Table of Content

2 Broadening Emancipatory Approaches in Social Work Education
Otrude Nontobeko Moyo[1]
[1]Indiana University School Of Social Work - South Bend Campus, ,
3 Learning to Cultivate Mutually Beneficial Intercultural/Internationalization Collaborations through Critical Relationality: Disrupting Coloniality
Otrude Nontobeko Moyo[1]
[1]Indiana University School Of Social Work - South Bend Campus, ,
6 Social Capital, Service Participation, Self-Management, and School-to-work Developmental Outcomes of Young People with Chronic Disabling Health Conditions
Dr Steven Sek-Yum Ngai[1]
[1]The Chinese University Of Hong Kong, , China
7 Social work, interplanetary manned space flight and health - A profession is moving into a new field and an utterly new era -
Mr Hans Kuhn[1]
[1]Private, ,
8 Police Social Work and Community Policing: A case Study of the Sierra Leone Police
Dr Sylvester Lamin[1]
[1]Middle Tennessee State University, , United States
13 Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice: A Decolonial Inquiry into the Experiences of First-Generation Black African Social Workers in Britain
Dr Mary Francis[1]
[1]Tavistock Doctoral Student, ,
14 Child Preotection at the Core of Strengthening families
Dr Sylvester Lamin[1]
[1]Middle Tennesee State University, , United States
15 Decolonizing Social Work Education: Lessons from a Transnational Immersion in Costa Rica
Laura Lewis[1]
[1]University At Buffalo School Of Social Work, , United States
16 Peers as Colleagues in Socialpsychiatric Care - Effects of Experienced Involvement (EXIN) and implications for Social Work
Prof Susanne Iris Bauer[1]
[1]Uas Fulda, Germany, , Germany
20 Education and Care Reform: Exploring the Experiences of Children in Charitable Children's Institutions in Kenya
Dr Justin Rogers[1]
[1]The Open University | The University Of Nairobi, ,
23 Bridging the Digital and the Human: Rethinking Social Service Delivery in the Age of Technology
Ms Rashmi Pandey[1]
[1]Department Of Extension & Communication Sndt Women\'s University, Mumbai, India, , India
29 31 years after the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda: Mental Health and Coping Strategies
Dr Pierre Celestin Bimenyimana[1]
[1]University Of Rwanda, , Rwanda
30 Ubuntu in the context of Medical Social Work Practice in Kenya
Dr Wilkins Muhingi[1]
[1]Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology, ,
33 From Policy to Practice: Advancing Social Protection for South Africa's Vulnerable Children Through the Foster Child Grant Programme
Dr Nokuthula Ngubane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, , South Africa
34 Integrating Everyday Restorative Practices for Social Work Student Development
Ms Barbara Hiltz[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, , United States

38 Becoming Through Belonging: Black Girls\' Educational Journeys in Gendered Racialized School Spaces
Sandra Jeter[1]
[1]Howard University, , United States
42 Decolonizing the terrain of care in social work: A narrative inquiry of the collective and embodied care practices of Indigenous and racialized activists.
Radha Bhardwaj[1]
[1]York University, Phd Program, Canada, , Canada
43 Teaching Environmental Justice to Prepare Climate-Informed Social Workers: A Curriculum Case Study from the U.S.
Jennifer Barile[1]
[1]Private, ,
44 ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY SOCIAL LABS: ADVANCING INDIGENISATION IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN UGANDA
Timothy Opobo[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda
45 FOSTERING CHILD AGENCY FOR CHILD PROTECTION: LESSONS FROM UGANDA'S ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP
Timothy Opobo[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda
47 'When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers': Social work and political violence
Prof Helmut Spitzer[1]
[1]Carinthia University Of Applied Sciences, Austria, , Australia
50 Harambee in Action: Reclaiming the Heart of Social Work in an Anti-DEI Era
Joan Blakey[1], Traci Laliberte[2]
[1]University Of Minnesota-twin Cities, , United States, [2]Multidiscipinary Institute for Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, ,
56 The Implementation of Adult Diversion (without a Law) in a Rural District in South Africa: Innovative Approaches and Practice Methods by Social Workers and Prosecutors
Dr Bongane Mzinyane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu-natal, South Africa, , South Africa
57 From Legislation to Practice: The role of a New Legal and Social Protection Frameworks in Israel for Safety and Rehabilitation - Combating and Enhancing Protection Against Domestic Violence through Implementing Regulations 18 and 19 of the Family Violence Law
Dr. Ella Salman[1]
[1]Tel Aviv University & Israeli Ministry Of Welfare, ,
61 The Rights of Child-Headed Households to Care and Protection: Reflections from Social Service Providers
Dr Niccoh Diago[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, , South Africa
63 International student mobility and transcontextual learning of social work practice – Experiences of Norwegian students and educators
Carina Henriksen[1]
[1]Nord University, , Norway
65 From Assessment to Intervention: Understanding Decision-Making in India's Juvenile Justice System
Ms Ida D Souza[1]
[1]Manipal Academy Of Higher Education, , India
66 Strengthening or Undermining Transitions to Adulthood? Recipient and Professional views and experiences of the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot
Dr Louise Roberts[1]
[1]Cardiff University, Wales, Uk, , United Kingdom
69 Reimagining social work practice in the field of drug and substance abuse in Africa
Dr Tawanda Masuka[1]

[1]Women's University In Africa, , Zimbabwe

71 Political Social Work and Democratic Renewal: Bridging Grassroots Power and Legislative Action

Dr. Anthony Estreet[1]

[1]National Association Of Social Workers & Color Of Change, Inc, , United States

72 Community Participation and Inclusive Governance: Fostering Sustainable Communities through Civic Engagement

Dr Golam Mathbor[1]

[1]School Of Social Work, Monmouth University, USA, , United States

73 Striving to Protect and Support Vulnerable and Older Adults with Cognitive Impairments and the Care Partners from Elder Mistreatment: Development of a Screening Intervention and Risk Assessment

Dr Monique Pappadis[1]

[1]The University Of Texas Medical Branch, , United States

74 A new horizon for social work: the Decolonization, Indigenization, Spirituality and Buddhist Social Work project

Ms Kana Matsuo[1]

[1]Methodist Mission Northern, Auckland, New Zealand And Tokyo Metropolitan University, , New Zealand

77 Transforming Doctoral Social Work Education for Sustainable Futures: Business, AI, and Data Science Integration

Dr April Jones[1]

[1]Tuskegee University, USA, Tuskegee, Alabama, , United States

78 From Chaos to Resilience: Developing a Multi-Sector Psychosocial Response Model for Displaced Communities in Wartime

Miss Efrat Levy[1]

[1]Ben-gurion University Of The Negev, , Israel

79 AI for Social Good: Redefining Doctoral Training in Social Work

Dr April Jones[1]

[1]Tuskegee University, USA, Tuskegee, Alabama, , United States

82 Crossing borders in learning: First-year student experiences of an international online symposium on human rights and social justice

Dr Dorothee Hölscher[1], Dr Corlie Giliomee[2]

[1]University Of Queensland, Australia, , Australia, [2]University of Pretoria and ASSWA, , South Africa

83 Reimagining the Role of Social Work in Emergency Situations: Lessons from Informal Workers' Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Tanzania

Dr Zena Mnasi Mabeyo[1]

[1]Institute Of Social Work, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, , Tanzania, United Republic of

85 Addressing Gender Based Violence through Movement building – the case for HURUKURO

Dr Mildred Mushunje[1]

[1]Midlands State University, Zimbabwe, , Zimbabwe

87 Enhancing Social Work Curricula through Trauma-Informed Pedagogy: Towards Potential and Impact

Dr Wuraola Bolaji[1]

[1]University Of Hertfordshire, , United Kingdom

88 Divorce and Family Well-being: A Qualitative Exploration

Dr. Vinnarasan Aruldoss[1]

[1]United Arab Emirates University (uaeu), , United Arab Emirates

90 Existential Social Work: Addressing Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Western Welfare States

Prof Johannes Nathschläger[1]

[1]Katholische Hochschule Nrw, Department Münster, , Germany

94 Holistic Approach to the Role of Enhancing Learners\' Academic Success Well Being, and Social Functioning Through the Established School Social Work Programme

Dr Stephen Mbinga Omondi[1]

[1]Kenya National Association Of Social Workers, , Kenya
95 Creating a template for Global North/South collaboration in decolonising Social Work
Jill Childs[1]
[1]Private, ,
99 The Uses of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Perceptions of University Social Science Teachers in Uruguay
Dr Alejandro Noboa[1]
[1]Universidad De La República, , Uruguay
101 Power of Art: An Art-Based Co-Creation Model for Social Work Education in Collaboration with Formerly Incarcerated Individuals and Community Partners
Megumi Tokoro[1]
[1]Kansai University, , Japan
105 Bridging Education and Practice: Peer Support, Resilience, and Professional Identity among Early-Career Bedouin Social Workers
Prof Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail[1]
[1]Sapir Acadmic College, , Israel
106 Indigenous Knowledge as a Resource for Professional Development: The "Social Workers as Researchers and Practitioners" Program as a Model for Decolonizing Practice
Prof Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail[1]
[1]Sapir Acadmic College, , Israel
109 Harambee Philosophy and Radicalized Street Children Social Rescue Strategies in Nakuru City Streets, Kenya
Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
[1]Tharaka University, , Kenya
110 Household Social Dynamics and Child Support-system within the Realm of Harambee Spirit in Kenya
Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
[1]Tharaka University, , Kenya
111 Educating Social Workers for Sustainable Futures: Programme Closures Global Inequalities and the Urgent Need for Transformative Delivery Models
Jill Davey[1]
[1]Edinburgh Napier University, , United Kingdom
112 "Every Social Worker Is A Brain Injury Social Worker": Bridging the Gap Between Brain Injury and Social Work.
Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
[1]Canterbury Christ Church University, , United Kingdom
113 Co-production and the role of the specialist services in supporting with people with brain injury.
Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
[1]Canterbury Christ Church University, , United Kingdom
114 Reclaiming resilience in social work practice: reflections from the lived experiences of racialized youth in Western Canada
Dr Dainaravičiūtė Neringa[1]
[1]Vytautas Magnus University, , Lithuania
116 Uses, perceptions, and challenges of Social Work students regarding Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education
Mariano Suárez[1]
[1]Universidad De La República, , Uruguay
117 Relational Resilience and Social Reconstruction: Lived Experiences of Older Women after the 2023 Malatya Earthquake in Türkiye
Assoc. Prof. Ipe Varughese, Asst. Prof. Ashifa Kariveliparambil[1]
[1]Vytautas Magnus University, , Lithuania
118 Strength in Partnership: Amplifying Community Health Workers' Voices and Reimagining Community Resilience Through Collective Action
Dr Mary-Ellen Brown[1]

[1]The University Of Texas At Austin, Tx, , United States

120 Collective Care in Clinical Settings: Applying the Harambee Spirit to Medical Social Work in Kenya

Dr Wilkins Muhingi[1]

[1]Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology, , Kenya

122 Effectiveness of PROACT Intervention Delivered by Social Workers to Children and Adolescents exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences in Nairobi

Dr Teresia Mutavi[1]

[1]University Of Nairobi, Kilimanjaro Clinical Research Institute And Washington University In St Louis, , Tanzania, United Republic of

124 Service-learning as a tool for successfully connect underrepresented students\' in higher education: The case of Ultra-Orthodox Students in Israel

Prof Edith Blit Cohen[1]

[1]School Of Social Work And Social Welfare- Hebrew University, , Israel

125 Building an International Green Care Network - Social Work Connects People with Nature

Priska Fleischlin[1]

[1]IFSW, , Switzerland

127 Strengthening Universities-community engagement through Community Social Labs in East Africa

Prof Janestic Twikirize[1]

[1]Makerere University, , Uganda

128 Kahampatan as Indigenous Well-Being: A Framework for Social Work Practice with Indigenous Communities in the Philippines

Assoc. Prof. Angelito Meneses[1]

[1]University Of The Philippines Diliman, , Philippines

131 Leveraging social workers in policy formulation and implementation in a developing country like Nigeria

Prof Uzoma Okoye[1]

[1]University Of Nigeria, Nsukka, , Nigeria

133 Staying Well, Staying Connected, Staying in the Profession: Exploring What Sustains Aspiring and Early-Career Social Work Leaders.

Ms Jody Bell[1]

[1]Churchill Fellowship Recipient (2025), Independent Researcher, Founder Of Being Your Potential, , Australia

135 Reclaiming Roots: Exploring the Awareness and Application of African Social Work Theories and Perspectives in Academia

Assoc Prof Ngozi Chukwu[1]

[1]Department Of Social Work, University Of Nigeria, Nsukka, , Nigeria

140 Social Work and Artificial Intelligence: Debates on the Ways of Teaching and Learning the Profession

Dr Leonel Del Prado[1]

[1]Universidad De La República, , Uruguay

142 A Clear Path to Globalization for Schools of Social Work

Dr Sabrina Straub[1]

[1]Marian University, Indianapolis, ,

143 Building Professional Identities through Cross Cultural Field Placement

Ann-Iren Høgalmen[1]

[1]Volda University College, , Norway

146 Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Free Speech in Higher Education: Concepts, Origins, and Lessons for Social Work Education

Prof Elizabeth Lightfoot[1]

[1]Arizona State University, , United States

148 The Impact of Sustainable Juvenile Diversion Programs on Socio-Economic Development in Liberia

Mr S. Siaka Sambola[1]

[1]Ministry Of Justice, Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia

151 Forest Dwellers in Protected Territories: An Inquiry into Rights, Issues, and Challenges in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve
Prof Keshav Walke[1]
[1]Matru Sewa Sangh Institute Of Social Work, Nagpur, India, , India
152 Strategic framing used by civil society actors to renegotiate state authority. The case of migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in Sweden and Italy.
Dr Claudia Di Matteo[1]
[1]Lund University, , Sweden
153 Integrating environmental justice and sustainability into social work education and professional training: A case study of pedagogical initiatives from Atlantic Canada
Dr Haorui Wu[1]
[1]Dalhousie University, , Canada
154 Building Emergency Response Capacity: Multi-Career-Stage Social Workers' Engagement with Homeless Sector in Emergency Response in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Dr Haorui Wu[1]
[1]Dalhousie University, , Canada
155 Nishkaam Seva and Social Work Education and Practice: Reclaiming Selfless Service for Sustainable and Shared Futures
Prof Pamela Singla[1]
[1]University Of Delhi, , India
156 Coaching in Social Work: Values, Practice and Transformation
Mrs Kate Cuthbertson[1]
[1]Basw / Oxford Brookes University / Durham University, ,
159 Nurturing Trauma-Informed Caregiving: Rebuilding Social Care and Support for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
Ms Patrice Penney[1]
[1]Initiative For Children At Risk Africa & University Of South Carolina, , United States
162 School social workers supporting learners and teachers: Mezzo-level interventions in Gauteng public schools
Dr Gift Khumalo[1]
[1]Centre For General Education, Durban University Of Technology, , South Africa
163 Digital Practices in Social Work with young people: Between Opportunities, Risks, and Ethical Questions
Dr Iris Dežman Burazer[1]
[1]Irssv, ,
164 Trauma-Informed Pedagogy as Collective Liberation: Reimagining Social Work Education through Community, Culture, and Co-Creation
Ms Keisha Pickens[1]
[1]University Of Alabama-instructor, Alabama A&m-phd Student, , United States
167 Present Body, Conscious Care: Self-Esteem, Self-Care, and Physical Strength in Contemporary Social Work
Hilda Antonia Triana Reyes[1]
[1]FENACOTSMEX, , Mexico
168 Present Body, Conscious Care: Self-Esteem, Self-Care, and Physical Strength in Contemporary Social Work
Hilda Antonia Triana Reyes[1]
[1]FENACOTSMEX, , Mexico
169 Mapping Sustainable Development for Rural India: An Indigenous Social Work Model of Panchatantra
Dr M.Hilaria Soundari[1]
[1]Gandhigram Rural Institute, , India
172 Between Angola, Brazil and Mozambique: coloniality, capitalism and racism imposing juvenicide
Prof Leonardo Ortegal[2], Andrea Pires Rocha[1]
[1]Youth; Global South; Human Rights, , Brazil, [2]Universidade de Brasília, , Brazil

173 Digital Compassion: A Pilot Hotline for Individuals in Prostitution in Israel
Bracha Shapira[1]
[1]Lo Omdot Meneged, , Israel
174 Bearing Witness Under Fire: Trauma-Informed Family Accompaniment in the Aftermath of the 7 October Mass Casualty Event in Israel
Bracha Shapira[1]
[1]Lo Omdot Meneged, , Israel
176 Social Work Education in Guyana: Evaluating the Emergence and the Prospects for the Fastest-Growing Economy
Mrs Dionne Frank[1]
[1]University Of Education, , Ghana
177 Immigrant Families Experiencing Co-occurring Intimate Partner Violence and Child Protection System Involvement: A Scoping Review of Trauma-Informed Family-Centered Interventions
Katherine Maurer[1]
[1]University Of Calgary Faculty Of Social Work, , Canada
179 Decolonizing mental health: Using rhizome theory to imagine networks of multicultural epistemologies
Victoria Huang[1]
[1]Wilfrid Laurier University, , Canada
181 Brazil and the Protection of Childhood: Building Anti-Racist Strategies in Social Work
Dr Marcia Campos Eurico[1]
[1]Puc/sp, , Brazil
184 Digital Storytelling and Mental Health Among Sub-Saharan African Migrant Men in Canada
Dr Alicia Boatswain-kyte[1]
[1]Mcgill Univeristy, , Canada
191 The Challenges of Partnership Management in Social Assistance Services in the City of São Paulo.
Najila Souza[1]
[1]PUC-SP, , Brazil
195 Time for Collective Radical Social Work Voices: A critical analysis of the Global definition of social work in a changing world.
Ms Edith Lewis[1]
[1]Private, , United Kingdom
196 Social Work in Multicultural Settings: Navigating Refugee Students' Educational Journeys
Brianne Garrison[1], Dr Itunu Ilesanmi[1]
[1]University Of Northern Iowa | University Of Northern Iowa | University Of Kentucky, , United States
197 A Systems Thinking Community Work Framework for Building Sustainable Interventions to Address Complex Social Problems
Dr Jai Prakash Ramalingam[1]
[1]Singapore University Of Social Sciences, , Singapore
198 Education – A means to protect care-leavers futures?
Ms Mandisa Mbaza[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa
200 MAKING SENSE OF HOUSING IN SOCIAL WORK: BRIDGING THE MICRO-MACRO DIVIDE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
Mziwandile Sobantu[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa
202 Reclaiming Complexity in Social Work Knowledge: Dialogical and Systemic Pathways for Understanding Family Life
Noelle Buzohera[1]
[1]University Of Ottawa, , Canada
204 Contesting the Myth of "Good Parenting": Social Norms, Marginalization, and Resistance in Western Contexts
Noelle Buzohera[1]
[1]University Of Ottawa, , Canada

205 The trauma-informed Gaze: Neuropolitical governing in child welfare
Mr Ole Johan Moe[1]
[1]University Of Agder, Department Of Sociology And Social Work, , Norway
207 Preventing Violence and Promoting Culturally Congruent Positive Youth Development among Indigenous Youth in the United States
Dr Katie Edwards[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, ,
212 Invisible Voices and Labors: Domestic Work as a Stage of Oppression and a Strategy for Survival
Mrs Yone Da Cruz Martins De Campos[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo - Puc/sp, , Brazil
213 What the Tech Giants won't tell us: Can we easily embrace Artificial Intelligence in social work without challenging the pros and cons?
Ms Edith Lewis[1]
[1]Private, , United Kingdom
215 Social Work Entrepreneurship
Ronnie-Lee Sneh[1]
[1]Street Medicine Tel-aviv, , Israel
216 Traversing the Borderlands: A Qualitative Exploration of Student Experiences
Dr Pa Nhia Xiong[1]
[1]California State University, Fresno, , United States
217 Challenges of Deinstitutionalization in the Face of the Lack of Family Support and Delays in the Effectiveness of Referrals to Social Assistance and Health Services in the Municipality of São Paulo
Cristiane Da Silva[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil
220 Solution-Focused Brief Interventions for Substance Use: Evidence, Practice, and Fidelity for Social Workers
Assoc Prof Karla Gonzalez Suitt[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidad Católica De Chile, , Chile
221 Transitioning Social Work Education Curriculum in Kenya's Competency Based Education
Prof. Gidraph G. Wairire[1]
[1]IASSW, , Kenya
222 He Kupenga o te Kotahitanga - Weaving Indigenous Solidarity from Aotearoa to Africa
Sharyn Roberts[1]
[1]Aotearoa New Zealand Association Of Social Workers, , New Zealand
223 Integrating Psychosocial Well-Being as a Pathway to Resilient Communities
Prof. Patteti Adam Paul[1]
[1]Manuu, India, , India
226 Reimagining Social Work Practice Through Creativity and Critical Thinking in Fieldwork Practicum: Insights from Public Health Social Work
Dr Nandu Kannothu Thazha Kuni[1]
[1]Dy Patil Deemed To Be University, Navi Mumbai, India, , India
227 What do you mean by health? Understanding the social work perspective in layman's conceptualization of health and its management
Dr Nandu Kannothu Thazha Kuni[1]
[1]Dy Patil Deemed To Be University, Navi Mumbai, India, , India
228 Integrated Perspectives on Disaster Mental Health: Global Temperature Patterns, Preparedness, and Long-Term Recovery
Tonya Hansel[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States
229 Assessing the Impact of Traditional Community Support Systems in Alleviating Loneliness among Older Adults Residing in Zambian Care Homes.
Mr Osborn Mutapa[1]
[1]University Of Manitoba, Faculty Of Social Work, , Canada

230 Human needs, social work practice, Uganda, social work practice tools, Social work practice motivation
Dr Senkosi Moses Balyejjusa[1]
[1]Kyambogo University, , Uganda
232 AI for Social Work: A Framework for Responsible Adoption (Based on Experiences from a Czech Pilot Project)
Dr Melanie Zajacova[1]
[1]Charles University, Faculty Of Arts, Department Of Social Work, , Czech Republic
234 Engaging Men in Social Services: Barriers, Opportunities, and Culturally Grounded Interventions in East Jerusalem
Mr Mahdi Shalodi[1]
[1]Jerusalem Municipality, , Israel
235 Advancing Climate Justice through Community-Based Social Work: Insights from Drought-Prone Regions of India
Suresh Pathare[1]
[1]Csrd-iswr, Savitribai Phule Pune University, , India
238 Strengthening Social Support Systems: Domestic adoption of children with special needs in China
Dr Fang Nan[1]
[1]Beijing Academy Of Social Sciences, China, , China
243 Hidden in Plain Sight: Foster Care, Trauma, and Lifelong Mental Health and Substance Use Outcomes
Mrs Jessica Lee Fraga - Trejo[1]
[1]University Of Texas At El Paso (UTEP), Interdisciplinary Health And Science Phd Program, , United States
244 Notes on Capitalism, Imperialism, and the Ecological Question in Latin America from Selected Reinterpretations of Historical Materialism
Mr Alejandro Casas[1]
[1]Prof. Dr. Titular Con Dedicación Completa En El Departamento De Trabajo Social, Facultad De Ciencias Sociales De La Univ, , Uruguay
245 Between Micro-Practice and Collective Futures: Political Interventions in Refugee Social Work
Mrs Gesa Langhoop[1]
[1]University Of Applied Sciences, ,
246 Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Issues on Indian Families: Social Work Interventions for Strengthening Family Resilience
Suresh Pathare[1]
[1]Csrd-iswr, Savitribai Phule Pune University, , India
250 Paperwork over Practice in the South African Child Protection System: The Need for Caseload Reform
Julie M Orme[1]
[1]Winthrop University, , United States
253 Critical reflections on public involvement in social services research - How has a parents\' research advisory group brought their lived experiences to social work research and navigated ethical dilemmas?
Dr Louise Roberts, Elaine Speyer[1]
[1]Cascade, Cardiff University, , United Kingdom
256 Experiences of and Resistance Against Everyday Racism: Roma Migrants and Social Work(ers) in Norway
Turid Misje[1]
[1]Vid Specialized University, Faculty Of Social Studies, , Norway
262 Labour Market Integration in Care Work: Reducing or Reproducing Inequalities for Migrant Women?
Jana Katharina Bürger[1]
[1]Universität Kassel, , Germany
265 Refugee-Inspired Ethical Guidelines from Kakuma: Toward Decolonising Research Practice

Dr Hadijah Mwenyango[2], Dr Neil Bilotta[1]
[1]University of Eidenburgh, , United Kingdom, [2]Skidmore College, , United States
267 Trauma-Informed, Culturally Based Intervention: Integration of Neuroscience and Social Work in Supporting Refugees
Dr. Nimo Bokore[1]
[1]Trauma, Culture, Intervention, ,
268 The silence of stones has no height: early childhood in UNICEF's discourse
Ms Aline Elisa Maretto Lang[1]
[1]Universidade Federal Do Espírito Santo (ufes), , Brazil
269 Organisational Climate and Job Performance of Social Workers in Singapore
Dr Carol Pereira[1]
[1]Singapore University Of Social Sciences, , Singapore
270 The Somali Transnational Collaborative Project (STCP): Capacity Building (CB) Through Social Work Education
Dr. Nimo Bokore[1]
[1]Trauma, Culture, Intervention, ,
273 Navigating Barriers: Examining the Challenges Faced by Social Workers in Addressing the Social Needs of Looked After Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People in Scotland
Mr Akeem Babatunde[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom
276 Exploring Counter-narratives and a Global Majority Praxis of Leadership for Social Work
Dr Lace Jackson[1]
[1]The Open University And University Of Bedfordshire, , United Kingdom
277 Ethical Crisis Response and Digital Integration: Emergency Mental Health Service Utilization Among Homeless and Crisis-Affected Populations
Prof Rachel Stankus[1]
[1]Ph.d Student, ,
281 Advancing transdisciplinary experiential education: A partnership for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction
Dr Julie Drolet[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
282 From Evidence to Action: Co-Designing STRETCH Nurture, a Community-Led Integrated Early Childhood Development Intervention in a Refugee Settlement
Agatha Kafuko[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Kenya
283 School social worker's perceptions of the challenges to implementing bullying prevention programs
Prof. Antoinette Farmer[1]
[1]Rutgers,The State University Of New Jersey, , United States
285 Structural Determinants of Youth Health and Climate Justice: An Equity-Oriented Systems Study in Alberta, Canada
Dr Julie Drolet[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
287 We fled gunfire to protect our children: Reimagining child protection in Australia for South Sudanese communities
Mrs Caroline Speirs[1]
[1]University Of Western Australia, , Australia
289 Implementation outcomes of a RCT on Solution-focused brief interventions for substance use in Chilean primary care.
Assoc Prof Karla Gonzalez Suitt[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidad Católica De Chile, , Chile
290 Examining Service Navigation in Neurodivergence: A Mixed Method Study
Prof Ernest Nene Khalema[2], Dr David Nicholas[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada, [2]University Of Kwazulu-natal, , South Africa

292 The Socioeconomic Impact of Psychiatric Care on Individuals Diagnosed with Mental Illness and their Caregivers in Ghana.
Magnus Mfoafo-M'carthy[1]
[1]Wilfrod Laurier University, , Canada
294 Exploring the Effectiveness of Virtual Simulation-Based Learning in Enhancing Clinical Skills in Social Work Education
Dr Angelique Jenney[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
295 From Land Degradation to Community Resilience: How Holistic Land Management Strengthens Livelihoods, Builds Social Cohesion, and Enhances Climate Adaptation.
Miss I Hsuan Tsai[1]
[1]Step30 International Ministries, ,
297 Learning from International Models: Advancing Health Equity Through Canada\'s National School Meal Program
Siu Ming Kwok[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,
298 Social Intrapreneurship in social work: Empowering Minority Communities and Promoting Their Community Involvement
Prof Hani Nouman[1]
[1]University Of Haifa, , Israel
301 Integrating Social Protection Approaches to Address Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya’s Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs)
Dr. Mary Mutisya[1]
[1]The Catholic University Of Eastern Africa (cuea), , Kenya
303 Global Migration Governance: An Expression of the Regulation of the World Labor Force?
Mrs Ariane De Paiva[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil
305 Between the Democratization of Access and the Reproduction of Inequalities: Quota Policies and Cultural Capital in Brazilian Higher Education
Mr Marcos Guilherme Pereira Salgado[1]
[1]Universidade Estadual De Montes Claros, , Brazil
306 The Impact of Climate Change on Persons with Disabilities in Ghana
Magnus Mfoafo-M'carthy[1]
[1]Wilfrod Laurier University, , Canada
309 Beyond Survival: Gender, Stigma, and Relational Recovery among Women Survivors of War-Related Childhood Sexual Abuse Introduction
Agatha Kafuko[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Kenya
310 Refuge and Contemporary Humanitarianism under Analysis
Mrs Ariane De Paiva[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil
312 Gender based violence and Social Work interventions in India: A critical analysis
Chitra Karunakaran Prasanna[1]
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316 Land, Healing, and Identity: Creative Interventions with Incarcerated Women using a Black Feminist Lens
Ms Coya Halley[1]
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320 Establishing a Local Social Worker Network: A Case Study of Community Support from Uganda
Ms Charity Musiimenta[1]
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321 Harambee in Practice: Social Support as Collective Healing and Relational Agency after War-Related Sexual Violence
Agatha Kafuko[1]

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326 Shaping Global Advocacy for Social Work: How COSW Supports Local Social Workers

Dr David Jones[1]

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329 Reimagining Social Work Education in India: Integrating Social Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum

Preetha Kizhakkekara Vannadil[1]

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330 UNSDGs and Environment Impact Assessment in India: A Sustainability Analysis through Systematic Literature Review

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331 INSPIRARE Global: Building Digital Community, Partnership, and Shared Learning in International Social Work Education

Ass. Prof. Laura Krishnan-Mackie[1]

[1]Colby-sawyer College, , United States

333 Building an Epistemically Just Global Ethics Community

Dr Bibiana Koh[1]

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336 Unconditional Cash Transfers in the European Region: Evidence and Design Lessons from New Leaf Czechia project

Dr Melanie Zajacova[1]

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337 Mapping learnings of sexual and reproductive health services for diverse youth: A scoping review of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services in the pan-African region

Dr Rosslynn Zulla[1]

[1]University Of Calgary, Faculty Of Social Work, , Canada

338 WRAP Across Cultures: Embodying the Spirit of Harambee to Expand Mental Health Tools in Kenya

James Bollinger[1]

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340 Towards a Transformative Memory of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery: From the Perspective of Decolonial and Feminist Social Work

Dr. Osamu Miyazaki[1]

[1]Meiji Gakuin University, , Japan

341 Sharing Trauma Informed Stories through Video Games ~ Della's Story

Sima Chowdhury[1]

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345 Building Mental Health Capacity from Afar: Mixed-Methods Findings from a Diaspora-Enabled Open Trial in Nepal

Dr Arati Maleku[1]

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347 Reinvigorating and Decolonising Social Work Education and Practice: Promoting Synergies University-Community through Social Labs Methodology in Eastern Africa

Dr Charles Kalinganire[1]

[1]University Of Rwanda, , Rwanda

348 From Rehabilitation to Prevention: Community-Based Programme for Street-Connected Children in Nairobi

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349 Clinical Perspectives on Authoritarian Parenting and Emerging Adult Wellbeing in Kenyan Family Systems
Miss Jacinta Gitau[1]
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350 Pedagogical Techniques for Social Work Education
Dr Sandra Williamson-Ashe[1]
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353 The Hidden Costs of Global Migration: Lifelong Impacts on Filipino Children's Well-Being and Implications for Social Work
Mrs Lea Joy Friesen[1]
[1]University Of Windsor, , Canada
354 Learning from Global Experience: Adding Unconditional Cash to Child Protection Services to families at risk for a recurrence of violence against children in the home
Prof Martha Schwartz Bragin[1]
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355 Applying "Role Analysis" in Men's Anger-Management Groups
Mr Gil Gilad[1]
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358 Linking Training to Practice: Reimagining Field Education in Global Social Work
Mr Hugh Salmon, Dr Praveen Kumar[1]
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360 Bridging Continents and Building Competence: Advancing Global Social Work Education through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)
Dr. Mary Gitau[1]
[1]University Of Tennessee, Knoxville, , United States
361 An Africana Womanist Approach to Intimate Partner Violence: Social Work Practice Among African Women of the Diaspora
Dr Patricia Jefferson[1]
[1]University Of Kentucky College Of Social Work, , United States
362 Creativity and Simulation in Social Work and Health Education
Dr Janet Parker[2], Dr Joanne Redcliffe[1]
[1]University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, , United States, [2]Royal Holloway University Of London, , United Kingdom
364 Social Work Education for the Rapid Deployment of a Child Protection Workforce: UNICEF Models in Somalia, Somaliland, and South Sudan
Brendan Ross[1], Dr Lacey Sloan[2]
[1]Unicef-south Sudan, , , [2]Auburn University At Montgomery, , United States
365 At the Crossroads: Can Social Work Doctorates Survive Market Pressures and Protect the Profession's Knowledge and Future?
Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom
368 A snapshot of the chalkboard writing experiences of Bachelor of Education students with visual disabilities in South Africa
Dr Roshanthni Subrayen[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal, , South Africa
369 Connecting theory and practice in social work education – reflexivity as a core competence for sustainable professional development
Felix Manuel Nuss[1]
[1]IFSW, , Germany
372 Dismantling Structural Barriers and Advancing Equitable Access to Higher Education: Voices of First-Generation Women Students
Saibeth Cedeno Avila[1], Dr Wanja Ogongi[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States

373 In Their Words: What Every Social Worker Should Know About Sex Work
Sharvari Karandikar[1]
[1]The Ohio State University, , United States
374 Harambee for Child Protection: A COIL-Based Collaboration to Advance Global Social Work Education
Dr Felicia Tuggle[1], Dr Abigail Mills[2], Odunayo Irene Fasoyinu[3]
[1]Auburn Univeristy, , United States, [2]Department of Social Work,University of Ghana, , Ghana, [3]Auburn University , , United States
375 Child welfare and disability collaborations
Traci Laliberte[1]
[1]University Of Minnesota, , United States
376 Staying Home Under Fire: A Decolonial Perspective on Older Adults\' Attachment, Resistance, and Displacement in Arab Al-Aramsha
Dr Neveen Ali-Saleh Darawshy[1]
[1]Bar-ilan University, , Israel
378 Early Autism Diagnosis and Access to Care: Understanding Barriers for Minority Children Under 5
Mrs Nancy Huerta Ramirez[1]
[1]Millersville University Of Pennsylvania, , United States
381 The Perivoli Schools Trust Research Project - Film Screening
Janet Ananias[2], Dr Vicky Sharley[1], Dr Elizabeth Ndeukumwa Ngololo[2]
[1]University Of Bristol, , United Kingdom, [2]Univerasity Of Namibia, , Namibia
383 Attachment Theory: A Primer from a Non-Westerner Perspective
Jose Carbajal[1]
[1]Stephen F. Austin State University, , United States
384 Guiding the Guardians: Social Workers' Experiences of Supervision within a Child Protection Organisation in South Africa
Assoc Prof Priscalia Khosa[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa
385 Financial Stress and Psychosocial Wellbeing: Developing the Individual Financial Access Scale for Clinical Practice
Dr Julie Birkenmaier[1]
[1]Saint Louis University, , United States
387 Istos; A systemic community approach for children facing school exclusion due to family problems.
Prof Christos Panagiotopoulos[1]
[1]University Of Nicosia, , Cyprus
388 From Policy to Practice: Advancing Social Protection for South Africa's Vulnerable Children Through the Foster Child Grant Programme
Dr Nokuthula Ngubane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, , South Africa
390 Reimagining Social Work: Letting go of Futures Past
Mrs Kristina Carlsson Stylianides[1]
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391 Menstruation, Menopause
Dr. Sevaughn Banks[1]
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392 Doctoral Education in Social Work: U.S. Models, International Comparisons, and Future Directions
Prof Elizabeth Lightfoot[1]
[1]Arizona State University, , United States
393 Beyond Theory: How AI and Digital Simulations Can Prepare Health and Social Service Professionals for Workplace Violence
Dr Luce Pretorius[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa

394 Reimagining Document Analysis in Social Work: Developing an Adapted Applied Thematic Analysis Model for Policy Texts
Dr Luce Pretorius[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa
395 Performative Gratitude – A Barrier to Understanding the Needs of Older Immigrants Experiencing Homelessness in Canada
Dr Kaltrina Kusari[1], Dr Christine Walsh
[1]University Fehmi Agani Gjakova, , , [2]University of Calgary, , Canada
397 Integrating Human Rights into Social Work Education: Perspectives from Students and Educators in Croatia
Antonija Petričušić[1]
[1]University Of Zagreb Faculty Of Law, , Croatia
403 Analysis of the program for assisting homeless people in Uruguay
Soledad Camejo[1]
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406 Social work content podcasting: A short but rich and impactful history
Mim Fox[1]
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407 Forests, Conservation Policies and Tribal Communities: A Comprehensive Study of Development, Rights and Displacement in India
Prof Keshav Walke[1]
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408 Natural Disasters and Social Work Interventions: A Critical Indigenous Perspective
Mr Venesio Bwambale Bhangyi[1]
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410 Exploring the underrepresentation of Black women in management and leadership in social work in the UK
Miss Christina Channer[1]
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414 The Ethical-Institutional Structure of the CFESS/CRESS System in the Defense of Brazilian Social Work
Dr Reginaldo Franca Junior[1]
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415 Social Work, Intersectionality, and Lived Experiences: Black Women in the Fight Against Poverty and Social Inequalities
Dr Nilza Rogéria De Andrade Nunes[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil
419 Social Support Guidelines to enhance medication adherence among patients with mental disorders: Lagos State, Nigeria.
Dr Olabisi Eniola Oladipo[1]
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420 Indigenous and contextual social work and disaster research perspective in Nepal
Dilip Karki[1]
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421 Bridging the Language Gap: A Multilingual Therapeutic Game for Emotional Communication in Mixed Cities and Diverse Populations
Mrs Daphna Loval-Lederer[1]
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423 Social work and disaster model in Nepal; A qualitative study'
Dilip Karki[1]
[1]University Of The Sunshine Coast, , Australia
426 Work Mentalities and Trade Union Orientations amongst Social Workers in Germany

