

# **CARE AFRICA NETWORK**

**A report of the training courses given in**

**Lesotho and Swaziland**

**during**

**January and February 2018**

**in**

**Methods for meeting the needs of Orphaned and  
Vulnerable Children (OVC) by empowering community  
supported family care**

**and**

**The treatment of children with Post-Traumatic Stress  
Disorder (PTSD)**



## **CAN 2018 TRAINING REPORTS**

### ***Introduction and overview***

The CAN aims and objectives are to benefit children in need, and promote the support and development of African community care systems for future generations. The courses are designed to empower community supported family care for children in crisis, including children orphaned by AIDS. This is achieved by disseminating innovative and successful ideas that have been employed elsewhere for the benefit of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). CAN seeks to promote community development of culturally appropriate methods that meet the needs of OVC. It will also undertake international advocacy for the needs of OVC in Africa, and campaigns for the support of community development projects for their benefit. In some instances CAN has provided some small initial funding for income generating projects that will enable the future self-sufficiency of local communities.

The CAN training courses are designed to meet these aims and objectives. CAN also provides needs led training specifically requested by some organisations in Africa. Training in the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children has been requested to address the significant number of children reported to be suffering this condition, predominantly as a consequence of having lost their parents to AIDS. This training is provided in addition to the main training course which is relevant to all OVC.

The framework for the courses undertaken in 2018 followed the dual workshop format adopted for 2016 courses. The first of these workshops qualifies individuals to treat children suffering from PTSD through the use of Children's Accelerated Trauma Therapy (CATT). This is a methodology that was developed and patented by Carly Raby. As a consequence it can only be taught by a licensed trainer, who for CAN is CAN's founder, Francesca Simms. It has been successfully used in Britain and elsewhere especially Rwanda, where it has been adopted as the official method for treating PTSD following the genocide.

The second of the workshop courses teaches methods to meet the needs of OVC through the maintenance of the African system of community supported family care. The teaching draws on CAN's research of successful projects across Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho and Swaziland. The guiding philosophy is to build on the established system of family and community care with a view to sustaining its functionality in established communities. This approach recognises the success of the African community care system in meeting the needs of society. The system is now threatened with destruction by the unprecedented pressures placed upon it; particularly following the AIDS orphan crisis. The destruction of this beneficial and cost effective care system would result in millions of children and vulnerable adults becoming destitute, and the reversal of all development aims. CAN's work endeavours to reverse this destruction by disseminating effective methods of meeting children's needs by empowering community supported family care, and providing course participants with a capability to develop projects using these methods. CAN has now trained around 250 CAN Extension Workers in Lesotho and Swaziland. Some have already started projects to benefit OVC using ideas from the courses.

The courses given in January and February 2018 capitalised on the successes of the 2016 courses and again focused on Lesotho and Swaziland; these being two of the poorest countries in the region that

have suffered cruelly from the AIDs epidemic of a decade ago. The focus in Lesotho has been to provide courses that are now integrated into the fourth year curricula of the relevant undergraduate courses at the National University of Lesotho at Roma. This is now seen as being one of the most effective platforms for disseminating the methods and treatments to the widest proportion of the population in need.

In Swaziland CAN would like to establish a similar relationship with the University of Eswatini (the National University of Swaziland), and in February held discussions with the two of the faculties there. The university was founded in 1982 being originally a part of the University of Basutoland which was previously based at Roma in Lesotho, and which provided tertiary education for Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. The present university in Swaziland is spread across three campuses. If the CAN teaching were adopted it would probably entail courses at the Department for Community Health at Mbabane (Prof. T.H. Gadaga, Dean of Faculty) and the Department of Social Sciences (Prof. Agostino M Zabmberia, Dean of Faculty) on the Kwaluseni campus. The approaches made in February are encouraging and the university has indicated that it would like to run the workshops in the next academic year.

