes the involvement of children in community clean up campaigns, in national commemorations days such as the Women's day and all children initiatives that aim to foster belonging and community ownership. This helps to improve the participation of children in community activities that shape leadership qualities of children to become responsible citizens in the future despite their distorted history. This is in line with the social development approach's agenda of person development and strengthening of resilience capacities.

The institution should also provide services that are strictly individualised and based on one's strengths. This involves the provision of services that strives to meet individual child's unique needs and strengths. This helps to develop one's potential capabilities for future resilience to shocks after discharge. This requires a closer collaboration of institutional staff members with social workers who can help in identifying the strengths of children and be able to work towards developing them.

Conclusion

The paper revealed that participants shared some similar understandings of what the social development approach was. Both key informants and children living within the institution had some similar views and perceptions about the concept of the social development approach. Although there were some minor differences in the conceptualisation of the social development approach, participants had a great deal of shared opinions. The social development approach was also understood as a concept that fosters popular participation of children in the development and maintenance of income generating projects carried out at the institution. The participation of children in these projects was witnessed by the researcher through observations of children's involvement in income generating projects. The approach is aligned to poverty reduction and socio-economic development of children through the inculcation of life sustaining skills that are relevant in the future. Poverty reduction was articulated in relation to the institution's efforts to provide children with post-secondary education which helps children to be resilient in the future.

The social development approach was also conceptualised by children as the promotion of human rights and social justice. Institutionalised children put much emphasis on the need of the institution and the larger community to observe the rights of children. This was shared by children during focus group discussions. Children seemed to be rights sensitive and want their identity and dignity to be preserved as human beings with rights as others. Their argument was that institutionalised children are taking it hard to reintegrate into communities because there will be no-one to satisfy their rights and justice needs. So, they vowed for the institution and the responsible authorities to expose institutionalised children into real life demands that sometimes rights can be sparred off in order to instil discipline within children. The key informants' involvement in citizen empowerment and participation influenced them to largely conceptualise the social development approach as an engine towards the empowerment and participation

of institutionalised children. Institution staff members largely understood the social development approach as the involvement of children in income generating projects that equip them with life enhancing skills. They envisaged the approach as working to assist children nearing exit from institutions against falling poverty through human capital development and social investment. Children largely understood the social development approach as the protection of human rights and maintenance of social justice within and beyond the institution. Many children gave this articulation largely because they were victims of abuse and exploitation. It was also conclude that in order for institutions to sufficiently improve human capabilities and popular participation for children under institutional care, development projects should be directed by those children's strengths, resilience capacities and values of human dignity and worth as well as popular participation.

Acknowledgements

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The journal publishes papers that focus on development in general including family, community, social, national and international development. The journal promotes *people centred development,* that is, people centric approaches to development, development with a human face. By putting people at the centre of development, practitioners in different fields of development are able to take people out of poverty. This from-bottom-going-up-approach to understanding poverty, planning against it and implementing reduction strategies is seen as the most important recipe for communities which still suffer the dangers brought by poverty.

Topic areas

The Journal considers articles from a wide variety of interest areas and from a wide spectrum of disciplines. The editor works with an editorial team from across the globe derived from development sectors mainly in the social sciences. Specific areas covered include but are not limited to development management; resource mobilisation and fundraising; inclusive development; sustainable development; disability and development; gender and development; poverty; sustainable development; social services and development; human development; HIV/AIDS; child development; counselling; rural development; governance; disaster management; agriculture and livelihoods; and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Types of papers

The Journal contains peer reviewed articles in the form of original reports, research summaries (including dissertations), book reviews, literature review articles, think pieces, reports of work and original frameworks. Other forms of papers may be published at the discretion of the Editor.

Review process

The JDA uses a double-blind peer review process.

Submission