Mr Gian-Luca De Carlo[1]
[1]Otto-von-guericke University Magdeburg, , Germany
429 From Margins to Mandate: Repositioning Social Work as a Transformative Global Actor
Dr Cath Hill[1]
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431 Harambee Begins with Children: Centering Nomadic Voices in Social Welfare
Mr Aman Semwal[1]
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432 HOPE for Sustainable Development: A Holistic Model of Vocational Education for Vulnerable Youth in Kenya
Dr Wanjiku Kaime[1]
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433 MARCHA DAS MULHERES NEGRAS 2025: o que ensina para a universidade brasileira?
Mrs Priscila Beralda Moreira De Oliveira[1], Mrs Daniela Cristina Augusto Campos[2]
[1]Puc/sp, , Brazil, [2]Doutoranda Pela Pontificia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil
434 Exploring internationalisation for decolonisation of social work in a globally connected world.
Dr Sharlotte Tusasiirwe[2], Ms Kana Matsuo[1]
[1]Japan Women\'s University, , Japan, [2]Western Sydney University, , Australia
436 Ethnic Tourism as Strategy for Social Development?
Karin-Ulrike Nennstiel[1]
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439 From culture to practice? Measuring what inclusion means to learners with disabilities in Ghanaian mainstream schools using Ainscow’s four dimensions of inclusion.
Edward Asamoah[1]
[1]Kwame Nkrumah University Of Science And Technology-knust, Ghana, , Ghana
441 Hope Groups Amidst Poly-Crises: An Evidence-Based, Global and Community-Led Model to Prevent Violence Against Children in War, Displacement, and Humanitarian Crises
Nicole Baldonado[1]
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442 Beyond Clinical Models: Comparative Analysis of Community-Embedded Psychosocial Care Frameworks in Malawi and Kerala, India.
Mr Felix Tehuti Kakowa[1]
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443 Higher Education as a Social Right in Brazil: Between Historical Achievement and the Persistence of Inequalities
Mr Marcos Guilherme Pereira Salgado[1]
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444 Peacebuilding as Core Business: The Triple Mandate in Glocal Social Work
Dr Sharon Schneider[1]
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445 Dreaming the MSW: The On/Off-the-Ground Cohort Model for Transforming Advanced Social Work Education
Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov[1]
[1]Thompson Rivers University, , Canada
446 Climate Crisis & Recyclable Material Collectors: Unveiling Existing Socio-Environmental Implications
Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
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448 Recyclable Material Collectors’ Cooperatives and Recycling Credit: Can This Be Viewed as a Path to Sustainable Development?
Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
[1]Puc-rio, , Brazil
449 Harambee for Ukraine: Sustaining Solidarity Through Weekly Vigils, Academic Partnerships, and Diaspora Community Organizing

Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov[1]
[1]Thompson Rivers University, , Canada
451 Social Work within the Public Defender's Office: The experience of the Rede Apoia project in promoting access to justice for mothers and relatives of victims of state-inflicted lethal violence.
Mrs Daniela Cristina Augusto Campos[1]
[1]Doutoranda Pela Pontificia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil
452 Working in the margins: Reclaiming social work practice with highly stigmatized offender groups in Finnish prisons
Tia Vanne-Lindström[1]
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453 A Critical Feminist Evaluation of Kenya's National Action Plan for the Advancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security
Dr Jocelyn Hermoso[1]
[1]San Francisco State University, , United States
459 Systemic Lessons, Emerging Gaps, and the Evolving Role of Social Work in Guyana's Disaster and Child Protection Landscape
Mrs Dionne Frank[1]
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464 Community-driven partnerships, UN80, SDGs, eco-social practice, people\'s assemblies, human rights
Sue-Ann Macdonald[2], Ms Evelyn Tomaszewski[1]
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465 Black Women\'s and the Power of Harambee in Higher Education Retention
Dr Lashawnda Fields[1]
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467 Microfinance and women's economic empowerment: A comparative study of 'SuSu' schemes across rural and urban communities in Guyana
Dr Dianna DaSilva-Glasgow[1]
[1]University Of Guyana, , Guyana
472 From Dispossession to Decolonization: Climate Activists\' Relational Ethics in South Korea\'s Energy Frontier
Dr Eunjung Lee[2], Yoon Jung Chung[1]
[1]Ohio State University College Of Social Work, , United States, [2]University of Toronto, , Canada
473 Integrated Farming: Sustainable Development for Small-Scale Farmers
Sanjay Fulkar[1]
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475 Reconsidering International Internship: Ethical, Pedagogical, and Postcolonial Reflections
Dr Linda Sjåfjell[1]
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477 At the intersection of care and control: Harm reduction, Managed Alcohol Programs, and Cultural Adaptation
Dr Rossio Motta-ochoa[1]
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478 Reframing Youth Economic Empowerment in Kenya: Challenges, Gaps, and Strategic Opportunities
Mr Timothy Okatta[1]
[1]Catholic University Of Eastern Africa, , Kenya
480 Digitalizing social work services in rural communities: opportunities and limitations
Dr Thabisa Matsea[1]
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484 100 Years of Social Work Resistance: Responding to Alt-Right Movements Across the Americas[
Prof Fabiola Leal[1]
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487 Understanding Intersectional Competencies for Social Work in Disaster Risk Management
Mr Robert Koglek[1]
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491 The E-learning project on the Global standards for social work education and training
Annamaria Campanini[1]
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493 Codifying the Right to Universal Social Protection: Are Legally Binding Frameworks the Missing Link?
Dr Sergei Zelenev[1]
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495 Israeli Women-Led Micro-Enterprise Model: From Marginalized Communities in Israel to a New Pilot in Malawi
Dr Dror Netzer[1]
[1]Be-atzmi Ngo, , Israel
500 The Unheard Voices: the Changing Landscape of International Aid and its impacts on community-led organisations working in Kenyan slums.
Dr Eric Kimathi[1]
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502 Financial Social Work as a Global Practice: Advancing the SDGs through Financial Capability and Asset Building
Dr Jin Huang[1]
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511 AI-Powered Digital Social Work: From Vision to Practice – Challenges, Workforce, Ethics and Professionalism
Miss Miri Frank[1]
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513 Beyond the Classroom: Designing Short-Term Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Social Work Education
Dr Chao-Kai Huang[1]
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515 From Case to Cause: Politicisation in Social Work Practice
Melih Samson[1]
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517 Productive Aging in Rural Contexts: Opportunities and Challenges for Elderly Artisans in Rural Tanzania
Ms Catherine Aquiline Manda[1]
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519 Preventing IPV in Crisis: A Collective Impact and Men's Engagement Approach from Israel
Dr Dror Netzer[1]
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521 "The relevance and inseparability of Community Social Work in the face of emerging local challenges."
Miss Cláudia Cláudia Garcia[1]
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522 Embedding Career Development and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in African School Curricula: A Social Work Approach to Youth Empowerment and Prevention of Irregular Migration
Ms Augustina Ugbana[1]
[1]Care And Prevention Organization, The Gambia And University Of Calgary, Canada, , Canada
523 The Community Dimension of Social Work: A Contemporary Strategy to Address Emerging Local Challenges
Miss Cláudia Cláudia Garcia[1]
[1]Clissis - Universidade Lusíada De Lisboa, , Portugal
525 Men and Women's Discourses on Family Life in Rwanda: Between Tradition and Change

Mrs Consolée Uwihangana[1]
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526 Utilizing the Native Hawaiian Concept of Kapu Aloha in Other Social Movements
Christian Kunz[1]
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527 Bridging the divide: Collaboration, challenges, and proposed strategies for school social work practice in South African education
Dr Gift Khumalo[1]
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528 From Development to Implementation: Parenting Support for Migrant Families
Pauliina Sibbie[1]
[1]University Of Helsinki, , Finland
531 Culturally targeted Interventions to Address Gender-Based Violence and Related Mental Health among Immigrants and Refugees in North America
Dr Cecilia Mengo[1]
[1]The Ohio State College Of Social Work, , United States
532 Social Rights Advising as Radical Social Work Practice: shifting power, building solidarity
Prof Jill Hanley[1]
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533 Understanding Resilience Among Immigrant and Refugee Women Survivors of IPV
Dr Cecilia Mengo[1]
[1]The Ohio State College Of Social Work, , United States
537 Let’s Talk About Sex: Integrating Sexuality Discourse into Recovery Pathways for Substance Use Disorders
Mrs Niva Lev-el[1]
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538 Toxic Masculinity and Mental Health: Experiences of male survivors of intimate partner violence in seeking support in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe
Miss Ashely Ropafadzo Tome[1]
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539 Reducing Stigma and Building Resilience: Adapting a Psycho-Educational Program for HIV-Affected Girls and Young Women in Namibia
Nicole Bromfield[1]
[1]East Carolina University, University Of Namibia, ,
540 Engaging social work students to explore how their material possessions, consumer habits, and political location influence their views on sustainability
Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö[1]
[1]University Of Jyväskylä, , Finland
542 Are you safe to chat? Advocate approaches to safety on digital crisis hotlines
Dr Rachel Voth Schrag[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States
544 Technology Facilitated Abuse: Survivor and Staff Experiences and Intervention Needs
Dr Rachel Voth Schrag[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States
545 The Social Work Climate Handbook by the Finnish professional organization Talentia in nutshell
Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö[1]
[1]University Of Jyväskylä, , Finland
546 Harambee Healing: Clinical Interventions for Debt, Poverty, and Health Equity in South Africa\'s Workforce.
Dr Johanna Deka[1]
[1]University Of Witwatersrand, , South Africa
550 Social Workers Engagement with Client Information using Social Media In England.
Dr Paul O Onginjo[1]
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552 Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents: Professional Roles, Challenges and Strategies
Prof Christian Ghanem[1]
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554 Harambee to Prepare Anti-Racist Social Workers: A Qualitative Study of Faculty Perceptions Social Work Faculty's Perceptions and Implementations of Anti-Racist Pedagogy in the United States
Dr. Allison Buzard[1]
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556 Innovation in Professional Training: The Experience of The First Mba in Social Work and Artificial Intelligence in Brazil
Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]
[1]Cfess/abepss, ,
559 Enhancing Children's Participation in Community by Organizing Adult Support Group: A Case Study
Miss Karleen May Reodique[1]
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560 Strengthening the Social Service Workforce in ASEAN: Capacity Development through International Technical Cooperation
Dr Akiko Yokoyama[1], Mr. Chinchai Cheecharoen[1]
[1]Japan International Cooperation Agency / Asean Training Centre For Socail Work And Social Welfare, , Japan
562 From Childhood Trauma to Digital Dependence: Identity Vulnerabilities and Addictive Social Media Use Among Young Men
Sabina Lissitsa[1]
[1]Ariel University, , Israel
563 Evaluating an innovative socio emotional learning program for asylum-seeking children living in shelters
Dr Maria Emilia Bianco Galindez[1]
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564 Building together: Diaspora-Led Mental Health Collaboration During Political Unrest
Ms Belinda Taka Onyango[2], Elizabeth Mukasa[1]
[1]School of Social Work, University of Georgia, , United States, [2]Boston University, Massachusetts, United States
566 (Neo)Social work and the challenge of resistance
Mrs Carolien Terhorst[1]
[1]Han University Of Applied Sciences, , Netherlands
570 From \"Me\" to \"We\": Ubuntu and Integrated Social Work Practice for Innovation and Sustainability
Dr Bronwyn Cross-Denny[1]
[1]Sacred Heart University, , United States
572 Social Work Education and Palliative Care
Assoc Prof Somaya Abdullah[1]
[1]University Of Cape Town, ,
573 Experience and Reflection on Public-Private Cooperation in Post-Disaster Emergency Shelter: A Comparative Analysis of the Two Hualien Earthquakes in Taiwan
Dr Ying-hao Huang[1]
[1]Associate Professor / National Dong Hwa University, ,
574 Youth Mental Health Mobile App: A Journey of Co-Creation
Dr Dora Tam[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
576 Care and Revitalisation of Indigenous Culture Health Stations in Taiwan: An Analysis of a Productive Ageing Perspective
Dr Ying-hao Huang[1]
[1]Associate Professor / National Dong Hwa University, ,

577 The Many Faces of Loss and Grief Concurrently Applied with Instillation of Hope Through a Trauma Informed Approach
Dr Jessica Weiss[1]
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581 Rethinking our cities: contributions from feminist urbanism and the construction of the commons
Prof Beatriz Rocco[1]
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585 Multiplicitous Vectors of Knowledge: A Multi-Case Classroom Ethnography of Antiracism Pedagogies and Racial Learning in MSW Diversity and Social Justice Courses
Amber Williams[1]
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588 Reimagining Social Work Education to Address the Global Mental Health Treatment Gap
Dr RoseAnne Droesch[1], Shahnaz Savani[2]
[1]Washington State University, University Of Texas Arlington, University Of Houston Downtown, University Of Houston Dow, , , [2]University Of Houston Downtown, , United States
589 “Are we Still Learning Anything”? Perceptions of Nigerian University Students on the Utilisation of AI Models for Academic Work
Dr Prince Chiagozie Ekoh[1]
[1]University Of Nigeria, Nsukka, , Nigeria
590 Unfreezing Social Workers: A Practice Research from the Perspective of Discursive Psychology
Hui Quan Chen[1]
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594 Afro-descent birth persons level of trust in their relationships with maternal health medical providers compared to doulas during the perinatal stage!
Mrs Crystal Jones[1]
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595 From the Critique of Fanon and Freire to Community Practice: Participatory Action Research as a Way to Decolonize Social Work in Africa
Mr Hafiz Jamú[1]
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596 Reclaiming and Reimagining Child Welfare: Decolonizing Practice and Advancing Equity
Dr Christa Gilliam, Dr Belinda D. Smith[1]
[1]Morgan State University, ,
597 Childhood Polyvictimization and Mental Distress Among Adolescent Girls in Namibia
Dr Ntandoyenkosi Maphosa[1]
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599 Suppression of Palestinian Liberation Movements by Canadian Institutions: Implications for Social Work Practice
Ms Noni Nabors, Lindsay Morris[1], Tys Burger[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
601 Reclaiming Global Social Work: Centering Afrocentric and Indigenous Ways of Knowing to Transform Global Practice
Ms Sheryl Thompson[1]
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603 Gender Equity of Women Migrant Labourers in Tiruppur Textile Industries
Dr M.Hilaria Soundari[1], Ms A.Viyakula Mary[1]
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605 Disasters and the need for Glocal Social Work
Assoc Prof Panagiotis Pentaris[1]
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607 What are the menstrual health and hygiene needs of school-age girls in northeastern Ghana, and how can sustainable, locally-implemented interventions improve their educational outcomes and well-being in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals?
Dr Roenia Deloach[1]
[1]Savannah State University,, , United States
608 Social Work in Addressing Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents: Reflections on Professional Competencies
Mr Alan Alves[1]
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609 Building Proposals to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in MERCOSUR
Mr Alan Alves[1]
[1]Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio De Mesquita Filho, ,
610 Reimagining Social Work Education in Africa: Co-creation, Indigenous Pedagogies, and Epistemic Freedom for a Transformative Future.
Dr Andiswa Pamella Bottoman-Mdlankomo[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal (ukzn), , South Africa
612 Social Worker's Role in Strengthening Livestock and Fisheries for Rural Food Security of Marginalized Communities
Dr Kadimi Madhu Babu[1]
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613 Improving Collaborations to Mitigate Non-Economic Loss and Damage Attributed to Disasters and Disruptions to School Feeding Programs: The Case of Malawi
Ms Tsogololathu Angel Itaye[1]
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614 Towards an Ecological Society: Social Work and the Social Institutions of Sustainable & Just Shared Futures
Dr Robert A Case[1]
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615 Recapitulation of Participation and Position of Social Workers in Social Movement: A Legacy of Hong Kong and its Impact to the World of Social Work
Dr Timothy Ka-Kit Chen[1]
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617 Healing Beyond Bones: Integrating Orthopaedic Surgery and Social Work to Restore Child and Family Wellbeing
Dr Khetani Solly Bila[1]
[1]University Of Pretoria, , South Africa
618 Effect of Gerontological Services Access on the Welfare Status of Older Persons in South-Western Uganda.
Dianah Aharimpisya[1]
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619 To Re-examine the Concept of Self Determination among Social Work Students: a dialogue between different cultural and socio-political contexts
Dr Timothy Ka-Kit Chen[1]
[1]Gratia Christian College, , Hong Kong
620 Care needs of older Australians living in rural areas: Key Issues and Challenges identified by case managers
Mr Ignatius Chida[1]
[1]Charles Sturt University, , Australia
624 Engineering and Social Work Student Teams Build International Success in India, Costa Rica, Greece and beyond
Ms Tanya Voss[1]
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626 Living on the Edge of Care and Survival: A Situational Analysis of Single Mothers in Nepal

Dr Arati Maleku[1]
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627 Dignity of Risk in Global Assisted Living: A Comparative Analysis
Dr Josephine Misaro[1]
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628 Doctoral Education in Social Work in China: Opportunities and Challenges
Assoc Prof Quancai Li[1]
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630 Professional alliances as political actors: institutionalizing social work in Kazakhstan
Ayagoz Aubakirova[2], Yessimova Dinara[1]
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631 Social work as a tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: evidence from HIV-affected families in Kazakhstan
Ayagoz Aubakirova[1], Ms Sholpan Primbetova[1]
[1]Al-farabi Kazakh National University, National Alliance Of Professional Social Workers Of Kazakhstan, , Kazakhstan
632 Rewards and Challenges of Knowledge-Sharing Leadership: Experiences of Racialized PhD Students
Dr Johanne Thomson-Sweeny[1]
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633 Sa Bahay Ampunan (At the Orphanage): Filipino Values in Residential Care Facilities for Children
Dr Hazel Cometa-Lamberte[1]
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634 Making (Radical) Change Real: Relational Criteria Needed to Create and Sustain Transformational Social Innovation between Nonprofit Organizations and Local Governments
Dr Trish Lenz[1]
[1]York University, School Of Social Work, , Canada
635 Every Home Tells a Story – Rebuilding Community Narratives During War and Displacement
Mrs Carmit Palty Katzir[1]
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636 Walking together: Rebranding Rural Social Work for Transformative Change for Sustainable Community Partnership and Social Development.
Mrs Heidi Fuentes[1]
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637 Social Work Supervision: Advancing Quality Care and Decision-Making
Dr Rebecca Davis[1]
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638 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
Naresh Dhurve[1]
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639 From Identification to Reintegration: Leveraging Digital Social Work to Strengthen Social Protection Responses to School Teenage Pregnancy
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641 Incest, Silence, and Social Work: Addressing a Hidden Child Protection Challenge in Zambia
Dr Namakau Kakanda-Sinkala[1]
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642 Integrating Sexuality Social Justice concepts within Social Work Education
Dr Becky Anthony[1]
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643 Need for Social Work Intervention in Combating Violence against Women in Indian Society
Prof Saraswati Raju Iyer[1]

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644 Centering Student Voices: Reimagining MSW Education to Foster Belonging and Well-Being
Dr Lana Elkins[1]
[1]University Of South Carolina, , United States
646 Lived experiences of transgender and gender diverse people living with neurodivergence and disability in Hong Kong and Taiwan
Chenxi Yang[1]
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648 Gender affirmation experiences among Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Hong Kong and Taiwan
Chenxi Yang[1]
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649 Determinants of Willingness to Use Home-Care Robots Among Older Adults in Chinese Mainland
Prof Mei-chun Cheung[1]
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650 We All (Should) Stand Together: A Collaborative Response to the Support and Development of Newly Qualified Social Workers- Insights from Graduates and Supervisors
Mrs Leanne Jordaan[1], Dr Corlie Giliomee[1]
[1]University Of Pretoria, , South Africa
651 Uganda Women\'s Immigrants Experiences of Social Integration into the Swedish Culture
Ms Doreen Ainembabazi[1]
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652 Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse Involving LGBTQ+ Youth
Dr Assaf Vital, Dr Amitai Marmor[1]
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654 RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDERS IN HOMES FOR THE DISABLED IN IBADAN, OYO STATE
Oluwapelumi Iyanuoluwa Ogunmola[1]
[1]Aanu Olaitan, , Nigeria
655 When Parents Struggle, Teens Suffer: Understanding the Impact of Parenting on Adolescent Well-being from a Clinical Social Work Perspective
Dr Violet Simiyu[1]
[1]Catholic University Of Eastern Africa, ,
656 Systems, Solidarity, and Sendai: A Curriculum for Disaster-Ready Social Work
Mrs Falon Alo[1]
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658 Enhancing Youth Upward Mobility Through Adaptive Intervention Designs: Insights from the JC YUP! Project
Dr Steven Sek-Yum Ngai[1]
[1]The Chinese University Of Hong Kong, , China
659 How does digital resilience matter? Examining the association between cyber victimization and psychological problems among children with different left-behind statuses
Dr Kunjie Cui[1]
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664 Parent councils as governmental technology
Mr Borgar Engtrø[1]
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666 Voices from the Global South: Academic Mobility and Internationalization Experiences in Brazilian Social Work (Brazil)
Mrs Adriana Regina Vettorazzi Schmitt[1]
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670 Trauma, sexual abuse, and adapted therapeutic responses for people with developmental disabilities
Ms Ronit Argaman[1]
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671 Effects of sexual abuse and sexual violence on sexuality and sexual healing
Ms Ronit Argaman[1]
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681 Achieving the SDGs: Case Studies from Social Workers in Africa
Prof David Androff[1]
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683 Integrating Authentic Learning Framework in Social Work Education: Experiences of Social Work Students in an Urban South African University
Dr Jennifer Wangari, Hlologelo Malatji[1]
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686 From U.S. Secret War Allies to Deportation: A Full Circle of Forced Migration, Structural Violence, and Transnational Social Work among Hmong Refugees
Dr Pa Nhia Xiong[1]
[1]California State University, Fresno, , United States
687 Burnout-in-the-making: Following Burnout as a Relational Process in Community Social Work
Monika Barbe-Welzel[1]
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688 Assessing Providers' Attitudes Towards Adoption of Virtual Reality in Military Mental Health Care using UTAUT and Theoretical Domains Framework
Thomas Mwibanda[1]
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690 Integrating Human Services in an Unequal Nonprofit Sector: Organizational Capacity, Funding, and Access for Low-Income Families
Dr Baorong Guo[1]
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692 Advancing environmental justice and sustainability in social work practice: Challenges and opportunities
Nicola Williams[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,
694 Spirit of Harambee with strong intergenerational networks in the United States
Maria Gurrola[1]
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695 Beyond Prohibition: Cannabis, Intersectionality, and Harm Reduction in Social Work Across the Lifespan
Dr Paulette S. Smith[1]
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697 Single teen mothers' Perspectives on future opportunities: Long-term outcomes of supporting interventions
Ms Généreuse Mukayisenga[1]
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698 From Policy to Practice: Implementing Gender Equality in Combat Roles within the South African Army
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[1]North-west University, , South Africa
699 Collaboration project to decolonise mental health social work education
Jill Childs[1]
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701 Students' Political Engagement and Social Justice Preparedness in Contemporary Social Work Education
Dr Melissa Redmond[1]

[1]Carleton University, ,

703 The AMANAH Model: Faith-Based Knowledge and the Five Pillars of Care in Decolonising Social Work

Miss Faisa Abdirahman[1]

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704 Economic Migration and Labor Trafficking: A Mixed-Methods Study Exploring Intersecting Vulnerabilities among Youth and Young Adults in Malawi and Zambia

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705 Harambee: Women Leading Together for Transformative Change

Miss Darlene Newman[1]

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706 Resilience from below: Interrogating 'Resilient Communities\' to Floods from an Emic Perspective in Southern Alberta, Canada

Dr Mahed Choudhury[1]

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708 Port to Port: examining the dispossession of the historic Jamestown community in Ghana

Rose-Lynne Amoah[1]

[1]York University, ,

711 Intersecting identities, diversity, and the right support: Lessons learned from firefighters in Alberta

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712 Electronic Records in the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) in the City of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil

Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]

[1]Cfess/abepss, ,

713 A comparative study on social housing in three countries: Australia, Brazil and United States of America

Dr Ndungi Mungai[1], Prof. Nicole Dubus[1]

[1]Charles Sturt University, , Australia

714 Transformative Learning in Kenya: Preparing Social Work Students for Practice in a Global Context

Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]

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715 Why Do They Stay? Black Women, Toxic Environments, and Schools of Social Work

Dr Lashawnda Fields[1]

[1]University Of Arkansas, , United States

716 Reclaiming Social Work Through Embodied Birth-Informed Practice: Restoring Presence, Power, and Connection in Care

Christa Mccrorie[1]

[1]Creative Therapeutic Solutions, Llc, ,

717 Deinstitutionalization in Slovenia: Restoring Civil Rights and Building Community-Based Care

Mateja Vončina[1]

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719 Principles for thinking, being, and doing decoloniality in Social Work

Prof. Shahana Rasool[1]

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720 Exploring Students' Experiences of Human Rights Education in Social Work: A Cross-Continental Comparative Study

Dr Corlie Giliomee[1]

[1]University of Pretoria and ASSWA, , South Africa

721 Gender Equality and Social Development: How far have we come?
Prof. Shahana Rasool[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa
723 Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Through Anti-Colonial Praxis, Collective Care and Black Feminist Leadership
Ms Shantel Thomas[1], Dr Jordanne Edwards[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom
725 The Formation, Function, and Future of the Anti-Racist Movement (ARM): How ARM Reframes Anti-Racism Through Black Women\'s Healing
Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom
726 Virtual Art Therapy Group: Promoting Healing and Connection in Digital Spaces
Patrick Panos[1]
[1]Utah Valley University, , United States
727 Networking Amongst New Social Workers for an Interconnected Social Work Movement
Omar Mohamed[1]
[1]Ifsw Europe, , Germany
730 Using Global Philosophy and Afrocentric Ideas to Decolonise Social Work Pedagogy: Applying Harambee Principles to Promote Collective Learning and Transformative Practice
Dr Arlene Weekes[1]
[1]University Of Birmingham, , United Kingdom
731 Access to mental health services for migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong from a service delivery system perspective
Sindy Li[1]
[1]University Of Edinburgh, ,
732 What factors predict Job Satisfaction in Social Workers? (A Quantitative Study from the UK)
Dr Selwyn Stanley[1]
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733 Exploring BSW Students' Perceptions of ADEI in a Redesigned Pre-Practicum Course at a Predominantly White Institution
Mr Nicholas Zeimet[1]
[1]Bethel University, , United States
734 Remodelling Child Reformation in Malawi: A Social Development and Ubuntu-Informed Framework for Sustainable Reintegration (PHDBASED))
Mr Felix Tehuti Kakowa[2,3], Raj Yadav[1]
[1]Queensland University Of Technology, , , [2]Midlands State University (zw) And Association Of Social Workers In Malawi , , Malawi, [3]Rajagiri College Of Social Sciences, , Malawi
735 Territorial Resistance a Political-Emotional Dimension in Hydroelectric Projects in Colombia And Chile
Dr Nélida Ramirez[1]
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736 Innovative e-Learning in Social Work: Simulation-Based Learning (SBL) to Translate Social Justice Value into Practice
Dr Eunjung Lee[1]
[1]University Of Toronto, , Canada
737 Social Work for a Sustainable Future: Lessons from Global Women Leaders
Dr Roslynn Scott-Adams[1]
[1]National Catholic School Of Social Service At The Catholic University Of America, , United States
743 Building RESILIENT Communities through Inclusive Education in East Africa
Prof Ann Christin E Nilsen[1]
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744 Shades of Bias: An Intersectional Tool for Revolutionary Praxis
Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
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745 Authorship as Leadership: Reconfiguring Social Work Learning Through Black Feminist Writing Praxis
Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
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746 Decolonising the social work curriculum: a scoping review
Dr Patrice Whitehorne-Smith[1]
[1]Flinders University | Flinders University | Flinders University | Australian Catholic University, ,
747 The IPVE Taskforce: Online Experiential Learning for IPV Response
Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States
748 Strengthening Teachers' Role in Child Protection: Social Work's Contribution to Learner 'S Safety in Schools in Packwach, Uganda
Dr Peter Nareeba[1]
[1]Mentoring And Empowerment Program For Young Women (memprow), , Uganda
749 Evaluation of a Sports Program on the Behavior and Interpersonal Relationships of Disadvantaged Adolescents
Fen Ling Chen[1]
[1]Icsw Nea, ,
751 Role understanding of actors in transnational non-formal youth education – south-north-perspectives (abstract for poster presentation)
Bettina Waldt[1]
[1]School Social Work, Esd/global Learning, Etc., ,
752 The psychological task of transformative leaders in fostering a \'soft life\' trend in professional learning communities
Dr Merlene Christobelle Esau[1]
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754 Global Insights, Local Impact: A Collaborative Cultural Adaptation of Youth Wellbeing Assessments
Yakahiris Norelis Vazquez[1], Dr Wanja Ogongi[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States
756 IMITACION Y CREATIVIDAD
Dr Carmita Leonor Alavarez Santana[2], Dr Jorge Erick Bojorque Pazmiño[1]
[1]Private, , , [2]Laica Eloy Alfaro University of Manabí / Anuatse / Alaeits, , Spain
759 Bringing Policy to Life: Strengthening Social Justice Commitments Through Experiential Classroom Strategies
Dr Melissa Redmond[1]
[1]Carleton University, ,
761 Initiatives for the Reform of Social Assistance Policies in Taiwan
Dr Pei-Yuen Tsai[1]
[1]Graduate Institute Of Social Work, National Chengchi University, , Taiwan
763 The need for places outside the home where mothers of children with disabilities can relax.
Mrs Miho Maehiro[1]
[1]Musashino University, , Japan
766 A Space and Dialogue for Mothers Raising Children with Disabilities to Actively Choose "Happiness"
Mrs Miho Maehiro[1]
[1]Musashino University, , Japan
769 Making International Social Work Education Accessible to All
Dr Melissa Grady[1]
[1]Catholic University Of America, , United States
771 Innovating the Social Work Education Curriculum: Preparing Tomorrow's Social Workers to Meet Local and Global Challenges
Dr Beverly Wagner[1]
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776 Teleconsultations in Dehospitalization as a Care Strategy: The Experience of Social Work in High-Complexity Healthcare in Brazil
Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]
[1]Cfess/abepss, ,
781 Designing Interactive Environments with UI/UX for Children with Asperger's Learning Musical Instruments
Carlos Alberto Ochoa Ortíz[1], Irma Hernández-Baéz[2], Alejandro Morales-Benavides[3], Roberto Contreras[1], Leticia Ortíz[1], Saúl Gonzalez[1], Humberto García[4], Francisco Trejo[5]
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784 Extended Reality technology: Digital insights for social work delivery in technology-driven societies
Dr. Dalon Taylor[1]
[1]Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, , Canada
785 The alternative approach: providing social work services and supervision during the transition from emergency to temporary placement—A case study of a post-earthquake social work service in northwest China
Dr Tian Zhou[1]
[1]Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , China
788 Social workers in elderly care
Mrs Nina Thorbjørnsen[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, , Norway
790 Maternal Mental Health Needs and Resilience in Rural Communities
Dr Jessica Liddell[1]
[1]University Of Montana, , United States
792 The Influence of the Ubuntu Philosophical Framework in decolonize social work Practice
Mr Meinrad Haule Lembuka[1]
[1]The Open University Of Tanzania, , Tanzania, United Republic of
793 Community Networks and Sustainable Environmental Practices in Narok County, Kenya
Ms Grace Wanjiku Ndegwa[1]
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794 Reposition of Ujamaa in the Future of Social Work Education and Practice
Mr Meinrad Haule Lembuka[1]
[1]The Open University Of Tanzania, , Tanzania, United Republic of
795 The Role of Abortion Funds: A Qualitative Study of Rural Abortion Fund Applicants and Global Implications
Dr Jessica Liddell[1]
[1]University Of Montana, , United States
797 Suicide in Ghana: Examining the Role of Culture, Gender, Attribution, and Stigma
Dr Robin Gearing[1]
[1]University Of Houston, , United States
798 Rhythms of Relations: Social Workers\' Role for Just, Equitable and Sustainable Socio-Ecological Transformations.
Maria Båld[1]
[1]Independent Researcher, , Sweden
799 SOCIAL WORK, CLIMATE JUSTICE, AND SHARED FUTURE: Challenges in Vulnerable Territories of Latin America
Dr Ana Rojas Acosta[1]
[1]Universidade Federal De Sâo Paulo - Brasil, ,
800 Cross-Cultural Context of Suicide Stigma: Comparison Between Mexican and Mexican American Communities
Dr Robin Gearing[1]
[1]University Of Houston, , United States

802 Citizen Science in Social Work: Designing a resource guide on active ageing
Ana Belén Cuesta R uiz-Clavijo[1], Mrs Esther Raya Diez[1]
[1]University Of La Rioja, , Spain
803 A Community Based Initiative to Promote Health and Wellness
Dr Victoria Venable-Edwards[1]
[1]Salisbury University, School Of Social Work, , United States
805 How Open Access (OA) Textbook Options Can Be Used to Address Financial Barriers in Social Work Education
Dr Victoria Venable-Edwards[1]
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807 The vision of social work in the future world
Dr Hassan Mousavi Chelak[1]
[1]President Of Iran Association Of Social Workers, Ifsw-ap Ethics Commissionair, ,
810 Culturally Grounded Social Work Interventions for Health Equity among Rural Older Adults in Southwest China
Dr Kun Tian[2], Dr Jie Zhuang[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , Hong Kong, [2]Zhuhai College of Science and Technology, , China
811 Photovoice Between the Streets and the Classroom: Co-Creation in Social Work Education
Eva Gallén-Granell[1]
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813 Experiencing democracy: attitudes and opinions of young people during the Spanish Transition
Domingo Carbonero Muñoz[1], Mrs Esther Raya Diez[1], Manuel Hernández Pedreño[2], Olga García Luque[2], Salvador Manzanera Román[2], Melchor Gómez Pérez[4]
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814 Social Work and Rural Social Innovation for climate change adaptation: An experience in the peruvian Andes
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815 Cross-Cultural Collaboration in Doctoral Supervisiory Teams - perspectives from Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Norway
Ms Rukiah Mwinyi Khamis[2], Dr Cecilie Revheim[1]
[1]Institute Of Sociology And Social Work, University Of Agder, Norway, , , [2]Makerere University, , Tanzania
817 Relief from statelessness, A case study
Mr Hamed Olamaee[1]
[1]Iran Association Of Social Workers, Ifsw-ap Representitive To The Un, ,
819 The Impact of Technology-Facilitated Violence on Women\'s Mental Health Outcomes in Zambia
Dr Edson Chipalo[1]
[1]University Of Cincinnati, ,
820 I Don't See Colour: Exploring Social Workers\' Racial Awareness, Implicit Bias, and Readiness for Race Talk in Guyana and the Caribbean
Dr Paulette Henry[1], Ms Latoya Beckles[1]
[1]University Of Guyana, ,
821 DIGNITY IN THE WORK OF WASTE PICKERS: A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE
Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
[1]Puc-rio, , Brazil
826 Writing for an English language international social work education journal
Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom
827 The Creation of Socio-Oncology: A Holistic Social Work Practice for People with Cancer
Moureau Yannick[1]
[1]University Of Nîmes, , France
830 Artificial Intelligence in Social Work: Promise, Peril, and Professional Integrity

Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom
833 Culturally informed responses to grief and loss in a fractured world: Implications for school social work in African contexts
Leticia Villarreal Sosa[1]
[1]University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, ,
834 NIA & CUSP: Mentoring Initiatives to Support Social Work Students
Dr Allessia Owens-king[1]
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835 Recovery through Parallel and Plural Realities: Rethinking Mental Health and Social Work Practice in Nunavik
Prof Dominique Gaulin[1]
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836 Building sustainable futures through groupwork: Strengthening collaboration through exploring highlights, challenges, and resources.
Dr Mieko Yoshihama[2], Namoonga.b Chilwalo[1]
[1]University Of Namibia, , Namibia, [2]University Of Michigan, School Of Social Work, , United States
838 Social work research addressing the problem of NEET youth: Scoping review and implications
Prof Mary Collins[1]
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841 The Role of Health Social Workers in Safeguarding Health Equity During Emergency Discharge Policies
Dr Efrat Lusky-Weisrose[1]
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846 Stories Without Borders: Sharing Social Work Narratives on a Global Digital Platform
Prof Rafael Angulo[1]
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847 Wellness Cafe Workshops : Meeting the challenges of rising global youth mental ill-health
Prof Anthony Ghaye[1]
[1]Umatter Tanzania, ,
849 The NANA Model: Developing professional awareness and intercultural understanding in Social Work
Miss Monica Sedahl[1]
[1]Uit - The Arctic University Of Norway, ,
851 Social Work Is Not Self-Harm: Making the SAVI Shift for Sustainable Shared Futures
Nadine Boyne[1]
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856 Decolonizing and Indigenizing Science: Reconfiguring Doctoral Social Work Curriculum in Africa {Panel Presentation- 45 Minutes]
Mr Venesio Bwambale Bhangyi[1]
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861 Legal framework of domestic violence
Mrs Maren Sagvaag Retland[1]
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862 Social Work from a Global South Perspective: The Articulation of the CFESS-CRESS Network with Portuguese-Speaking African Countries in the 2023–2026 Triennium
Prof Iara Vanessa Fraga De Santana[1]
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863 Photovoice as an Ethical Digital Social Work Intervention: Addressing Violence Against Women Through Participatory Digital
Mrs Oluwatoni Modupe Adeleke Olubitan[1]
[1]IFSW, ,

