CHAPTER 35

Sun, Sand, Sea and Social Work: Issues Facing Social Work Educators in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

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CONTEXT

Trinidad is the larger island of the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago located at the southern-most end of the chain of islands known as the Eastern Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago gained independence from Britain in 1962, and many of its foundational structures have remained fashioned on the British system, for example, governance, justice, education, and welfare. The economy is driven mainly by the energy sector, that is, oil and gas reserves, ranking Trinidad and Tobago as having one of the highest GDP’s in Latin America and the Caribbean (de Castro, 2012). However, economic and infrastructural development has not inoculated Trinidad and Tobago against harsh impacts of global economic recession and social problems including rising poverty rates, increasing disparity in income, high levels of unemployment and under-employment, and concurrent high rates of crime (de Castro, 2012). The Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Atlas (2012) identified a number of priority areas for attention for Trinidad and Tobago including poverty reduction, human security, human capital development, job creation, health care, and food security, all highlighted in the United Nations’
Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030 (UN 2015). These priorities are also reflected in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development Commitment to Action (Jones & Truell 2012), as traditional concerns for the social work profession.

Trinidad and Tobago can be described as modern, largely influenced by North America, but is widely recognised as a multicultural and multiethnic society characterized by African and Indian descendants of slavery and indentureship, Chinese, Syrian-Lebanese and Portuguese entrepreneurs, European colonists, Venezuelan migrants, and persons of mixed racial heritage. It is a strongly faith-based society, consisting of Christian, Hindu, and Muslim followers. Racial sensitivities often play out in the political arena and there are noticeable class and socio-economic disparities on the basis of race, but in the social sphere there is racial and ethnic harmony for the most part. The composition of social work practitioners and students reflects this ethnic diversity, and education and practice embrace cultural competence as a skill and use multicultural approaches.

Social work in Trinidad has traditionally been practised through state agencies such as hospitals, clinics and health centres, mental health institutions including addiction services, social welfare services, children’s homes, the court system, the prison and public schools. Over time, specialized areas of practice have also been introduced including youth services, poverty reduction, community development, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health, social displacement, disability affairs, elder care, family services, The Family Court, The Children Court, The Children’s Authority, mediation, employee assistance, and services to victims of crime. Social work practitioners are involved in meeting basic needs, crisis and disaster management, child protection, domestic violence, individual therapy, group work, community organization, and policy development. Social workers in Trinidad and Tobago mainly provide ancillary services in the health/mental health, education, and justice systems.

In Trinidad and Tobago, social work positions are largely filled by persons who have tertiary-level qualifications in social work or related social science discipline, namely a certificate or bachelor’s degree in social work, sociology, behavioural science or psychology, with few selected positions, save jobs in tertiary education and senior social service management, desiring Masters degrees. There is currently no registration, certification, or licensure requirement for professional social workers, but medical and psychiatric social workers seeking employment within the public health system, must be registered with the Board for Professions Allied to Medicine. Institutional accreditation for tertiary institutions is offered by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago (ACTT), which is mandatory for programmes seeking approval for the State to cover student costs under the Government Assistance for Tertiary Education (GATE) programme.
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN TRINIDAD

In 1990, The University of the West Indies St Augustine Campus in Trinidad (SAUWI) began offering tertiary-level training in social work, initially at the certificate level only, and quickly advancing to a Bachelor of Science degree. The Masters in Social Work (MSW) was introduced in 2002, and the MPhil/PhD Social Work soon followed in 2004. Since 2008, four other institutions have introduced undergraduate programmes in social work, and in the absence of a national or regional code of ethics or regulatory standards, there is an important opportunity for the profession as a whole to strengthen its mission, status, social identity, mandate and impact on which all education programmes might converge. SAUWI has a regional identity with three sister campuses in other parts of the Caribbean and an open campus offering a fully online bachelor’s degree in social work. Two other institutions that offer BA’s in social work are affiliates of well-established North American Christian universities, and the third is a public non-denominational institution. The ethos of each institution can inform philosophical differences in delivery, priorities, outcome, and impact. In the current climate of escalating social problems, there is need to harmonize understandings of the social mandate of social work in Trinidad and the terms of reference for professional training.