The courses provided in Swaziland in 2018 were again given to the staff of a small NGO, which is also a partner organisation of CAN. The courses are intended to support the work of this NGO, which has coverage across Swaziland through youth organisations in most major centres. The PTSD treatment course is specifically to support a national initiative by this organisation to assist children traumatised as a consequence of AIDs; a problem this NGO believes is now systemic within the country. Swaziland has the highest incidence of AIDs of any African country, indeed of any country in the world. The teaching of the CAN methods course to this NGO was designed to assist its youth programmes, but the impact of the courses had a somewhat unintended outcome that was both surprising and immensely encouraging. It is reported on further below.

## ***National University of Lesotho***

### ***Course 1 - The treatment of PTSD in children – January 2018***

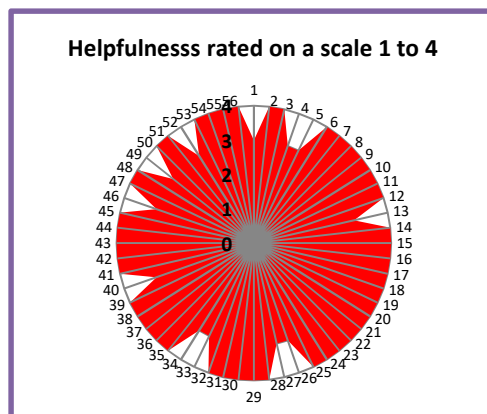
Following the success of the 2016 courses the University had incorporated this course as an integral part of its fourth year curriculum for undergraduates studying for a BA in social work. 57 students registered for the course which was held in a large meeting room adjacent to the University's library. In order to comply with the terms of the Licence held by CAN each student was invited to become a "CAN Extension Worker". Can Extension Workers are volunteers committed to using ideas learnt on the course to benefit OVC where possible. As an affiliate of CAN they are able receive the training which the Licence stipulates can only be given to CAN members.

The training followed the format set by the Licence with additional input based on the trainer's considerable experience of treating children with a wide range of severe mental health problems including PTSD. Students were also given an opportunity to devise their own projects for rolling the treatment out to communities. The workshop comprised a combination of lectures and role playing through which the students could develop their skills. Students were formed into seven groups that discussed aspects of how the methodology might be deployed within Lesotho then fed back their

conclusions in a plenary session. The enthusiasm of these students was both tangible and immensely encouraging. They had some exciting ideas for developing their own projects to treat children suffering from PTSD.

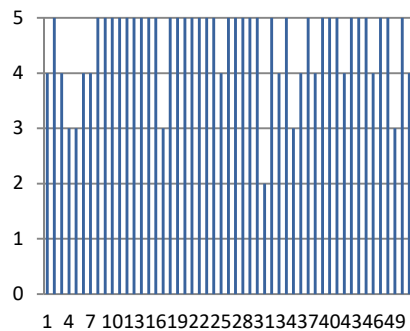


The feedback provided by the students universally declared the course to be useful and pitched at the right level. Participants found the course either helpful or very helpful as is indicated in their individual assessments shown in the following radar diagram.

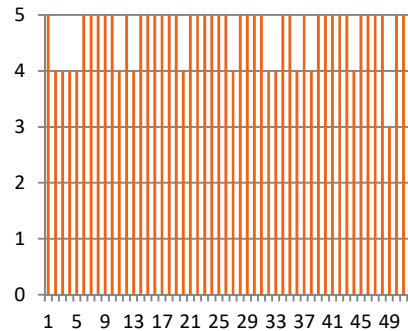


Most participants also awarded similarly high scores to each of the four dimensions they were asked to comment upon; this time on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was poor and 5 excellent. The average score given by all students was between very good and excellent for each component of the course they were asked to assess.