867 The NANA Model: Developing professional awareness and intercultural understanding in Social Work to address global challenges.
Prof Anthony Ghaye[1]
[1]Umatter Tanzania, ,
868 Medical Social Work Support for the Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers
Dr Peter Nareeba[1]
[1]Mentoring And Empowerment Program For Young Women (memprow), , Uganda
872 Trauma-informed community work with youth through a terror attack survivor's narrative and original music to foster resilience and shared meaning
Shai Shmuel Fahima[1]
[1]Independent Social Worker, ,
878 Social Workers and Advocacy for De-Institutionalization of Children In Kenya
Dr Muraguri Phyllis[1]
[1]The Technical University Of Kenya, , Kenya
880 Whose Best Interests? Minority Parent Perspectives on Child Welfare Decision-Making in Norway
Mrs Maren Sagvaag Retland[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, , Norway
881 Boarding School Education in Xizang, China
Siu Ming Kwok[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,
883 Harambee as Prevention: Relational Accountability and Collective Approaches to Domestic Violence Prevention
Dr. Patrina Duhaney[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
884 Seeing Things Differently: A Necessary Challenge for the Helping Profession
Dr Gillian Berry[1], Ms. Audrey Enid Benn[1]
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886 From Statute to Practice: Confronting Legal and Implementation Barriers to Race-Conscious Child Welfare Laws
Joan Blakey[1], Traci Laliberte[2]
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887 Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Comparative Analysis of Social Work Approaches to Supporting Displaced Families in Burundi and the United States
Dr Phyllis Thompson[1]
[1]University Of Tennessee, Knoxville, , United States
890 Centering Afrocentric Healing Frameworks in Clinical Social Work Practice
Ms Sheryl Thompson[1]
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891 Knowledge, attitude and practices contributing to the neglect of the mental health wellbeing of the ageing population Imo State, Nigeria
Mrs Ifeyinwa Austin-Egole[1]
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894 Exploring the prevalence, socio-cultural drivers of substance abuse among women in South Africa: Insights from social workers
Miss Dzunisani Euginea Baloyi[1]
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895 Not a "one man show" - a qualitative study of the importance of student groups in international field placements.
Ann-Iren Høgalmen[1]
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898 Competitive Skill Infusion into Macro Social Work Curriculum
Dr Joyce White[1]
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902 Reframing HIV Service Delivery: Social Work, Resilience, and Sustainable Development Pathways
Bonita Sharma[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,
904 Community Building in Crisis: Interventions with Displaced Communities in Temporary Housing Shelters
Prof Hani Nouman[1]
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905 Rethinking "caregiving" in initial and continuing education: through dialogue seminars and communities of practice in Health and Social Services
Mr Jean-Pierre Béland[1]
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906 Do Digital Tools Empower Social Workers or Exhaust Them?
Mrs Amal Al Salti[1]
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908 Bridging culture, care, and recovery: Advancing Mental Health Social Work in South Africa
Prof Nontembeko Bila[1]
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909 The Social Needs Framework: An Indigenous Framework for Social Work Practice in Africa
Dr Senkosi Moses Balyejjusa[1]
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910 An arduous and evolving path towards the welfare state in Africa
Prof Louise Carignan[1], Marie Fall[1]
[1]Université Du Québec À Chicoutimi, ,
911 Beyond the Burden of Change: Shared Accountability in Inclusive and Transformative Social Work Education
Dr Diana Van Dijk[1]
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912 Brazilian Social Work in the Context of Artificial Intelligence Expansion
Miss Marenilse Saturnino[1]
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919 Brazilian Social Work: Institutional Requests and Professional Demands Post COVID-19 Pandemic
Miss Marenilse Saturnino[1]
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920 Providing Hope, Support, and Advanced Psychological Treatment Skills to Frontline Mental Health Providers Treating Survivors of Loss and Trauma in Ukraine
Dr Bobbie Legg[1]
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923 Understanding pathways of resiliency for adolescents living with HIV in Uganda
Bonita Sharma[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,
924 From Divided Worlds to Entangled Lives: Reimagining Social Work\'s Global Gaze
Prof Erika Gubrium[1]
[1]Oslo Metropolitan University, , Norway
925 Supporting policy- and macro-level social work practice
Melissa Wojnaroski[1]
[1]Social Workers In Policy, ,
929 Lifelong Learning and Professionalization in Social Work: International Recognition and Innovative Curricula for Sustainable Development
Prof. Mandy Schulze[1]
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937 Dissecting the myths and realities of disasters using the April 2022 KwaZulu Natal floods in South Africa
Prof Louis Nyahunda[1]
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939 From Adverse Childhood Experiences to Family Polyvictimization: An ecological transactional model of developmental trajectories of family violence
Prof Edward Ko-Ling Chan[1]
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940 Preparing Social Workers for the 2030 Agenda: Embedding the SDGs in Education and Practice
Mr Robert Koglek[1]
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941 Towards a positive social work supervision model: An autoethnographic meta-analysis
Prof Lambert Engelbrecht[1]
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942 The Professional Training of the Social Worker: A Look from the Historical Evolution of Ecuador
Dr Carmita Leonor Alavarez Santana[1]
[1]Laica Eloy Alfaro University of Manabí / Anuatse / Alaeits, ,
945 This one, yes; that one, no... Structural racism in the adoption process
Ana Lucia Oliveira De Freitas[1]
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946 Bridging Policy and Practice: Developing a Multilayer Model of Care for Children with Behavioural Problems in Sri Lanka
Asst. Prof. Jobi Babu[2], T H Rasika Samanmalee[1]
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948 Predictors of adolescents' perceptions of feeling unsafe and mental health
Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]
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949 Restorative Storytelling: Using Community Learning Empowerment Groups to Co-designing Mental Health Education interventions
Dr Sophie Yohani[1]
[1]University Of Alberta, ,
951 Reframing HIV Service Delivery: Social Work, Resilience, and Sustainable Development Pathways
Eusebius Small[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,
953 After All, Who Takes Care?
Vanessa Estábele[1]
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954 Navigating young fatherhood: experiences and coping strategies of unmarried fathers raising children born out of wedlock
Assoc Prof Frans Koketso Matlakala[1]
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957 Unified Social Assistance System – SUAS: Obstacles and Prospects for Implementation.
Mrs Cristiane Reis dos Santos[1]
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958 Empowering Rural Girls through Education, Mentorship, and Cross-Border Partnerships
Ms Inviolata Akoth Olang[1]
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960 ASSESSING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER IN RELATION TO HEALTH AND WELBEING. A CASE STUDY OF MUHIMBILI ORTHOPAEDIC INSTITUTE.
Ms Stellah Kihombo[1]
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966 Training Social Workers: Developing the Skills of Social Action Actors in Developing Countries
Mr Jovelin Emmanuel[1]
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967 Reclaiming Practice in Complex Realities: Regional Innovations in Chinese Paediatric Social Work
Miss Ling Hui Zhang[3], Dr Sui Kan Yip, Assoc Prof Qing Ning Zhang[4], Dr Liying Xu, Hui Quan Chen[6], Dr Suo Deng[1]

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968 Social movements and public policies in Brazil: reflections in the light of the professional training project in Social Work in Brazil

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974 The Paradox of Visibility: The Impact of the 2025 G20 Summit on Urban Governance and the Systematic Displacement of People Experiencing Homelessness in Johannesburg, South Africa

Dr Tshidi Lelaka[1]

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987 Effects of Social Isolation on All-Cause Mortality in Older Adults: Do Age and Gender Matter?

Dr Lydia Li[1]

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993 Lessons Learned: Andragogy for the AI Era, Co-creating Social Work Curriculum with DSW Students

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996 Pathways of Possibility: Advancing Equity and Shared Futures Through AAS → BSW → MSW Career Ladders

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1002 Effectiveness of digital game-based GISCC program on cyberbullying prevention among Chinese adolescents

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1005 Promoting Transformative Learning: PhotoVoice For Global Social Work Impact

Dr Mieko Yoshihama[1]

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1006 Reimagining Poverty Elimination through Relationships: The Family Mentoring Model (FMM) in Pakistan's Remote Mountain Communities

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1008 Algorithmic Governance and the Conditions of Professional Judgment——Social Work Practice in the Digital Welfare State

Renxia Zhang[1]

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1009 Exploring the motivations of image-based sexual abuse perpetration: An empirical study in Taiwan

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1010 Associative Governance and Participation

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1011 Social Enterprises as Proxy Spaces for Social Work Values: Consensus and Contradictions in the Pursuit of Sustainable Development

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1012 Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap: Utilising COVID-19 Research to Inform Education for Integrated Social Work Responses for Older Persons

Dr Merlene Christobelle Esau[1], Dr Martha Maria Van Straaten[1]

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1013 Lived Experiences of Professional Frustration among Social Workers in Iran: A Phenomenological Analysis
Mr Mehdi Sarvi Hampa[1]
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1014 A Critical Evaluation of Iran's National Suicide Prevention Program: Alignment with WHO's LIVE LIFE and Evidence from Iran
Mr Mehdi Sarvi Hampa[1]
[1]Member Of The Board Of Directors Of The Iranian Association Of Social Workers And Phd Student In Social Work, , Iran
1015 Ethical Responsibility under Algorithmic Decision-Making: Professional Judgment in Digital Social Work
Renxia Zhang[1]
[1]Nanjing Normal University, ,
1017 Exploring the lived experiences of street homeless persons in selected metropolitan municipalities in South Africa
Dr Emmi Muleya[1]
[1]University Of Witwatersrand Johannesburg, , South Africa
1018 Proportion, Barriers and Facilitators of disclosure of sickle cell status to school authorities among Adolescents attending Mulago Hospital sickle cell clinic
Ms Winnie Nabuyoga[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda
1019 Multi-level Interventions for Social Isolation Based on the Social Ecological Model ～ A Study Through Japan\'s Community-Based Social Work practice and Social Policy ～
Dr Hiromi Kamiyama[1]
[1]Taisho University, ,
1020 Experiences of Black women of first-generation in the families at Undergraduate courses in Brazil universities at Southeast region.
Sâmia Maria Curto De Jesus[1], Miss Talita Prada[2]
[1]Federal University Of Espírito Santo, , , [2]IFBA, , Brazil
1021 Women, drug use, and loss of child custody: grief deprived of rights
Prof. Maria Lucia Teixeira Garcia[1]
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1022 Global anti-oppressive archeologists in the decolonial classroom: Engaging with integrative learning experiences (ILEs)
Dr Bibiana Koh[1]
[1]Salisbury University, ,
1024 Lifting while we Climb: Mentor and Mentee
Dr Christa Gilliam[1]
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1025 EMPOWERING CHANGE: SOCIAL WORK\'S BLUEPRINT FOR FORGING TRANSFORMATIVE SUSTAINABLE FUTURES
Mr Suryanarayana Alamuri[1]
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1026 Digital Exclusion as Structural Oppression: Empirical Insights for Social Work Practice
Federica Vezzoli[1], Beatrice Marina Cacopardo[1]
[1]Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, , Italy
1027 Foundations of Haki and Harambee in Education: Social Work in Student Access and Retention Policies for Student Mothers
Lady Yara Dias Fernandes[1]
[1]Universidade Federal Fluminente, , Brazil
1029 BRAZIL\'S UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM: THE CHALLENGES OF DECENTRALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT
Mrs Lara da Silva Campanharo[1], Prof. Maria Lucia Teixeira Garcia[1]

[1]Universidade Federal Do Espírito Santo, , Brazil
1032 Reclaiming and reimagining social work practice through indigenous communal ethics: Lessons from local community support systems (LCSSs) advancing educational equity in rural northern Ghana
Rodney Buadi Nkrumah[1]
[1]Mcgill University, ,
1034 Families as Anchors of Social Resilience: How NGO Practices Reconnect Communities through Empowerment and Care
Mrs Chun Yu Yin[1]
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1037 Reimagining Social Work Education in Uganda Through Students\' Perspectives on Indigenization
Liberty Vivian Tadria[1], Prof Janestic Twikirize[1]
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1038 Reconceptualizing the Social Responsibility of Social Work Knowledge in Advancing Social Welfare and Social Protection
Dr Hassan Mousavi Chelak[1]
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1040 Decreasing bias in reports of child maltreatment
Dr Micki Washburn[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States
1041 Stigma toward mental health conditions in Ghana
Dr Micki Washburn[1]
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1042 The path towards hope - The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, Personal Hope, and Collective Hope Among Arab and Jewish Students In the Face of Ongoing Emergency Situation
Rana Jubran[1]
[1]University Of Haifa, , Israel
1043 Safeguarding and protecting children and other vulnerable populations
Dr. Asha Mukundan[1]
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1049 Bridging policy and practice: developing legal frameworks and social protection systems for universal and sustainable coverage: The case of youth with SUDs and their caregivers in Zambia.
Dr Ireen Manase Kabembo[1]
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1050 Family separation across displacement, encampment, and post-resettlement: Understanding psychosocial well-being among Bhutanese refugees
Mr Kamal Khatiwada[1]
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1051 Period - Measuring Menstrual Stigma and Shame in Rural Ghana
Dr. Sevaughn Banks[1]
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1052 Social Care Responses to People Experiencing Homelessness in the 2024 Valencia Floods
Alba Galán Sanantonio[1]
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1053 LAB DH: The Sesc São Paulo Experience in Territorial Articulation and Strengthening Networks in Human Rights
Mrs Sandra Carla Sarde Mirabell[1]
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1059 Leveraging National Partnerships to Enhance Child-Centered Data through the Child Research institute and Training in Namibia (CRIT)
Dr J.C. Ndilimeke Nashandi[1]
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1060 Understanding Return Migration Experiences of Young Men: Social Work Case File Analysis

Ms Augustina Ugbana[1]
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1061 Never forget? Current relevance of historic memory and genocide studies: a Salvadoran case study
Dr Michael Berghoef[1]
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1062 Transforming Social Work Doctoral Education: A Global, Culturally Relevant Toolkit for Gender Safety and Equity
Ilana Shtivelman[1]
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1063 Mental Health Interventions for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence Across Racial Groups: A Systematic Review
Miss Monikornika Kakoty[1]
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1065 Social Work and Mental Health
Dr Nélida Ramirez[2], Prof Sabine Bährer-Kohler[1]
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1066 Decolonizing Empathy: From Performative Care to Relational Accountability in Social Work
Mrs Kinya Baker[1]
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1067 Outcomes of a Global Education Program for U.S Social Work Students and Kenyan Program Partners
Dr Suzen Wysor Nguema[1]
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1068 Rooted in Care: Humanizing Approaches for Transformative Learning
Dr Nakeiha Primus[1]
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1069 Social Work Education and Training in the Outcome-Based Education Framework
Asst. Prof. Jobi Babu[1]
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1071 We Are Not Dust, We Are Dreamers: A Qualitative Study on the Self-Definition of Women Street Vendors in Kigali, Rwanda
Mrs Marie Claire Uwamahoro[1]
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1074 Feasibility of training Master Trainers on Mental health for the marginalised women (Karuna Fellows).
Dr Kimneihat Vaiphei[1]
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1075 Workshop on Social Work Interventions in Women's Mental Health: Focus on Internally Displaced and Indigenous Women
Dr Kimneihat Vaiphei[1]
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1078 Preparing and Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Humanitarian Action: The Role of Academia and Social Workers as First Responders
Mrs Marion Mwebi[1]
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1079 Boundary Reciprocity and the Epistemic Limits of Social Media Traces: Evidence from Italian Practice
Beatrice Marina Cacopardo[1]
[1]Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, ,
1082 Syrian Refugees' Perspectives on Family Reunification and Social Work
Veronika Rosenberger[1]

[1]University Of Tuebingen, ,
1083 Beyond the classroom: The benefits and challenges of implementing a faculty-led, study abroad program in Chennai, India
Dr Katie Lopez[1]
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1084 Children's Coping in Disasters: Developments, Challenges, and Future Directions
Tara Powell[1]
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1086 Challenging Barriers, Co-Creating Solutions: Rethinking Individualized Education Plan Implementation through Interprofessional Collaboration
Dr Carol Wade[1]
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1089 Sustained International Collaboration in Clinical Social Work Education: Lessons from Chile and Texas
Ms Tanya Voss[1]
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1091 When Students Become Co-Creators: Reimagining Simulation with Students as Partners and Universal Design for Learning
Ms Kealey Dube[1]
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1092 A Model of Transnational Social Work
Dr Jocelyn Hermoso[1]
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1093 Suicide Among Youth and Young Adults: Bereaved Parents\' Perspectives on the Systems of Care
Dr Toula Kourgiantakis[1]
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1094 Youth trajectories and digital behavior across the socioecological environment: Does technology access and use predict opportunity?
Dr Tianca Crocker[1]
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1095 Reimagining Social Work Education: Leading Together Using an Ubuntu Framework
Prof. Tiffany D. Baffour[2], Dr Bibiana Koh[1]
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1097 The Power of Dialectics: Facilitating Antiracist Education Through Participatory and Dialectic Learning, in Social Work Education
Amber Williams[1]
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1098 Community-Led Research and Action (CLRA): Advancing Collective Civic Learning as Social Work Education
Mariusz Granosik[1]
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1104 Refugee Inclusion and Social Work: Intersectional Inequalities in Education and Employment in Global Comparative Perspective
Ms Ophelia Akonobea Asante, Julia Cholewa[1], Ms Judith Bucher[2], Sharon Akinyi[3]
[1]Hochschule München; Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt | Hochschule München; Technische Universität Dortmund, , Germany, [2]Munich University of Applied Sciences, TU Dortmund University, , Germany, [3]Legacy Community Health , , United States
1105 Building Safety, Justice, and Sustainability in a Fragmented Global Context
Prof. Elena Marchetti[1]
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1106 Steady Within, Connected Between: Mindfulness Through Ukuzinza and Ubuntu
Chenyu Zhao[1]
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1107 Collage for Reflection: Visual Creative Pedagogy for Co-Creating Knowledge in Social Work Education
Dr Roma Thomas[1]
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1108 Advancing Climate-Smart Food Systems Through Pamoja Collaboration: Integrating Aquaponics, Social Work, and Community Capacity Building
Dr Felicia Tuggle[1]
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1110 Emotional Debt and Organizational Resilience: Survival Mechanisms of Social Work Organizations in China\'s Ethnic Minority Regions
Assoc Prof Meng Cui[1]
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1111 Modeling Latent Suicidality Among Thai Adolescents: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach
Chenyu Zhao[1]
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1113 Harambee in the Context of Ethics, Autonomy, and the Patient’s Will to Power
Mr Emmanuel Kinoti[1]
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1114 Impact of Climate Change on Older People’s Health and Social Work Response in Rural China
Dr Jie Zhuang[1]
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1118 MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN NIGERIA: HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE AND PATIENTS\' ADVOCACY
Mrs Victoria Oluwayemisi Dare[1]
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1119 Tourism, Development, and Environmental Transformation: A Case Study in Southwest China and Its Implications for Green Social Work Practice
Prof Hok Bun Ku[1]
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1121 Integrating Social Development and Social Work: Opportunities and Challenges in Curriculum Design
Assoc Prof Somaya Abdullah[1]
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1122 A scan of the social work field practicum in Africa: Towards an Africentric model
Dr Julie Drolet[1]
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1124 Addressing Attention Fragmentation in the Digital Era: An Experiential Learning Model for High-Risk Youth
YouXua Chen[1]
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1125 ECO-SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN INDIA: DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK
Chitra Karunakaran Prasanna[1]
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1127 Technology Use Among Older Adults Living with Severe Mental Health Conditions: Accessibility and Impact
Ms Ya-ching Chang[1]
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1129 Closing the Gap: Reimagining Mental Health Care in Ghana Post-COVID 19
Dr Festus Moasun[1]
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1130 Repositioning Social Work in Kenya’s Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Training Institutions: From Marginalization to Professional Recognition
Euphracia Owuor[1]

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1131 Cultural Contexts of Disability: An Ethnographic Analysis of Bikpakpaam in Ghana

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1134 Values-Driven Sustainability Education: How Attitudes Predict Global Citizenship Among UAE Students

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1136 Integrating Ecosocial Practice into Clinical Social Work: A Nature-Based Intervention with People Experiencing Homelessness in the Azores

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1137 Remembering Why We Chose Social Work: Biographical Work, Professional Identity, and Global Solidarity in the Spirit of Ubuntu and Harambee

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1138 Advancing SDG 6 Through Social Practice: Protocol for a Global Scoping Review of Social Work Interventions in Water Security

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1139 Severe Food Insecurity among the Black Population: An Indicator of Inequity and the Debate in Social Work

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1140 Lived Experience and Professional Identity: How Who We Are Shapes How We Practice

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1144 LABOR UNDER A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE REALITY EXPERIENCED BY BLACK BRAZILIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

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1148 Integrating the Implicit Curriculum into TVET Social Work Training for a Strong and Ethical Workforce in Kenya

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1149 THE ETHNIC-RACIAL AND GENDER DIMENSION IN THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF BRASILIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

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1150 Urban Development Context, Organizational Climate, and Ethical Identification as Predictors of Social Workers' Service Quality: Multilevel Evidence from CSWLS2019

Assoc Prof Nian Liu[1]

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1154 Prioritizing Decolonizing Frameworks: Ubuntu and Social Work with Refugee Communities

Dr Neil Bilotta[1]

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1155 Educar em Territórios de Desigualdade: Iniciativa Comunitária, Solidariedade Transnacional e Direito à Educação no Estudo de Caso da Westgateh Secondary School em Watamu

Cristiane Libardi[1]

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1156 Empowering the unemployed youth as a pathway to crime reduction in an informal settlement for a sustainable future.
Dr Jeniffer Birech[1]
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1158 A Protocol on Group-Based Brief Mindfulness Intervention for Menstrual Distress among Marginalized Women
Ms Margi Shah[1]
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1160 Professional Purpose, Commitment and Pedagogical Risk-Taking: Career Motivations and Transformative Teaching in South African Social Work Education
Dr Precious Mseba[1]
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1161 Navigating the Duty to Report in Canadian Schools: Educators' Experiences Supporting Racialized and Low-Income Students
Dr Sarah Maiter[1]
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1163 From Cultural Stigma to Collective Healing: A Photovoice Pilot Study Exploring Grief and Bereavement Among Older Chinese Immigrants
Qianyun Wang[1]
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1167 Impact of Community-based Initiatives on Child Welfare Policies in Orhionmwon Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria.
Dr. Efosa Kingsley Ehigie[1]
[1]Aswen, ,
1169 From Playing Apart to Playing Together: Exploring Home-Visiting Parenting Empowerment and Parent-Child Interaction Quality
Ms Yu-hsin Chen[1]
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1170 Critical Moments in Migration: the Psychosocial Wellbeing of International Students Transitioning to Permanent Residency
Jilefack Amin Ngami[1], Prof Jill Hanley[1]
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1175 Vicarious trauma in disaster situations: Social workers\' experiences with Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe
Prof Louis Nyahunda[1]
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1179 Family-Centered Preventive Interventions: Strengthening Child Development and Family Functioning through Early Social Work Engagement
Mrs Chun Yu Yin[1]
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1183 Reimagining Social Work through Diaspora Wisdom and Global Futures: Practice and Pedagogy
Dr Ashley Cochran[1]
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1185 Empowering Botswana\'s Youth: The Role of Social Work in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals
Kgomotso Jongman[1]
[1]University Of Botswana, ,
1190 Climate Risks and Adaptation: At the intersection of landlessness and building home
Nicola Williams[1]
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1191 Social Work Intervention in the Postpartum Period: Emotional Approach to Mothers of Premature Babies
Lord Alexander Durán Lozano[1]
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1193 Community Participatory Trainings for Caregivers of Older Adults in Rural Rwanda
Luz Marilis López[1], Immaculee Nyiransengimana[2], Prof. Katharine R Hobart[3]
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1194 Evolving Child Welfare in Korea: Safeguarding Vulnerable Children in the Digital Era through 'Harambee'
Mr Eun Kang Chung[1]
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1195 The Prevalence of Childhood Polyvictimization and Involvement in Suicide Risk Behaviors Among Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in Namibia
Dr Edson Chipalo[1]
[1]University Of Cincinnati, ,
1196 Social work and social welfare across the lifespan
Kgomotso Jongman
[1]University Of Botswana, ,
1198 Rethinking International Social Work: Epistemic, Structural, and Political Tensions
Prof. Abye Tasse[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
1200 Intersections of ethnic cultural women's climate change adaptation, edible gardening, and sustainable shared futures in Australia
Dr Ndungi Mungai[2], Vinathe Sharma-Brymer[1]
[1]Social Work Discipline, School Of Law & Society, University Of The Sunshine Coast, Australia, , Australia, [2]Charles Sturt University, , Australia
1202 "Even in Times of War, We Need to Pay the Rent": Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence through Job Rehabilitation in Wartime — Tools for Building Individual and Community Resilience
Jennifer Isackov[1]
[1]Women\'s Spirit Ngo, ,
1203 Economic Violence: Challenges and Interventions at the Individual, Group, and Community Levels
Jennifer Isackov[1]
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1205 Re-imagining Social Work Practice as Social Value Creation
Sug Pyo Kim[1]
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1207 Developing and Evaluating an Intensive Teaching Model for Social Work Knowledge and Skills Transfer
Dr Chun-yi Chen[1], Dr Yu-ju Yen[1]
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1208 Trauma Treatment and Prevention in Malawi through Multi-Level Collaboration with Local and National Leadership
Dr Bobbie Legg[1]
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1209 Resilience and social support as protective factors for well-being and food security among smallholder farmers in Rwanda
Mr Alexandre Hakizamungu[1]
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1210 Learning Together: International Social Work Education Rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals
Nicholas Wallace[1]
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1211 Gendered Policing and Domestic Violence Intervention: Mental health and Psychosocial Analysis of Women Police Officers in an Urban Indian Context
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1214 Constructing a Practice Model: Navigating the Policy–Practice Nexus in Acquired Brain Injury Social Work

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1215 Child-Led Approaches to Research, Child Protection, and Resilience

Ms Clare Ahabwe Bangirana[1]
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1216 Political Action Movements by and for People with Disabilities Around the World

Dr Ellen Schaefer-Salins[1]
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1217 Professionalizing Social Work in Kenya through regulatory framework; Reflections on the Social Work Professionals Act 2026

Dr Muraguri Phyllis[1]
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1218 The Nairobi Proposal: Co-Creating Decolonised Curricula and Practice Learning Assessment Criteria

Mrs Abigail M. Joseph-Magwood[3], Dr Phyllis Ngai[4], Dr Wasiq Silan[2], Assoc Prof Henglien Lisa Chen[1]
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1219 “They call the Spirituality of my Ancestors madness” – Embracing spiritually sensitive practice in child protection with African background children and families in Australia.

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1221 Social Work Support for Unaccompanied Minors in Germany: Empirical Findings and Implications for Inclusive, and Equitable Research

Franziska Anna Seidel[1]
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1222 Psychotherapy in Clinical Social Work: The Castanheira Method and the Vital Reconnection Therapy (VRT) in Eco-Social Contexts

Dr Sandra Castanheira[1]
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1223 The Social Protection We Have and the One We Want: Notes for Reflecting on Poor Families in the Neoliberal Context, at the Intersection of Race and Gender

Mrs Rosane Cristina Moreira De Souza[1]
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1228 Harambee for Holistic Wellbeing: Interconnecting Dimensions of Wellness for Sustainable Futures

Margaret Thorwart[1]
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1229 From Clinic to Community: The Vital Relevance of Social Workers in Modern Global Health Care

Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
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1230 Risk and resiliency factors amongst social work educators

Assoc Prof Varoshini Nadesan[1]
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1231 From Inclusion to Belonging: Peer and Parent Strategies for Building Relationships with Autistic Children

Dr Dalila John[1]
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1232 Understandings of domestic violence

Brita Gjerstad[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, ,
1233 The right to life and drug prevention policies: a necessary debate for social work
Prof Fabiola Leal[1]
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1235 Coalitions for Justice: Social Workers, Social Movements, and Refugee Advocacy in Germany and Greece
Ms Lefkothea Rizopoulou[1]
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1236 Empowering the Global Social Work Agenda through the WHO ICF: Celebrating a 25-Year Jubilee for Sustainable Shared Futures
Dr Patricia Saleeby[1]
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1238 Advancing Social Work Advocacy for Transgender Rights: Comparative Lessons from Europe and Asia
Kath Khangpiboon[1]
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1241 Reinforcing Social Workers\' Capacities in the Face of Climate Change
Sue-Ann Macdonald[1]
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1242 Disaster Social Work in Germany in Times of Climate Crisis: Transformative Community-Based Approaches and International Learning
Prof Caroline Schmitt[1], Prof. Andrea Schmelz[1]
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1246 From the Colonial Margins to the Centre: Reclaiming Ubuntu through the HARMONY Framework as Sankofa Praxis
Ms Shayla Dube[1]
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1248 Prevention and Protection in Situations of Loss of Parental Care in Colombia: A Care Diamond Perspective
Carolina Giraldo Henao[1]
[1]University Of Barcelona, ,
1249 Articulating the Unsayable: Digital Peer Dialogue and Brown Girl Subjectivities
Ria Arora[1]
[1]Mcmaster University, ,
1250 Towards a Gerontological and Feminist Social Work: Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence Against Older Women
Dr Vicenta Rodriguez Martin[1]
[1]Universidad De Castilla La Mancha - España, ,
1251 ‘Pedagogy of the Enlightened’: Towards Anti-Oppressive Pedagogies in Social Work Profession
Dr. Pradeep Jare[1]
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1253 When Harambee Meets Caste: A Critical Inquiry of Prejudices and Power from Anti-Oppressive Social Work Perspective
Dr. Pradeep Jare[1]
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1255 Indigenous and Rural Women as Agents of Transformation: Food Resilience, Community Leadership, and Social Work in the Bolivian Amazon
Dr Vicenta Rodriguez Martin[1]
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1256 Reclaiming the history of social work in Africa
Dr Linda Kreitzer[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

1259 Radical Ethical Social Work: Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice for Sustainable Shared Futures
Dr Donna Richards[1], Marina Morgenshtern[1]
[1]Trent University, Canada | University Of Johannesburg Za And Vancouver Island University Canada, ,
1260 Contribution of Cash Transfer for OVC for Food on Welfare of Children in Kasarani Sub-County,Kenya
Mr Noah Mokaya Omambia Sanganyi[1]
[1]Mount Kenya University, ,
1262 Poor Families in the Neoliberal Context, at the Intersection of Race and Gender
Mrs Rosane Cristina Moreira De Souza[1]
[1]Nenhuma- Pucsp, ,
1265 Navigating survival in rural refugee settlements: A critical ethnography of home-brewed alcohol production and refugee livelihoods in Uganda
Mr Godfrey Makoha[1]
[1]Mcgill University, ,
1266 Unaccompanied Migrant Minors: towards an Intersectional and Multidimensional Approach to Assessing Vulnerability and Promoting Social Inclusion
Miss Rocío Vela-jiménez[1]
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1270 Beyond Role-Plays: Virtual Reality as an Inclusive Space for Social Work Skill Building
Ms Kealey Dube[1]
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1271 Supporting African Women Entrepreneurs While Contesting Gender Inequality
Dr Maria Emilia Bianco Galindez[1]
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1272 The Intersection of Spirituality, Religiosity, and Health Outcomes in Later Life: A Cross-National Perspective from Sub-Saharan Africa
Dr Josephine Misaro[1]
[1]University Of Nairob, , Kenya
1276 Suicide Stigma in Tajikistan: Attitudes toward Treatability
Shahnaz Savani[1]
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1277 The Journey from Nothing to Something: The Development and Challenges of TASW Supervisor Certification in Taiwan
Miss Szu-Yu Ou[1]
[1]National Taiwan Normal University, , Taiwan
1280 Designing Curricula for Financially Competent Practitioners in Kenya's Human Services Sector
Dr Njeri Kagotho[1]
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1281 RE-IMAGINING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN KENYA: FOUNDATIONS, PRACTICE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
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1282 Women's Farming Practices and Ecological Fragility in Western Kenya: Intersections of Culture, and Food Security
Dr Njeri Kagotho[1]
[1]Ohio State University, , United States
1283 Smartphones as a Gateway to Independence and Adaptation: Older Mandarin-Speaking Immigrants' Use of Smartphones for Everyday Living
Dr Christine Walsh[1]
[1]University Of New Brunswick, ,
1284 Valuing our Worth: Reimagining Social Work Through Ethical Entrepreneurship and Transformative Travel

Dr Suzen Wysor Nguema[1]
[1]Travel To Transform, ,
1285 Beyond policy gaps and protection failures? Social work response to human mobility in the African context
Prof Tanja Kleibl[1], Prof Janestic Twikirize[2], Uzoma Okoye[3], Ngozi Chukwu[3], Fauzia Jamú[4], Imedy Condelaque[5], Hafiz Jamú[6]
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1286 Empowering Arab Women Survivors of Violence in Israel: Employment Rehabilitation through Minority Support Models
Lulu Balous[1]
[1]My Work, ,
1287 Stereotypes, Aspirations, and Personal Development among Arab Women in Israel: A Socio-Psychological Perspective
Lulu Balous[1]
[1]My Work, ,
1290 Exploring the Use of Simulation-Based Learning to Promote Trauma-Informed Care Approaches for Youth in Therapeutic Campus-Based Care
Dr Angelique Jenney[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
1293 “We Turned Pain into a School of Life.” Rwandan Young People as Archivists of Knowledge in Response to Childhood Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence
Dr. Serge Nyirinkwaya[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
1294 Amplifying Ratego Stories and Knowledges: A Co-Research Initiative with Young Mothers in Social Movements in East Africa
Dr. Serge Nyirinkwaya[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
1295 Sustainable Careers in Social Work: Perspectives of Social Workers and Social Work Managers
Ms Johanna Holappa[1]
[1]University Of Turku, , Finland
1296 Circle of Courage Workshop
Katherine Raynor[1]
[1]Suny New Paltz, ,
1298 Suicide in Central Aisa: Examining Suicide Stigma in Tajikistan
Shahnaz Savani[1]
[1]University Of Houston Downtown, , United States
1300 Epistemic sovereignty and democratization of knowledge: Indigenous knowledge and its transformative role in social work and research in Germany
Mrs Larissa Nathalie Biehl[2], Dr Monika Pfaller-Rott[2]
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1301 \"Almost like meeting a friend\": Sit Spots as a pathway for nature connection in social work education
Dr Erin Skinner[1]
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1302 Invisible threat of asbestos exposure: Need for social work education and advocacy for preventing health risks in Australian home renovators
Dr Ndungi Mungai[2], Vinathe Sharma-Brymer[1]
[1]Social Work Discipline, School Of Law & Society, University Of The Sunshine Coast, Australia, , Australia, [2]Charles Sturt University, , Australia
1303 Strengthening Social Work and IFSW through greater inclusion and responsiveness at regional levels - a Symposium coordinated by IFSW Europe.
Dr Ruth Allen[1]

[1]President Ifsw Europe, ,
1305 **The Experience of the National Student Assistance Policy at the Federal University of Campina Grande, Brazil**
Dr Reginaldo Franca Junior[1]
[1]Federal Universty Of Campina Grande, , Brazil
1306 The House of Plenty (HOPE) Social Innovation Model (Poster or Short Presentation)
Dr Wanjiku Kaime[1]
[1]Mid Sweden University And House Of Plenty Foundation, , Sweden
1307 From Partnership to Practice: Strengthening the Social Service Workforce Across North Pacific Island Nations
Theresa Kreif[1]
[1]University Of Hawaii At Manoa, , United States
1309 Alto Loa Municipal Table: A Space for Dialogue and Critical Analysis for Local Development. Experiences and Challenges of Territorial Tables in Municipal and Community Governance
Mr Arturo Bruna Villanueva[1]
[1]Municipalidad De Calama, , Chile
1310 Parent-Child Therapy Groups Incorporating Touch Techniques
Riva Erez[1]
[1]Menifa Clinical Center, , Israel
1311 Healing Circles: Reclaiming African Spiritual Wisdom in Social Work Practice
Ms Keisha Cox[1]
[1]Social Worker, ,
1312 DEVELOPMENT OR SUBORDINATION? CHINA'S EXPANSION IN KENYA AND ITS EFFECTS ON LABOR
Cristiane Libardi[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, ,
1313 Influence of Parental Alcoholism on the psychosocial development of children Aged 5 - 13 years in Nambale sub-county, Busia County Kenya
Ms Christine Arbe Halkano[1]
[1]Connect A Child, ,
1315 Measuring the Unseen: Mixed Methods and Bayesian Multilevel Modelling in Survivor-Centered Child Trafficking Research
David O Okech[1]
[1]Center On Human Trafficking Research And Outreach, School Of Social Work, University Of Georgia, ,
1316 Reclaiming Dignity in Welfare Systems: Trauma, Power, and Relational Practice Among Temporary Cash Assistance Workers and Consumers
Laurens Van Sluytman[1]
[1]Morgan State University, , United States
1318 "Foster care is no longer the accepted mode of permanency": Centering Family Preservation and Reunification for Black Families in Ontario's Child Welfare System
Rasnat Chowdhury[1]
[1]Toronto Metropolitan University, , Canada
1320 Parenting Under Threat: Investigating Black Families Experiences with Ontario\'s Child Protection System
Travonne Edwards[1]
[1]Toronto Metropolitan University, , Canada
1323 Nestled among cultures: Challenges of parenting among newcomer families in Canada
David Flomo[1]
[1]Macewan University, , Canada
1325 \"Air quality readings, what air quality readings\": Community Narratives on Air Quality Monitoring in a Township South of Johannesburg, South Africa
Assoc Prof Busisiwe Nkala-Dlamini[1]
[1]University Of The Witwatersrand, , South Africa