SAUWI is part of a larger institution with three regional campuses in Jamaica, Barbados, and Antigua (most recently) plus the Open Campus which offers pre-degree certificates, distance education, partial programmes, and fully online programmes (including a fully online social work degree). Deliberate efforts are made to ensure that programme offerings are aligned with each other and with international standards (UWI Strategic Plan 2017–2022). SAUWI is an institutional member of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the social work programme reflects acceptance of the Global Standards for Education and Training for the Social Work profession (Sewpaul and Jones 2004). With the close social and cultural proximity to the USA, educators also refer to the Council for Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards list of core competencies for social workers (CSWE EPAS, 2015).

The UWI may be regarded as the subject leader in this field since its social work programmes date back almost sixty years, have evolved in keeping with the social needs of the territories, and have contributed significantly to shaping the practice of social work in traditional settings in particular (Maxwell, Williams, Ring, & Cambridge, 2003). Currently, holders of PhD’s in social work are all employed at the UWI. Additionally, many faculty members in the programmes offered by other universities are graduates of the UWI so it would not be surprising if programme content and approaches used in other programmes reflect their UWI education. Therefore, UWI, and SAUWI by extension, may significantly impact social work education and practice in the region. Hence, this chapter will describe social work education offered
at the University of the West Indies St Augustine Trinidad that include the challenges faced at different phases of the education process. This will be followed by a more in-depth discussion of the specific challenges for social work education in Trinidad and Tobago.

**ADMISSIONS**

Social work education at the UWI is governed by university regulations regarding matriculation and admission, course load, credit requirements, advancement through the programme and award of degrees. Literature on gatekeeping in social work refers to three different screening points in the education process—at admission, during training, and at exit/entry into professional practice (Elpers & Fitzgerald 2013; Finch & Taylor 2013; Holmström 2014; Sowbel, 2012). While the right and role of educators to ‘gatekeep’ has been debated, from its inception, the SAUWI saw fit to include additional admissions screening for social work applicants. A two-level screening process was applied: matriculation and an in-person interview and essay. Applicants were able matriculate in the traditional way with requisite passes at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE), or a B+ average or above from the UWI Open Campus certificate programme. Students could also enter through the mature student route where, in lieu of CAPE, relevant work or voluntary experiences and other tertiary qualification or professional training in (for example) policing, prisons, nursing, or teaching, were acceptable alongside lower level matriculation requirements. The in-person interview allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of social work, awareness of ethical issues and clarity of academic and career purpose as well as non-academic factors such as interpersonal skills and maturity.

In 2015, there was debate among faculty regarding the usefulness of the in-person interview—did it ensure that the most suitable candidates were selected for social work education and training? While this was an aspect of social work education at SAUWI that set it apart from other social work programmes, it was also viewed as making it less competitive. The decision was taken to discontinue the interviews, and two years later, the essay requirement was also withdrawn. It is important to also note that outside of the admissions’ phase, University regulations do not allow for enrollees to be ‘counselled out’ or ‘required to withdraw’ from social work for reasons of unsuitability or unfitness, unless they have committed a serious breach of University rules. Additionally, the prerequisite for entry into field is academic course completion which does not guarantee suitability or fitness for direct practice encounters. Social work faculty at SAUWI accept their duty to shape and mould future practitioners, but are also effectively powerless to gatekeep the profession at any stage. This has impacted the profile of the social work student and had implications for teaching and learning.

In its nearly thirty-year life span, the SAUWI social work programme has seen the demographics of each cohort change from predominantly mature
students employed in social work and related jobs, to increasingly younger students coming into social work directly from secondary school. In the last three years, the mode age of the social work cohort has been 17–19 years at intake and the programme has consistently admitted on average 35–45 students per year. Another common concern for all social work education programmes and professional practice across the region is that the proportion of male enrollees has averaged less than 10% and has been seen as compromising professional effectiveness with gendered social problems such as gang activity, violent crime, and domestic violence. More targeted marketing of social work careers, such as outreach to all-male schools and motivational talks by male social workers from (e.g.) the prison and police services, are being used to address this shortfall.