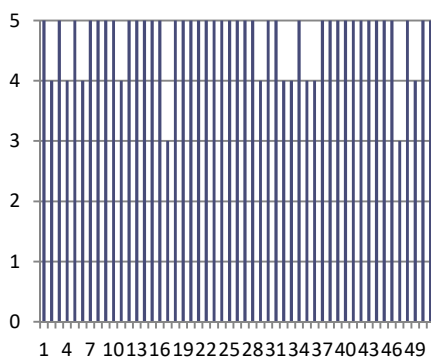
**Presentations**  
average score 4.57



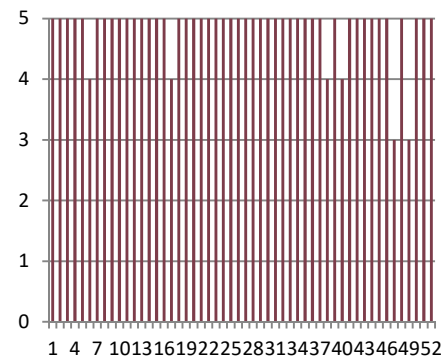
**Content**  
average score 4.70



**Exercises**  
average score 4.73



**Handouts**  
average score 4.86



When asked to comment on which aspects they found best in the course over, a third of the class cited the presentations (although it was unclear whether it was the lecturer of their own presentations they were applauding), the clear explanation of the CATT methodology and the underlying causes of PTSD, and the case studies used to illustrate the condition and its treatment. There was widespread enjoyment of the personal involvement in the role playing exercises and the group work with its opportunity to present their conclusions to the full class. Some mentioned the use of the rating methodology (CRIES-8 developed by the Children In War Foundation) as a measure of the effectiveness of the treatment. But what was also apparent was the appreciation that the students had gained a skill that could be deployed directly once they finished their course by enabling them to start their own projects for children.

The feedback also asked for suggestions on what might be improved in the course. The most frequent comment was that the course should be longer. Instead of the two days for the workshop it was suggested that two weeks would be more appropriate. Some thought a month and one even suggested a year! One theme was that the course should be broadened to cover other mental health issues and another was that there should also be a focus on treating communities. There was a general desire for students to be engaged in more practical exercises and discussion. Some suggested that the course might even be extended to include fieldwork with children directly involved. Generally the role playing exercises were greatly enjoyed. Some noted that the different accent of the presenter sometimes made it hard to follow the content. It was suggested there might be a greater use of video material, and that there should be more humour in the presentations.

There was also a wish that they might be allowed to teach others to use the method, although the patent does not permit this.

One widely advanced comment was that third year students, as well as those in the fourth year should also be invited to the course. Many thought the course would be useful to other courses within the university such as those for pastoral care and health sciences, and that other institutions would benefit from the teaching.

Of course the workshops have already been given to government social workers, but it has been found that their jobs are so demanding it is difficult for them to find the time to develop a programme for treating children with PTSD. This is in contrast to the CAN methods teaching which contained ideas directly applicable to their roles. The merit of teaching the PTSD course to final year university students is that since few will be able to find employment immediately following graduation, they may have both the time and the inclination to develop their own projects, and once successful apply for aid funding to develop their projects further. Indeed many enthusiastically expressed the intention of doing just that.

The feedback included many favourable comments. A much repeated comment was that the course was viewed as essential and that it would benefit them by enabling them to help children with PTSD and generally improve the care of children. The trainers were found to be very good and had taught them a lot. Their coming to Lesotho was much appreciated. It was reported that the trainers “were always patient and welcoming, and gave us confidence and they are always smiling which makes the course more interesting”.

Other comments included statements such as: “As a student interested in psychology this course has brought an incredible light of information”; “A great presentation and training”; “Everything was excellent”; “Everything was perfect, they must keep up the good work”; “The course facilitators were just perfect in what they did”; “They are doing a wonderful job in spreading knowledge of the disorder and how to treat it”; “The presentations were outstanding”; “The course was an eye opener - I feel I have graduated to a new understanding of children”.

Most proclaimed it to be a very interesting course and they would love to volunteer for CAN and advocate for children. They also felt that they had learnt a lot on the course; enough to feel confident to go out and create projects to treat PTSD. It was also suggested that “it would be great if they could get more funding to expand the knowledge all over the world”.