1326 Female Leadership, Solidarity Kitchens, and Tackling Hunger in Favelas: Contributions to Sustainable Development
Dr Nilza Rogéria De Andrade Nunes[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil
1334 Social Work at the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of São Paulo: The Financialization of Brazilian Public Policy and Its Impacts on Social Protection in the City of São Paulo
Mrs Yone Da Cruz Martins De Campos[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo - Puc/sp, , Brazil
1335 Social Work Practice and Global Challenges - Title: Bridging the Trust Gap in a Globalized World: Integrating Cultural Heritage with the Signs of Safety Framework in Statutory Child Protection
Ms Ophelia Mac-Kwashie[1]
[1]BelongAlways, SOLLENTUNA, Sweden
1336 Glocal Social Work: Collaborating to Tackle Interconnected Global Challenges
Dr Phyllis Ngai[1]
[1]University of Montana, Missoula, United States
1337 PHDBASED: "Agency in Displacement; Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Agency in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Western Uganda"
Mr Kwikiriza Wilson[1]
[1]MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON UNIVERSITY, Fort Portal City, Uganda
1339 Leveraging ICT for Citizen-Centric Social Work: The Case of the Citizen Support Unit, Mauritius
Mr Louis Girty Elenore[1]
[1]Citizen Support Unit. Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius, Port Louis, Mauritius
1341 Decolonizing Global Social Work Education through Interprofessional Collaboration: A Social Work and Health Outreach Model in Ghana
Dr Renie Rondon-Jackson[1]
[1]California State University Monterey Bay, Monterey, United States
1342 Social Work Fieldwork Education Pedagogy: A Comparative Study between South Africa and the United Kingdom
Dr Stephen Moyo[2], Dr Ntandoyenkosi Maphosa[1]
[1]University Of Sussex, , United Kingdom, [2]University Of Greater Manchester, , United Kingdom
1349 A Community-Informed Simulation Model for Critical Social Work Education
Dr Alicia Boatswain-kyte[1]
[1]Mcgill Univeristy, Montreal, Canada
1350 Intercultural learning in higher education: experiences of social work students in the Peruvian Amazon
Mr Manuel Tarin Cayuela[1]
[1]Universidad Católica De Valencia, Valencia, Spain
1351 Post-COVID-19 Social Work Education in South Africa: Bridging Tradition and Innovation
Prof Pius Tanga[1]
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1352 Mental Health as an Academic Retention Policy at IFBA: Challenges and Strategies for Reducing Dropout and Repetition
Miss Talita Prada[1]
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1353 Appreciating Sámi (Northern Norway) and Masai (Northern Tanzania) youth experiences of human flourishing: Implications for social work across borders
Siss-Mari Solli[1]
[1]UiT, Alta, Norway
1354 Employment Opportunities for Social Workers in Emerging Arenas in India
Laxmikant Chopkar[1]
[1]Kumbhalkar Evening College of Social Work, Nagpur, Nagpur, India
1355 Who are the first-generation Black students in higher education in Brazil?
Prof. Maria Lucia Teixeira Garcia[1]
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1358 Research Topic Mining and Evolutionary Analysis of Artificial Intelligence in Social Work Based on the BERTopic Model
Jiangang ZHU[3], Wei Lu[2], Jing YANG[4], Miss Jie Song[1]
[1]LANZHOU university, LanZhou, China, [2]Xiamen University, , China, [3]Zhejiang University , , China, [4]Guizhou University, , China
1359 Obstetric violence, low education, and social vulnerability: the role of Social Work in obstetric care
Mr Warlen Da Cruz Ribeiro Oliveira[1]
[1]UFES, Cariacica, Brazil
1360 Enhancing School's Capacity to Address Community Violence
Dr Alexia Angton[1]
[1]University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, United States
1361 All Hands Design in Deep Learning Models: Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence and Patient-Centered Approaches to Address Substance Use and Improve Global Health
George Leibowitz[1]
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1362 From 'Invisible' to 'Change-Makers': Empowering Marginalised Cleaners through Health, Safety, and Dignity in Hong Kong
Miss Sin Man Tsoi[1]
[1]Caritas-Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong
1364 Evaluating a Group-Based Pilot Intervention to Enhance Test-Taking Confidence and Reduce Licensure Exam Anxiety Among Black MSW Students
Kyaus Washington

1366 Efficacy of an Interactive Digital Platform in Improving Resilience and Mental Health Outcomes for Children
Dr Dora Tam

1367 Reclaiming and Reimagining Sports as Social Work Practice: A Global Platform for Black Girls\' Youth Development
Dr Treisha Hylton

1368 Contemporary Social Work Thought: Book Presentation on Margarita Rozas Pagaza
Dr Leonel Del Prado

1369 Lessons Learned: Expanding International Social Work Practice through Social Work Education Collaborations
Dr Melissa Grady

1370 Using Children's Drawings to Assess Impacts of a Culturally-Tailored Trauma Intervention in Zimbabwe
Dr Colleen Fisher

1371 Building Resilience among Trauma-Affected Zimbabwean Youth in Low-Resource Settings: Results from a Mixed-Method Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial
Dr Colleen Fisher

1372 Innovating Curricula Reform: Centering Community and the "Cultural Eye" in Social Work Education using an Organizational Change Approach
Dr Shelley L Craig

1373 Addressing the Suicidality of Sexual and Gender Diverse Youth through Digital Delivery of Affirmative Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
Dr Shelley L Craig

1375 Reimaging Social Work education using Afrofuturist Epistemological Approach: Centering Black Women's Leadership
Dr Christa Gilliam

1377 Assisting new immigrants in Raanana, israel
Ms Dorit Keefe

1379 Verification of the Role of Hospital Social Workers in Supporting Terminally Ill Cancer Patients Living Alone.
Mr Taro Baba

1380 Religion as a representation of mental illness in Montreal\'s Afro-Caribbean community: Implications for social work practice.
Syndie David

1381 Young Carers: inspiring action and change through the Commonwealth YC Charter
Dr David Jones

1382 Social Work and Indigenous Peoples: Moving Toward Sustainable Shared Futures; A facilitated discussion with the IFSW Indigenous Commission
Mr Rutikanga Charles

1385 Home visits with families and pregnant women with children aged 0 to 36 months conducted by non-professional outreach workers in the Cuna Más Program in Per
Mrs Fabiola Cortez-Monroy Muñoz

1386 Enhancing Participation of Children in Schools: A Social Worker's Perspective
Miss Karleen May Reodique

1389 Using Ecomaps and Stories to Understand the Social Convoys of Older African Refugees in Calgary
Dr Prince Chiagozie Ekoh

1390 Creating a Sustainable PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development: A Collaborative University-to-University Partnership
Prof. Alice Butterfield

1391 A Change in Plans: Reimagining Curriculum and Practicum through Collaboration and Accessibility
Ms Rhonda Dinovo

1395 Practising Digital Social Work at Community Level: Intergenerational Mediation and Digital Rights in Later Life
Prof. Andrés Arias Astray

1396 Ethical Dilemmas in the use of Digital Social Work in INDIA
Dr Aarti Jagannathan

1397 Psychosocial Impact of Smoking and Alcohol Use among Generation Z Adolescents and Young Adults: A Healthcare Professionals' Perspective
Dr Sadananda Reddy

1399 Social Work Education, Pedagogy, and Research: Reframing Anti-Racism in a Changing Professional Global Landscape
Dean Dexter R. Voisin

1400 Workforce Diversity and Quality of Care in Care Homes: A Scoping Review of Professional Perspectives
Lola Casal-Sanchez

1401 Community-Informed Mental Health Curriculum Reform in Somalia
Mr Kato Francis, Abdulwahab M. Salad[2], Ayann Abdiker[3], Mariam M. Osman[2], Mohamed Ibrahim[1]
[1]School of Social Work, The University of British Columbia, , Canada, [2]School of Medicine, Somalia National University, , Somalia , [3]School of Population and Public Health, The University of British Columbia, , Canada, [4]Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Makerere University, , Uganda
1416 Co-constructing the evaluation of social services with vulnerable people
Marco Lupoli[1]

1424 Sustainable Social Work Practice and Public-Private Partnerships for Climate Crisis Disasters
Mr Tatsuya Okamoto

1446 Bridging Borders: Advancing Social Work Practice Through Global Collaboration and Shared Challenges
Dr Isiah Marshall Jr
[1]Co-Chair, NASW International Committee, Norfolk State University , , United States, [2]MSW, NASW International Committee, George Mason University, , United States, [3]MSW, MPH, NASW International Committee, Coppin State University, , United States, [4]LCSW-C, Co-Chair NASW International Committee, , United States, [5], NASW International Committee, Elizabeth City State University , , United States, [6]NASW International Committee, University of Minnesota, , United States

Broadening Emancipatory Approaches in Social Work Education

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"This presentation engages the notion of emancipatory social work education. Given the prevailing global and local socio- political contexts, social work as a profession has a charge to use knowledge to address prevailing systemic inequalities, and oppression and work towards positive social change. However, considering the situatedness of knowledge production and, in turn, political practice, how do social work educators cultivate emancipatory approaches? This question is addressed by sharing four notions that are reiteratively used by the the presenter in social work education to facilitate the unravelling of systemic inequalities in everyday life and to encourage engagement in positive social change. We begin with Lee Anne Bell\'s notion that everyone has a story; therefore, actively engaging Gayatri Spivak's "let the subaltern speak." Using these narratives, we actively unpack coloniality, through examination of one's positionality, active unlearning of coloniality of power, to actively situate ourselves in anti-oppression and decolonial politics.

Learning to Cultivate Mutually Beneficial Intercultural/Internationalization Collaborations through Critical Relationality: Disrupting Coloniality

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"Mutually beneficial internationalization/intercultural collaboration is a desired process and outcome, particularly in social work contexts, as the professional commitment is to enhance well-being through positive relationships. International collaboration, be it in teaching/curriculum, research, or service, has become a critical goal in higher education, including in social work education, but the critical question remains: how do we cultivate mutually beneficial intercultural/internationalization collaborations? This presentation, Learning to Cultivate Mutually Beneficial Intercultural/Internationalization Collaborations through Critical Relationality, is a dialogue to examine dominant articulations of internationalization in higher education and how these may extend coloniality of power. Using our experiences in intercultural collaborations, the presentation shares the importance of critical relationality as a way of disrupting coloniality, for example, articulating shared foundational worldview, walking the talk of our foundational worldview in our relational collaborations, engaging difficult conversations, rooting new ways from the roots upwards instead of top-down are among the ideas that will be explored

Social Capital, Service Participation, Self-Management, and School-to-work Developmental Outcomes of Young People with Chronic Disabling Health Conditions

Dr Steven Sek-Yum Ngai[1]
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"Research is crucial for addressing the challenges faced by young people with chronic disabling health conditions (YPCDHC) during their transition from school to work. This population encounters obstacles such as discrimination, reduced self-confidence, and health-related issues that affect their career development. Despite having the necessary skills and motivation, YPCDHC are often underrepresented in the labor market, facing risks of long-term unemployment and financial hardship. Thus, exploring effective support strategies is vital. This study sampled 480 YPCDHC aged 15 to 29, recruited from self-help organizations, supported employment centers, and special schools. A longitudinal study approach was employed, with participants surveyed initially and six months later to assess their development. We focused on factors contributing to successful school-to-work transitions, specifically (1) social capital from family and peer networks, (2) participation in self-help organizations, supported employment centers, and special schools, (3) self-management of chronic health conditions. Mediation analysis examined the direct and indirect relationships between these variables. Results showed that social capital positively influences school-to-work developmental outcomes, mediated first by service participation and then by self-management. We also explored how these factors interact with personal, family, and background characteristics, shaping the development of YPCDHC. The findings offer valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers to develop targeted strategies that empower YPCDHC, enabling them to reach their potential and contribute to the workforce, ultimately benefiting society.

This presentation aligns with subtheme 3, “Social Work and Social Welfare Across the Lifespan,” focusing on addressing a pressing social challenge. By assessing the transitions of YPCDHC and the effects of social capital, service participation, and self-management, this presentation will be relevant to conference participants, especially for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers concerned with the well-being of YPCDHC."

Social work, interplanetary manned space flight and health - A profession is moving into a new field and an utterly new era -

Mr Hans Kuhn[1]
[1]Private, ,

"The lecture deals with an utterly new and largely unexplored field of social work: the profession and manned space flight! Against the background of the maintenance of health and/or survival, protection of humans in unprecedented environments, the lecture attempts to find answers. On the one hand, it seeks to answer the question: what has the profession of social work to do with manned space flight? On the other hand - based on the serious and tangible plans of the International Space Exploration Coordination Group (ISECG) to approach a different planet (Mars) in the early 2040s for the first time in the history of mankind – it seeks to provide answers to how can the profession possibly contribute to such a mission during all its phases (preparation, outward flight, stay on the surface, return flight and arrival on the earth) by using the model of a theoretical, experimental, anticipated long-term flight.

It is worth to mention that the German Aerospace Centre, over 24 years ago, already appreciated that the science of social work showed \""finally\"" (quote) some interest in manned space flight, because astronauts are often faced with life-threatening situations and the loss of their autonomy, which is out of view, and the science of social work is still wondering what has this to do with the other. If the profession decides to commit itself, unimagined possibilities in terms of the exploration of unprecedented life contexts will open up. The lecture is intended to contribute to this notion. Finally, a more recent development should be mentioned, which relates to low Earth orbit and forms the conclusion of the work presented here."

Police Social Work and Community Policing: A case Study of the Sierra Leone Police

Dr Sylvester Lamin[1]
[1]Middle Tennessee State University, , United States

Police social work and community policing are relatively new in many parts of the world. In the last few years, the Sierra Leone police has introduced new strategies in community policing, but there are no police social workers who can effectively work with police departments or as police social workers. The presentation will address the significance of police social workers in community policing. Kappeler and Gaines (2015) posit that "community policing rests on the belief that only by working together with people will the police be able to improve the quality of life for all members of a community" (p. 2). Community-oriented policing (COP) strategy differs from problem-oriented policing (POP). Regarding POP, "agencies develop strategies to prevent and reduce crime and disorder" (Development Services Group, 2023, p. 1). Therefore, in dealing with mental health challenges and other social problems, many police departments have collaborative strategies that are designed to work effectively with social service providers. The Sierra Police seeks to promote and maintain partnerships and community relations. The police force seeks to engage community members and police officers continuously in the transition from a force to a service engagement.

The presentation will outline the significant roles of police social workers and thereby advance the need for a change in the way police departments engage the people that they serve. The Police Social Worker position could be the police department's position that weaves a network of citizens to address community issues underpinning criminal activity and respond to calls for mental health crises and social services. Police social workers can offer training in stress management, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence, and make referrals to provide counseling services to police officers and their families.

Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice: A Decolonial Inquiry into the Experiences of First-Generation Black African Social Workers in Britain

Dr Mary Francis[1]
[1]Tavistock Doctoral Student, ,

This paper draws from the author's doctoral study, which explored the lived experiences of racial microaggressions among first-generation Black African social workers in Britain, situating these within the broader context of colonial continuities and post-colonial challenges in social work. Drawing on a critical realist ontology and a decolonial epistemology, the study challenges dominant Western paradigms by privileging Ubuntu as an African worldview and moral framework. Through a psychosocial and decolonial methodological approach—including autoethnography, focus groups, and free association narrative interviews—the research uncovers the complex interplay between internalised racism, professional identity, and agency. The findings reveal that while racial microaggressions are pervasive, participants actively resist and reframe their experiences through culturally grounded resilience and collective empowerment.

This paper contributes to the reimagining of social work practice by advocating for epistemic disobedience, the indigenization of knowledge, and the strengthening of the social service workforce through inclusive, culturally affirming approaches. Drawing from the aforementioned study, a key contribution of this paper is its reflexive interrogation of the researcher's positionality, particularly when the researcher shares ethnic and cultural affinities with participants. This paper suggests that by embracing pluriversality (Mignolo, 2012), this resist reproducing the very oppressions decolonial researcher seeks to dismantle and offers a model for ethical, inclusive, and transformative social work research and practice.

Child Preotection at the Core of Strengthening families

Dr Sylvester Lamin[1]
[1]Middle Tennesee State University, , United States

"Families are the locus of society. Therefore, strengthening families is pivotal to developing a nation in many ways. Every individual comes from a family, be it nuclear, single, or extended, and keeping the family together could be challenging, but social workers make every effort to work with families so that they can thrive. In every society, people expect the family to protect, nurture, and provide sustenance for children. Thus, the family is the setting that gives nurturance, affection, and various opportunities. Many factors affect the lives of children within the family setup or the larger community. For example, children living in impoverished homes or squalor, extreme poverty, lack of adequate health care, physical abuse and neglect, hard labor, underground sexual abuse, and family disintegration. When the family collapses, many children are doomed or paralyzed in their normal developmental growth.

The integrative workshop will highlight areas for social work intervention and practice and discuss strategies for child protection.

Participants will discuss local laws and policies and identify family versus individual therapy.

Participants will explore ways of protecting children from neglect, physical, and emotional abuse.

Participants will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of child protection and social care of children"

Decolonizing Social Work Education: Lessons from a Transnational Immersion in Costa Rica

Laura Lewis[1]
[1]University At Buffalo School Of Social Work, , United States

This presentation explores a sabbatical project conducted in Costa Rica that engaged U.S. social work faculty and students in a collaborative, cross-cultural learning experience centered on decolonizing social work education. Through classroom exchanges, field visits, and dialogue with Costa Rican faculty, NGOs, and Indigenous communities, the project illuminated the importance of epistemic justice, relational accountability, and anti-oppressive practice. Participants critically examined how colonial legacies continue to shape social work theory and practice, and how culturally grounded, community-led approaches can foster more equitable and responsive interventions. The immersive experience emphasized the value of reciprocal learning, humility, and sustained relationships in transforming social work education.

Drawing on critical pedagogy and global perspectives, the presentation will highlight key insights from the project, including the need to challenge Eurocentric frameworks, recognize informal economies and Indigenous knowledge systems, and address systemic inequalities rooted in colonial histories. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how social work education can be reimagined to center justice, cultural relevance, and community empowerment. The session will also offer practical strategies for integrating decolonial principles into curriculum design, field education, and international partnerships.

Objectives are as follows: 1. analyze the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism on social work in Costa Rica and beyond; 2. identify strategies for fostering relational accountability in cross-cultural and international social work settings; and, 3. evaluate the role of critical pedagogy in challenging dominant narratives and promoting inclusive, community-centered learning."

Peers as Colleagues in Socialpsychiatric Care - Effects of Experienced Involvement (EXIN) and implications for Social Work

Prof Susanne Iris Bauer[1]
[1]Uas Fulda, Germany, , Germany

"Experiential knowledge and peer involvement in contexts of Mental Health Care still is particularly strongly affected by prejudice and stigmatization: At the same time professionalised peers, such as Experienced Involvement recovery agents (EX-IN) contribute uniquely at various levels in the domain of socialpsychiatric Care. The concept of EX-IN reaches back to the European Leonardo Da Vinci Project of 2005-07. During this period, a curriculum was developed with the objective of professionalising people with experience in mental health crisis, aiming further inclusion and destigmatization.

Taken from the PhD research project „EX-IN in socialpsychiatric Care in Germany“, results about effects of EX-IN- Peers as colleagues are presented: Effects on offers in Services (lowering threshhold, broadening portfolios,..) on teammembers (strengthening self-care, self efficacy and understanding,...), on service Users (participative designs, empowerment, hopefulness) but also on EX-In themselves (social life, income, status,etc.).

The research project utilised a mixed methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was obtained from a questionnaire that garnered approximately 500 responses. The qualitative data was derived from focus groups and 19 tandem interviews with EX-IN participants and team colleagues. The results obtained from the questionnaire demonstrate the existence of both barriers and potential for the deployment of EX-IN. Furthermore, the results provide differential data regarding the field and scope of EX-IN deployment. The results of the qualitative research present the effects and changes that have been experienced by and for EX-IN. The discussion encompasses the conceptualisation of peer involvement in the context of psychiatric care, with a focus on its implications for fostering participation and inclusivity. Led further conclusions are drawn on what is needed to prepare services, but also Social Work students for collaboration with peers as colleagues, and how (reflected) experiential knowledge can be utilized in social work studies, practice and research."

Education and Care Reform: Exploring the Experiences of Children in Charitable Children's Institutions in Kenya

Dr Justin Rogers[1]
[1]The Open University | The University Of Nairobi, ,

"This presentation shares findings from a qualitative study exploring how children living in Charitable Children's Institutions (CCIs) in Kenya experience education, within the broader context of national care reform. While the government has committed to reducing institutional care, many children remain in CCIs due to poverty and limited access to schooling rather than explicit protection concerns. Education is often the main reason children enter CCIs, which are seen as a way to access schooling when public provision falls short.

Drawing on eleven interviews with a range of stakeholders, including government officials, NGO leaders, CCI staff, and care-experienced advocates, the study examines how systemic factors shape children's educational experiences. Participants highlighted barriers such as hidden school costs, teacher absenteeism, stigma, and the uneven implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Children in CCIs often face exclusion from school activities and violence, both within educational settings and care institutions, which undermines learning and wellbeing.

Despite these challenges, the study identified emerging opportunities for change. Participants felt partnerships between CCIs, NGOs and schools during the care reform process will support children's access to education. A number of participants discussed the potential for CCIs to take on more community-based roles in the future, offering educational and reintegration support without directly housing children. However, such shifts are at an early stage and depend on clear policy direction, adequate resourcing, and strong safeguards and accountability measures. Participants emphasised the need for improved cross-sector collaboration, enhanced safeguarding training, and better coordination to support children's transitions to family-based care and ensure continuity in education.

The study contributes to emerging evidence on education within alternative care in low- and middle-income countries. It underscores how systemic poverty and weak public infrastructure drive institutionalisation and educational exclusion, and how inclusive education and stronger safeguarding practices may contribute to addressing these barriers during

Bridging the Digital and the Human: Rethinking Social Service Delivery in the Age of Technology

Ms Rashmi Pandey[1]
[1]Department Of Extension & Communication Sndt Women\'s University, Mumbai, India, , India

Digital platforms are reshaping how social services are delivered—often with remarkable efficiency, but also with unintended exclusions. In India, innovations such as Aadhaar-enabled Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), the Poshan Tracker, and the UMANG app have made service delivery in areas like healthcare, nutrition, and education faster and more targeted. For many families in underserved communities, a mobile phone has become a vital connection to the welfare state. These tools have also empowered frontline workers and social work professionals to respond to community needs with greater precision and timeliness (Desai, 2018; World Bank, 2021).

However, this shift toward digital governance brings significant challenges. Populations without access to smartphones, digital literacy, or reliable internet—especially older adults, rural women, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers—risk being excluded from vital services (UNESCAP, 2022). In some cases, digital systems have replaced in-person support with automated processes, undermining the relational foundation of social work. Additionally, concerns about data privacy, surveillance, and algorithmic bias pose serious ethical dilemmas for practitioners (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2020; Saldanha, 2021).

This presentation reflects on the lived realities of digital welfare delivery in India, drawing on policy analysis, community-based practice, and ethical reflection. It argues that while digital tools offer powerful ways to extend the reach and responsiveness of welfare systems, they must be implemented with care, cultural sensitivity, and a rights-based perspective. Social workers have a critical role to play in ensuring that technology enhances—not replaces—the human connection at the heart of social care. By engaging with digital platforms ethically and inclusively, the profession can bridge the divide between innovation and equity."

31 years after the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda: Mental Health and Coping Strategies

Dr Pierre Celestin Bimenyimana[1]
[1]University Of Rwanda, , Rwanda

"Rwandans suffered through a devastating genocide in the spring of 1994. Nearly a million people, or one in seven of the nation\'s population, were killed in just 100 days. Machete attacks were the primary method used for mutilations and murders. By exploring the existing studies and reports, there is a need to introduce the current status of mental health in Rwanda in connection with the genocide against the Tutsi, which took place in Rwanda in the last 31 years. There is also a need to understand the situation of mental health during the genocide commemoration period, as well as the coping strategies put in place to tackle the mental health issues related to the genocide. According to studies, survivors of genocide and their offspring frequently suffer from mental illnesses such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Using local values and customs to supplement global best practices, Rwanda has created a number of (HGS) to treat mental health issues. Ubudehe, Umuganda, Resilience-Oriented Therapy, Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), Sociotherapy Protocols, Abajyanama b\'ubuzima, and other indigenous methods are among them. 31 years after the genocide, PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and depression are still major public health challenges in Rwanda, despite tremendous progress made in addressing mental health issues. Access to mental health services should remain a priority to make it easier for everyone who needs care to get it.

Ubuntu in the context of Medical Social Work Practice in Kenya

Dr Wilkins Muhingi[1]
[1]Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology, ,

Ubuntu, an African concept that emphasizes interconnectivity and humanity, provides a useful framework for social work ethics. It emphasizes relationships, community, and social justice, laying the groundwork for ethical practice that complements and challenges Western-centric methods. Integrating Ubuntu\'s principles can help social workers create more culturally appropriate and effective treatments. This paper presents practical ways ubuntu philosophy demonstrates its relevance for social work practice in Healthcare in Kenya.

From Policy to Practice: Advancing Social Protection for South Africa's Vulnerable Children Through the Foster Child Grant Programme

Dr Nokuthula Ngubane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, , South Africa

"International conventions and charters recognize the right to social protection for children which many countries are signatories. In South Africa social protection of vulnerable children is seen as especially important due to their exposure to various social ills such as poverty, child abuse, orphanhood. The country offers a variety of social protection interventions for children, primarily in the form of social grants, including the Foster Child Grant, Child Support Grant, Child Support Grant Top-up, and Care Dependency Grant. This paper draws on a doctoral study which focussed on the experiences of foster parents in accessing the Foster Child Grant (FCG) in South Africa. The study employed a qualitative methodology, gathering data through in-depth interviews with 40 foster parents from four different local municipalities. The study findings indicate that under conditions of poverty, the FCG is primarily used by foster parents for nutrition, schooling, clothes, medical expenses and burial insurance. However, despite these favourable impacts, challenges were identified by foster parents in accessing the FCG. Some of the challenges include the lack of information regarding the application procedures and eligibility criteria, lack of required application documents and long waiting periods for application approval. These challenges impact on the distribution and access of the grant. The recommendations of the study include the need to revise the foster care grant programme accessibility and distribution procedures to improve its reach and impact. Other possible alternatives and/or complementing approaches could include: investments in community-based poverty alleviation programs. Achieving this shift will require comprehensive policy reform, increased funding, and strengthened multi-sector collaboration to ensure sustainable social protection for vulnerable children.

Integrating Everyday Restorative Practices for Social Work Student Development

Ms Barbara Hiltz[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, , United States

"This presentation proposes a novel approach to strengthening social work education through the intentional integration of everyday Restorative Practices (RPs). While traditionally associated with conflict resolution, RPs offer powerful frameworks for fostering robust relationships, enhancing communication, and building inclusive communities in daily interactions. This abstract highlights how social work students can leverage these skills, not only for effective practice with clients but also to navigate complex peer and professional dynamics throughout their academic journey and into their careers.

Drawing from a writing series dedicated to applying restorative principles in daily life, this presentation will explore practical RP tools such as (Connect through Listening, Affirm with positive language, Let emotions flow, Make space for repair) and a four-question framework for restorative conversations. These easily adoptable techniques, including statements, non-judgmental language, active listening, and addressing impact, equip students to engage in full and fruitful conversations even across differences. The presentation will illustrate how these skills cultivate essential social work competencies like empathy, accountability, and ethical engagement, directly aligning with themes of reclaiming and reimagining social work practice, education, and addressing complex global challenges. Without relying on formal data, this presentation posits that embedding everyday RPs empowers social work students to build resilient relationships, fostering a supportive learning environment and preparing them for the relational complexities inherent in professional social work."

Becoming Through Belonging: Black Girls\' Educational Journeys in Gendered Racialized School Spaces

Sandra Jeter[1]
[1]Howard University, , United States

Black girls across the world often navigate school environments that misrecognize their intellect, police their expression and bodies, and deny their right to belong. Drawing on Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Feminism, this qualitative study examines how Black women in the United States retroactively reflect on their K–12 educational experiences to illuminate how belonging, or its absence, shaped their identity development and sense of becoming. Through thematic analysis of 2-hour in-depth interviews with twelve Black women, five themes emerged: Becoming the Girl They Said I Wasn’t Belonging in the Margins Performing Perfection to Belong School as a Site of Harm or Power. These themes reveal how participants contended with gendered racial expectations, negotiated visibility and erasure, and sought affirmation in peer relationships and trusted educators. Their narratives underscore how school belonging is not a neutral experience, but one shaped by power, surveillance, and resistance. There are numerous important implications for this study. Researchers can expand this work by conducting large-scale, generational studies to assess how cultural context and historical moments have shaped and continue to shape Black girls\' school beloginginess across time. Longitudinal designs with adolescent participants can further uncover how belonging influences identity over critical developmental periods. Practitioners, including social workers and school counselors, should co-create safe spaces with students and collaborate with educators to develop inclusive classrooms and affirming curricula. Policymakers must ensure equitable resource allocation, invest in culturally responsive mental health supports, and dismantle systemic barriers to access and opportunity. This study encourages us to reimagine educational belonging not as assimilation, but as liberation, one where Black girls, and other intersectionally marginalized youth, are allowed to be, become, and belong on their own terms.

Decolonizing the terrain of care in social work: A narrative inquiry of the collective and embodied care practices of Indigenous and racialized activists.

Radha Bhardwaj[1]
[1]York University, Phd Program, Canada, , Canada

I'm a third year PhD student in the doctoral program at York University's School of Social Work. The objective of my research is to explore collective and embodied care practices of Indigenous, Black, and racialized activists engaged in local and global justice movements. This session will seek to explore the following questions: What are the current practices of collective care and embodied healing of Indigenous and racialized activists? How do healing practices contribute to the sustainability of justice movements? What values guide care and healing practices? Current discourse frames self-care in social work as a personal responsibility that facilitates professionalism and the ability to optimally perform clinical work. Western epistemology of self-care does not integrate global inequities, feminized and racialized disparities nor meet the cultural and contextual needs of global social workers. In this session, participants will join a conversation about care rooted in Indigenous, Black, and racialized traditions such as embracing reciprocity through mindfulness, African philosophies of Ubuntu, Harambee, and Ujamaa grounded in ethical relationships, and Yoga philosophy of selfless action. A deep ontological worldview of interconnectedness is intrinsic to these philosophies that enable a compassionate relationship with self, community, and the environment. As the social work profession is no longer just local, and there is a dire need to support the resilience of socio-ecological justice movements, this facilitation will share early findings, offer multiple traditional knowledges on care that have been historically excluded, and consider diverse practices to foster healing in our eco-social world.

Teaching Environmental Justice to Prepare Climate-Informed Social Workers: A Curriculum Case Study from the U.S.

Jennifer Barile[1]
[1]Private, ,

As the climate crisis continues to expose and deepen social and environmental inequities, social workers are increasingly called upon to respond to its complex impacts. This poster highlights the development of a new Environmental Justice (EJ) course within a U.S.-based of Social Work program, designed to prepare students for climate-informed practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Rooted in social work's core values of equity, human rights, and ecological well-being, the course centers Indigenous and rural perspectives to examine how environmental degradation intersects with colonization, poverty, displacement, and health disparities. Students explore the connections between environmental injustice and mental health, intergenerational trauma, housing instability, and access to clean air, water, and land. Through case-based learning, reflective writing, and policy analysis, the course supports students in identifying both harm and resilience in communities most affected by environmental crises.

This work aligns closely with two SWSD 2026 themes: "Social Work and Sustainable Development" and "Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges." By preparing students to understand and act on the social dimensions of climate change, the course contributes to the field's growing global responsibility to advance climate justice as a critical component of sustainable development and ethical practice.

The poster will outline key course objectives, content areas, and early student reflections, and will offer practical insights for other social work educators seeking to integrate environmental justice into their own programs.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY SOCIAL LABS: ADVANCING INDIGENISATION IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN UGANDA

Timothy Opobo[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda

"The indigenization of social work education in Africa is a response to the limitations of Western-centric approaches to addressing complex local social issues. This paper explores the role of engaged scholarship and community social labs in indigenizing social work education in Uganda. The study analyzes data from four focus group discussions and student WhatsApp conversations to examine how these approaches facilitate meaningful community engagement and the integration of local knowledge into the social work curriculum. The results show that community social labs can help with cultural sensitivity and problem-solving that is relevant to the situation. They also demonstrate that institutional constraints and power dynamics may hinder this transition.

Despite these issues, the study suggests that engaged scholarship through community social labs has significant potential to make social work education and practice in Uganda more culturally sensitive and responsive to local realities. Even with these challenges, the study suggests that engaging scholars in community social labs have a lot of potential to make social work education and practice in Uganda more sensitive to local cultures and needs."

FOSTERING CHILD AGENCY FOR CHILD PROTECTION: LESSONS FROM UGANDA'S ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Timothy Opobo[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda

In Uganda, children face pervasive threats to their well-being, including high rates of physical, emotional, and sexual violence. This paper explores the role of Engaged Scholarship, implemented through community social labs, in fostering child agency for child protection. The study involved children from two rural communities and Makerere University social laboratory students, highlighting how child agency can address critical child protection issues.
We collected qualitative data from five focus group discussions, purposefully selecting 40 children from Eastern and Northern Uganda, and analyzed the data thematically to identify patterns of child participation.

Scholars encouraged child engagement in community gatherings by fostering open interaction. Children identified parental neglect of school expenditures, food, shelter, healthcare, decision-making, and their right to be a child. They formed child committees to follow up on meeting recommendations, made reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap, created drama groups to raise awareness, and observed and practiced with social laboratory students.

This study underscores the value of Engaged Scholarship in empowering children as active participants in addressing child protection issues. By bridging academic research and community action, the social labs model fosters child agency and promotes sustainable, community-driven solutions, highlighting its potential as an innovative approach to tackling complex social challenges.

‘When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers’: Social work and political violence

Prof Helmut Spitzer[1]
[1]Carinthia University Of Applied Sciences, Austria, , Australia

Political violence in all its manifestations is a significant driver for social work interventions in many parts of the world. The scope of politically induced violence includes genocide, armed conflict, state repression, the discrimination and persecution of certain groups in society, and various forms of human rights violations. Perpetrators can be state, parastate, and non-state actors. Political violence can be carried out by groups or individuals, both in the form of physical or psychological violence. This presentation refers to the theoretical concept of the ‘triangle of violence’, which encompasses direct, structural, and cultural violence. These three forms of violence are closely related to and influence one another. Based on these deliberations, the presentation introduces a distinct definition of political violence suitable to serve as an analytical and practical entry point for the social work profession. It is argued that social work has both the mandate and the scope to address various forms of such violence meaningfully. Intervention strategies should address micro, meso, and macro levels. However, social workers should balance their commitment to vulnerable groups with ensuring their own safety and agency. They sometimes work in dangerous contexts of humanitarian crisis and political oppression, facing harassment and intimidation from the authorities. When they advocate for human rights and social justice, they face the risk of public discreditation and personal attacks, particularly when criticising the government and engaging in political matters. To demonstrate these challenges more practically, the presentation provides case examples drawn from countries in Africa’s Great Lakes region. The proverb ‘When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers’ highlights the fact that it is primarily the civilian population that suffers from the effects of political violence.

Harambee in Action: Reclaiming the Heart of Social Work in an Anti-DEI Era

Joan Blakey[1], Traci Laliberte[2]
[1]University Of Minnesota-twin Cities, , United States, [2]Multidiscipinary Institute for Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, ,

Amid escalating anti-DEI legislation and hostile political climates, social work education faces intensified scrutiny. What is now labeled “controversial” diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work is, in fact, grounded in the profession’s core values: person-centered care, cultural humility, strengths-based practice, and ethical engagement. In the spirit of collective action, and mutual support—this work calls us to stand together to protect and advance the heart of social work.