**Programme Structure**

The SAUWI programme offers a three-year course of full-time study comprised of 30 three-credit courses. It is noteworthy that all other social work programmes in Trinidad and Tobago have lower matriculation requirements and are a minimum of four years with full-time and part-time options, with a higher number of credits. The UWI operates on a two-semester system, with the summer session being separate and self-funded. Students normally take five courses per semester over a minimum of three years, but may take longer if they have to repeat courses. The BSc Social Work is described in the SAUWI regulations as a ‘special’ degree, that is, it consists of a large complement of required or ‘core’ taught courses (twenty) and fewer elective courses (five), plus fifteen credits worth of field placement hours and assignments.

SAUWI offers a generalist social work degree meaning that the theories and methods taught may be applied across the spectrum of practice situations graduates may encounter, and prepares students with core knowledge, competencies and attitudes required for entry into generalist social work positions. The curriculum for the BSc is influenced by a combination of imperatives determined by stakeholders, including social work agencies and employers, the global agenda for social work, and the standards and competencies stated in the aims and objectives of the Social Work Unit. Core content covers theory and practice courses for working with all units of social work practice: individuals, families, groups, and communities, as well as social policy practice and management and administration of human service agencies. Other core areas are drawn from allied disciplines to inform the body of social work knowledge that supports social work assessments and interventions, for example, sociological, psychological, and organizational theories and research methodologies.

Students can also elect to take courses in special topic areas for example criminology, addictions, gender studies, disability studies, gerontology, international social work, and social policy analysis and formulation.
A clear difference between the SAUWI programme and others is that it emphasizes foundation knowledge with less emphasis on specific concentrations or fields of practice; practice with selected populations or social problems inform course content and case examples, and are infused throughout. The social work programme offers elective minors in Social Policy and Social Development Planning, but students also declare minors in other concentrated areas such as psychology, criminology, and gender studies.

Social work education is delivered using mixed methods: face-to-face interactive lectures, online activities, and active and cooperative learning projects. Human skills' laboratories—supportive group sessions specially designed to build inter-relational skills and reflectivity (Moss et al., 2007) are held concurrent with field placements. In the first year, students engage in social marketing/activism to commemorate World Social Work Day and final year students undertake a group community organizing project. Despite their young age, many social work students have confronted severe personal, family, and community trauma and are regarded as experts in their own survival and resilience. Approaches to teaching and learning actively accommodate students' lived experiences and provide opportunities for shared and reciprocal learning among students and educators.

The SAUWI programme is well-structured and course sequencing is important; many of the first year courses are prerequisites for the advanced courses. Additionally, social work theory and practice courses are offered only once per year and are prerequisites for later theory and practice courses, for example, Theory and Practice of Social Work I is a prerequisite for Theory and Practice of Social Work II which is a prerequisite for Theory and Practice of Social Work III, etc. The challenge for students is that if they fail any of these courses they cannot move on to the next, and they must wait until the following academic year to repeat. This means that a student who fails a Theory and Practice course effectively extends their degree duration by a year. While roughly 70% of social work students at SAUWI complete within three years, this presents a challenge for social work education throughput and outcome, and will be fully discussed later.

Field practice, or a practicum accounts for 1/6th of the course credit in the SAUWI programme (15/90 credits); students are assigned to social work agencies for 96 days over their last two years to get hands-on experience under the supervision and guidance of trained field instructors. Again, scheduling and administration of practicum is highly structured, and must be taken two days per week concurrent with Theory and Practice courses in a parallel learning modality: Wednesdays and Fridays in the second year, and Thursdays and Fridays in the final year. Students receive a dossier with rubrics and assessment forms that clearly outline their expectations. There is a formal agreement with agencies and field instructors to receive, train, mentor, and assess students. Students are placed in governmental and non-governmental organizations and a few private agencies. Field instructors are qualified social
workers or experienced practitioners, but there have been concerns about parity in quality of instruction when some students are supervised by persons who are not social work-trained. SAUWI has field instructors’ seminars every semester and also offers training in field instruction for non-social work-trained and new supervisors, so as to take advantage of the widest range of student learning opportunities at a time when the demand for social work field placements is high.