### ***Course 2 - Methods for meeting the needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children – January 2018***

This course, delivered in the second half of the week at the National University of Lesotho started by describing children’s needs including their psychological and social needs, and the theoretical basis for the community supported care of orphaned and vulnerable children in the context of the African extended family culture together with its ability to meet these needs. It went on to consider the destructive pressures threatening the collapse of this system before drawing on research in four African countries to promote ideas that will combat these adverse pressures and enable the system to be sustained and children’s needs met.

The approach contrasts the differing conditions and challenges in four countries before describing projects and ideas under ten headings that have been effective in restoring the care system and meeting the needs of OVC. These include ideas for the economic empowerment of families and communities, including income generating projects and savings and loans groups, also community development and methods for restoring collapsed communities, child protection and child empowerment programmes, psychosocial support, rehabilitation of children to families and devices for rescuing street children, as well as alternative care of those children for whom it is impossible to return to a birth family or community. Access to education is also examined, together with catalyst organisations that can empower other organisation or individuals to meet children’s needs.

The course was attended by the same group of 57 students. It was structured as a series of lectures punctuated by sessions in which the students, again in their groups, considered which of the ideas would be effective in the communities with which they were familiar, and how the those ideas might be promulgated throughout their regions.

The final group exercise gave students the opportunity to plan projects which either individually or as a group, they would like to start themselves following graduation for the benefit of children in their area. Since the employment opportunities on graduation are sadly limited, there was great enthusiasm for this group exercise. It enabled them to think though specific project developments and how they might undertake them. Inspiration was provided by the numerous examples in the course that had been started by unemployed graduates. Many course participants resolved to do inspirational work developing projects for children in their areas. It was suggested that once some successful results had been recorded, they might apply for aid funding to further develop their project, and in doing so create a role and possibly a means of living for themselves; thus establishing their own self-sufficiency.