Historically, social work education has centered Whiteness through curriculum, licensure, and institutional norms, shaping both the profession and its perceived boundaries. Reclaiming the full history of social work—including its roots in grassroots organizing, social protest, and abolition—offers a subversive and necessary educational strategy. By honoring the liberatory practices long embodied by Black, Indigenous, Latino, and Asian social workers, we connect current struggles to a lineage of resistance and resilience.

Drawing on lessons from Freedom Schools, mutual aid networks, and other community-led movements, this presentation shares concrete strategies for preserving justice-centered content in restrictive environments. These include embedding structural analysis into field education, using case studies that center survival and resistance, and elevating community-based knowledge as legitimate expertise. Such approaches affirm dignity, self-determination, and cultural responsiveness—not as political positions, but as ethical imperatives.

Resisting anti-DEI efforts is not about defending an ideology—it is about safeguarding the profession’s purpose. As we navigate these challenges, reminds us that we are stronger together: listening deeply, honoring lived experience, and using our collective power to support—not control—those we serve. In doing so, we affirm that equity is not optional. It is—and has always been—what good social work requires for building sustainable, shared futures.

The Implementation of Adult Diversion (without a Law) in a Rural District in South Africa: Innovative Approaches and Practice Methods by Social Workers and Prosecutors

Dr Bongane Mzinyane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu-natal, South Africa, , South Africa

Adult diversion, although not formalised by a law in South Africa, has proven to be a useful rehabilitative pretrial process that holds significant promise for social development and crime management. However, its full potential remains unrealised, particularly in under-resourced rural districts, such as UThukela. This paper, grounded in a exploratory-contextual qualitative study in the UThukela District of KwaZulu-Natal, examines the lived experiences and practices of probation officers (criminal justice social workers) and public prosecutors to understand the opportunities and challenges promoting/hindering effective adult diversion. Using a social constructivist paradigm and framed by structuration and restorative justice theories, the study revealed a significant disjuncture between professional perceptions and practices. Findings show that while practitioners view adult diversion as a rehabilitative, its inconsistent application, a critical lack of formal, accredited training, and the absence of a standardised framework create operational chaos. The rural context, characterised by resource limitations and communication inefficiencies, exacerbates these challenges. This paper argues for an interdisciplinary effort to bridge these professional and systemic gaps. It presents a proposed framework for adult diversion that formalises practices, ensures accredited training, and fosters meaningful stakeholder collaboration. The paper offers a framework, which is not merely an academic exercise; it is an innovative, practice-based methodology designed to resolve operational inconsistencies and promote sustainable, victim-centric outcomes. By uniting the distinct roles of social workers and legal practitioners, this research offers a pathway to advance restorative justice and contribute to a more just and sustainable future within the South African criminal justice system. The study also advances the discourse of adult diversion in South Africa, which is under-researched and under-util

From Legislation to Practice: The role of a New Legal and Social Protection Frameworks in Israel for Safety and Rehabilitation - Combating and Enhancing Protection Against Domestic Violence through Implementing Regulations 18 and 19 of the Family Violence Law

Dr. Ella Salman[1]
[1]Tel Aviv University & Israeli Ministry Of Welfare, ,

Regulations 18 and 19 of the Family Violence Law, introduced in Israel only about two years ago, represent a significant development in the legal and social framework designed to protect individuals suffering from domestic violence. These relatively new regulations provide concrete tools for implementation, ensuring that the law moves beyond general principles and becomes an effective mechanism for safeguarding victims and promoting rehabilitation.

Regulation 19 focuses on the procedures for granting and enforcing protective orders. It establishes standards for restraining orders, removal of violent individuals from the household, and restrictions on contact between perpetrators and victims. This regulation ensures that victims receive immediate protection, while prioritizing swift judicial intervention to reduce the risk of ongoing harm.

Regulation 18 complements this by defining the responsibilities of welfare services, law enforcement, and community organizations. It mandates the provision of shelters, psychological counseling, and social support, while also emphasizing inter-agency cooperation to prevent victims from falling into recurring cycles of violence.

As part of these developments, a new unit was recently established within the Ministry of Welfare, which I manage. The unit's mandate is to implement Regulations 18 and 19 by providing professional opinions to the court regarding the feasibility of treatment programs and the assessment of dangerousness posed by violent individuals. This function bridges the legal system and social services, ensuring that judicial decisions are informed by expert evaluations and that interventions are tailored to both protect victims and address perpetrators' risks.

Together, Regulations 18 and 19, along with the institutional framework created to enforce them, reflect a broader understanding of domestic violence as a societal concern that requires coordinated legal, social, and rehabilitative responses. They reinforce the state's duty not only to provide immediate safety, but also to foster long-term resilience and empowerment for victims.

The Rights of Child-Headed Households to Care and Protection: Reflections from Social Service Providers

Dr Niccoh Diago[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, , South Africa

"In South Africa, children living in child-headed households face multiple vulnerabilities, including exposure to violence, abuse, poverty, and limited access to social welfare services. Although social workers are legislatively mandated to provide care and protection, gaps persist between policy and practice.

This study is informed by a human rights-based perspective, which highlights the injustice, inequality, and social exclusion experienced by children in child-headed households. The ecological systems perspective was further utilized to identify appropriate social services needed to safeguard the rights of vulnerable children.

A qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive research design was utilized. Purposive sampling was used to select 17 social workers and 5 social work supervisors from Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape, as well as 1 designated official from the provincial Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that children in child-headed households experience emotional distress due to parental loss, trauma, and the premature assumption of adult responsibilities, resulting in a need for counselling, emotional support, and nurturing environments. However, the delivery of essential social work services is constrained by high caseloads, staff shortages, limited funding, and inadequate resources.

The study concludes that child-headed households do not constitute protective measures and often fail to uphold the best interests of the child. It recommends that more social workers should

be employed to ensure effective services for these children. Furthermore, legislative amendment to recognize these children as in need of care and protection in line with Section 150(1) of the Children's Act is recommended."

International student mobility and transcontextual learning of social work practice – Experiences of Norwegian students and educators

Carina Henriksen[1]
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"Study-abroad programs have been increasingly popular in social work education worldwide (Moorhead et al., 2021). In Norway as well as in many other European countries, doing practice abroad or participating in short-term practice mobility program has become a popular and common form of student mobility in professional education like social work (Sjåfjell & Øydgard, 2023; Zhao & Moen 2022). Though being an international profession practiced in over 150 countries, social work practice is highly contextual (Healy, 2005; Lyngstad, 2013). This paper discusses how social work students encounter and deal with contextual differences when participating in practice mobility programs. With a focus on differences that are normally perceived as cultural differences, it addresses how the differences in cultural norms can cause confusions for students in terms of their professional identity, particularly in societies where the social, cultural and institutional context are significantly different from that of their own. Our analysis and arguments are based on the qualitative data that shed light on experiences of students who have participated in such practice mobility in non-western countries. It includes interviews, focus groups, and participant observations, and essays they delivered after the mobility, as well as our own experience as teachers in supervising these students."

From Assessment to Intervention: Understanding Decision-Making in India's Juvenile Justice System

Ms Ida D Souza[1]
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"Juvenile justice systems aim to respond to children's offending behaviour through rehabilitative and developmentally informed interventions. In India, while the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 mandates a child-centred framework, the effective integration of psychosocial assessments into decision-making remains unclear. This paper examines how counsellors' developmental and psychosocial assessments are utilised by Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) in designing interventions for children in conflict with the law (CICL).

The study is based on a qualitative analysis of four cases of children in conflict with the law and the interventions prescribed for them. It focuses on the counselling process, the preparation of counselling reports, and their utilisation by Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) in prescribing interventions as part of the reformation and reintegration process. The study was conducted within the jurisdiction of two districts of Karnataka—Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. Interactions with counsellors and JJB members were analysed using thematic analysis to understand assessment practices and their influence on judicial responses. Findings indicate that counsellors often lack formal training in structured assessment techniques and theoretical frameworks related to the onset of offending, factors contributing to persistence, and pathways to desistance. Consequently, counselling assessments tend to be descriptive rather than analytical.

JJB members reported that while counselling reports occasionally support intervention planning, they are frequently perceived as superficial and insufficiently analytical to guide nuanced, rehabilitation-oriented decisions. Gaps were also identified in professional education, college curricula, and in-service training programmes, with limited exposure to evidence-based "what works" approaches to reformation.

The paper recommends the development of a structured training module for counsellors focusing on developmental criminology, psychosocial risk–need assessment, and evidence-informed intervention design. Strengthening assessment capacity is essential for aligning judicial decision-making with children's needs and improving reformation and reintegration outcomes in juvenile justice systems."

Strengthening or Undermining Transitions to Adulthood? Recipient and Professional views and experiences of the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot

Dr Louise Roberts[1]
[1]Cardiff University, Wales, Uk, , United Kingdom

"The Welsh Government's Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot represents a bold social protection strategy, providing £1,600 gross (£1,280 net) per month for two years to young people transitioning to adulthood from state care. This presentation draws on qualitative findings from interviews and focus groups with recipients and professionals, undertaken in the early and latter stages of the pilot.

Initial interviews revealed that young people were positive about the scheme and discussed benefits related to well-being, poverty, housing security, and social and educational opportunities. However, experiences varied and some faced challenges with budgeting, and others remained concerned about the future.

Professionals broadly endorsed the pilot's aims but raised ethical and safeguarding concerns, particularly regarding the absence of conditions and the potential impact on substance misuse and exploitation.

The presentation will include currently unreleased follow-up data examining participants' experiences and how hopes, concerns, and views have evolved over the course of the pilot. This will include consideration of how recipients have fared since the end of the pilot, and if and in what ways participants believe the basic income has influenced their transitions to adulthood.

The presentation situates these findings within broader debates on poverty reduction, structural inequalities, social protection systems, and participatory approaches in social work. Connections will be made with key practice tensions related to care and control, including efforts to promote independence and autonomy, whilst protecting individuals from harm. Lessons from the pilot offer critical insights for bridging policy and practice, including the potential for unintended consequences, and complexities related to perceived \'good\' and \'bad\' uses of the money."

Reimagining social work practice in the field of drug and substance abuse in Africa

Dr Tawanda Masuka[1]
[1]Women's University In Africa, , Zimbabwe

"Endemic drug abuse mainly among the young people in Africa has emerged as a major threat to sustainable shared futures as espoused in the Agenda 2063's vision of Africa which is citizen-driven, prosperous, peaceful, and a dynamic force in the global arena. In response, since 1996 the African Union has adopted successive Action Plans to guide drug control policies across the continent. This paper using case studies of Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe argues that coloniality is evident in the responses to the drug abuse problem which are predominantly criminal-legal in approach and have recorded limited success. For more effective, decolonised and indigenised responses, the paper considers the indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu which is rooted in the social justice approach. In this context, social work which is at the forefront in the responses to the drug abuse problem focuses on policy change advocacy to decriminalise drug abuse and community-based rehabilitation which embrace indigenous therapies and a wider network of expertise and support from professionals, families, traditional and religious leaders. This shift in social work practice is aligned with African Union's Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019–2025) which urge Member States to address all forms of problematic drug use through paying greater attention to support, treatment and protection rather than punishment of people who abuse drugs

Political Social Work and Democratic Renewal: Bridging Grassroots Power and Legislative Action

Dr. Anthony Estreet[1]
[1]National Association Of Social Workers & Color Of Change, Inc, , United States

"The IFSW Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles affirms social work's responsibility to advance human dignity, social justice, collective responsibility, and the ethical challenge of unjust power. This presentation situates political social work as an ethical, movement informed practice that intentionally integrates grassroots organizing with legislative advocacy to strengthen democratic societies. Using a US based case study, the session examines collective advocacy between the National Association of Social Workers, the largest professional social work organization in the US and Color of Change, one of the largest grassroots racial justice and digital organizing organizations globally.

This collaboration demonstrates how sustained grassroots mobilization, when strategically aligned with legislative action and professional policy advocacy, can influence public narratives, advance social policy, and expand democratic participation. Drawing on social movement theory, critical race praxis, and participatory democracy, the presentation explores how social workers in the United States operate across systems by connecting community led demands with institutional and legislative pathways to address structural inequities, promote social justice, and reduce social conflict.

Particular attention is given to the ethical role of media, technology, and digital organizing in shaping social narratives, mobilizing youth movements, and countering disinformation that undermines democratic trust and human rights. The presentation emphasizes that grassroots power alone is insufficient without clear pathways to policy change, just as legislative advocacy is ineffective without organized community engagement, accountability, and sustained public pressure.

While grounded in the United States context, the session explicitly focuses on international relevance and replication. Transferable frameworks for coalition building, narrative strategy, and integrated grassroots and legislative advocacy are discussed with attention to cultural humility, political context, and respect for local social movements. This presentation positions political social work as a global ethical practice that bridges community power and policy systems to co construct inclusive, resilient, and democratic societies."

Community Participation and Inclusive Governance: Fostering Sustainable Communities through Civic Engagement

Dr Golam Mathbor[1]
[1]School Of Social Work, Monmouth University, USA, , United States
"This presentation explores community participation in development, examining how its meaning has evolved over time with real-world examples. The term participation is often paired with concepts like citizen participation, people's participation, and public participation. Arnstein (1969) compares citizen participation to eating spinach-widely accepted as beneficial yet seldom analyzed for its true impact. The presenter delves into different interpretations of participation, its uses, and potential misuses.

Participation in development is not just a concept, but a process involving activities that, when applied effectively, can drive sustainable outcomes. Successful participation requires clear definitions, context-sensitive application, and redistribution of power and resources. Key elements include identifying stakeholders, ensuring transparency, involving the community in decision-making, equitably sharing benefits, and protecting the environment. Ongoing communication between project officials and beneficiaries is critical to avoid gaps and mistrust.

Effective participation depends on accountability from beneficiaries and strong local commitment. It is a collaborative process where both community members and officials work together to design, implement, and assess projects, ensuring responsiveness to evolving community needs, and civic engagement opportunity to shape programs and outcomes.

Through case studies, the presentation highlights factors that enhance or hinder civic engagement and identifies global best practices for successful community involvement and inclusive governance.

Striving to Protect and Support Vulnerable and Older Adults with Cognitive Impairments and the Care Partners from Elder Mistreatment: Development of a Screening Intervention and Risk Assessment

Dr Monique Pappadis[1]
[1]The University Of Texas Medical Branch, , United States

"Elder mistreatment (EM) is public health and safety concern for vulnerable and older adults, especially those with brain injury, mild cognitive impairment, and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (MCI/ADRD). EM is chronically undetected and underreported in acute, post-acute, and primary care settings, which will continue until reliable and accurate screening practices are implemented and interventions or referral for services to safeguard vulnerable populations and minimize the risk of caregivers perpetrating abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. Therefore, we aimed to: 1) develop a predictive model of risk and protective factors for EM among older adults using national administrative data from the US; 2) interview older adults with cognitive impairments, family caregivers, and providers about dynamic risk factors and education/training gaps that may contribute to EM risk; and 3) develop a screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) model for caregivers and older adults to address EM risks that may be used by medical professionals and social work professionals. Our findings indicate that social determinants of health, such as housing, financial instability, and social isolation, along with frailty, contribute to EM risk. In addition, caregiver stress, often from financial instability, can increase risk conditions for EM. Caregivers and providers report limited education and knowledge on EM, which further contributes to the complexity of identifying individuals at increased risk of experiencing or perpetuating violence, neglect or exploitation. Thus, our developed SBIRT model centers on risk assessment, universal education, and referral to support based on the results of the risk assessment. Key considerations for implementing the SBIRT intervention will be provided, updates regarding preliminary feasibility and acceptability testing, and expanding the SBIRT intervention to a greater number of clinics across a large academic health system to protect older and vulnerable adults."

A new horizon for social work: the Decolonization, Indigenization, Spirituality and Buddhist Social Work project

Ms Kana Matsuo[1]
[1]Methodist Mission Northern, Auckland, New Zealand And Tokyo Metropolitan University, , New Zealand

For over a century, the discourse on international social work has been predominantly shaped by the Western-rooted Professional Social Work (WPSW) framework, which has been disseminated globally. This framework has served as a valuable foundation for social work education, particularly in developing human resources within nation-states. In 2021, our project group convened an international forum spanning five continents to address the resistance of social work researchers to the globalization of WPSW. Through this dialogue, we discovered that international collaboration projects have the potential to transcend entrenched contextual boundaries and support a new and emerging course for the future of social work. Decolonization, indigenization, spirituality, and Buddhist social work have emerged from a variety of contexts. We are determined to support an emerging, inclusive discourse on social work at the international level. Reports from Africa highlight the decolonization of social work in Kenya, while the Oceania team has emphasized indigenous social work. Members of the Asian Pacific Association for Social Work Education have underscored the spiritual dimension of social work. The North American team has contributed essential insights into the significance of spirituality, indigenous perspectives, and decolonization in social work. The Asian Research Institute for International Social Work presented \"Buddhist Social Work," which is not traditionally rooted in WPSW. Collectively, this project joins the groundwork for a new construct of social work in the context of globalization. We are eager to advance dialogue on the future of social work. Social work education and practice must not be confined to a singular Western rooted globalized concept; instead, they should flourish in diverse and vibrant contexts worldwide.

Transforming Doctoral Social Work Education for Sustainable Futures: Business, AI, and Data Science Integration

Dr April Jones[1]
[1]Tuskegee University, USA, Tuskegee, Alabama, , United States

This presentation introduces the proposed in Social Work — Global Business, AI & Data Science Leadership at Tuskegee University, designed as the first of its kind at an HBCU and one of few globally to integrate social work, business, and emerging technologies. This 54-credit, fully online asynchronous program equips scholar-practitioners to advance sustainable futures through rigorous interdisciplinary training, flexible dissertation pathways, and stackable certificates in Genomics, Political Social Work, Financial Social Work, and AI for Social Good (MIT partnership) secondary! The program reimagines doctoral education by embedding social innovation labs, hybrid dissertation models, and applied research-to-practice pipelines. Students may choose between traditional dissertations or collaborative, community-engaged dissertations producing both scholarly and applied outputs. Through partnerships with NIH RCMI, AUC Data Science Institute, NASW, and municipal governments, the program aligns with the Grand Challenges for Social Work and the UN Sustainable Development Goals This approach ensures graduates emerge as transformative leaders who synthesize interdisciplinary knowledge, conduct original research, and design equitable, technology-driven solutions for global challenges. By prioritizing sustainability, social justice, and global engagement, the program advances doctoral pedagogy to prepare leaders capable of fostering inclusive, innovative, and socially responsive futures.

From Chaos to Resilience: Developing a Multi-Sector Psychosocial Response Model for Displaced Communities in Wartime

Miss Efrat Levy[1]
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On October 7, 2023, an unprecedented mass-casualty attack in southern Israel led to the large-scale evacuation of communities from the Gaza border region, including the complete displacement of the Kibbutz Kfar Aza community. On the morning of the attack, Kibbutz Kfar Aza was home to just under 1,000 residents. During the attack, 64 community members were murdered and 19 were kidnapped to Gaza, including seven children. Evacuation of survivors occurred only after prolonged exposure to life-threatening conditions: in the earliest cases after approximately 15 hours, and for some residents only after more than 36 hours. Many evacuations took place while active fighting was still ongoing in the kibbutz and under continued threat of fire. Survivors were subsequently relocated to temporary accommodation in hotels across the country, carrying the compounded impact of direct violence, loss, displacement, and ongoing uncertainty.

This paper presents the development and implementation of a psychosocial response systemestablished in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Drawing on our direct involvement as practitioners leading the process, we describe a three-stage trajectory: (1) From chaos to initial coordination – spontaneous volunteer-led emergency psychosocial support; (2) Integration of formal authorities – collaboration between local government, national agencies, and civil society organizations; and (3) A multi-sector system operating under prolonged emergency conditions – structured, community-centered services including individual, family, and group interventions, alongside community-based initiatives.

Key guiding principles included flexibility within structured systems, proactive outreach, trauma-informed rights advocacy, inter-organizational coordination, and sustained community engagement. The model balanced professional accountability with responsiveness to rapidly changing needs, while preserving continuity of care across multiple displacement sites.

Situated within international disaster and conflict social work literature, the paper offers transferable insights for designing scalable, trauma-informed, multi-sector psychosocial systems in contexts of armed conflict, mass displacement, and protracted crisis."

AI for Social Good: Redefining Doctoral Training in Social Work

Dr April Jones[1]
[1]Tuskegee University, USA, Tuskegee, Alabama, , United States

This interactive workshop demonstrates how Tuskegee University's proposed in Social Work — Global Business, AI artificial intelligence, data science, and digital innovation at the core of doctoral preparation. The program equips candidates with technical fluency and ethical frameworks necessary for leveraging AI in social work research, practice, and policy.

Workshop participants will engage with the AI for Social Good certificate (developed with MIT), which explores applications of machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics for equity-driven interventions. Through case scenarios drawn from the curriculum, participants will analyze how AI can reduce disparities—or inadvertently reinforce them—across systems such as child welfare, healthcare, and global poverty alleviation.

The session emphasizes the role of social innovation labs, which allow doctoral candidates to co-create digital tools and interventions with NGOs, governments, and technology partners. Faculty will facilitate discussion on aligning AI innovation with data-start NASW Code of Ethics, and global AI ethics frameworks.

Learning Outcomes:

Identify opportunities and risks of integrating AI and data science into doctoral social work education.
Apply an ethical framework for evaluating technology use in social service delivery.

Explore strategies for building cross-disciplinary partnerships that advance digital transformation in social work.

This workshop is intended for faculty, doctoral program directors, and practitioners seeking to integrate ethical technology into education and practice. By combining presentation, case analysis, and collaborative dialogue, it models how social work can shape digital transformation as both innovator and ethical steward.

Crossing borders in learning: First-year student experiences of an international online symposium on human rights and social justice

Dr Dorothee Hölscher[1], Dr Corlie Giliomee[2]
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Social work education is increasingly challenged to prepare students for practice within a globally interconnected yet deeply unequal world. This paper presents findings from an international, online student symposium on human rights and social justice involving first-year social work students from the University of Queensland (Australia) and the University of Pretoria (South Africa). Anchored in the global definition of social work and its ethical commitment to human rights and social justice, the symposium was designed as an internationalisation-at-home initiative that sought to disrupt traditional, elitist models of international learning. Using a participatory action research framework, students and educators collaborated as co-learners in the planning, facilitation, and reflective evaluation of the symposium. Guided written reflections, adapted from Brookfield's Critical Incident Questionnaire, were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. The study explores three interrelated dimensions: students' willingness to engage beyond formal curriculum requirements, their learning about similarities and differences in human rights concerns across geopolitical contexts, and their experiences of peer-to-peer international engagement. Preliminary findings suggest that virtual international learning spaces can meaningfully support the development of a shared professional identity grounded in human rights, while simultaneously fostering critical reflexivity about context, power, and positionality. Students reported enhanced awareness of global social justice issues, increased confidence in articulating ethical commitments, and a strengthened sense of belonging to a global social work community. The paper argues that online international symposia offer a pedagogically robust, accessible, and decolonial approach to social work education, with particular relevance for first-year curricula. Implications for curriculum design, student–educator partnerships, and the future of internationalization in social work education are discussed.

Reimagining the Role of Social Work in Emergency Situations: Lessons from Informal Workers' Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Tanzania

Dr Zena Mnasi Mabeyo[1]
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Social workers are increasingly challenged and called upon to provide support to clients across different settings in order to buffer the effects of emergency situations such as COVID-19. However, in order to design contextually appropriate and culturally relevant emergency response strategies, social workers must understand the unique challenges posed and emerging needs of the different population segments. However, evidence indicate a gap in empirical information about such challenges and needs to inform evidence-based interventions. To bridge the gap, this article draws on the experience from the informal workers of the tourism industry in Tanzania in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic impacts. It seeks to explore the challenges they encountered, mitigations strategies used and support mechanisms that helped them to sustain their lives and business and the implications to social work practice.

Employing a across-sectional descriptive design and non-intervention qualitative approach with 100 participants, the study found that the impact of COVID-19 was double sword to the informal workers. It was not only the business that collapsed but also the primary support structures such as family and community were of no help implying that in mitigating the impacts of emergence in low-income countries with limited social protection coverage, social workers should be mindful, re-thing and consider harnessing innovative and indigenous mutual support strategies beyond the conventional traditional strategies and support mechanisms.

Addressing Gender Based Violence through Movement building – the case for HURUKURO

Dr Mildred Mushunje[1]
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Movement building is a powerful strategy for creating momentum toward lasting social change. It is through collective action, shared vision, and sustained advocacy that societies begin to shift entrenched norms and structures whilst amplifying marginalized voices and addressing systemic inequalities. The social work profession is well placed to advocate for social justice through movement building. One of the most urgent social justice issues requiring movement building is gender equality. There can be no gender equality when women one third of women globally suffer from gender-based violence. Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals relates to gender equality, yet UNWomen reports that attainment of this goal is off the mark if women are not empowered. This stark reality underscores the gap between aspiration and lived experience. Women's empowerment is central to addressing gender based violence. Empowerment enables women to claim their right to self governance, to make decisions free from coercion, and to participate fully in civic and economic life. The social work response to gender based violence is vital because the profession approaches societal challenges holistically. Social workers recognize that violence is not an isolated act but a symptom of intersecting systems — cultural norms, economic inequalities, legal frameworks, and family dynamics. Using an Afrocentric model of engagement called— which translates to— this discussion explores how indigenous systems of communication can be harnessed to create movements that lead to impactful change in communities. In many African societies, dialogue has historically been the foundation of community governance, conflict resolution, and social cohesion. It is a process that values inclusivity, respect, and the wisdom of collective voices. Applied to movement building, HURUKURO becomes a powerful tool. It allows women and communities to articulate their challenges, identify shared goals, and mobilize around common visions.

Enhancing Social Work Curricula through Trauma-Informed Pedagogy: Towards Potential and Impact

Dr Wuraola Bolaji[1]
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Trauma is widespread among university students globally. It remains a widespread problem in UK universities, especially following COVID-19. Social work students, in particular, encounter higher levels of trauma and adverse childhood experiences than the general population. Many of these students enter the profession with their own histories of trauma, motivated by a wish to \'help others\' as a way to heal from their past experiences. However, social work is a highly stressful profession, and social work educators face difficulties in navigating the complexity of teaching this group of students, who are at high risk of burnout and secondary trauma. The study explored trauma-informed pedagogy (TIP) and its impact on these students\' learning experiences within UK universities. Data were gathered through qualitative focus group interviews with MSC and BSC social work students at the University of Hertfordshire and were analysed thematically. The study highlights the detrimental impact of trauma on learning and its potential as an indicator of academic failure. It investigates the urgent need for TIP within social work education and its potential in other university disciplines. It also highlights the positive impact of TIP on students\' learning experiences and practice. Recommendations are made for integrating TIP into social work education and other university disciplines. It recognises the need for training to ensure the successful implementation of TIP. This requires resources and commitments across organisations.

Divorce and Family Well-being: A Qualitative Exploration

Dr. Vinnarasan Aruldoss[1]
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"Divorce is an increasingly visible social issue in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), yet it remains largely unspoken in public and academic discourse, as it is often viewed as a personal issue or social taboo. The rising rates of divorce, set against the backdrop of modernity and development, present a significant threat not only to ‘the fabric of society,’ but also to the well-being of families and communities. This study explores the lived experiences of divorced people, focusing on their evolving roles and responsibilities. It examines divorce\'s impact on parenting, social support system, relationships with children, and emotional well-being through a small-scale qualitative study and literature review. The paper concludes by analysing the implications of divorce for the sustainability of families and communities, as well as the role of social work practices in effectively addressing this issue within the country.

Existential Social Work: Addressing Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Western Welfare States

Prof Johannes Nathschläger[1]
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In contemporary social work debates, the challenges posed by poverty, exclusion, and structural inequality remain central. Yet in affluent Western societies, another set of issues increasingly demands attention: the existential questions of meaning, freedom, responsibility, and the confrontation with suffering and death. This paper introduces the framework of Existential Social Work, a theoretical and practical approach that places these questions at the heart of professional practice. While material deprivation may be less visible in many industrialized nations, practitioners encounter growing experiences of alienation, loss of purpose, and existential insecurity. Technological transformations, especially the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence, intensify these dynamics by reshaping labor, social relations, and even self-understandings of human uniqueness. Social work in such contexts cannot limit itself to service provision or problem management. It must also address the profound question many clients bring—what is the meaning of my life in the face of change, uncertainty, and mortality? Existential Social Work provides professionals with conceptual tools and ethical grounding to engage with these dimensions. Drawing on philosophical traditions and therapeutic insights, it encourages dialogue on meaning, supports authentic decision-making, and fosters resilience not only through external resources but through deeper reflection on human existence itself.

By presenting this approach, the paper argues for a broadening of social work's mandate in wealthy societies: to take existential concerns seriously as legitimate social needs. Far from being an abstract or individualistic concern, meaning-making is a collective task with implications for social cohesion, mental health, and democratic participation. Recognizing and addressing existential dimensions strengthens the profession's ability to respond adequately to the realities of life in the twenty-first century.

Holistic Approach to the Role of Enhancing Learners\' Academic Success Well Being, and Social Functioning Through the Established School Social Work Programme

Dr Stephen Mbinga Omondi[1]
[1]Kenya National Association Of Social Workers, , Kenya

School social work has become increasingly significant in the contemporary era as countries strive to realise the global commitment to “Education for All” (EFA) and the education-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. From the landmark World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), through the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), to the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the SDGs, education has remained central to global development agendas. However, persistent structural inequalities continue to limit access, retention, and completion of schooling, particularly among children from poor and vulnerable backgrounds. This paper examines the critical role of school social work as a change-oriented intervention in advancing inclusive, equitable, and quality education. Social work interventions span micro, meso, and macro levels, including counselling, casework, group work, family support, social pedagogy, and policy advocacy. These approaches address the psychosocial, economic, and environmental barriers that undermine learners’ educational participation. In Kenya, schools increasingly face complex challenges such as poverty, child neglect and abuse, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, disability, and mental health concerns, many of which extend beyond the capacity of teachers alone to manage effectively.
The Nyanza Branch of the Kenya National Association of Social Workers (KNASW) school social work project (2025–2027) adopts a mosaic and community-based approach across six counties. Grounded in prior research and case studies, the initiative integrates poverty alleviation, family engagement, community participation, and psychosocial support to enhance learner wellbeing and educational outcomes. Aligned with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the project emphasises capacity building, collaborative networking, monitoring and evaluation, and socio-economic empowerment
The paper concludes that embedding school social work within education systems is essential for achieving EFA and the SDGs 2030, and calls for stronger policy implementation, curriculum integration, research, and gender-responsive educational reforms

Creating a template for Global North/South collaboration in decolonising Social Work

Jill Childs[1]
[1]Private, ,

Aligned to the overall conference theme of Harambee, this presentation will detail the work of an established international project fostering social connectedness and exploring partnership working and collaboration across the United Kingdom and East Africa. Using the backdrop of decolonisation of the curriculum and embedding indigenous wisdom, this project took its starting point to begin learning around indigenous wisdom and how this can be applied to social work practice and the curriculum, with a move towards the internationalisation of the profession. This project focuses on decolonising international collaboration and how this is practised through responding to and addressing colonial influences to repair and rebalance partnerships. This included utilising key indigenous concepts and methods around mediation and community consultation to create an inclusive, democratic, healthy and (socially) sustainable society.

The call to indigenise social work is one that has been advocated for across the globe, as the current global knowledge base for social work is dominated by a White, Western, Eurocentric and Global North perspective. There is evidence that locally produced knowledge and home-grown solutions produce authentic effective social work practice, therefore there is a need to deconstruct understanding of the colonial legacies. Using decolonisation and Ubuntu as a backdrop, this project utilises community consultations between Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and the UK with an aim to start to build an evidence base for the position of indigenous knowledge and the value this brings to a global perspective for social work curricula and to increase global learning through a lens of social justice. Overall the work which has created a good practice template for Global North/South collaboration in decolonising social work links to the subthemes of social work and sustainable development and social work education, pedagogy and research.

The Uses of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Perceptions of University Social Science Teachers in Uruguay

Dr Alejandro Noboa[1]
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The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (hereinafter referred to as GAI) challenges teachers and students in the teaching-learning processes, particularly the perceptions held about its possibilities and risks. This study observes the perceptions of teachers of different ages, specifically those under forty and those over forty. This paper presents, in particular, opinions on what the contributions of GAI are to teaching and learning processes, what the main problems in teaching and learning processes are with the use of GAI, the ethical and social challenges of GAI in teaching, and the teacher\'s role in the teaching-learning processes. This issue is addressed through a qualitative study based on interviews. Empirical evidence indicates that teachers under forty adapt more to the use of this technology, whereas those over forty find themselves in a difficult position regarding this innovation; they do not know how to confront it and have a rejecting attitude towards GAI, perceiving it as an insurmountable obstacle, although they acknowledge that students have a much greater command of it in university teaching. Assessment methods that capture the outcomes and prevent abuse of the technology are being innovated. The rejection by some and the critical acceptance by others is what we will analyze in this paper.

Power of Art: An Art-Based Co-Creation Model for Social Work Education in Collaboration with Formerly Incarcerated Individuals and Community Partners

Megumi Tokoro[1]
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This paper presents Power of Art, an art based project based learning (PBL) initiative designed to strengthen student agency, relational competence, and community collaboration in social work education. The project was implemented with diverse partners—including organizations supporting older and disabled formerly incarcerated individuals (FIIs), municipal community wellbeing departments, local social welfare promotion agencies, and a regional arts council—to create an inclusive, cross sectoral learning environment.

The initiative comprised six components:

(1) a student led dialogue session with FIIs aimed at understanding participants as whole persons;

(2) FIIs' creation of artworks;

(3) responsive artworks by students, practitioners, and citizens;

(4) an art exhibition and open workshops during the university festival;

(5) co creation workshops involving FIIs and students;

(6) structured reflection sessions.

Mixed methods evaluation drew on students' written reports, reflective journals, in class presentations, records of student led workshops, focus groups, and thematic analyses. Findings showed enhanced student agency, strengthened empathy and critical reflection, shifts toward strengths based understanding of reentry, and improved cross sector relationships. Art making served as a low barrier, trauma informed, and culturally adaptable modality that enabled authentic engagement.

Although not originally framed through Harambee, retrospective analysis revealed strong resonance with its ethos of collective uplift and shared responsibility. Power of Art demonstrates the transformative potential of art based co creation in bridging classroom learning, community engagement, and social work practice.

Bridging Education and Practice: Peer Support, Resilience, and Professional Identity among Early-Career Bedouin Social Workers

Prof Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail[1]
[1]Sapir Acadmic College, , Israel

Bedouin Arab social workers in Israel begin their careers at the intersection of multiple cultural, linguistic, and professional challenges. Many complete their social work education in Palestinian Authority institutions, where training is predominantly theoretical and delivered in Arabic, and then transition into Israel's Hebrew-speaking welfare system. This process often leaves them feeling unprepared, isolated, and conflicted between professional ethics and traditional community values. This qualitative exploratory study examines the role of a structured peer group, the Connecting Bridge program, in supporting the professional integration of 34 early-career Bedouin female social workers.

Findings from semi-structured interviews highlight the group's unique contribution as a culturally sensitive and professionally supportive space. The peer group provided participants with emotional sustenance and a sense of belonging to a professional community, reducing feelings of isolation and normalizing help-seeking behaviors. It also facilitated the acquisition of practical tools, professional language, and reflective practice habits that bridged gaps between academic training and field realities. Participants reported that the group process enabled them to negotiate ethical and cultural dilemmas, strengthen their professional identity, and enhance resilience in high-stress and sometimes threatening work environments.

Metaphors used by participants, such as "sitting on a chair without a back", illustrate their initial sense of instability and lack of guidance. At the same time, by the end of the program, many described themselves as "sitting on a stable chair with support." This symbolic transformation captures the empowerment and professional grounding fostered through the group process.

The study underscores the importance of creating safe, culturally responsive learning environments that support minority social workers in their early careers. Such models prevent burnout, strengthen professional identity, and equip practitioners to balance cultural sensitivity with professional ethics. The Connecting Bridge program offers transferable insights for international contexts where minority professionals face similar integration challenges.

Indigenous Knowledge as a Resource for Professional Development: The “Social Workers as Researchers and Practitioners” Program as a Model for Decolonizing Practice

Prof Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail[1]
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"This presentation introduces the “Social Workers as Researchers and Practitioners” program as a unique model for integrating Indigenous knowledge into professional development and embedding principles of decolonization in social work practice. Within the program, each social worker investigates a pressing social issue in the Bedouin community and develops an intervention program grounded in the Indigenous knowledge revealed through their research. This approach forges a direct link between applied research, culturally responsive practice, and professional innovation.

A qualitative study conducted with the 15 participating social workers highlights the program’s empowering effects. Participants report a strong sense of personal and communal pride, alongside enhanced professional recognition within their organizations. Their inquiries reinforce their standing within the Bedouin community and position them as role models and sources of inspiration. They also describe experiences of creativity and innovation that counter burnout and revitalize their sense of professional mission.

The program demonstrates how social work can be reimagined through Indigenous knowledge, promoting epistemic equality, community resilience, and contextually grounded practice. It offers a practical pathway toward the decolonization of social work, blending local knowledge, applied research, and innovative interventions. In doing so, it contributes to international discourse on the sustainable development of the profession and the reconfiguration of social work as a discipline responsive to cultural diversity and structural inequalities."