In their first year, students take an in-house preparation course designed to enhance their understanding of social work and its essential concepts, to develop appropriate attitudes and skills, and to improve their capacity to make full use of their later direct practice experiences in agencies. The changing student profile aforementioned led to the creation of a classroom-based programme of activities, discussions, role plays, and reflective exercises to replace the first year field placement (168 contact hours). The in-house practicum is built on four pillars: (i) team-building, reflecting a value for collegiality and cooperative learning; (ii) skills’ building through role-playing and experiential learning; (iii) raising social consciousness and awareness of the social and social work environments through field activities and interactive discussions; and (iv) enhancing self-awareness and reflectivity through introspection and feedback. The students and field instructors have attested to enhanced learning, growth, and preparedness for direct practice experiences through the course. Students’ journals and self-evaluation reports show enhanced insight and self-awareness as well as sound understanding of social work concepts, skills and abilities. Additionally, in the 2011 and 2019 quality assurance reviews of social work at SAUWI, the first year in-house practicum was noted to be a strength of the undergraduate programme.

POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

In the academic year 2002–2003, the Master of Science in Social Work (MSW) came on stream, marking the introduction of graduate studies in social work to Trinidad and Tobago. The graduate course of study provides the chance to acquire greater competence for contributing to the development of the profession, assuming leadership roles, and for addressing the distinct challenges facing the countries of the region. Applications to this programme reflect the high demand and need for advanced professional training, despite the fact that for the most part senior social work positions are filled by person with seniority in the organization and not tied to advanced qualifications. Candidates express the need for advanced knowledge and skills for dealing with contemporary social problems and seem to use the MSW for continuing education and development more than advanced academic qualification. This could provide an explanation for why candidates become ‘stuck’ at the research phase of the MSW taking between 1 and 2 years (or more) to complete a 6–9 month project and report: they place greater value on the
knowledge and skill elements to enhance job performance with seeming less interest in research capacity. A group mentorship process has been introduced to assist with throughput in the research stages of the MSW programme.

In 2004, the MPhil and PhD degrees were introduced, marking another important development in social work education in Trinidad, and interest in the MPhil/PhD is also growing. Many candidates who apply for entry into the PhD programme are offered enrolment via the MPhil route. Candidates in higher education with good research experience enrol as PhD candidates and can take anywhere between three and eight years to complete the research degree. Holders of PhD’s in social work are all employed in higher education and respected as experts in the field; however, research funding and institutional support are needed so that Caribbean research output can grow and strengthen the knowledge base for Caribbean social work.

Specific Challenges for Social Work Education in Trinidad and Tobago

In recent years, national security and violent crime, economic decline and unemployment, increase in domestic violence and child and elder abuse, the Venezuelan migrant crisis, and most recently the COVID 19 pandemic have consumed the attention of State agencies including social service providers, challenging social work practitioners to maintain proficiency and productivity in increasingly demanding situations in resource-strapped environments. By necessity, social work educators continue to monitor the dynamic context of social work practice in Trinidad and Tobago and find themselves in a state of continual adaptation in order to prepare professional social workers to meet these demands: educators have to prepare twenty-first century Caribbean social workers to do more with less. Social work educators can be viewed as experts in contemporary social issues and are involved in public fora, social and community engagement, and research activities, to help bridge gaps between theory and practice, and to keep content and methods contextually relevant; this can be an uphill battle in the current climate.

The governments of developing countries are drivers of economic development and stability, and social and human development. Those two elements can threaten each other, and in times of economic decline when social needs are highest, funding for social programmes is very limited. This is the reality facing Trinidad and Tobago, and social work services and jobs are harder to find; not that there are no positions, but the job market for social workers is effectively frozen. So, in addition to some 120 social work graduates ‘hitting the streets’ every year, many social work jobs are open to persons with any social science degree, so a stagnant job market is flooded with applicants. Social work educators are challenged to prepare graduates who can survive in this capitalist context and market themselves as self-directed innovative social work practitioners. Social entrepreneurship is fast becoming a premier option for social work graduates, and educators have to retool themselves to be able to prepare BSc graduates for self-employment.
Additionally, as the rates of crime, violence, and social problems have increased, the distinction between social work clients and social work students seems to be becoming blurred. A significant number of enrollees are drawn to social work because of their own experiences of extreme personal and family trauma, community violence and deep deprivation. These students seem to be driven by a desire to solve problems, prevent them, and save children and families from their impact. They tend to be eager for the answer, which the instructor often does not have because in social work, solutions are applied, not programmed or predetermined. Field instructors attest to having to support students through secondary traumatic stress reactions when client situations stimulate unresolved issues or difficult personal circumstances. Social work educators across Trinidad and Tobago concur that there are increasing demands for input into critical thinking and assessment skills for applying theory to real life practice situations, but more importantly for counselling therapy for students, and nurturing emotional awareness, self-acceptance, and self-regulation skills. The idea of mandatory counselling for all social work students has come up repeatedly, but there is no precedent for this at the undergraduate level. The Campus provides free voluntary counselling and psychological services to students and there is support available for those experiencing difficulties and financial problems. Nonetheless, there is a growing need for trauma-informed social work education to evolve alongside trauma-informed practice; in the meantime, social work educators at SAUWI are often called upon to provide support to vulnerable students.