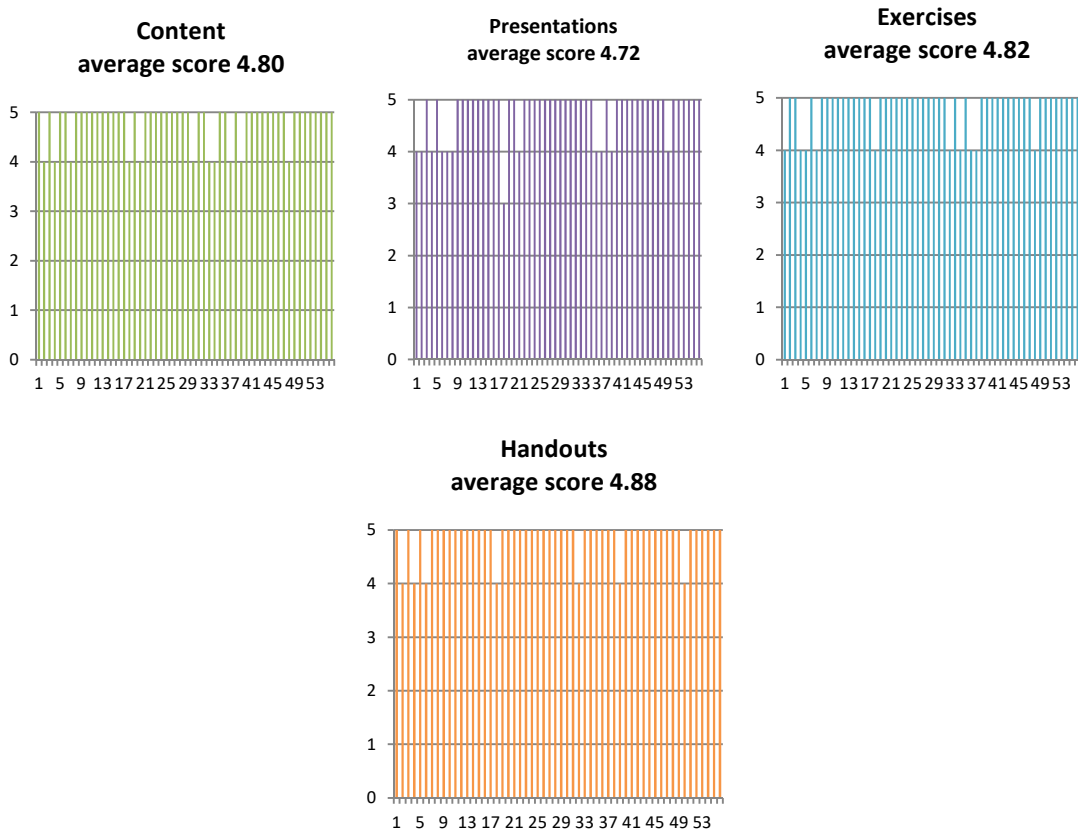


The CAN methods course is essentially one of knowledge transfer so maintaining the interest of the students for such a protracted period represents a significant challenge. As the feedback subsequently showed, giving the students an opportunity to devise, discuss and develop their own ideas was an important learning feature of the course. The course was also accompanied by a 70 page hand-out that summarised the various projects found in the research as well as the other course content.

The course members generally found the course content useful as well as being helpful, although the helpfulness score was fractionally lower than that for the PTSD course, possibly reflecting the different aspirations of the course members and that the challenge of developing projects for OVC was possibly more daunting than locating children with PTSD who would benefit from the treatment they could now offer.



Participants again rated the various aspects of the course’s production highly, the average scores given again being between very good and excellent for every component of the course they were asked to assess. In contradiction to the helpfulness ratings, these scores were slightly higher than those for the PTSD course. Virtually all course members found the content, presentation, exercises and the hand-outs to be either very good or excellent.





A common theme in the feedback on the aspects of the course that the students found best was the ability to participate in the group exercises and the presentations they made to their colleagues. The exposure to projects and strategies that had been devised for meeting the needs of OVC, especially those in other countries, was found particularly fascinating. It was appreciated that the course empowered families and communities to care for OVC and discouraged institutional solutions. It was felt that the course would enable families to be made aware of their importance to their children, and so take full responsibility for them. The merits of promoting community and family care as opposed to the pitfalls of institutional care were clearly taken to heart. Many indicated an enthusiasm for starting their own projects that would support OVC in their communities.

Some were somewhat submerged by the wealth of information to which they were exposed and once again there was a plea for a longer course of perhaps up to two weeks. The appreciation for the group work and student presentations was illustrated by the suggestion that there should be more time given for these in the course. A significant number thought that provision of a funding arrangement for research into their projects and the associated training would make a useful extension to the course.

A few suggested that there was a need to update or refresh some of the original research for the course. However one of the advantages of inviting student participation in the courses has been that students, particularly those on refresher courses, have often provided useful update information on some of the projects described.

Other comments made on how the course might be improved included the suggestion that the background could be extended to include other African countries, that the training might be given to NGOs and government officials, and that third year students and those on other courses could benefit from the presentations. A greater use of videos as a teaching medium was mentioned as well as creating connectivity between CAN extension workers through social media.

Once again there were many favourable comments made. There were many comments that the course was “excellent” and that “the presentation was amazing”, “everything was done perfectly”, “very interesting and beneficial to social workers and for empowering families to care for OCV, which is much needed with the present challenges the country faces caring for so many orphans”. It was said that the initiatives described by CAN were “an eye opener” and “ideal for African communities”. “The information she is spreading is so rich and motivating, especially to us social workers. She is so knowledgeable and inspiring”. It was suggested that “the course should be made available to university lecturers, and more widely to all those working to improve the lives of OVC as well as that the ideas should be made available worldwide”. Some said they would like to join CAN and spread the course further afield.