Harambee Philosophy and Radicalized Street Children Social Rescue Strategies in Nakuru City Streets, Kenya

Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
[1]Tharaka University, , Kenya

Child radicalization takes different shades in Kenyan city streets. Harambee philosophy entails mainly pulling together in collective mutual support of one another socially, economically or emotionally. Although through persistent Government efforts most street families have now been reintegrated to their original or accommodative households, the hardcore extremist children are still in the streets especially in Nakuru town. By upholding strong sense of brotherhood, the very core root of harambee tag, members of the public have been offering handouts to seemingly deserving children in streets, a trend that tends to sustain the children on the street with hope of getting a more generous person who could offer food and or money, and sometime both. Social work practitioners, likewise set out to rescue such children to safer environments with a long term intend to introduce them to formal learning in schools. The paper, which is predominantly a desk exploration is cemented on Social Inclusion (SI) and Social Radicalization (SR) thinking. Persistent rescue efforts have not been able to fish all street family members in Nakuru town. Secondary data were collected through skim assessment of documentary evidence and interviews that were guided by questionnaire and observation guides. A sample of 100 respondents was determined by use of randomization, and key informants were recruited purposively. Data were analysed in phases. Passerby generosity and handouts from business people have sustained children in streets. Investor sensitivity education, tailor-made psychosocial rescue and rehabilitation of radicalized members and multiagency teamwork would consistently attract street families on alternative livelihood security.

Household Social Dynamics and Child Support-system within the Realm of Harambee Spirit in Kenya

Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
[1]Tharaka University, , Kenya

This paper explores the intricate interplay between household social dynamics and the child support-system within the cultural framework of the Harambee spirit in Kenya. Rooted in the ethos of collective responsibility, solidarity, and mutual aid, Harambee has historically shaped how communities mobilize resources to support vulnerable members, particularly children at all spears of life. The study examines how household structures, kinship ties, gender roles, and intergenerational relations influence the provision of care, education, and well-being of children at the household and beyond. It's a desk review, which further interrogates the tension between traditional communal support systems and the pressures of modern socio-economic realities, such as globalization, technology, urbanization, individualism, and policy-driven interventions that are safe-guarded by the state, unlike the cultural communal upbringing of children. By situating child support practices within the broader social fabric of Harambee, the paper highlights both the resilience and challenges of community-based mechanisms in safeguarding children rights in the continuum of social welfare provision. The study is anchored on Social Capital Theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and African communism (ubuntu philosophy). The findings underscore the importance of integrating cultural values into social policy, while reimagining Harambee in ways that strengthen household capacities, foster inclusivity, and sustain collective responsibility in child development for mutual community and National social development. It concludes that a child grows withing a broad socioeconomic structure that might be detrimental to their wellbeing, unless it is well harmonized.

Educating Social Workers for Sustainable Futures: Programme Closures Global Inequalities and the Urgent Need for Transformative Delivery Models

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Social work education is experiencing a quiet but serious global crisis, particularly visible in the United Kingdom, where universities are closing social work programmes due to declining student enrolment, high delivery costs, and shifting market-driven priorities. These closures are not isolated incidents but reflect deeper structural tensions between neoliberal higher education systems and the long-term societal need for a skilled, values-driven social work workforce. The paper argues that the contraction of social work education threatens sustainable development, social cohesion, and progress toward the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Social work is vital to advancing social justice, reducing inequality, strengthening communities, and supporting populations most affected by climate change, economic instability, conflict, and displacement. Paradoxically, as global demand for social workers increases, educational provision is shrinking. This imbalance poses significant sustainability risks, particularly for low-income and rural communities where professional social work infrastructure is already fragile. The loss of university-based programmes also weakens research capacity, policy engagement, and the profession's ability to innovate in response to emerging global challenges

Drawing on international examples, the paper explores the drivers behind programme closures, including austerity-led funding models, shortages of academic staff, dependence on costly placement systems, and limited political commitment to social work education. These issues are situated within wider debates about sustainable development, raising critical questions about whose knowledge is valued, whose labour is funded, and which professions are prioritised in future societies.

Alternative delivery models are examined, such as apprenticeships, blended learning, transnational partnerships, and digitally enabled community-based education. While these models offer opportunities to widen access and strengthen local workforce pipelines, they also raise concerns about academic depth and professional identity. Ultimately, the paper calls for renewed global commitment to social work education as a public good essential to sustainable futures.

“Every Social Worker Is A Brain Injury Social Worker”: Bridging the Gap Between Brain Injury and Social Work.

Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
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Brain Injury, described as global health concern, is the leading cause of death and disability in the UK for people aged 0-40 and diagnosed in 70% of all cases of head injury. However, there is limited knowledge and understanding about this topic (Norman 2020) with very little known about social care and social work with people with brain injury (Holloway 2020) even though, social work plays an important role in the assessment and treatment of people with this condition (Linden 2023). The complexity and hidden nature of the condition can lead to misdiagnosis and inappropriate care and support. Safeguarding Adult Reviews repeatedly identify social workers’ poor understanding of ABI as a contributing factor to the premature deaths of people who struggle post injury. Heads Together is a multi-university effort led by Prof. Andrew Bateman and researchers from universities in the UK with the aim of addressing this knowledge and skills gap.

This unique project has five work packages including a systematic review of existing brain injury social work literature recently accepted for publication. We have surveyed 152 students, 65 social work educators and interviewed newly qualified and experienced social workers and commissioners in the UK to inform outputs. A recent addition to our project is Making Headway, a play in collaboration with specialist brain injury charities brings the brain injury experience to life and serves as a trans-disciplinary teaching tool for health and social care students and other disciplines. This presentation would focus on the play and the impact on people with ABI in attendance at Canterbury Christ Church University. The project has been presented at the World Congress on Brain Injury, Dublin, The North American Brain Injury Society Conference in Las Vegas, the European Social Work Conference in Munich."

Co-production and the role of the specialist services in supporting with people with brain injury.

Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
[1]Canterbury Christ Church University, , United Kingdom

This research explores the role of the third sector in supporting people with brain injury . This research is a qualitative study that explores the perspectives of five professionals who work specialist charities that support children and adults with brain injury and

This research uses thematic analysis to study data from five semi-structured interviews with experienced practitioners in this sector. Five themes emerged from the data. These are; 1)the devastating impact of brain injury, 2) aims and rationale, 3) range of services and support, 4) the response to COVID-19 –new ways of working and 5), lessons learned and improving service delivery.

This research is important as social workers play a key role in advocating for change and improved services whilst ensuring the service user's voice is heard, irrespective of the location of provision.The findings from the research demonstrates how life altering brain injury can be and exposes the desperate need in this area. Neuro-rehabilitation services and support is imperative for people post-injury. There is a need for specialist social workers with expertise in the knowledge, approaches, and techniques of neuro-rehabilitation. It also provides insight into the wide range of services the third sector offers including funding clinical research, supporting family members, providing access to education and employment and end of life/palliative care for people with terminal conditions. Furthermore, it highlights how the sector third responded to the unprecedented challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 by adopting new ways of working.

Overall, the third sector plays a vital role in supporting people with brain injury, even in difficult times."

Reclaiming resilience in social work practice: reflections from the lived experiences of racialized youth in Western Canada

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Despite its criticism, resilience remains a dominant construct in social work practice, often framed as an individual's capacity to cope, adapt, or "bounce back" from adversity. Drawing on findings from an interpretive description study with ethnoracial minority youth in Vancouver, Canada, and informed by a critical resilience framework, this paper offers a critical reflection on how resilience-focused approaches can be effective within social work interventions.

The study explored how youth navigate everyday racism within a multicultural context that frequently minimizes its presence. Youth narratives revealed that so-called "resilient" responses often involved emotional self-containment, silence, and taking sole responsibility for diffusing racist encounters. These responses are frequently interpreted in clinical contexts as evidence of strength or effective coping, obscuring the structural nature of harm and reinforcing expectations of endurance. Using a critical resilience framework informed by anti-oppressive social work perspectives, this paper argues that resilience, as commonly operationalized in clinical practice, often shifts responsibility onto oppressed communities while leaving systemic pressures unchallenged. This paper seeks to reclaim resilience as a relational, contextual, and politically situated process, emphasizing the role of clinicians in naming oppression and disrupting neutrality, and resisting therapeutic practices that reward self-silencing.

This paper presents clinical practice considerations grounded in youth narratives. It is an invitation for social workers to reflect on their clinical stance and the ethical implications of resilience discourse.

Uses, perceptions, and challenges of Social Work students regarding Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

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This study presents findings from focus groups conducted with Social Work students at CENUR Litoral Norte (Udelar, Salto), as part of a mixed-methods project funded by the Office of the Pro Rector for Teaching. Groups were organized according to students' progress in the degree program (introductory and advanced). The objective was to examine perceptions, uses, opportunities, and challenges linked to generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in study practices and university teaching.

Across both groups, AI was perceived as inevitable and integral to academic and social life, with ambivalent assessments that combined recognition of its utility and efficiency with concerns about dependence, diminished reflective skills, and ethical dilemmas. Common uses included text summarization, explanation of complex concepts, writing improvement, and quick consultations. Differences centered on expertise: introductory students showed exploratory use and uncertainty about effectiveness, whereas advanced students reported diversified and critical practices such as bias detection, source comparison, and use of multiple applications. Both groups identified access gaps related to socioeconomic conditions, connectivity, premium versions, and generational divides. Advanced students also noted accessibility challenges for deaf students. Despite these inequalities, participants recognized the democratizing potential of AI in expanding access to knowledge. Regarding teaching, students valued the integration of AI as pedagogical support and as a driver for innovation, though tensions remain around its use for surveillance or control. Finally, cross-cutting concerns emerged about AI's impact on affective dimensions and social bonds, particularly its role as a form of "emotional companionship" on social media.

Relational Resilience and Social Reconstruction: Lived Experiences of Older Women after the 2023 Malatya Earthquake in Türkiye

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The February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye generated extensive material destruction and social disruption, with older women facing compounded vulnerabilities shaped by age, gendered roles, and the erosion of informal care systems. Although disaster research has traditionally framed resilience as an individual psychological capacity, recent scholarship increasingly conceptualizes recovery as a relational and socially embedded process. Nevertheless, the lived experiences of older women in post-disaster contexts—particularly within non-Western societies—remain insufficiently examined. This study investigates how older women in Malatya reconstructed social support, meaning, and resilience in the aftermath of the 2023 earthquake. Employing an interpretivist qualitative design, the study draws on in-depth semi-structured interviews with fifteen women aged 60 years and above who directly experienced the disaster. Participants were purposively selected to capture variation in displacement status, family structure, and socio-economic background. Data were collected between May and August 2024 and analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, enabling an inductive interpretation of both manifest experiences and latent meanings. Analytical rigor was ensured through reflexive journaling, peer debriefing, and iterative theme refinement. Ethical approval was obtained, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Three interrelated themes emerged from the analysis. First, the fragility of traditional support networks highlights how the earthquake disrupted kinship and neighborhood systems that previously structured care, reciprocity, and belonging. Second, emergent collective resilience illustrates how older women actively reconstituted social ties through informal caregiving arrangements, faith-based gatherings, and reciprocal practices within displaced settings. Third, negotiating emotional survival reveals how spirituality, caregiving, and moral responsibility enabled women to transform loss into purpose and reaffirm agency. Overall, the findings demonstrate that resilience among older women is relational, culturally mediated, and morally enacted. The study underscores the importance of recognizing older women as active social actors and advancing age- and gender-sensitive, community-centered approaches to post-disaster recovery

Strength in Partnership: Amplifying Community Health Workers' Voices and Reimagining Community Resilience Through Collective Action

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Grounded in the principle of all pull together"—this presentation explores how partnerships between social workers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) are essential for advancing equitable, sustainable community health and resilience. Social workers and CHWs are naturally aligned workforces, united by shared values of equity, community empowerment, and collective action. Drawing on findings from the national evaluation of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities (CCR) initiative, this presentation highlights how these workforces can respond collaboratively to address complex social and health inequities. CCR was a $340 million, three-year national initiative implemented across 67 sites to address COVID-19 impacts, health disparities, and social determinants of health, while fostering community resilience. Mixed-methods evaluation findings demonstrate that CHWs received extensive competency-based training, engaged in CHW core roles, reached over 20 million community members with culturally responsive messaging and education, and facilitated more than one million connections to health and social services. These outcomes illustrate the CHW workforce's unique capacity to build trust, navigate systems, and mobilize community assets—capacities that strongly complement social work's commitments to social justice, advocacy, and systems change. The presentation further features a participatory case study using to engage CHWs in co-developing a community resilience framework grounded in lived experience. Digital storytelling functioned as a decolonizing and empowering method, elevating community-defined knowledge, honoring cultural strengths, and supporting collective healing. Implications for social work practice include recognizing CHWs as essential partners in community health and social development, strengthening cross-sector collaboration, and adopting participatory, narrative-based methods to advance sustainable, community-driven futures. Social workers and CHWs can be stronger when they work in partnership—"pulling together" to bridge clinical systems and communities, strengthen the social service workforce, and advance community-driven pathways toward resilient and shared futures.

Collective Care in Clinical Settings: Applying the Harambee Spirit to Medical Social Work in Kenya

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The Harambee spirit, which is Kenya's indigenous philosophy of collective responsibility, mutual aid, and community solidarity, offers a culturally grounded framework for strengthening hospital social work practice. This paper examines how applying the Harambee spirit in hospital social work can enhance holistic patient care, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community-based support systems within healthcare settings. Drawing on principles of participatory practice and culturally responsive social work, the paper explores how hospital social workers operationalize Harambee through family engagement, mobilization of community resources, patient advocacy, and collaborative discharge planning. In contexts marked by limited healthcare resources, high patient vulnerability, and social inequalities, Harambee-informed practice enables social workers to bridge institutional care with community support networks, thereby improving treatment adherence, psychosocial well-being, and continuity of care. The paper further discusses the relevance of Harambee in addressing social determinants of health, reducing stigma associated with illness, and fostering ethical practice rooted in African communal values. By situating hospital social work within a culturally resonant framework, this study argues that integrating the Harambee spirit strengthens professional practice, promotes patient-centered care, and aligns hospital social work with broader national values of unity and shared responsibility. The paper concludes by highlighting implications for policy, training, and practice, advocating for the intentional incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems into hospital social work to enhance equitable and sustainable healthcare outcomes.

Effectiveness of PROACT Intervention Delivered by Social Workers to Children and Adolescents exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences in Nairobi

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Globally, children and adolescents exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) face heightened risks of developing mental disorders. There is an urgent need to provide effective, scalable mental health care to these populations. Psychoeducation, Relaxation, Problem-solving, Activation, and Cognitive coping therapy (PROACT) has demonstrated strong evidence for improving mental health outcomes, yet it is rarely delivered with fidelity or evaluated in routine care settings by social workers. This study assessed the effectiveness of PROACT delivered by social workers to children exposed to ACEs in Nairobi, Kenya. A quasi-experimental pre-post design guided by the RE-AIM framework was used to purposively select sites across Nairobi County; each contributed one social worker (N = 20), who was trained to deliver the intervention. A total of 40 children participated, receiving 4-6 PROACT sessions. Quantitative data were analysed using STATA v.17. Paired t-tests were conducted to compare baseline and endline scores, and mixed-effects linear regression models with participant ID as a random effect were used to estimate intervention effects while accounting for repeated measures. PTSD scores decreased from 16.7 (95% CI: 12.8–20.5) at baseline to 7.3 (95% CI: 4.4–10.1) at endline (mean difference: −9.4; 95% CI: −14.6 to −9.3; 0.001). Anxiety scores reduced from 6.2 to 2.7 (mean difference: −3.5; 95% CI: −5.2 to −3.7; 0.001), and depression scores dropped from 6.4 to 2.9 (mean difference: −3.6; 95% CI: −4.9 to −2.3; 0.001). Mixed-effects regression confirmed these improvements: PTSD (β = −9.44), anxiety (β = −3.48), and depression (β = −3.59), all 0.001. PROACT is a feasible, acceptable, and potentially effective intervention for improving children and adolescents' mental health when delivered by non- specialists in low-resource settings. Findings support the role of task-shifting in addressing mental health care gaps in LMICs.

Service-learning as a tool for successfully connect underrepresented students\' in higher education: The case of Ultra-Orthodox Students in Israel

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"This study examines community engagement programs involving Social Work students from the Jewish Ultra-Orthodox society in Israel, a minority group that is clearly underrepresented in the higher education system in Israel. Ultra-orthodox students constantly cross social and cultural boundaries, and their choice to enroll in higher education is often delegitimized in their communities. Community engagement of students takes varied forms. One common form is service-learning, which is a course-based educational experience in which students engage in activities that meet community needs and promote student learning and development. The study was based on 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ultra-Orthodox Social Work students who during their studies participated in a social involvement program with people with disabilities. It analyzed how Ultra-Orthodox students experience their community engagement and perceive its effects on them personally and on their communities. The findings illuminate how the students\social interactions during their volunteer work enhance meaningful learning despite considerable challenges and dilemmas. Their ability to contribute to their communities through community engagement programs helps justify their decision to pursue an academic education and empowers them in the challenging liminal state between the ultra-Orthodox society and academia. This proposes that service-learning can be an effective pedagogical tool to promote underrepresented students\' engagement with both university and community since it allows students to connect academic knowledge to the practical concerns in their communities and their culture of origin, thus serving as agents of societal change.

Building an International Green Care Network - Social Work Connects People with Nature

Priska Fleischlin[1]
[1]IFSW, , Switzerland

Many countries have established umbrella organizations to coordinate and advocate for green care. This growing healthcare branch links social work with care farming, garden therapy, and animal-assisted interventions

Green care uses the supportive effects of nature, animals, and plants to improve well-being. Care farming integrates people with special needs into agriculture to boost health and quality of life through supervised farm-based programs. Animal-assisted therapy uses structured animal interactions within a "participant-animal-caregiver" triangle to achieve therapeutic or educational goals. Similarly, garden therapy utilizes active gardening to improve physical, mental, and social functions, reduce stress, and foster ecological understanding (Green Care Switzerland, 2025)

Green care aligns with the three pillars of the SDGs (social, ecological, and economic). Connecting with food production and nature promotes healing, while offering care farmers—especially small-scale owners—essential diverse income. Furthermore, fostering an understanding of our interdependency with nature encourages environmental preservation

In this field, social workers either provide direct care or act as consultants, collaborating with services to set frameworks and ensure human rights and quality standards

This workshop aims to share learning from different countries. Participants are invited to give a 2-minute presentation on their work. One or two national models will be presented, after which the discussion will focus on the questions ‘What exists worldwide?’ and ‘Are we ready to build a global green care network of social work?’

Strengthening Universities-community engagement through Community Social Labs in East Africa

Prof Janestic Twikirize[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Uganda
Panelists

1. Janestic Mwende Twikirize -Makerere University, Uganda
2. Ann Christin E. Nilsen – University of Agder, Norway
3. Cecilie Revheim – University of Agder, Norway
4. Eric Awich Ochen – Makerere University, Uganda
5. Zena Mnasi Mabeyo -Institute of Social Work, Tanzania
6. William Manyama -Institute of Social Work, Tanzania
7. Charles Kalinganire – University of Rwanda
8. Firminus Mugumya -Makerere university

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Since 2021, Schools of Social Work in East Africa have embarked on piloting an innovative model to strengthen the engagement of social work education institutions with the local communities to address priority issues. Grounded in the philosophy of ubuntu and inspired by ongoing movements for the decolonisation and indigenisation of social work in Africa, Community Social Labs (CSL) are introduced as both an epistemological framework and a methodological pathway for co-creating locally grounded solutions to complex social problems. The model was inspired by reflections on the following questions: How do we make social work education relevant to community needs and situations? How can we strengthen our contribution as universities and scholars towards community ecological and social transformation? How do we leverage local knowledge systems to strengthen social work curricula and pedagogy for reflective students and future practitioners? How can knowledge generated from research with local communities inform social work theory and epistemologies at large? Drawing on four years of empirical implementation in Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania through a regional academic partnership, this panel will discuss the conceptual, methodological aspects of this approach as well as the potential and challenges in the adoption of the model. Participants will be challenged to recognise communities as co-producers and owners of knowledge, and to reposition universities as collaborative catalysts for inclusive and transformative societal change.

Kahampatan as Indigenous Well-Being: A Framework for Social Work Practice with Indigenous Communities in the Philippines

Assoc. Prof. Angelito Meneses[1]
[1]University Of The Philippines Diliman, , Philippines

This study explored the lived experiences of indigenous well-being among the Ayta, guided by a qualitative research design incorporating phenomenological methods, indigenous research orientation, and grounded theory. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, immersion, and participant observation in two Ayta communities, focusing on how they understand and embody their concept of indigenous well-being, encapsulated in the term kahampatan. Findings revealed that kahampatan is experienced as a multifaceted expression of well-being rooted in cultural, spiritual, and ecological values. It is manifested as care and concern for kapwa (shared identity), pagkatao (shared nobility), access to food and health, aspiration for a good life through education, sharing the blessings of Apo Namalyari (the Creator), compassion for lowlanders, respect for the land, symbiotic relationships with all beings, and kainomayan (self-sufficiency and abundance). These were synthesized into four overarching themes: (1) Right relationships with the self, others, nature, and the Creator sustain kahampatan; (2) Good food ensures a healthy body capable of fulfilling one's role in the community; (3) Land is the lifeblood of kahampatan and (4) Recognizing the Ayta's rights to reclaim and reconstruct their culture is vital to the continuity of kahampatan. The eidetic insight of the study reveals kahampatan as an attitude and act of positive relationship, aimed at achieving a collective good life. This indigenous perspective aligns with ecosocial work's emphasis on the interdependence of all life. A kahampatan framework for ecosocial work practice was developed, illustrating that total human development is achieved through the satisfaction of bio-psycho-social-spiritual needs. Ecological conservation plays a crucial role in fulfilling these needs. This framework offers a culturally grounded and holistic understanding of the interrelation between welfare, being well, fare-well, and well-being, providing a comprehensive strategy for social work practice anchored in indigenous worldview.

Leveraging social workers in policy formulation and implementation in a developing country like Nigeria

Prof Uzoma Okoye[1]
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"In developing countries like Nigeria, institutional flaws, a lack of funding, and poor governance frameworks frequently make it difficult for policies to be implemented effectively. With their special combination of abilities and viewpoints, social workers can be extremely helpful in bridging the gap between the formulation and implementation of policies. In developing countries like Nigeria, social workers have a variety of responsibilities in ensuring that policies are implemented. Social workers can use their knowledge to forge alliances, advocate for underrepresented groups, and negotiate complicated policy contexts. This paper attempts to highlight the potential and challenges faced by social workers in these situations by looking at the intersections of democratic governance, policy analysis, and social work practice. In order to improve the efficacy and responsiveness of policy making processes in developing democracies, the paper hopes to emphasize context-specific tactics for increasing social workers\' ability to influence policy results. The paper also hopes to add to the expanding body of research on the role of social work in advancing democratic governance and human well-being in Africa by emphasizing the vital roles that social workers play in the policy arena.

Staying Well, Staying Connected, Staying in the Profession: Exploring What Sustains Aspiring and Early-Career Social Work Leaders.

Ms Jody Bell[1]
[1]Churchill Fellowship Recipient (2025), Independent Researcher, Founder Of Being Your Potential, , Australia

Social workers across the globe are navigating increasing complexity within systems marked by high demand, limited resources, and structural inequities. In feminised professions like social work, leadership often grows from the frontline, but is rarely supported in ways that sustain wellbeing, identity, and long-term commitment, especially for those stepping into leadership for the first time.This Churchill Fellowship project explores a central question: What kind of leadership enables social workers to stay well, stay connected, and stay in the profession long term? Through an eight-week inquiry involving interviews and site visits across England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Canada, and the United States, this presentation shares emerging insights into what sustains aspiring and early-career social work leaders. The focus includes peer-based leadership, identity-affirming practices, and culturally responsive support systems, particularly within diverse, hybrid, and geographically dispersed practice contexts, that may contribute to workforce sustainability. These insights are offered not as universal solutions, but as learning provocations, acknowledging that leadership is always shaped by local contexts, cultural histories, and community wisdom. Using a Conversational Intelligence (C-IQ) lens, the research foregrounds the lived experience of emerging leaders and the ecosystems that support them. In Australia, the issue of professional identity is increasingly recognised, yet we lack a national framework to guide social workers through leadership transitions. This absence contributes to role ambiguity, disconnection, and burnout. Early findings across countries suggest these are not personal shortcomings, but collective challenges that call for relational, values-based responses.
This session invites dialogue, reflection, and reciprocity. Participants will be invited to share insights from their own national and cultural contexts as part of a wider, international conversation about what it means to stay well and lead with integrity in our shared profession.

Reclaiming Roots: Exploring the Awareness and Application of African Social Work Theories and Perspectives in Academia

Assoc Prof Ngozi Chukwu[1]
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Despite the growing call to decolonize social work education, African social work theories and perspectives remain underrepresented in academic curricula across the continent. The study explored the current state of awareness, understanding, and application of these theories, such as Ubuntu, communalism, and Afrocentricity among educators and students in universities.

Qualitative data was obtained from purposefully selected social work educators (nine) and students (six) from three regions (East, South and West Africa) to examine the extent to which African epistemologies are integrated into teaching, research, and practice. An in-depth interview guide was utilized for data collection. Data was thematically analysed.

Findings indicated poor awareness, a growing rhetorical commitment to decolonizing social work curricula, while actual implementation remains limited due to structural, ideological, and institutional barriers. While educators express positive attitudes toward African theories, many face resource limits, weak institutional backing, and Western dominance. Students, conversely want culturally grounded practices but lack curricular exposure.

The study contends that African theories should be positioned at the core of social work education on the continent, rather than treated as supplementary. It presents concrete approaches for embedding indigenous knowledge systems into teaching, curriculum development, research, and fieldwork, while also advocating for a wider epistemological shift that acknowledges African perspectives as essential for both local relevance and global engagement in social work. By reclaiming these intellectual foundations, social work in Africa can promote practices that are culturally aligned, contextually appropriate, and socially equitable, thus preparing practitioners who are critically aware and firmly connected to their communities.

Social Work and Artificial Intelligence: Debates on the Ways of Teaching and Learning the Profession

Dr Leonel Del Prado[1]
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"The paper presents the state of the art of the research project entitled “Artificial Intelligence: Uses and Challenges for Improving Undergraduate Teaching in Social Work and Social Sciences.” The project focuses on students in these programs at the Litoral Norte University Center of the University of the Republic (Universidad de la República), Uruguay.
The objective is to understand how generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) impacts teaching and learning processes in higher education.
The research is based on a literature review that classifies texts on AI into four main categories: dissemination materials, statements by international organizations, manuals, and scientific articles. The review highlights a significant increase in bibliography on the topic beginning in November 2022, a phenomenon driven by the popularization of tools such as ChatGPT.
The studies analyzed, including systematic reviews, agree on the transformative impact of GenAI in higher education. A predominantly positive perspective is observed, emphasizing AI’s potential for personalized learning, the optimization of teaching tasks, and pedagogical innovation.
However, this perspective coexists with serious ethical concerns, including plagiarism, technological dependency, data privacy, and digital divides. The debate also focuses on the role of the teacher, which is considered increasingly relevant as a mediator between students and technology.
The need to train both faculty and students in critical literacy is emphasized, enabling them to identify biases and understand the ethical and social implications of these tools.
The research concludes that, rather than prohibiting AI, institutions should develop strong regulatory and ethical frameworks to ensure the equitable, inclusive, and responsible use of this technology."

A Clear Path to Globalization for Schools of Social Work

Dr Sabrina Straub[1]
[1]Marian University, Indianapolis, ,

Increasing globalization necessitates schools of social work to prepare their students to work with diverse populations throughout the world. Professional organizations, such as the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work, and the Council on Social Work Education have outlined standards and competencies for cultivating a global mindset and incorporating cultural humility in social work curriculum, but they provide little guidance on how to achieve this effectively. Without guidance, schools of social work could likely continue to see mixed results with cultivating a global mindset and cultural humility, which could impede students' ability to effectively serve diverse client populations in the future. This presentation addresses this gap by detailing how the Culturally Literate Education and Reorientation (CLEAR) model can be integrated into social work curricula. The model utilizes the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and strategies of Culturally Responsive Teaching to form a customizable framework for teaching global mindset and cultural humility. By the end of this presentation, participants will understand how the CLEAR model can be used by schools of social work around the globe to help students develop the skills, talents, and dispositions needed to meet their future clients where they are and meet their needs in ways that embrace indigenous knowledge and respect their cultural roots.

Building Professional Identities through Cross Cultural Field Placement

Ann-Iren Høgalmen[1]
[1]Volda University College, , Norway

"Field work as part of social work education is considered important \""hands on\"" training to build professional skills and understanding. Globalisation has made the world a global village and social work is about building bridges between people and communities to prevents marginalization and strengthen people`s ability to connect despite intersecting dimensions.
Educational traditions of social work in Norway have emphasis on individualisation with a risk of missing the relational dimension working together with people with different cultural background. It is of interest to investigate to what extent social work students doing their internship training in Kenya, Tanzania and India develop a professional identity characterized by expanded cultural competence and cultural sensitivity.
Norwegian students find themselves in a challenging learning position working in communities characterized by poverty and collective approaches where knowledge from Scandinavian contexts is not always valid. International contexts have the potential for transformative experiential learning contributing to the development of global knowledge, new perspectives on international social work and a cross-cultural professional identity.

The approach of the analysis is to investigate to what concern an extended cross-cultural learning and formation is developed. The study examine learning by using the concepts of learning, transformation and formation to draw conclusions on findings. There is a lack of research on transformative learning during student`s international field placements in social work. The urpose is to present new knowledge based on empirical findings from interviews one-tree year after graduation.

Teori and discussion: Understanding on the concept om competence will be applied to discuss to what extent cross cultural field placements provide increased intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity and a different path of transformation into an extended professional identity. I also make use of Skau`s model The practice triangle to discuss students development of personal competence through development of professional independency and new values."

Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Free Speech in Higher Education: Concepts, Origins, and Lessons for Social Work Education

Prof Elizabeth Lightfoot[1]
[1]Arizona State University, , United States

This session examines academic freedom, freedom of expression, and free speech in social work education, clarifies their meanings, and analyzes current threats with global implications. Although contours vary across countries, academic freedom protects inquiry, research, and teaching from undue interference, grounded in disciplinary standards, peer review, and ethical responsibilities. Freedom of expression is the international human right to expression, subject to proportionate limits. Free speech is the U.S. First Amendment doctrine that binds public institutions and is unusually protective of controversial speech. These sometimes intersect but serve distinct purposes.
The session first offers a brief history situating academic freedom in early European universities and later statements such as the AAUP Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure. Many countries safeguard academic freedom: Germany's constitution guarantees it; Finland and Norway's laws protect the independence of teaching and research; the United Kingdom upholds it through higher education legislation; Canada protects it through faculty union agreements; and South Africa's constitution affirms freedom of scientific research. It then contrasts the United Nations principle of freedom of expression with proportional limitations and the U.S. First Amendment concept of free speech.
Using brief U.S. examples, the presentations will discuss how these principles relate to teaching controversial topics, sensitive research, practicum education, and faculty and student expression on and off campus. It also covers current pressures that narrow the space for inquiry, including political interventions in curriculum, campaigns against specific topics, donor and media scrutiny, administrative risk aversion, and the chilling effects of harassment and public controversy. Aligned with the conference theme of Harambee, the session invites an exchange on sustaining academic freedom while advancing inclusive, rigorous, and socially responsive social work education.

The Impact of Sustainable Juvenile Diversion Programs on Socio-Economic Development in Liberia

Mr S. Siaka Sambola[1]
[1]Ministry Of Justice, Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia

This paper explores how juvenile diversion programs in Liberia are impacting young people and the country\'s overall development. Since the Liberian government officially recognized these programs in 2011, they have become a key tool in helping young offenders turn their lives around, stay out of trouble, and become positive contributors to their communities. With support from UNICEF Liberia, the programs expanded across fifteen counties, involving social workers and community members working together to reduce repeat offenses and provide youth with education and vocational training opportunities. In 2019, the partnership between UNICEF and the government was formalized through the Child Justice Strategy, which aims to sustain and strengthen these efforts over the next five years. Using a mix of policy analysis, program evaluation, and both qualitative and quantitative data, the research shows that well-structured diversion programs significantly reduce reoffending rates, foster social cohesion, and open up economic opportunities for young people. Many youths have benefited from skills training and education, helping them reintegrate into society and contribute positively to their communities. Despite these successes, the programs face challenges such as limited funding, infrastructure, and a shortage of social workers, restricting operations to only eight counties. Drawing from my nine years of experience working directly with youth in juvenile diversion programs, I have seen firsthand how community involvement and government support are vital for their success. To expand and sustain these initiatives, Liberia needs increased investment in infrastructure, more resources, and capacity-building efforts. In the end, this paper highlights that juvenile diversion programs are more than just a way to prevent crime. They are a pathway to giving young people a second chance, strengthening communities, and supporting the country’s social and economic progress.

Forest Dwellers in Protected Territories: An Inquiry into Rights, Issues, and Challenges in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve

Prof Keshav Walke[1]
[1]Matru Sewa Sangh Institute Of Social Work, Nagpur, India, , India

The Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR) in West Bengal, India, is home to millions of forest-dependent communities whose livelihoods have been profoundly affected by strict conservation laws enacted since 1973. This study examines how these regulations impact access to forest resources, livelihood security, and socio-economic well-being. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 2,597 households across 31 settlements via structured surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Analysis reveals widespread land tenure insecurity, restricted resource access, and persistent human–tiger conflicts, disproportionately affecting women and marginalized groups. Less than 15% of forest rights claims have been recognized, exacerbating vulnerability and illegal resource use. Governance challenges, including bureaucratic delays further limit adaptive capacities. The findings highlight the need for integrated social work interventions to strengthen land rights, streamline permits, improve conflict compensation, and foster inclusive governance—balancing conservation goals with social justice and sustainable livelihoods in this ecologically and climate-sensitive region.

Strategic framing used by civil society actors to renegotiate state authority. The case of migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in Sweden and Italy.

Dr Claudia Di Matteo[1]
[1]Lund University, , Sweden

Restricted opportunities for permanent residency and welfare state cuts driven by a neoliberal agenda have resulted in large groups of non-Western migrants who are not eligible for public social protection measures in the EU. In this context, the social protection of migrant women with precarious status is increasingly dependent on NGOs. These civil society actors (CSAs) often find themselves navigating tensions in their relationships with the individuals they assist, but also with public authorities, as their resources are contingent upon working with and on behalf of them. Hence, this study explores how NGOs use diverse knowledge to create temporarily limited micro-practices of social protection at the periphery of the institutionalised welfare systems. In these processes, they both contribute to doing migration, and challenge categorical boundaries by undoing migration in their practical interventions. The results are based on a vignette study based on a case of a migrant woman with precarious legal status. Drawing on the fictive case, interviews were carried out with social workers operating in 31 NGOs in Italy and Sweden. CSAs play a key role in providing support within the welfare system by diverting resources to groups not eligible for public support. To justify their actions, CSAs operating in Italy and Sweden use and produce knowledge that reframes the interpretation of the situation faced by migrant women. Accordingly, this study showcases how diverse types of knowledge are combined to support migrant women in precarious legal situations, and in doing so, how CSAs are reshaping the social protection of migrant women with precarious legal status. Additionally, the study considers how being wanted for migration law violations could complicate civil society relations with public authorities. Ultimately, this research aims to explore the productive potential of dissensus and resistance by investigating how NGOs provide social protection amidst neo-liberal bureaucratic frameworks.

Integrating environmental justice and sustainability into social work education and professional training: A case study of pedagogical initiatives from Atlantic Canada

Dr Haorui Wu[1]
[1]Dalhousie University, , Canada

Climate change, ecological degradation, and environmental injustice dramatically affect the quality of all life in international communities. The social work profession has a long-term engagement in supporting the affected individuals, families, and communities and building their resilience and sustainability. In 2020, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) published a position statement on climate change and social work by encouraging social workers to advocate for environmental justice and social justice. In 2021, the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) recognized and formally incorporated a focus on environmental sustainability and ecological practice into the national social work accreditation standards. Both national organizations set the right direction, yet, professional social work education still needs curriculum and professional training that integrates environmental justice and sustainability. This presentation uses a case study approach to illustrate pedagogical initiatives regarding integrating environmental justice and sustainability in the social work core curriculum in Atlantic Canada. These pedagogical efforts support the students' comprehension and exploration of environmental and social justice as well as resilience and sustainability through social work research and practice to address the community-driven, short-term necessities and long-term development requirements.

Building Emergency Response Capacity: Multi-Career-Stage Social Workers' Engagement with Homeless Sector in Emergency Response in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Dr Haorui Wu[1]
[1]Dalhousie University, , Canada

The dramatic increase of global extreme events (e.g., natural, technological, and willful hazards) propels social workers to be equipped with emergency response capacity, supporting affected individuals, families, and communities to prepare, respond, and recover from disasters. Although social workers have historically been engaged in emergency response, social work curriculum and professional training remain slow to adapt, jeopardizing their capacity to support the vulnerable and marginalized populations, who have always been disproportionately affected by extreme events. In response to this deficit, this article utilizes a critical reflection approach to examine three social workers' (a senior faculty, a junior faculty, and a social work student) interventions and challenges in their emergency response to persons experiencing homelessness (PEHs) during the 2023 Upper Tantallon Wildfires, the 2022 Hurricane Fiona, and the 2021 COVID-19 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The cross-career-stage reflections and analyses exhibit these three social workers' emergency response efforts: (1) a top-down advocacy effort for social development and policy, (2) a bottom-up cognitive effort to comprehend the community's dynamics, and (3) a disaster-driven self-care effort. These three types of effort demonstrate a greater need for social work education and professional training, to develop more disaster-specific components to contribute to building the emergency response capacity of the next generation of social workers through in-classroom pedagogical enhancement and on-site field education training, better supporting PEHs and other vulnerable and marginalized groups living in the diverse context of extreme events in Canada and internationally.