Educators across all institutions and disciplines in Trinidad and Tobago lament the steady decline in students’ foundational writing skills including use of English, comprehension, composition, and expressive skills. These challenges are attributable to changes in curriculum emphasis and exam structure at lower levels, and the digital era. Problems with writing skills are manifesting in professional practice with complaints from supervisors and allied professionals about the poor quality of social workers’ assessment reports. This is a serious indictment against social work education and practice and educators have had to increase the scope of teaching beyond technical knowledge, skills development and formation, to basic mechanics of writing. SAUWI has put in a great deal of support to address this problem through the expansion of library services, the establishment of a writing centre, and a special needs programme that conducts educational assessments and interventions.

A common concern is the question of suitability for the demands of social work practice of the Generation Y (late millennial) and Generation Z students who tend to be more liberal, literal, digitally groomed, and future-oriented (Mohr & Mohr, 2017) and the pedagogical options for creating effective practitioners in this socially demanding, resource-strapped and uncertain environment. An obvious choice was to increase blended learning options, taking into consideration the importance of keeping connected to the students, maintaining open lines of communication and tangible support, and most importantly, facilitating development of learners’ ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practice situations; however, outcomes from increased
blended learning with respect to skills’ development and practice applications are as yet undetermined. Faculty continue to experiment with interactive methods that provide opportunities for real-world problem solving and hands-on work using community engagement projects, case studies, and social activism. However, while students testify to having memorable experiences, there seems to be a challenge with transfer of learning to practice settings. Field instructors lament that some social work students display problematic and inappropriate behaviours that test professional ethics. Therefore, the ongoing challenge for educators lies in the formation aspect of social work education that moves theoretical and experiential learning to skills and attitude development demonstrated in practice.

To compound this, placement opportunities are becoming increasingly difficult to source because of high demand for spaces between institutions, the working conditions of social workers in agencies and the lack of incentive to accept students. The physical infrastructure in some organizations cannot safely accommodate students, departments are understaffed, the intensity of the work does not allow for adequate and effective supervision of students, and staff are over-stretched to near burnout. Experienced field instructors complain of exhaustion, plus field instruction is more and more demanding as students’ needs expand. Additionally, senior administrators have become wary of students; on the one hand, they are nervous about exposing students/outsiders to the ‘real world’ of agency practice thereby opening the organization to criticism, and on the other hand, they are fearful of possible fall out if students make mistakes or breach ethics. Social work educators have had to become creative by developing projects, and community- and NGO-based practicum using long-arm field instructors. While these solve one problem, there is still the issue of relevance of practice learning experiences when the nature of social work practice in Trinidad and Tobago is predominantly welfare work and micro-practice with individuals and families. As direct practice placements become more scarce, graduates’ readiness for professional practice can be compromised.

Social work practice in Trinidad and Tobago is not subject to statutory regulation—no registration, certification, or licensure requirements, and no agreed standards and accreditation for social work education programmes exist. There are currently five institutions offering social work education in Trinidad and Tobago that have different matriculation requirements and school ethos, and there can be variations in input, throughput, output, and outcome. Also, the educational environment is highly competitive, which can be antithetical to collaboration to ensure that there is alignment across institutions; yet graduates are competing for the same jobs. There are also no established standards for social work practice in the Caribbean, although all programmes use the ethical standards of the North American Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Social work remains an unregulated profession with no clear performance indicators and sanctions for malpractice or dereliction of duty; the job
title ‘social worker’ is not protected. These factors present significant challenges for social work educators.