It was also said that “the projects they had devised made them aware of their own capabilities and that they were inspired by hearing about others who had made their dreams concerning helping vulnerable children become a reality”. It was noted that ‘solutions to everyday problems met with OVC are discovered’ on the course. They felt the trainer was “very positive and encouraging that they too could achieve their ambitions with hard work and they now had the skill to help children in their own villages and areas and to create jobs for themselves” “Her work inspires more people to help OVC” It was reported that it made them aware of the importance of their role as social workers. “The course has made me aware of how important the interaction of social workers is between

government and community”. One noted that “There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. So the fact she is reaching out to social work students and even qualified social workers, this helps OVC because we will be able to reach out to everyone”.

Reflecting the admirable commitment to community care in the country it was said that it was an honour to be given the skills to help OVC in Lesotho. “We are very honoured to have been given this precious opportunity that has empowered us to go and impact the lives of our communities positively”.

### **Swaziland NGO Courses**

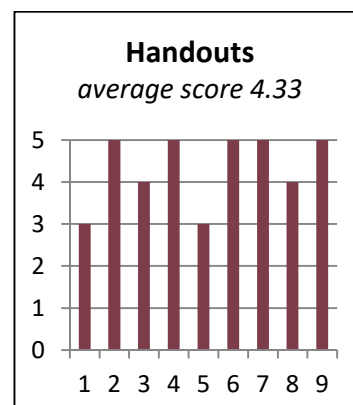
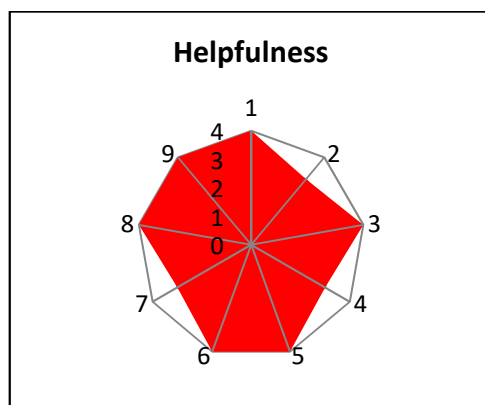
The Swaziland NGO courses were given on the premises of Super-buddies, an NGO that has volunteer staff that cover all parts of Swaziland. This is a youth organisation that provides mentoring and instructional support to children and young people in schools and clubs across the country. It is run from its headquarters premises in Mbabane. Those attending the course numbered much fewer than the university students in Lesotho, and were the more senior mentoring staff in the organisation.

#### **Course 1 - The treatment of PTSD in children – February 2018**

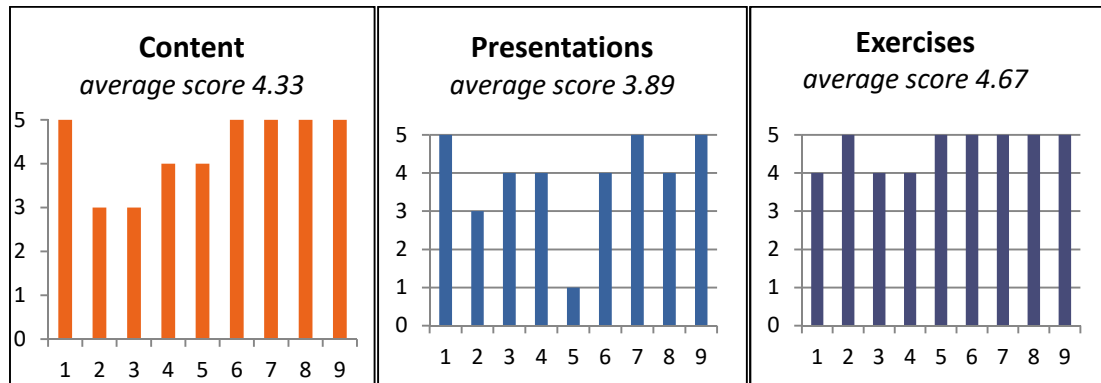
The PTSD course was provided at the specific request of the NGO’s founder Siphwe Nkambula Vilakati. She believes that PTSD is endemic amongst Swaziland’s youth who have been traumatised by the loss of parents through AIDS, and abused by others linked to their families. Super-buddies are keen to establish a ground movement of treatment to confront, and if possible rectify the situation.