Nishkaam Seva and Social Work Education and Practice: Reclaiming Selfless Service for Sustainable and Shared Futures

Prof Pamela Singla[1]
[1]University Of Delhi, , India

Contemporary social work practice across postcolonial contexts is increasingly shaped by complex and overlapping crises, including pandemics, displacement, widening social inequalities, and institutional precarity. While global social work discourse has actively engaged with indigenous ethical frameworks such as Ubuntu, Harambee, and Buen Vivir, Indian indigenous ethical philosophies remain underrepresented in international scholarship. This paper revisits the principle of selfless service performed without attachment to reward, as an ethical framework relevant to contemporary social work education, practice, and institutional leadership.

Rooted in Indian philosophical traditions, Nishkaam Seva emphasises action guided by responsibility, compassion, and ethical commitment rather than instrumental outcomes or personal gain. The paper conceptualises Nishkaam Seva as a practice-oriented ethic based on professional accountability, inclusivity, and care, irrespective of social divisions such as caste, religion, language, and region. Practices informed by Nishkaam Seva are evident in diverse social welfare initiatives addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised populations, including orphaned and abandoned children, isolated older persons, economically disadvantaged patients, and underprivileged women and communities. Such practices include material assistance (including daan) alongside knowledge-sharing, community engagement, and service-oriented approaches towards collective well-being.

The paper demonstrates how these traditions converge in their emphasis on relational care, shared responsibility, and community resilience, while reflecting distinct socio-cultural expressions of service and solidarity. It complements existing models with indigenous philosophies of care, responsibility grounded in lived experiencesThe paper concludes by outlining implications for social work education, leadership, and practice, suggesting that integrating indigenous ethical frameworks, such as Nishkaam Seva, can strengthen culturally responsive, humane, and sustainable social work interventions, thereby supporting the pursuit of shared futures grounded in social justice and collective care.

Coaching in Social Work: Values, Practice and Transformation

Mrs Kate Cuthbertson[1]
[1]Basw / Oxford Brookes University / Durham University, ,

Social work education is grounded in enduring values of justice, compassion, dignity, and empowerment. Yet, these values are increasingly tested by the realities of under-resourced, high-pressure practice environments. This presentation explores how coaching can act as a transformative pedagogical tool, bridging the gap between values and practice in social work education and professional development. Drawing on findings from a BASW/Durham University evaluation of the Social Work Professional Support Service and an interpretative phenomenological study with Consultant Social Workers on the Think Ahead (Mental Health) programme in England, the research highlights how coaching fosters reflective dialogue, strengthens values alignment, and empowers practitioners.

Participants reported that coaching enabled them to reconnect with their motivations for entering the profession, navigate moral distress, and sustain resilience amidst systemic pressures. In practice education, coaching approaches enhanced supervision by modelling curiosity, collaboration, and respect, thereby cultivating confidence and self-directed learning in students. These findings position coaching as a catalyst for innovation in social work pedagogy: supporting co-creation, enhancing inter-professional collaboration, and embedding reflective, values-based practice in both field education and organisational culture.

By reframing coaching as more than an individual intervention—as a circuit breaker, a collective practice, and a cultural orientation—this presentation argues for its integration into the social work curriculum and continuing professional development. In doing so, it contributes to the democratisation of knowledge, the re-imagining of mentorship and supervision, and the creation of sustainable, values-driven professional identities across local, regional, and global contexts.

Nurturing Trauma-Informed Caregiving: Rebuilding Social Care and Support for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

Ms Patrice Penney[1]
[1]Initiative For Children At Risk Africa & University Of South Carolina, , United States

An estimated 52 million children are considered orphaned and vulnerable (OVC) across Africa, and over 140 million children globally, highlighting the continuing urgency of addressing trauma-responsive caregiving. In many contexts, caregivers are under-resourced, overwhelmed, and may not fully understand the complexity of orphaned and vulnerable children's needs. An essential global social work challenge is addressing better care for these children as they develop.

Drawing on over two decades of work training caregivers, social workers, teachers, child protection workers, police, and government leaders in ten African countries, this workshop will identify current issues regarding OVC and introduce a training curriculum that effectively responds to their complex caregiving needs. The curriculum addresses two questions in ten modules: first, what enables children to flourish? And second, what enables orphaned and vulnerable children—who have already experienced loss and trauma—to heal and flourish? Integrating critical culturally relevant theory on child development and attachment, neuroscientific evidence regarding brain development and the effects of interpersonal trauma, and trauma-responsive nurturing caregiving and discipline, these complex ideas are presented in an accessible, non-formal style to connect with caregivers directly. Trainings are highly interactive, engaging participants in content-rich, hands-on learning including dyadic activities, role play, group activities, play, and interactive case studies, which will be modeled with workshop attendees.

The curriculum is both rooted in current theory and flexibly responsive to the realities for caregivers and OVC in changing sociocultural contexts. It provides a robust training framework for scaling up trauma-informed caregiving that is relevant and adaptable for OVC in Africa and other global regions.

School social workers supporting learners and teachers: Mezzo-level interventions in Gauteng public schools

Dr Gift Khumalo[1]
[1]Centre For General Education, Durban University Of Technology, , South Africa

School social work is a growing specialty area within the field of social work practice; however, little is known about the nature of mezzo interventions with learners and teachers in school settings. Through mezzo interventions, school social workers may focus on systems larger than an individual learner but smaller than society as a whole, such as small groups, awareness initiatives, and school and community organizations. This current paper explores the roles of school social workers in mezzo interventions in Gauteng public schools. Using an exploratory qualitative study, 22 social workers (practitioners, supervisors, and school social work program coordinators) participated in the study through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which revealed that school social workers' i) design and implement school awareness campaigns, ii) conduct and facilitate group work sessions, and iii) train and support teachers aimed to enhance teachers\' ability to recognise the signs of psychosocial problems in adolescents, respond effectively to these challenges, and appropriately refer learners to necessary care and support services. Through therapeutic and psycho-educational groups, school social workers helped learners cope with and manage their psychosocial challenges. Ultimately, mezzo interventions in school social work encourage positive school climates, thereby improving learners' well-being and academic outcomes, and contributing to safer and inclusive school settings. Considering that no standardized practice guidelines have yet been developed in South Africa for school social workers, the results of this study inform future guidelines and practices as school social workers continue to be recognized as an integral part of education systems and offer mezzo-intervention services.

Digital Practices in Social Work with young people: Between Opportunities, Risks, and Ethical Questions

Dr Iris Dežman Burazer[1]
[1]Irssv, ,

Digital technologies have become an inseparable part of young people's everyday lives, from communication through social media to identity formation and community building. For social work, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity: how to meaningfully integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) into professional practice while safeguarding the core values of the profession.

This paper presents findings from a mixed-methods doctoral study conducted in Slovenia, combining a national survey among social workers with a focus group, training program, longitudinal monitoring of ICT use, and interviews with both social workers and young people. The study reveals an ambivalent attitude among professionals: they recognize the potential of ICT to improve accessibility, reduce stigma, and bridge geographical barriers, yet remain cautious due to ethical dilemmas, blurred boundaries, and concerns about losing interpersonal depth. The research also highlights the heterogeneity of young people's experiences. Far from being a homogeneous group of youth demonstrate diverse preferences: some welcome digital accessibility, others express fatigue and a desire for face-to-face support. Organizational context matters, with NGOs showing more innovation than public institutions bound by stricter protocols. COVID-19 emerged as a turning point, accelerating digital adoption but followed by a partial return to traditional practices. A central conclusion is that hybrid approaches, like blending ICT with in-person work, could be most effective, especially when digital tools are used as a in direct encounters. The study underscores the crucial role of digital literacy, understood not only as technical skill but as the ability to critically, safely, and ethically navigate digital environments. For both youth and professionals, digital literacy is key to ensuring that ICT strengthens rather than undermines social work practice."

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy as Collective Liberation: Reimagining Social Work Education through Community, Culture, and Co-Creation

Ms Keisha Pickens[1]
[1]University Of Alabama-instructor, Alabama A&m-phd Student, , United States

Rooted in the East African principle of Harambee, pulling together for a shared future, this presentation explores how trauma-informed, culturally responsive pedagogy can transform social work education into a space of collective healing, empowerment, and epistemic freedom. Drawing from over a decade of practice and scholarship in child welfare and trauma-informed care, I present a multi-layered approach to curriculum design that centers community, culture, and co-creation.

Through the development of simulation-based learning tools like the Rivera Family Case Scenario, I have embedded trauma-informed principles across BSW and MSW courses, including Human Behavior, Policy, and Professional Writing. These simulations foster interdisciplinary collaboration, deepen cultural humility, and allow students to engage with complex systems in real time. Initiatives like Operation Boots on the Ground further extend learning into the community, empowering students to lead advocacy efforts rooted in lived experience and resilience.

My research, focused on placement stability and resilience among adult survivors of childhood trauma, guides the integration of evidence-based strategies into course content, while also challenging dominant Western paradigms. By uplifting indigenous knowledge systems and promoting student-led inquiry, this work bridges the North–South divide in social work education and contributes to the democratization of knowledge.

This presentation offers a replicable model for trauma-informed curriculum development that aligns with CSWE competencies and global calls for decolonized, justice-centered education. It invites educators, researchers, and practitioners to reimagine social work pedagogy not just as instruction, but as a radical act of healing and collective liberation.

Present Body, Conscious Care: Self-Esteem, Self-Care, and Physical Strength in Contemporary Social Work

Hilda Antonia Triana Reyes[1]
[1]FENACOTSMEX, , Mexico
Here's a polished English translation of your text suitable for a workshop description or professional program:

General Objective:

Strengthen social workers' bodily, emotional, and physical awareness through body scanning practices, self-care, and strength exercises.

This workshop offers an ethical and holistic reflection on the importance of comprehensive self-care for Social Work professionals, particularly for those over 40—a stage in which physical and emotional strain intensifies due to work overload, sedentary habits, and prolonged exposure to others' trauma. From an international perspective, social workers accompany processes of transformation, but they must also model well-being practices within the communities they serve. Therefore, self-care is no longer merely a personal choice: it is an ethical and professional responsibility.

The session begins with a body scanning exercise that allows participants to become aware of and identify physical tension, chronic pain, and emotions stored in the body. This practice reconnects presence, breathing, and bodily awareness—essential elements for sustaining high-quality interventions.

Next, scientific evidence is presented demonstrating the relevance of strength training as a preventive strategy against chronic-degenerative conditions common in this stage of life, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, sarcopenia, and osteoporosis. Psychological benefits are also highlighted, including reduced anxiety and depression, along with enhanced self-esteem and professional self-efficacy.

The workshop includes a mini strength-training routine designed specifically for social workers and adaptable to adults, featuring simple, safe exercises that can be replicated in community, educational, and institutional settings.

Physical and emotional self-care are essential for professional sustainability and the creation of healthy communities. The strength of Social Work emerges from the body and spirit of those who support others; nurturing it ensures continuity and a transformative impact on our profession.

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Physical and emotional self-care are essential conditions for professional sustainability and the construction of healthy communities. The strength of Social Work arises from the body and spirit of those who support others; strengthening it ensures continuity and the transformative impact of our profession.

Mapping Sustainable Development for Rural India: An Indigenous Social Work Model of Panchatantra

Dr M.Hilaria Soundari[1]
[1]Gandhigram Rural Institute, , India

The rural population of India, holding 65 per cent of the total population (approximately 909.12 million), is known for its specific issues, such as caste discrimination, class concerns, gender disparity, and geographical isolations (PIB, 2023). This scenario extends a clarion call to social work professionals for an intense introspection in searching for new and innovative paths of sustainable development in these rural areas. The present study aims to present the portrayal of rural India in the roadmap for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); to propose a Panchatantra of SDGs (Sanskrit: five treatises) as a way forward, and to recommend strategies for multiple stakeholders in contributing to the sustainable development of rural India. The model-building approach of this study is the process of creating structured frameworks to guide interventions and propose actionable strategies for the rural population. Therefore, the present study proposes an Indigenous Social Work Model of Panchatantra for SDGs, in which the five 'E' approach (i.e. 'Economic upliftment, Education, Empowerment of Women, Equality and Environmental sustainability') is applied. These social work interventions in rural areas seek to identify potential stakeholders who can be collaborators in the process of sustainable development. It involves an in-depth understanding of divergent cultures and the requirements of various segments of target populations. Getting tuned to the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS), evolving appropriate strategies to address the five treatises of Panchatantra, designing context-based social work interventions and involving the various social sectors can certainly make a difference in achieving sustainable development within the stipulated time with the multi-stakeholder approach.

Between Angola, Brazil and Mozambique: coloniality, capitalism and racism imposing juvenicide

Prof Leonardo Ortegal[2], Andrea Pires Rocha[1]
[1]Youth; Global South; Human Rights, , Brazil, [2]Universidade de Brasília, , Brazil

The research investigates youth conditions and identity-construction processes among young people from Angola, Brazil and Mozambique, drawing on a critical perspective and counter-colonial epistemologies. The study emerges from a previous trajectory of international cooperation among researchers from these countries. Considering youth as a socio-historical category traversed by class, race/ethnicity, gender/sexualities and territory, the research seeks to understand how these determinants shape experiences, violence and possibilities for resistance. The study dialogues with authors such as Fanon, Mbembe, Lélia Gonzalez, Oyěwùmí, Quijano, Grosfoguel and Gramsci. Juvenicide is analyzed as an expression of the precarization, criminalization and death of Black and poor youth in the Global South, resulting from a penal-oriented neoliberalism and its necropolitical dynamics. Methodologically, the investigation integrates literature review, documentary research, opinion surveys and focus groups with young people from the three countries, seeking to identify similarities, differences, cultural expressions, forms of political participation and perceptions regarding identity, belonging and racism. The comparative approach considers particularities and singularities, avoiding generalizations but allowing observations grounded in the universality of historical oppression. Partial results indicate that the youth trajectories analyzed are traversed by juvenicide, marked by the deep legacies of Portuguese colonialism, structural racism, patriarchy and capitalism—elements that produce distinct realities yet remain connected through common violations. The research demonstrates that identity erasure—expressed through racism, whitening practices and the imposition of hegemonic cultural narratives—decisively affects the formation of children and young people, both in Brazil and in African countries that continue to deal with the effects of civil wars and national reconstruction. Thus, the urgency of understanding the youth of the South from the South is reaffirmed, valuing their experiences, resistances and everyday struggles. It is the responsibility of the State to ensure protection systems that truly guarantee the human and social rights historically denied to these young people.

Digital Compassion: A Pilot Hotline for Individuals in Prostitution in Israel

Bracha Shapira[1]
[1]Lo Omdot Meneged, , Israel

This presentation introduces Shira Line, a pioneering digital hotline model providing phone and chat support for women and men engaged in or exiting prostitution in Israel. The pilot, launched by the NGO Lo Omdot ("Not Standing Against"), aims to bridge the gap between survivors and the social service system through accessible, trauma-informed digital communication.

Operating through both phone and encrypted chat platforms, the hotline offers immediate emotional support, safety planning, and referrals to welfare and therapeutic services. Its digital infrastructure enables anonymous, stigma-free contact—essential for individuals whose experiences of shame, fear, and marginalization often prevent in-person outreach.

The model was designed with cultural and linguistic inclusivity at its core, ensuring equal access for Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Druze, and migrant populations, as well as refugees and undocumented residents. This reflects Israel's complex social mosaic and the urgent need for flexible responses that transcend bureaucratic barriers and social hierarchies. The pilot integrates evidence-based practices from digital social work, emphasizing supervision, data ethics, and volunteer training for online emotional engagement. It also explores how hybrid digital-human approaches can enhance safety, empowerment, and connection for individuals in prostitution—especially in times of crisis and ongoing social fragmentation following national trauma.

This session will present findings from the pilot's first year, highlighting lessons learned about digital trust-building, vicarious trauma in online settings, and the potential of digital platforms to extend compassionate, culturally competent care to those most excluded from traditional services.

Bearing Witness Under Fire: Trauma-Informed Family Accompaniment in the Aftermath of the 7 October Mass Casualty Event in Israel

Bracha Shapira[1]
[1]Lo Omdot Meneged, , Israel

On October 7, 2023, Israel experienced an unprecedented mass-casualty event in which over 1,200 civilians and soldiers were brutally murdered and hundreds abducted. Within hours, thousands of unidentified bodies were transferred to the Shura military base, rapidly transformed into the national center for forensic identification. Recognizing the immense emotional toll on bereaved families arriving in shock and terror to identify their loved ones, social workers were urgently mobilized — without preparation, guidelines, or precedent for the scale of trauma they would confront.

This presentation reflects on the firsthand experience of a social worker deployed to Shura base as part of the Home Front Command emergency response. It examines the unique ethical, professional, and emotional decisions required while working under wartime conditions: balancing the need for procedural clarity with the absolute fragility of families confronting the unimaginable; maintaining professional grounding while absorbing acute trauma and national grief; and ensuring dignity and humanity amidst chaos, security threats, and constant media pressure.

Drawing from field notes, team reflections, and supervision processes, this session identifies key trauma-informed practices that emerged organically: sensory safety, micro-choices for family agency, culturally attuned rituals, and non-verbal presence when language fails. It also surfaces the cost to responders and the critical importance of real-time support structures.

The lessons learned highlight gaps in disaster preparedness for large-scale lethal violence and propose a framework for integrating social workers into forensic identification centers worldwide to ensure that even in the darkest moments, compassion and professionalism remain operational.

Social Work Education in Guyana: Evaluating the Emergence and the Prospects for the Fastest-Growing Economy

Mrs Dionne Frank[1]
[1]University Of Education, , Ghana

The complexity of the expanding social welfare sector in Guyana, a former British colony, engendered the need for localised social work education. This article utilises the five decades (1971–2025) of the provision of social work education in the country to deconstruct the indigenous and exogenous factors that underpin its emergence, reflect on its trajectory, and evaluate its strengths, weaknesses and the challenges that need attention in order to prepare graduates for the developmental prospects of Guyana. The empirical assessment data sources include historical records, programme enrollment data and unstructured interviews with graduates and current social work educators. Examining the cooperative socialist climate in which the programme evolved provides a contextual background. In contrast, scrutiny of the curriculum reveals the continuous connection to the recommendations of the Young husband Report for the two-year training programme and the development of social work in Great Britain. The article concludes with an emphasis on the need to streamline the signature pedagogy to adequately prepare a highly trained social workforce in an emerging oil and gas economy and to contribute to the attainment of national goals.

Immigrant Families Experiencing Co-occurring Intimate Partner Violence and Child Protection System Involvement: A Scoping Review of Trauma-Informed Family-Centered Interventions

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Background and Purpose: Although family violence occurs within the complex and dynamic relationships of members of families, social interventions occur via two profoundly siloed carceral service structures which separate service provision and support when violence occurs between partners/parents/couples and violence is experienced by children.The criminal justice system, child protection services, or both can become involved in response to IPV. In North America, Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) families are over-represented in both systems, with persistent negative consequences; our prior research demonstrates that immigrant families, already living in heightened precarity, may be exponentially further negatively impacted by contact with these systems. We conducted a two-part scoping review to answer what is known in the existing literature about: 1) immigrant families with co-occurring IPV and child protection service involvement; and 2) trauma-informed approaches to family-centred interventions when IPV has occurred.
Methods: We utilized the JBI 3-step strategy to locate both published and unpublished sources. We searched databases Scopus, Ovid, Cinahl & Proquest for peer-reviewed literature and World Cat, Google Scholar, BASE, Google Advanced, and Worldwide Science for grey literature. Concepts included variations of IPV, youth protection, immigrant, family-centered, and trauma-informed. Two researchers independently reviewed all title and abstracts in Covidence. A third reviewer resolved any conflicts.

Results: The Q#1 search resulted in a sample of 7804 texts for review, of which 24 were retained for data extraction. The Q#2 search resulted in 1273 texts for review, of which 10 were retained for data extraction. Results show very few studies were family-centered or included interventions that were trauma-informed. Thematic analysis highlighted lack of cultural context and community engagement.
Conclusion: Our analysis demonstrates the need for further research on interventions to meet the needs of all members of immigrant families when IPV has occurred, taking into account culture, trauma, and community connection.

Decolonizing mental health: Using rhizome theory to imagine networks of multicultural epistemologies

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Contemporary global mental health discourse remains heavily shaped by Euro-Western biomedical psychiatry and recovery models that operate within colonial and neoliberal logics. These dominant frameworks marginalise and delegitimise alternative ways of understanding mental health, particularly those rooted in non-Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. Such epistemic exclusion has significant consequences: it restricts the development of culturally meaningful research and practice, narrows the language available for people to describe their experiences, and perpetuates inequities for communities both in the Global South and within diasporic populations living in settler colonial contexts.

To challenge this dominance, rhizome theory offers an alternative approach for imagining mental health as inherently multiple, interconnected, and resistant to rigid categorisation. This perspective supports an environment in which diverse and even contradictory epistemologies can coexist without hierarchy, an important step in decolonizing mental health knowledge. When taken up in social work research and practice, it encourages more equitable relationships between people experiencing distress, practitioners, and scholars by creating space for varied realities, cultural frameworks, and forms of knowledge.

Drawing on examples from Mad Studies and non-European Indigenous scholarship, this presentation highlights alternative mental health frameworks that emphasise systemic, spiritual, political, and communal dimensions of wellbeing—dimensions frequently overlooked in dominant models. Across these varied approaches, shared themes such as wholism, interconnectedness, and balance emerge as central to many communities' understandings of distress and healing.

By foregrounding these alternative epistemologies, this work calls for a mental health landscape that embraces plurality through decolonial ways of relating between knowledge systems, and ultimately aligns with social work's commitments to justice in research and practice.

Brazil and the Protection of Childhood: Building Anti-Racist Strategies in Social Work

Dr Marcia Campos Eurico[1]
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"The research analyzes racism and its impact on Black childhood and adolescence in Brazil, based on the experiences of Black children and adolescents in institutional care, separated from their families by judicial decision.

The enslavement of African people trafficked to Brazil between the 16th and 19th centuries and the abolition process in 1888, marked by the signing of the Lei Áurea, are interconnected through the exploitation of Black families' labor, who were treated as inferior beings and denied their human rights.

In Brazil, the debate on race is not a false issue, as racial groups construct conceptions about other racial groups with the intention of marking difference. From a biological perspective, all humans belong to the same race, yet everyday manifestations of discrimination and racial prejudice are socially constructed through the devaluation of the physical, intellectual, cultural, and religious attributes of Black people.

By expanding the analysis of social relations and their intersections with ethnic-racial relations, Social Work professionals in Brazil, working across diverse public policies, play a fundamental role in promoting respect for difference. This anti-racist commitment is reflected in the guidelines produced by the Federal Council of Social Work and the Brazilian Association of Teaching and Research in Social Work, which guide the work of social workers.

As a researcher of institutional racism and a professor in the Graduate Program in Social Work at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, I have focused on problematizing the relationship between Black childhood/adolescence and the production of professional responses that are anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-capitalist. As professionals in the Child and Adolescent Rights Guarantee System and their families, we must denounce any practice that criminalizes Black families."

Digital Storytelling and Mental Health Among Sub-Saharan African Migrant Men in Canada

Dr Alicia Boatswain-kyte[1]
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The Black population in Canada is becoming increasingly diverse due to migration from African countries. Despite this demographic shift, the mental health experiences of Sub-Saharan African migrant men (SSAM) remain critically understudied and underserved. These men navigate complex psychosocial realities shaped by intersecting cultural, social, and structural factors. While research highlights that Black migrants in Canada face heightened discrimination and systemic disadvantage, dominant mental health frameworks often obscure these structural determinants by privileging individual-level explanations and framing Black men themselves through deficit-based or pathological lenses. Consequently, SSAM experience elevated rates of psychological distress, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, yet frequently avoid formal, Western mental health services due to stigma and cultural barriers. This study employed a qualitative, community-based Black emancipatory action research (BEAR) approach, engaging eight SSAM in a facilitated digital storytelling workshop. The digital stories themselves served as rich, multimodal data sources, combining voice, image, music, and narrative structure. The iterative nature of the storytelling process—where participants refined their narratives through group feedback and individual reflection—added layers of meaning that were considered during analysis. Researcher field notes and impressions, collected throughout the workshops, were also integrated to contextualize relational dynamics and process outcomes. Thematic analysis revealed three themes: (1) mental health stigma and emotional suppression, highlighting how cultural norms around masculinity and fear of judgment inhibit help-seeking; (2) trauma, transitions, and structural challenges, describing the compounded stress of migration, discrimination, and precarious socioeconomic conditions; and (3)coping mechanisms and pathways to healing, illustrating strategies such as faith and community as sources of resilience. Findings underscore the value of digital storytelling as a non-extractive, culturally affirming methodology for exploring mental health in SSAM. By centering lived experience through BEAR, this study calls for relational, community-based approaches in mental health practice and policy for SSAM.

The Challenges of Partnership Management in Social Assistance Services in the City of São Paulo.

Najila Souza[1]
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This work presents an analysis of the technical supervision of social assistance services in the city of São Paulo, based on the relationship between public servants (civil service Social Workers) and workers (outsourced) from Civil Society Organizations (OSCs), who provide a public service through the \"partnership\" between OSCs and the State. It seeks to demonstrate the strengthening of the workforce in Social Assistance Policy through a critical analysis that highlights the contradictions and challenges presented in reality. Social Assistance in the city of São Paulo has historically been outsourced; currently, 96% of the social assistance network is outsourced, comprising approximately 17,000 OSCs workers and 950 public servants. Since Federal Law 13.019/2014, known as the Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organizations (MROSC), there have been changes in the process of technical supervision in social assistance services; public servants have become partnership managers, and the requirements and responsibilities have increased. The MROSC (Brazilian Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organizations) emphasizes the principles of transparency, legality, and social participation. Therefore, in partnership management (Social Workers), there is increased rigor in accountability; they are compelled to analyze menus, verify the conditions of rooms and furniture, and authorize purchase actions that sometimes lead to deviations from their job descriptions, accumulation, and work overload. These changes in the work process of public servants and the new demands of the MROSC impact the work of outsourced workers in OSCs (Civil Society Organizations), who need to fill out various electronic systems, respond to sometimes inappropriate requests that come from the immediacy of reality, among other actions that this article intends to explore in more detail. However, it is undeniable that together, public servants and outsourced workers make a difference in the lives of people assisted by Social Assistance and enhance each other\'s professional lives.

Time for Collective Radical Social Work Voices: A critical analysis of the Global definition of social work in a changing world.

Ms Edith Lewis[1]
[1]Private, , United Kingdom

Social work profession has roots in principles of social justice, human rights and collective liberation. This paper seeks to critique the absence of collective social work radical voices across the globe to promote its fundamental principles-collective responsibility in the age of antisocial justice movement-anti woke western agenda. The paper will examine current global injustices, abuse of human rights, endless wars and displacement of people. I will explore the political dehumanising rhetoric of certain groups, the derailing of global human rights institutions and the rise of neoliberal agenda that seeks to silence justice-oriented practice. The paper will argue how social work cannot remain apolitical or in the peripheries. While human suffering, injustices and abuse of human rights continues to be normalised across the globe. The paper is a call for social workers across the globe to unite and ensure more radical voices are heard across the globe. I will critique how social work remains fragmented across the globe lacking one voice and lack of commitment to the global challenges. While I argue that neutrality and remaining in the periphery is no longer an option, I will examine how to reclaim radical social work through:

Collective action taking advantage of social media across all global societies. Community organisations in the age of individualism and neoliberalism agenda.
Becoming co-conspirators in the struggle for justice.

I will outline:
How educators and institutions can resist pressure to de-politicize curricula, adopt decolonial curricula and centralise social justice pedagogy.
Role of practitioners in advocating within their organizations and resist workplace cultures that penalize speaking truth to power.
How social work bodies and associations must publicly challenge anti-woke narratives and reaffirm their commitment to social justice and liberation.

Social Work in Multicultural Settings: Navigating Refugee Students' Educational Journeys

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Displacement is a complex global issue that has adversely impacted millions of individuals, particularly youth. Nearly 49 million youths aged 18-24 are displaced refugees, of whom about 122,805 were enrolled in U.S. higher education. Many refugee students, including young college learners, seek to integrate through education but face numerous barriers that hinder their academic progress. Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial component of refugee resettlement; however, these students face significant obstacles and need appropriate resources and support to succeed in college. Social workers play a vital role in providing resources to help students overcome challenges and address systemic inequalities stemming from violence, crises, natural disasters, or political conflicts, especially in refugee-hosting settings. This study identifies key challenges faced by refugee college students resettling in the U.S. and highlights the crucial role of social workers in addressing systemic inequalities during post-conflict recovery. Using qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight (8) refugee-background students aged 18 to 46, including undergraduates and graduate students across five U.S. universities. The findings reveal significant barriers, including limited awareness of campus resources, difficulties with advisors, and the faculty\'s lack of understanding of refugee students' experiences, which affect their navigation of the educational system. These results emphasize the need for trauma-informed environments and underscore the importance of social workers\' roles in improving campus support by ensuring that departments, college service providers, and staff comprehend refugee students\' challenges and how to assist them. Participants\' recommendations serve as guides for social work interventions, especially in areas of cultural sensitivity and mental health awareness within universities, to help create a more equitable environment. Addressing these needs requires social workers to intervene, develop, and allocate resources to reduce systemic inequalities in multicultural societies, particularly in post-conflict or resettlement settings.

A Systems Thinking Community Work Framework for Building Sustainable Interventions to Address Complex Social Problems

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Social issues in Singapore are becoming increasingly complex, necessitating multiple perspectives to address their root causes. In contrast, social workers are trained to address these challenges using a person-in-environment approach, specifically in community work. This study aims to showcase the parallels between community work and the necessity of understanding the interconnectedness of social issues to address them effectively, as well as emphasising the importance of systems thinking in evaluating social challenges and developing interventions. A multiple-case study method, involving in-depth interviews, was conducted with eight cases from social service agencies, family service centres, grassroots organisations, and civil society organisations. The data gathered from the interviews were triangulated with field participant observations, document analysis and a focus group discussion. The findings uncovered inconsistencies in the application of community work models and the execution of community work activities across various organisations. The different organisations do not employ a standardised community work framework. Consequently, community work activities contributed little or only minimally to addressing the complex social issues faced by the clients of these organisations and society at large. A contemporary community work framework LEAP (Learn, Examine, Act, Progress) infused with systems thinking knowledge has been developed to support social workers' interventions in effecting long-term change in social issues.

Education – A means to protect care-leavers futures?

Ms Mandisa Mbaza[1]
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Care-leavers, especially from residential care placements, are a vulnerable and disadvantaged population. Children are placed in residential care facilities for their care and protection,but are consistently underprepared when transitioning from care into independence. Care-leavers are consistently associated with poor post-care outcomes in areas including educational attainment and progression.
Education is a catalyst for change. Education can bring sustainable and positive outcomes for care-leavers. The skills and qualifications acquired through education positively improves their chances of acquiring employment, impacting other areas of their life including individual agency & mental health.
Eight residential care-experienced people from South Africa participated in this qualitative study. The participants comprised of care-leavers from residential care placements, that were engaged in tertiary education. Data was collected through the possible me tree model visual methodology. The model comprises of three steps – a life map, a possible me tree drawing, the planning step.This study involved 2 interviews with each participant, utilizing the first two steps.
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant after the life map and possible me tree drawing activities. Data was analysed through thematic analysis, with themes and subthemes being extracted from the transcribed data. Findings included individual agency, motivation and self-determination reflected by participants. The participants also reflected a visible hope for their future. Resources that the care-leavers presented that assisted them were mostly facilitated through the residential care facilities.
Care-leavers need to be assisted to have their futures protected and reach their full potential. Recommendations from this research include the development of suitable models to assist their transition from care. This will help to explore their future possible selves whilst in care and develop concrete plans toward their actualization. The development of policies that mandate the provision of aftercare services for care-leavers are also needed, especially in Global South countries like South Africa.

MAKING SENSE OF HOUSING IN SOCIAL WORK: BRIDGING THE MICRO-MACRO DIVIDE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Housing is an integral component of individuals and families' wellbeing as it undergirds all social and economic relations. Yet as a welfare and a social development item, it is underrated. Tailoring macro-economic policies, strategies and programmes to yield positively on human wellbeing is the goal of social work and a premise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (UN). While housing impacts almost all the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this article attempts to shed light on how economies can utilise housing to realise the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3 and 11 and, by so doing, potentially bridge the micro- and macro- divides. The scoping literature review that was utilised by this article followed the eight methodological steps to analyse the reviewed data. The findings of the review identified four significant themes in the literature. These are: the likelihood of adequate housing delivery to connect individuals and families to economic opportunities and thereby reduce poverty (SDG1), the potential of adequate housing delivery to promote health and well-being of individuals and families (SDG3), the prospects of adequate housing to enhance educational prospects of the poor and thereby impacting human development (SDG11) and the role of social work in housing delivery. The paper concludes that working towards achieving the SDGs is a complex process that must be presided by a willing government to tackle the systemic and structural elements that prevent individuals and families from benefiting from the economy. With its human rights and social development agendas, social work is better positioned to advocate adequate housing delivery through policy advocacy, for example.

Reclaiming Complexity in Social Work Knowledge: Dialogical and Systemic Pathways for Understanding Family Life

Noelle Buzohera[1]
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Social work research continues to rely heavily on linear and reductionist models that struggle to capture the multidimensional nature of contemporary family life. This paper proposes a renewed conceptual approach grounded in Edgar Morin's complex thought and Ivana Marková's dialogical theory of social representations. Rather than seeking coherence through simplification, complex thought invites social work scholars to recognize contradictions, uncertainty, and the interdependence of individual, relational, and societal processes. Dialogicality further illuminates how meanings about family, care, and parenting emerge through the interaction of the Self, the Other, and the social object under consideration. Through an examination of key concepts: hologrammaticity, recursion, linked systems, polyphasia, and dialogical tensions. The paper argues that these frameworks offer powerful epistemological tools for rethinking how social work theorizes family relationships, identity formation, and social norms. By unsettling dominant assumptions of stability, continuity, and universality in family life, this approach opens space for greater epistemic plurality and reflexivity. The paper concludes by highlighting implications for social work education and research, including the need for more integrative, ethically aware, and context-sensitive models of knowledge production.

Contesting the Myth of “Good Parenting”: Social Norms, Marginalization, and Resistance in Western Contexts

Noelle Buzohera[1]
[1]University Of Ottawa, , Canada

In Western societies, dominant representations of “good parenting” circulate through scientific discourse, public policy, child protection systems, and everyday cultural narratives. These representations privilege intensive mothering, emotional constant availability, and stable intergenerational continuity, while often pathologizing families who depart from these expectations. This paper examines the sociogenesis of these norms and their effects on marginalized parentalities, including Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and non-normative family forms. Drawing on social representations theory, feminist critiques of parenting, and scholarship on coloniality and racialized surveillance, the paper shows how normative models of parenting reproduce exclusion and moral judgment. Through an analysis of intensive motherhood, gendered expectations, and cultural stigmatization, the paper highlights the mechanisms through which certain parental practices become idealized while others are rendered deviant or deficient. By centering resistance, adaptation, and alternative narratives of care, the paper calls for a pluralist, culturally grounded understanding of parenting that moves beyond punitive and homogenizing frameworks. Implications for social work practice include the need to recognize intersecting forms of oppression shaping parental experiences, and to design interventions that uphold dignity, diversity, and social justice.

The trauma-informed Gaze: Neuropolitical governing in child welfare

Mr Ole Johan Moe[1]
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This paper investigates how trauma-informed care (TIC), now deeply embedded in Norwegian child welfare, reshapes professional practice through a neuro-oriented mode of governance. By adopting a lifespan perspective, the study examines how neuro-normative frameworks influence care practices for children and shape family. The analysis employs a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) on training materials from the Regional Resource Centres on Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS). RVTS are government funded competence centres supporting child welfare, health care, schools, and other actors. Building on Foucault's concept of governmentality and social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen), the paper reveals how brain-based models function as normative templates. The TIC approach risks masking power relations behind a discourse of care. The paper argues that this neuro-turn not only guides professional behaviour but also establishes new governance logics: self-regulation emerges as a moral ideal for both children and practitioners. These logics extend beyond institutional settings, influencing collaboration with families and shaping welfare strategies.

The theoretical contribution of the paper is through the concept of neuro-politics (inspired by Foucault's biopolitics). Familiar TIC models, such as the "triune brain" and the "window of tolerance", are shown to operate as tools within a rationality of governance. The study identifies three key manifestations of neuro-politics in the material: 1. The constitution of a new norm of child development through brain-based discourse. 2. The caregiver's capacity to discern trauma beneath challenging behaviour. 3. Self-governing techniques: advice for regulation of emotions. Through these mechanisms, TIC shapes subjectivity and exerts soft governance over both practitioners and children. By critically examining the intertwining of scientific authority, care, and power, the paper speaks to the political, ethical, and epistemic implications neuro-oriented approach to trauma. It calls for an ethically grounded practice that respects relational care while remaining conscious of power dynamics.