Firstly, the policies and procedures governing social work practice can be dated and oppressive and out of step with international standards and best practices. Students’ practicum can be limited by agency practice, which does not reflect classroom learning. In their field experience, students come face-to-face with the real ‘unsanitised’, unregulated world of social services delivery with human tragedy and social problems. They are exposed to practitioners’ enduring frustrations (tantamount to burn-out) from working too long with difficult cases in under-resourced settings with very limited options to meet clients’ need. This can be a harsh reality-check for young students excited about the promise of the human rights and social justice mission of social work, and longing to make a positive difference in society. When conditions of practice do not meet students’ expectations, they can feel disheartened, demotivated, less cooperative, more complaintive, and can imbibe the agency climate of dissatisfaction. Educators at SAUWI are constantly challenged to bridge the widening gap between theory and practice, to keep students’ motivation and morale up, strengthen their sense of agency and foster professional confidence. Regular field seminars, human skills’ labs, skilled field supervisors and an open-door policy with faculty and the field coordinator play critical roles in this regard.

Secondly, because the title ‘social worker’ is not protected, social work positions in key social service agencies such as the Judiciary, probation services, child protection, and schools are open to multi-professionals. These are prime agencies for field placements, and agency managers and persons performing social work jobs may not be social work-trained. This places social work educators in a difficult dilemma because when their supervisors are not social work-trained, students have expressed feeling disadvantaged and seem less committed to the experience. Students and graduates alike have observed that non-social work-trained supervisors do not demonstrate appreciation for what professional social work practice entails, and the gap between what they learned and what they are directed to do is widened even further. One of the ways that SAUWI has attempted to address this challenge is by providing field instructor training courses and interprofessional continuing education sessions to create communities of practice learning that support social work education. This has been very well received, but challenges persist as staff turnover in social work agencies can be high.

There are also challenges within the academic environment. SAUWI is governed by fairly strict regulations, to which social work is subject; the sequencing policy that prevents students who fail core prerequisites from advancing in the programme can be punitive and impose hardship on students who are struggling. In the case of social work, each theory and practice of social work course is offered once per academic year and is a prerequisite for the next, and a co-requisite for practicum. There have been instances where students have been withdrawn from field placement in semester two
because they failed a core course in semester one and had to repeat the entire year. Adherence to rules and policies can supersede students’ interests gives the impression of a harsh and insensitive institution; students can be left feeling depersonalized and aggrieved. There have been many debates in faculty meetings in response to appeals from students for special consideration, but the administration is very reluctant to relax the rules for selected cases thereby setting dangerous precedents, which, they fear, can leave the University open to litigation. Social work faculty at SAUWI are on the receiving end of students’ grievances and find themselves balancing the explicit curriculum governed by strict university regulations, against the implicit curriculum informed by social work values and principles and students’ expectations that social work educators will act consistent with what they teach (Bogo & Wayne, 2013; Miller, 2013) e.g. demonstrating empathy, and advocating for students’ needs and considerate treatment. Special care is taken to ensure that students are regularly informed about university regulations and their rights and responsibilities within them.

**Conclusion**

In 2016, the Social Work Programme at The University of the West Indies St Augustine celebrated its 25th anniversary and has established itself as the leader in social work education in Trinidad and Tobago. The commemorative conference in March 2016 provided a platform for graduates and others to share knowledge and experience, and the overwhelmingly positive response to the conference was a testament to the reputation and contribution of the SAUWI social work programme. Field agencies have expressed satisfaction with the in-house preparation for field that students receive, and the clear and predictable structure of social work field practicum. SAUWI students have also been praised for their sound theoretical knowledge base. Despite the many challenges outlined above, at present, agencies, both in the public and NGO sectors, welcome the expertise that is offered to the field by the SAUWI programme. The current State initiatives to expand and increase access to social services and welfare hold definite potential as a timely investment in the well-being of the citizenry. Social work education plays a vital role in meeting the demands of practice and social development in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. Faculty and administration are not blind to these perennial challenges and efforts have been made to make representation to senior management, taking steps to avert them where possible by, for example, empowering student with information, and trying different strategies to address them. It is hoped that by outlining the challenges for social work educators at SAUWI, educators in other regions might gain a deeper understanding of some of their own challenges and come up with innovative ways to address them. Additionally, there is a lot to be gained by shared experience as it opens up opportunities for shared problem solving which SAUWI would welcome.
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