Eleven members of her organisation and attended the two day workshop and agreed to become CAN extension workers. Generally they found the course helpful although two of the eleven found the level at which the course was pitched difficult. This represents a challenge for CAN who is effectively teaching a course designed for nursing staff and social workers to unqualified youth workers. Some of the course responded well to the teaching whereas others found the level at which the course was pitched overly challenging.

Notwithstanding this the feedback received from the nine participants who responded on the helpfulness of the course was positive. The quality of the course hand-outs was rated as average, good and mostly excellent.



The ratings provided for the course content, the standard of the presentations, and the practical exercises were generally good to excellent; the average score for the presentations being pulled down by one participant who thought the presentation format should be more in line with the format of schools’ teaching with which they were familiar.



The comments received on what might be done better in the PTSD course emphasises the difficulty of using this licensed course for this group in the time available to teach it. The use of a single facilitator, a comment often heard elsewhere, is a constraint placed by the condition of the Licence under which the course is taught. The teaching style might be slightly altered to make the group feel more inclusive but the experience suggests that there should be careful screening of those accepted onto the course to establish their suitability for the NGO’s objective. Although the Methods course was adapted more to this group’s needs by leaving out some sections and covering others more slowly, that is not possible for the PTSD course where the Licence dictates what must be taught so that course participants are to be able to treat children with PTSD. The idea of offering the handouts in a digital format could be readily embraced for future courses, especially in an age where most students have access to computers and smart phones.

The final year university students in Lesotho found the courses quite demanding in the amount of information that had to be absorbed in the time available. Those without the benefit of university selection, and 4 years of study in social work would find the content even more difficult. Possibly in the time available for the courses, the Methods course is be most usefully provided for final year social work students and the PTSD course also to final year social work students as well as psychologists or psychiatric nurses; these being the groups with both the relevant skill sets, and the best opportunity use the teaching.

The NGO course group did make a number of positive comments such as “this was a really helpful course”, and “this model is very good as it is child centred”, “it is ideal for everyone”. “PTSD touches the whole community, family and school. Thank you”.

## Course 2 - Methods for meeting the needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children – February 2018

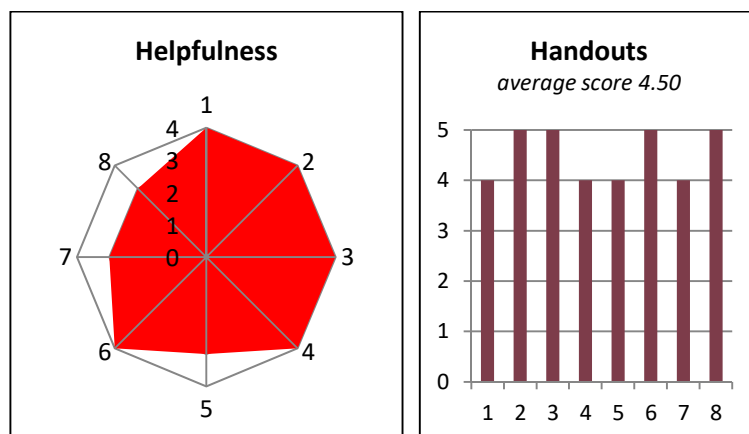
The engagement of the students with this course was much more positive than with the PTSD course.

