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A Revamped Journal and Publishing Arrangements: IJASS From 1998-2003

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Five Years On

I became aware in the early 1990's that social care/child and youth care would significantly benefit from a peer-reviewed journal that had a strong applied research and practice dimension; a journal that would be read by students, practitioners, managers and educators involved in this emergent and emerging 'profession'. With this in mind, I began the process of dialogue with other Institutes of Technology who provided social care programmes. I was fortunate that all the colleges (Athlone IT, Cork IT, Dublin IT, IT Sligo and Waterford IT) saw the idea as something worthwhile and signed up as partners to the journal. Having secured the support of my colleagues in education, I then approached the two practitioner Associations in Ireland – the Irish Association of Care Workers and the Resident Managers' Association who both lent their credentials as partners to the project. One of the Universities, Cork, has a vibrant applied social studies Department and Professor Fred Powell joined up his Department. This left only St. Patrick's College in Carlow, the youngest partner on the scene at the time, and it too joined as a partner.

Volume 1. No. 1 was published in 1998 and included papers from academia and practice. The IJASS has gone from strength to strength over the five years since its launch at an international conference held in Waterford in 1998. The review editorial board has increased both in size and in scope with an international section now including some of the leading authors from Canada, the United States and South Africa. New Zealand is about to yield representation and I am looking further and further afield for review editors I can work with.

I intend to maintain the Irish focus as the name of the journal suggests, but international papers will increasingly contribute to, and inform, the Irish experience of social care and child and youth care. We have much to learn from our respective systems. One of the more exciting and rewarding aspects of living in modernity (or post-modernity depending on your viewpoint!) is that Internet and e-mail ensure an editor such as myself can work with partners from all over the globe largely through electronic communication. I intend to explore this further in the future.

The IJASS has now the largest print run of any journal within Ireland in the area of sociology/psychology/anthropology/social work/applied social studies. It is stocked in all the libraries of the Institutes of Technology providing social care education and training, in several Universities, in St. Patrick's College and in a number of Health Boards and voluntary agencies and projects. It has travelled to libraries in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Sweden, France, Denmark, Holland, the UK and Northern Ireland.

Marketing Executive

In 2002, I employed the services of Brody Cameron, a Child and Youth Care graduate from New Brunswick in Canada, who had travelled over to a Conference in Drogheda and decided to stay in Ireland for some years. Brody regularly receives requests for volumes from international students who have accessed the editorial and content on the CYC-Net. The IJASS is, increasingly, seen as a valuable resource for scholars both here in this country and abroad and in the next volume, Brody will assess the journal over the five year period of 1998-2003 in terms of the papers published.

A New Deputy Editor

Dr Kevin Lalor of the Dublin Institute of Technology has been invited to act as Deputy Editor to the Journal. We very much welcome Kevin's contribution and look forward to working on a closer basis with him over the coming months. Dr Lalor has published extensively in child and youth care with a particular focus on child abuse, street children and prostitution amongst other areas of interest.

Publishing both Students and Practitioners

It is worth noting once again that the IJASS is committed to publishing both students and practitioners. Not many journals can claim this to be stated policy. It is my belief that, if we are to effect change in the social care/child and youth care landscape, students and practitioners must begin that courageous journey of public expression. That is to say, I am delighted to publish views and opinions from the 'coalface'. Students lament the paucity of published material on social care from social care practitioners, but I challenge them to contribute themselves and to take ownership of their 'profession' by assisting in the development of a new discourse. We all need to hear what 'doing' child and youth care is like. What it means to be a student of social care and a practitioner in an increasingly legalized landscape. As can be seen from Dr Thom Garfat's regular contributions in this journal, the Canadians and Americans have consistently argued that there is something inherently different and unique about the work social care practitioners do and I would like to cultivate a similar climate in this country.

The IJASS is not exclusively limited to child and youth care/social care but has an interest in all areas of applied social studies. It, thus, includes mental health,

psychology, social work and the related helping and caring disciplines. As editor, I embrace inclusivity and want to promote cross-fertilisation between all of us with an interest in articulating change for vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups.

A Time for Change

The IJASS stands on the precipice of change. Since my move from the Centre for Social Care Research in 2001, it is now being published by SocSci Consultancy (indeed, Minister Mary Hanfin launched 3:1 in Waterford under the new brand designation with Fergus Hogan as special guest editor) and the review editorial board has been reconfigured to reflect the move away from one college site to a private practice. I intend to review the partnership dimension and view certain possibilities, which have been articulated to me recently, and all partners will be kept abreast of developments. The Open Training College has joined as a partner and we welcome the staff and students on board. This further extends our areas of interest and expertise as the OTC are specialists in disability.

The journal will now be published bi-annually with dedicated volumes coming out from time to time. I have also secured commitment for the journal to be joint-published on occasion where I will work with my Canadian and American colleagues in child and youth care. This will ensure that it continues to develop organically.

A Dedicated Web Site

The IJASS is developing an Internet site, which is being developed by Cormac Forkan of ProSoc Consultancy, and this site will go on-line over the summer 2003 period. Links to the practitioner and academic partners will be created, as will discussion areas within the site.

The IJASS will, I hope, live long and prosper because there are many individuals who have given of their free time to review submissions. It has also prospered because people choose us as a publication source. I want to conclude by quoting from the Romanian poet Anna Blandina (translated into English) who notes:

“Words with no shadows to cast have lost their soul”.

We have cast some shadows with this volume. Long may it be so...

