Handout 1: What is Research?

Research is the process of collecting information in a logical and systematic manner. Some research is very academic and technical but the research of a community service worker should be logical, simple and straightforward.

Research is about going to the source to collect information and to prove or disprove what you believe to be true. It can be as simple as brainstorming with a group of colleagues, summarising the findings of other people’s research or doing your own social survey.

There are two types of research undertaken by community service workers. These are:

**Primary research:** includes all information taken from first hand experiences. These include personal observations by witnesses to events. These events may be told to the researcher or recorded in diaries, letters, newspaper articles, reports, speeches, photos, videos or biographical data primary research also included the information gathered in surveys and interviews.

**Secondary research:** includes all information that comes through two channels. It involves making use of sources that have already interpreted events. It includes any re analysis of reports from other organisations and surveys that have already been undertaken and reported on.