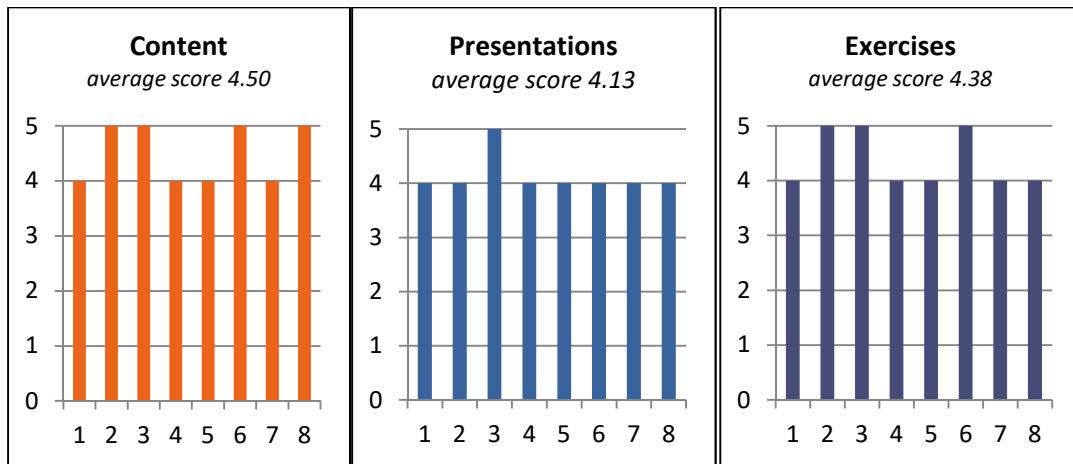


Generally participants found the course more helpful for their youth work and rated the hand-outs more highly than for the PTSD course. They also gave higher scores to the course content, presentations, and exercises than was the case for the PTSD course. They found the construction of keyhole gardens, a drought resistant permaculture method introduced to Swaziland from Lesotho by CAN, a particularly useful project probably because it would enable the drought stricken eastern areas of Swaziland, where there has been a reliance on food aid for many years, to grow the vegetables they need for survival.

A few were taken by the arrangements found elsewhere for protecting abused children, and thought that more advice on how to provide confidentiality when treating such cases would be helpful. They were also impressed by the need to enable communities to care for children so that they did not lose touch with their families, and the problems encountered with institutionalisation in meeting needs of children. The potential impact of savings and loans groups, and training in income generating projects on impoverished communities struggling to meet the needs of their children was clearly recognised. As for the PTSD course they would have appreciated the hand-outs being made available in a digital format.

The average score given to all components on the course they were asked to assess was between very good and excellent.





There were positive comments such as “she excelled” and “the CAN methods are very important to change lives of OVC and poverty stricken communities / families”. The course taught us how “to develop projects that can help OVC and needy families in the community”. “Francesca is doing a great job to change the lives of African children, youth and poverty stricken families”.

The most encouraging outcome of this course was the surprising decision by the group to form their own cooperative that would embrace the ideas and projects in the Methods course firstly for the benefit of themselves, and then to offer their experiences as a practical demonstration to the youth groups they mentor and to help them to develop similar projects. At the conclusion of the course the group formed its own savings and loans group, and started to draw up plans for a small scale chicken farm. There has been feedback since then that this project is now underway. This has emphasised the relevance of the Methods course content for relieving the difficult situations found in Swaziland. Some also had plans for developing projects now to benefit OVC, as well as using the ideas in their youth mentoring work and the PTSD treatment project planned by Super-Buddies.

### **Conclusions**

The juxtaposition of the two groupings that received the 2018 training courses illustrates the different needs and aspirations of the two student bodies. The university students tended to look more at the contents of the courses with a view to embedding the taught content in their future careers. Their interest and enthusiasm for the subjects was palpable and greatly encouraging as were their plans to use the ideas learnt to develop their own projects to benefit OVC in their country.

The Swazi NGO volunteers looked at the subjects from a more pragmatic standpoint. Child abuse is clearly an issue that runs just beneath the surface of their communities, and they are acutely aware of the need to address it. However, they also realise that poverty is at the heart of the problem and the practical ideas in the Methods course was something to which they could give immediate effect.

We wish them well in these endeavours.