Preventing Violence and Promoting Culturally Congruent Positive Youth Development among Indigenous Youth in the United States

Dr Katie Edwards[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, ,

The purpose of this interactive workshop is to share innovative approaches to preventing violence and promoting culturally-congruent positive youth development among Indigenous youth. Drawing from our work with the Indigenous peoples in the Norther Great Plains region of the United States, we will discuss (1) an empowerment-based, gender-transformative program to prevent sexual violence; (2) a crime prevention through environmental design program to reduce youth and gun violence; (3) a teaching farm integrating traditional ecological knowledge and STEM; and (4) a family-based intervention for 2SLGBTQ+ youth an their caregivers. In addition to providing information on programming details and impact, we will share lessons learned and opportunities for attendees to apply information to their own work as well as discussions for partnerships.

Invisible Voices and Labors: Domestic Work as a Stage of Oppression and a Strategy for Survival

Mrs Yone Da Cruz Martins De Campos[1]
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This article seeks, drawing on concerns arising from the ongoing doctoral research at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) and considering the current stage of the study under development, to analyze the organization of domestic work in contemporary Brazil as a reflection of colonial and patriarchal roots deeply grounded in the period of enslavement. This historical legacy not only shaped the division of tasks but also placed the burden of care and household maintenance primarily on women, especially Black women.

It is essential to contextualize that enslavement, beyond being an economic system that structured capitalism, constituted a historical process that decisively shaped the social relations embedded in contemporary Brazilian society. The establishment of hierarchies based on race, gender, class, and ethnicity consolidated patterns of domination and subordination that continue to structure the social fabric. Enslavement determined the insertion of the Black population into Brazil's social structure, marking it with systematic subalternity and stark inequalities in access to fundamental rights, the formal labor market, and spaces of prestige.

This scenario is not merely a passive inheritance; it manifests as structural selectivity that confines Black labor power, for the most part, to precarious and invisible occupations. The hierarchical patterns perpetuated by colonialism persist within systems of power that naturalize racial and socioeconomic disparities, operating through the unequal distribution of resources, the marginalization of non-European forms of knowledge, and the maintenance of privilege. These mechanisms are not remnants of the past but foundations of the present.

Thus, this investigation seeks to reveal how structural racism sustains these conditions, pushing Black populations into spatial segregation and informal, intermittent occupations. This process reinforces historical inequalities that compel this population to articulate survival strategies within a context of disparities legitimized by ultra-neoliberal capitalism, which deepens exclusion and the precarization of life in favor of capital accumulation.

What the Tech Giants won't tell us: Can we easily embrace Artificial Intelligence in social work without challenging the pros and cons?

Ms Edith Lewis[1]
[1]Private, , United Kingdom

This presentation examines how Tech companies have presented the vision of shining, sleek autonomous machines/devices and how they can make our lives easy by touch of a button. As we all navigate the search engines as the norm through the large quantities of data and now AI, we lack education or awareness on the reality of the misery behind the technology or those mining the coltan that produces tantalum used for capacitors in mobile, laptops and cameras now dominating our lives and purchased across the globe.

The paper will argue how the use of AI products should be approached with caution in social work while considering and asking the following:

Definition and context of artificial intelligence, drawing on historical definition of race, the lack of global south as leading players-whose narrative i.e. Eurocentric versus, colonial, post colonial, leaders and followers.
How tech companies deliberately hide the environmental impact and exploitation of human labour across the globe.
The lack of global majority, global south initiatives/leadership, impact of algorithmic bias, global inequalities ethical considerations.
Lack of meaningful regulation, policy frameworks and implications to the what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work IFSW definition of social work. Finally I will argue whether global south countries can prioritise AI and its impact at the expense of rural infrastructure development - industrial revolution experienced by the global north nations e.g. clean running water, electricity, road/rail/transport networks free education and health for all?

Social Work Entrepreneurship

Ronnie-Lee Sneh[1]
[1]Street Medicine Tel-aviv, , Israel

In recent years we witness a rise in inequality, chronic stress, and humanitarian crises across the globe. As social workers professionals we understand the field from within its gaps, its human stories, and its systemic challenges. This is why social workers are uniquely positioned to create new, sustainable initiatives.

This workshop will explore how social workers can become social entrepreneurs: founding initiatives that translate our empathy and field experience into: action, policy change and systemic change.

Through group exercises, and peer learning, participants will explore the mindset and tools of social innovation for example: how to identify unmet needs, build coalitions and transform ideas into resilient models of care. I will want to highlight why in my opinion, social workers must lead this wave of entrepreneurship: We hold trust and knowledge of impacted populations and paths for change.

During the workshop, I will present my personal case study: How I founded Street Medicine Tel-Aviv, an NGO providing medical and social care to people experiencing homelessness. Participants will hear how my own frustration with system failures grew into a multidisciplinary collaboration with hospitals and municipalities. The session will also dive into why it is important to pivot in times of crisis and adapt to keep continuity of care under uncertainty and the team's security.

Participants will leave with frameworks, tools, and lived insights to start or strengthen their own initiatives. Ultimately, the workshop redefines entrepreneurship as a social-work practice of courage and adaptation turning compassion into infrastructure and crisis into opportunity, exactly what our world needs.

Traversing the Borderlands: A Qualitative Exploration of Student Experiences

Dr Pa Nhia Xiong[1]
[1]California State University, Fresno, , United States

Immigration is woven into the fabric of the United States. Today, we live in an era with considerable debate surrounding immigration. Currently, more than 45 million immigrants live in United States, the largest group of whom are of Mexican nationality. In California, more than 20% of the population is foreign born; in every state, the share of foreign-born population has increased since 2010 (Azari, et al., 2024). A deeper, more empathetic understanding of different pathways of immigration experiences is crucial for social work practitioners. As such, creating opportunities for students to witness the journey immigrants who take to come to the US is paramount, especially those who cross the border undocumented. Understanding undocumented immigrants' experiences fosters empathy and informed support. This paper was based on a qualitative experiential project with social work students traveling to California's southern border. The students dropped off water in a desert area well known for undocumented border crossings and they helped fundraise, talked to day-laborers who were undocumented, and visited the border wall between US and Mexico. Students were interviewed about their experiences. We hoped to capture the most salient memories of the trip and the things they derived the most meaning from while at the border. Results and implications: Three themes emerged: Things migrants left behind (subthemes of personal items, bullets, pondering the reasons, making it real) Walking in their shoes (subthemes of physicality, danger, and Emotional responses (subthemes of empathy and compassion, feelings of fear, unwantedness, and intimidation, sad and heartbreaking, and felt called into activism. Implications include the importance of experiential learning and the incorporation of human rights perspective into the classroom. Implications for social work education will be discussed. Azari, S. S. et al. (2024). The foreign-born population in the United States: 2022.

Challenges of Deinstitutionalization in the Face of the Lack of Family Support and Delays in the Effectiveness of Referrals to Social Assistance and Health Services in the Municipality of São Paulo

Cristiane Da Silva[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil
Here is a careful and academically appropriate English translation of your abstract:

This abstract aims to present a case study based on the professional practice of a Social Worker in a Specialized Ward of a public hospital in São Paulo. The experience refers to the challenges faced by Social Work when a patient is scheduled for hospital discharge, requires ongoing care, and lacks family support.

The patient in question, Ms. R.S., 48 years old, was admitted after a suicide attempt by direct flame burns. She is single and lived alone in a rented property. Her only source of income was the Bolsa Família social assistance benefit, in the amount of R$600.00. She has a history of substance dependence and a diagnosis of schizophrenia, with no ongoing medical follow-up. She has three children—two adolescents and one adult—but has no active relationship with them. She also has six siblings who are employed and have their own families; however, her ties with them are fragile.

In view of the discharge process, the Social Work team held meetings with family members to raise awareness and encourage them to arrange housing for the patient, as well as to facilitate access to social benefits such as social rent assistance, the Continuous Cash Benefit (BPC-LOAS), food assistance, and transportation for hemodialysis treatment. However, the attempt to restore family ties proved insufficient for ensuring the assumption of care responsibilities.

In coordination with social assistance and health services, we requested placement in a supported living residence. However, due to delays in service response, administrative issues intrinsically involved in the process, and the family's refusal to assume responsibility for the patient's care, the multidisciplinary ward team decided to pursue judicial intervention in the case.

Solution-Focused Brief Interventions for Substance Use: Evidence, Practice, and Fidelity for Social Workers

Assoc Prof Karla Gonzalez Suitt[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidad Católica De Chile, , Chile

This workshop addresses the global challenge of substance use through the lens of Solution-Focused Brief Interventions (SFBIs). This approach resonates with social work values of self-determination, human dignity, and cultural responsiveness, emphasizing client strengths and future-oriented change, being adaptable across diverse social and cultural contexts. SFBIs are suitable for primary care and programs that provide brief mental health interventions. The session will begin by situating SFBIs within international social work principles, presenting theoretical foundations and empirical evidence of substance use interventions worldwide. Participants will then engage in experiential learning through demonstrations and practice of core SFBI techniques—such as scaling questions, looking for exceptions, goal setting, and the first session formula task.

Additionally, an adapted manual with structured guidance for implementing SFBIs with individuals with substance use will be presented. This manual was developed as part of the author’s research project. Finally, the workshop will present an adapted fidelity instrument and outline methodological strategies for maintaining adherence to SFBI principles, including structured training, technical supervision, and ongoing fidelity monitoring.

By integrating theory, practice, and fidelity, this workshop equips social work researchers and practitioners with evidence-based tools to strengthen substance use brief interventions focused on individuals\' resources, what works in their life, and what they want, which is essential for social work. Participants will leave with actionable strategies and culturally adaptable resources to enhance solution-focused practices in their own settings.

Expected learning outcomes for participants:
Understand the theoretical foundations and evidence base of SFBIs in substance use interventions
Acquire practical skills in core SFBI techniques through interactive exercises.
Explore culturally adapted resources for maintaining fidelity in intervention delivery across diverse contexts.
Reflect on ways to integrate solution-focused approaches into global social work practice.

Transitioning Social Work Education Curriculum in Kenya's Competency Based Education

Prof. Gidraph G. Wairire[1]
[1]IASSW, , Kenya

The new competency based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya's education sector is a learner centered system that is replacing the old 8-4-4 system of education that encompasses 8 years of study in Primary school, 4 years in High school and another 4 years for a basic degree at the university level. CBC is centered on strong focus for practical skills, critical thinking and value application in the system of learning from primary school to university levels. It is structured under a 2-6-3-3 system of education encompassing early years, middle years, junior secondary, senior secondary and another 3 years at university level.

CBC is designed as a holistic system that involves parents with clear assessments geared towards demonstrating the learner's competencies but not just exams. The system has just transited from junior secondary to senior secondary and is expected to transit to the university level in 2029.

This paper seeks to explore the diverse considerations that should be prioritized in the social work curriculum for university education in Kenya for learners trained through CBC. The extent to which this curriculum should be aligned with the global standards for social work education, policy implications, challenges and prospects related to the CBC implementation in social work curriculum will be analysed in this paper with a view to generate sound guidelines for social work stakeholders and institutions that will consume the outcomes of the revised social work curriculum in the CBC system of education at university level.

He Kupenga o te Kotahitanga - Weaving Indigenous Solidarity from Aotearoa to Africa

Sharyn Roberts[1]
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"He Kupenga o te Kotahitanga explores the shared Indigenous wisdom of Kotahitanga from Aotearoa and Harambee from Kenya, each calling people to move as one, to pull together, and to uphold the collective good. These concepts, grounded in relational worldviews, remind us that social transformation begins with connection, between peoples, cultures, and the natural world.

Through a Māori lens, this presentation positions Kotahitanga as both philosophy and practice, the art of weaving relationships that strengthen communities. Drawing from the lived experience of Māori leadership and Indigenous praxis, it explores how the values of Whanaungatanga (relationship), Aroha (love), Manaakitanga (care), and Rangatiratanga (self-determination) act as the knots that hold our kupenga (net) together. Each knot represents a commitment to unity, integrity, and collective wellbeing.

When woven with the spirit of Harambee, “all pull together,” these values extend beyond Aotearoa to resonate across the Global South, offering a model for solidarity, equity, and shared responsibility. The kupenga becomes a living metaphor, a net cast across oceans, connecting Māori and African ways of knowing, gathering strength through each act of care, compassion, and collaboration.

He Kupenga o te Kotahitanga invites global social workers, educators, and community leaders to reflect on how Indigenous wisdom can guide us toward sustainable, relational, and just futures. It affirms that when we weave together our values, across oceans and generations, we create a world where everyone is held, uplifted, and able to flourish.

Integrating Psychosocial Well-Being as a Pathway to Resilient Communities

Prof. Patteti Adam Paul[1]
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Communities across the world are increasingly confronted with overlapping crises driven by conflict, forced displacement, climate change, persistent poverty, and widening social inequalities. As the World Health Organization asserts that “there is no health without mental health,” psychosocial well-being emerges as a fundamental determinant of human development, social cohesion, and community resilience. With more than 970 million people living with mental disorders and over 360 million affected annually by humanitarian crises, alongside 240 million children residing in conflict zones, the urgency of integrating psychosocial frameworks into education and community structures is evident.

A central focus of this study is the transformative role of digital mental health innovations such as mobile counseling platforms, tele-psychosocial services, AI-supported screening tools, and digital socio-emotional learning systems which expand access, reduce stigma, and enable early identification and continuous support, particularly in low-resource or crisis-affected settings. The study aims to promote psychosocial awareness as an integrated educational mechanism and to examine the contribution of digital mental health strategies and intersectional partnerships in building resilient communities.

Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed-method approach combining a thematic review of literature, analysis of global policy frameworks, and synthesis of case studies drawn from education and community-based psychosocial interventions. Additionally, a sample of 100 individuals from diverse communities will be surveyed to assess levels of psychosocial well-being. Insights from field-based evidence and international practices will inform the development of psychosocial resilience.

The paper calls for a global paradigm shift in which psychosocial well-being is recognized not only as a fundamental human right but also as a crucial pathway to building resilient, empowered, and equitable communities.

Reimagining Social Work Practice Through Creativity and Critical Thinking in Fieldwork Practicum: Insights from Public Health Social Work

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Background: Social workers are engaged in settings across the healthcare continuum, providing services to individuals and families throughout their lifespan and addressing the full range of bio-psychosocial issues that impact well-being. However, in practice, the role of social workers in health, especially in healthcare services, is limited and disoriented to the core values and functions of social work. In countries like India, their work ranges from psychosocial assessment to counselling, hospitality, and healthcare marketing. One way to bring about transformation is through self-appraisal, which involves identifying the specific role of social workers in meeting the population\'s health needs.

Methodology: This research addresses the question of how creativity and critical thinking can be integrated into contemporary fieldwork practices to reimagine the scope of social work practice in public health settings. It presents two case studies on student fieldwork that incorporate creativity and critical thinking. First, a case study of public health students organizing a community health camp; second, a case study of social work students doing a participatory rural appraisal. By taking two social work field practicum cases to explore the research question, the study uses a qualitative case study design. The data collected through participatory observation, the findings of the field practicum exercise, and key informant interviews were analyzed thematically using an inductive method by identifying patterns, similarities, and differences in the data.

Findings: People's perception of health, understood through the findings of two field practices studied, shows that, in addition to medical professionals like doctors, nurses, and other health workers, there is a need to involve health workers who can address the social determinants of health. The findings of this study show that incorporating creativity and critical thinking into fieldwork will empower students and practitioners to rethink and redefine the scope and functions of the profession.

What do you mean by health? Understanding the social work perspective in layman’s conceptualization of health and its management

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Background: Social work practice is an integral element of people's health management and, therefore, an essential component of the public health and healthcare system worldwide. However, little is known about the role and scope of social workers in patients' subjective experience of health and healthcare management. In addition to the medical professionals like doctors and nurses, does the social worker have any role in laymen's conceptualization of health management? Is analyzed in the study.

Study Design: The study employed a qualitative phenomenological study design. Data regarding the concept of health and the role of social work were collected from respondents identified from five major social groups. Further, a thematic analysis using a phenomenological approach is carried out to answer the research question. The needs and expectations of villagers with regard to social workers in managing health issues were analyzed by looking into their local definition of health and the roles and responsibilities of medical social workers designed by institutions of national importance in India. The present study is based on data collected through yearlong fieldwork conducted in a rural village in Kerala, India. In-depth interviews were conducted with individuals from 20 households from a baseline survey with around 700 individuals across 150 households.

Principal Findings: People's perception of health shows that, in addition to the medical professionals like doctors and nurses, and other local health workers, there is a need to involve health workers who will be able to address the sociocultural determinants of health. In those people's understanding, illness is conceived by multiple causations; unless all causes are addressed, there remains a sense of incompleteness, and they continue in the search for better management. This is because one particular discipline or its professionals may not be fit to satisfy their perception of the disease and its causation.

Integrated Perspectives on Disaster Mental Health: Global Temperature Patterns, Preparedness, and Long-Term Recovery

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Mental health concerns continue to rise globally, driven not only by improved diagnosis and expanded access to services but also by broader contextual stressors, including environmental precarity and prolonged disruptions to daily life. This integrated study synthesizes global mental health trends and long-term disaster recovery research to highlight disaster mental health models that can strengthen community well-being even in non-disaster times.

Using data from 28 countries between 1990 and 2018, we observed strong associations between reported rates of anxiety ($r = 0.85$) and depression ($r = 0.86$) and increased temperature—a proxy for heightened disaster potential through drought, stronger storms, wildfires, and related events. Together, these patterns illustrate a clear global-to-local link between environmental instability and rising mental health concerns, highlighting the potential for escalating disaster and psychological vulnerability.

These broad population-level patterns extend to children and adolescents as well, who are not too young to experience significant and lasting mental health impacts following disasters. To understand long-term recovery trajectories, we analyzed post–Hurricane Katrina data. More than 30,000 youth ages 9–18, were screened annually from 2005 to 2015, using the Katrina Inspired Disaster Screening and Services (KIDSS) model. Over half met thresholds for posttraumatic stress symptoms in the early years, with rates gradually declining. Persistent symptoms were associated with loneliness, additional traumas, housing instability, and key demographic factors.

Despite clear need, mental health services often receive limited attention in disaster planning because of resource constraints, damaged infrastructure, and the prioritization of immediate physical needs. Strengthening public health messaging, enhancing early identification, and expanding flexible school- and community-based supports—particularly those delivered by social workers—are essential. A proactive, resilience-centered approach that incorporates modern technologies and lessons learned from prior disasters can help ensure sustained mental health support before, during, and long after major events.

Assessing the Impact of Traditional Community Support Systems in Alleviating Loneliness among Older Adults Residing in Zambian Care Homes.

Mr Osborn Mutapa[1]
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The impact of loneliness among older people living in care homes has become a globally challenging issue, compounded by social, and emotional isolation and diminishing community support. In Sub-Saharan countries, such as Zambia, care for older adults through Traditional Community Support Systems, family systems, community groupings, and religious institutions, has long been part of the care system for older people. In addition, the 2016 National Policy on Ageing in Zambia provides little direction on integrating Traditional Community Support Systems into care home settings. This study explored the experiences of older adults residing in Zambian Care Homes and the impact of Traditional Community Support Systems on alleviating loneliness. A descriptive qualitative research design was applied to conduct semi-structured interviews with ten older people, four community members with social connectedness to older people residing at the care home, and one Social Worker working at the care home. The study was conducted at Maramba Old Peoples Home in Livingstone, Zambia. The study was guided by two theoretical approaches, namely the Social Convoy Model and Socio-emotional Selectivity Theory. Both theoretical models emphasize the importance of emotionally meaningful relationships in old age. The study findings highlighted the prevalence of loneliness and the positive effects of integration of Traditional Community Support Systems among older people living in care home settings, however, the findings show how the prevailing socio-economic challenges have negatively affected. The study recommends that a standardized national ageing framework be operationalized for use in care homes and incorporate Traditional community Support Systems. It also recommends establishing care spaces within care homes to facilitate interactions between older people and their communities of origin and, finally, suggests a mixed-methods, futuristic survey to explore the applicability of Traditional Community Support Systems in future care homes.

Human needs, social work practice, Uganda, social work practice tools, Social work practice motivation

Dr Senkosi Moses Balyejjusa[1]
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"Social work practice is tasks based. Therefore, practitioners require both tools and motivation to carry it out as they solve clients' problems. In this paper, using qualitative data from a research project on the use of the concept of human needs during social work practice in Uganda, we argue that the concept of human needs is both a practice tool and motivational force for social work practice. As a practice tool, social work practitioners use it to carry out the four problem-solving tasks of social work practice, that is, assessment, goal setting/ developing intervention plans, resource allocation and termination of the helping process. As a practice motivational force, the concept of human needs energized social work practitioners to provide services to clients. The implication of this to social work practice is that social workers should have adequate knowledge of the concept of human needs since it is a major influence (tool and motivation) to social work practice. We conclude by arguing that the human needs concept is an enabler of social work practitioners to successfully engage in social work practice.

AI for Social Work: A Framework for Responsible Adoption (Based on Experiences from a Czech Pilot Project)

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Artificial intelligence is entering the field of social work in a similar way to how GPS entered the world of driving: it enables predictive risk assessments and the more efficient allocation of resources when working with large administrative records. However, this metaphor also highlights the key role of human expertise and accountability, as a flawed or outdated dataset can result in systemic errors and injustices. This paper presents the experiences of implementing an AI module in the social services record-keeping system in the Czech Republic. Based on these experiences, it formulates a framework for the responsible adoption of AI by social work organisations.

The paper aims to analytically describe the benefits and risks of the pilot deployment, and derive practical standards for governance, data handling and evaluation. The method employed was participatory co-design with social workers, students, and service users, as well as iterative testing and evaluation of prompts, and ongoing documentation of decisions and auditability of outputs. The tested functions include the systematisation of records, the generation of overviews and recommendations for procedures, and the provision of timely risk alerts.

The results identified (i) areas of immediate benefit (faster orientation in records and better preparedness for client contact), (ii) key risks (data quality, context transfer and potential bias) and (iii) conditions for safe operation, including clear roles and responsibilities, minimum data standards, rules for human review of outputs and evidence-based impact metrics (e.g. workload, time to intervention and trust). At the time of submission, the project had been shortlisted for the 2025 AI Awards.

The framework for implementing and evaluating AI tools in social work enables the use of predictive and generative functions while safeguarding professional autonomy, ethics and client rights. It can also be applied to education and service quality management.

Engaging Men in Social Services: Barriers, Opportunities, and Culturally Grounded Interventions in East Jerusalem

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This paper examines the challenges, barriers, and opportunities in developing gender-sensitive social work practices with men in Social Welfare Offices of East Jerusalem.
Although men play central roles as fathers, partners, and community members, their engagement with welfare and therapeutic services remains limited. Many men experience significant emotional, familial, and socioeconomic distress, yet they seldom seek help voluntarily. Instead, they often enter the welfare system through legal or coercive pathways such as probation services, domestic violence centers, or child protection processes.
Findings from four focus groups—conducted with social workers, community practitioners, and male service users—reveal multilayered barriers that inhibit men's participation in social services. These include structural barriers (limited service hours, lack of accessibility, female-dominated workforce), cultural and gender-related norms (traditional expectations of masculinity, stigma surrounding emotional vulnerability, internalized patriarchal beliefs), and context-specific challenges unique to East Jerusalem. The latter include political tension, chronic socioeconomic instability, restricted mobility, and profound mistrust toward state institutions. These factors shape men's reluctance to seek support and complicate the role of social workers operating within a contested sociopolitical space.
At the same time, the study identifies emerging shifts in men's openness toward redefined masculinities, emotional expression, and involvement in parenting, highlighting an important window for innovative intervention. Successful engagement strategies include persistent outreach, culturally attuned communication, transparent relationship building, and practical assistance that meets men "where they are." The findings emphasize the need for system-level adjustments: flexible service hours, dedicated programs for men, gender-sensitive professional training, and collaborative community platforms.
This work argues that reimagining social work with men is essential for promoting family resilience, strengthening community well-being, and creating equitable welfare services. It calls for the development of a comprehensive professional guide and regional training program, forming the basis for a transformative, culturally grounded practice with men in East Jerusalem.

Advancing Climate Justice through Community-Based Social Work: Insights from Drought-Prone Regions of India

Suresh Pathare[1]
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Climate change has emerged as a defining global challenge, intensifying social inequalities, livelihood insecurity, forced migration, and vulnerabilities among marginalized populations. In India, recurrent droughts and agrarian crises represent not only environmental hazards but profound social emergencies affecting rural livelihoods, food security, gender relations, child wellbeing, and community cohesion. This paper presents findings from an empirical study conducted in drought-prone rural communities of Maharashtra, examining the role of community-based social work practicein building resilience to climate-induced stress and socio-economic disruption.
Using a comparative village-level approach, the study analyses community-led interventions including participatory watershed development, water literacy, collective decision-making, and institutional strengthening. The findings demonstrate that villages with functional community institutions—such as self-help groups, watershed committees, youth collectives, and Gram Sabhas—were better able to mitigate drought impacts, reduce distress migration, prevent child labour, strengthen livelihoods, and enhance social protection for women and vulnerable households.
The paper highlights how integrated social work practice linking environmental resource management with livelihoods, governance, gender empowerment, and disaster preparedness, contributes to long-term resilience rather than short-term relief. These practices align closely with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 8 (Decent Work), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 13 (Climate Action). The study also reflects the principles of the IFSW Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, especially commitments to environmental sustainability, strengthening human relationships, and promoting social justice.
By conceptualizing drought as a recurring social emergency, the paper argues for a paradigm shift in social work—from reactive crisis response to proactive, resilience-oriented, and rights-based practice. The findings contribute practice-based evidence to global social work discourse on addressing climate crises and environmental disasters through participatory, community-centered approaches.

Strengthening Social Support Systems: Domestic adoption of children with special needs in China

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Background: In China's current adoption system, most of willing families are unable to adopt children, while a vast majority of children who are disabled and/or serious illnesses living in welfare institutions cannot be adopted domestically. The Chinese government has introduced policies and practices to promote special needs adoptions; however, these policies and measures have achieved little effect so far.

Aim: The aim of this study was to disclose the main reasons hindering Chinese families from adopting children with special needs, and to explore strategies to strengthen social support system in order to reduce these hindrances and promote more opportunities for permanent family placement of children with special needs.

Methods: A descriptive topics/social-sciences/qualitative-research qualitative study was adopted as basis for this study, which entailed thematic analysis of 5 focus group interviews with government officials and social workers. and 18 semi-structured interviews with parents.

Results: It was found that stereotypes about adoptable children and adoptive parents; little incentive to promote domestic special needs adoption among child welfare institutions; a lack of a transition system between foster care and adoption; and fragmented pre- and post-adoption services; along with concerns for the future social security of adults with disabilities and older adults without family caregivers simultaneously discourage Chinese families from adopting a child with special needs.

Conclusion: This study revealed that the lack of acceptance toward special needs adoption China is not simply the consequence of economic, cultural, ideological, or policy restrictions; rather, it is affected simultaneously by many factors embedded in the microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem. It is recommended that strengthening the social support mechanism for special needs adoption to match social cognition and cultural habits and constructing a platform for all stakeholders to support adoption, thereby achieving the best interests of children with special needs.

Hidden in Plain Sight: Foster Care, Trauma, and Lifelong Mental Health and Substance Use Outcomes

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Children and adolescents involved in foster care and alternative care systems are disproportionately exposed to cumulative trauma, social instability, and structural inequities that shape mental health and substance use outcomes across the lifespan. This workshop examines the long-term implications of foster care involvement through an intergenerational lens, exploring how early adversity, systemic disruption, and marginalization contribute to enduring mental health challenges and substance use disorders from childhood into adulthood.

Grounded in empirical research and informed by lived experience, the session integrates trauma-informed, intersectional, and rights-based perspectives to examine ethical dilemmas within child welfare systems, including issues of voice, agency, continuity of care, and the long-term consequences of fragmented services. Attention is given to how poverty, cultural displacement, and systemic disparities influence assessment, intervention planning, and outcomes for children and families involved in foster care. The workshop emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive and participatory approaches that recognize children and families as knowledge holders rather than passive recipients of care.

The session includes a brief interprofessional education (IPE) experiential learning activity using the “Lock-It” method. Participants will work in interdisciplinary small groups and receive a case scenario involving a child or adolescent aged 8 to 17 currently in foster care. Groups will initially discuss assessment and intervention strategies based on limited information. Additional contextual information, revealing hidden trauma histories, systemic barriers, and social disparities, will then be disclosed. Participants will reflect on how their understanding, assumptions, and proposed interventions shift after engaging with the child’s full context.

By bridging policy, practice, and lived experience, this workshop advances social care frameworks that strengthen families, safeguard vulnerable populations, and promote continuity of support across the lifespan. The session concludes with practice and policy recommendations to advance ethical, equitable, and trauma-responsive approaches within child welfare and social protection systems.

Notes on Capitalism, Imperialism, and the Ecological Question in Latin America from Selected Reinterpretations of Historical Materialism

Mr Alejandro Casas[1]
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Here is a careful and academically appropriate English translation of your text:

The proposal, framed within postdoctoral studies, seeks to address certain theoretical interconnections among the current configurations of capitalism, the question of imperialism, and the ecological crisis. To this end, it draws on selected reinterpretations from historical materialism and socio-environmental thought, with particular relevance for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

To achieve this, we propose to revisit some of the fundamental elements of the relationship between Marxism and environmentalism, based on theoretical perspectives and concepts that have renewed this field in recent years, such as “metabolic rift,” the crisis of capital’s “socio-metabolic system,” the “imperial mode of living,” and “new dependency,” among others.

This reflects an internal dialogue and production within the field of historical materialism, incorporating significant contributions from original Marxism, political ecology, and ecosocialism. These perspectives seek to account for particular features of dependent capitalism in our region, while also drawing from diverse socio-environmental struggles with post-capitalist and anti-imperialist horizons in Latin America and other regions of the world.

This process enriches, complicates, and diversifies the more classical framework of Marxism, freeing it from certain productivist and economistic deviations found in some approaches within the so-called Marxist tradition, and opening it to new conceptual and socio-historical determinations.

At the same time, it connects with ongoing discussions and dialogues with social struggles and utopian horizons that, despite their diversity of perspectives and meanings, share a critique of growing inequality and the attacks on labor and life more broadly, as well as neo-extractivism. These struggles advocate for the defense of the commons and of nature, buen vivir, and related principles, from a post-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Finally, connections between these issues and Latin American Social Work will also be outlined.

Between Micro-Practice and Collective Futures: Political Interventions in Refugee Social Work

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"Social work is defined as a human rights profession with a mandate to promote social justice (Staub-Bernasconi 2019; IFSW 2014). Yet, in restrictive migration regimes, practitioners face systemic barriers that constrain refugees' participation (Goebel i.E.; Hinger 2020). In Germany, people with a "toleration status" (Duldung) experience structural exclusion (Ataç et al. i.E), raising urgent questions about how social workers can enact their political role beyond individual casework.

This PhD study examines how social workers develop political strategies in everyday counselling with refugees under toleration status. Drawing on qualitative interviews and grounded theory, it identifies practices that transcend the dichotomy of micro-support and macro-advocacy. A particularly significant finding is an "intermediate level" (Langhoop i.E.) of engagement: practitioners act close to individual cases while simultaneously reshaping participation opportunities at a collective scale.

Beyond analysing these subtle forms of resistance, the project also asks: how can micro-practices of solidarity evolve into collective action—Harambee—that challenges exclusionary structures and builds shared futures? While grounded in refugee social work, these insights extend beyond this field by contributing to a broader understanding and theorisation of political social work. By making visible these everyday interventions, the study contributes to re-imagining political social work as a dissenting and justice-oriented activity.

This contribution addresses Sub-Theme 7: Social Movements, Political Social Work and Building Democratic Societies."

Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Issues on Indian Families: Social Work Interventions for Strengthening Family Resilience

Suresh Pathare[1]
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In India, the escalating effects of climate change—manifested through erratic monsoons, heatwaves, floods, droughts, and environmental degradation—are not only ecological concerns but social crises with deep implications for families. These disruptions have intensified livelihood insecurity, displacement, health risks, and intra-household stress, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized communities.

This paper examines how environmental challenges are reshaping family structures, roles, and coping capacities in diverse Indian settings, including rural, tribal, coastal, and urban low-income populations. It highlights the psychosocial and economic toll of climate-induced stressors on families and explores the critical role of social work in promoting adaptive capacities and resilience.

Drawing from fieldwork and practice-based insights in Maharashtra and other climate-affected regions of India, the paper presents models of social work interventions such as eco-psychosocial counseling, community preparedness, women-led sustainable livelihood programs, and child protection in disaster-prone zones. It underscores the importance of integrating environmental sensitivity into family-centered social work practice and the urgent need for policy advocacy and grassroots capacity-building.

The paper calls for an Indian eco-social work framework that foregrounds environmental justice, intergenerational equity, and family resilience, contributing to the larger Asia Pacific discourse on climate-responsive social work.

Paperwork over Practice in the South African Child Protection System: The Need for Caseload Reform

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Child protection in South Africa has long been characterized by unmanageable caseloads, escalating administrative workload, and chronic resource constraints, leaving social workers with little time for direct engagement with children and families. Although qualitative research has highlighted the strain placed on practitioners, there remains a lack of quantitative and mixed-methods evidence measuring how workload and caseload could contribute to job satisfaction. This study addresses this gap by examining how administrative burden, task demands, and caseloads affect direct practice and the wellbeing of child protection social workers.

Using a mixed-method sequential design, this pilot study examined workload among child protection social workers to identify a reasonable amount of cases for a full-time worker.

Qualitative data was collected via focus groups in the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape of South Africa (N= 12 and N=9, respectively) using a semi- structured interview schedule. This was followed up with quantitative data collection among child protection workers (N=66). The Child Welfare Employee Feedback Scale - Revised survey was distributed to four provinces using Qualtrics (Griffiths, Royse, Murphy, Jones, Culver, Turner, & Smajlovic; 2023).

Across both provinces studied in the qualitative study, social workers reported spending up most of their time on administrative tasks with limited time spent with clients and or families. They experienced average caseloads of 96.5 cases. Significant negative correlations were found in the quantitative study between caseload size and job satisfaction (p < .05). Job satisfaction varied significantly by province (Kruskal-Wallis H=11.147, p=.025) with an effect size of .45 (η^2 > 0.14), indicating a large effect size (Cohen, 2013). Findings reveal systemic challenges with excessive caseloads and administrative burdens that have a negative effect on job satisfaction which hinder child and family centered practice. Reforms are urgently needed to ensure ethical, sustainable working conditions and effective service delivery.

Critical reflections on public involvement in social services research - How has a parents\' research advisory group brought their lived experiences to social work research and navigated ethical dilemmas?

Dr Louise Roberts, Elaine Speyer[1]
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This presentation reflects on involvement of parents with experience of child protection processes in research. The Parents' Research Advisory Group at CASCADE, a UK children's social care research centre, brings lived experience and knowledge to multiple stages of social work research. Participatory approaches support parents to advise researchers, improving quality and relevance of research.

The group is distinctive. It involves parents who are involuntary recipients of social services in a standing group, providing regular influence and contributing across multiple projects. The group share valuable, seldom-heard perspectives. Their accumulated research expertise enables them to meaningfully participate in the design and direction of research.

Drawing from a recently published article co-authored by the group (Holland et al., 2024), the presentation outlines the development, benefits, and challenges experienced to date. Examples of the group's contribution, including research prioritisation; informing trauma-sensitive and ethically responsible methodologies; contextualising findings; and identifying how human rights considerations can be strengthened in research with families will be shared. We hope parent members will present alongside public involvement staff sharing reflections collectively.

We will emphasize the transformative potential of involving parents with lived experience in research, acknowledging ethical complexities inherent in such collaborations. At a time when participatory and power-sharing approaches are increasingly expected - but remain challenging to implement - the presentation offers practical insights into supporting and sustaining meaningful involvement. Reflections from parents underscore the importance of co-creation and lived experience in shaping research, policy, and practice.

Reference:
Holland, S., Cook, L., Harris, C., Liennard, S.-L., Malik, S., Price, Z., Rodrick, L., Speyer, E., Vaughan, R. and Williams, J., (2025) Critical reflections on public involvement in research: Involving involuntary recipients of social services to improve research quality. The British Journal of Social Work, 55(5), pp.2500–2518.

Experiences of and Resistance Against Everyday Racism: Roma Migrants and Social Work(ers) in Norway

Turid Misje[1]
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This paper addresses how Roma migrants in Norway are subjected to and experience both subtle and blatant forms of anti-Roma racism, as well as resistance against such racism. Its data derives from ethnographic fieldwork in Oslo over a period of one year, including participant observation and in-depth interviews with Roma migrants and social workers engaging with these migrants as well as analyses of legal documents and policy texts. The study demonstrates that the Roma are perceived as undesirable and unwelcome and are racialised in terms of being associated with crime, begging and littering in public places. I employ the concept of 'everyday racism' (Essed, 1991) to capture both experiences of racism and the macro-societal conditions that produce and shape such experiences. The paper first examines how racialised perceptions of Roma migrants manifest in public discourse, policies and legal documents in Norway. Next, the everyday experiences of racialisation and resistance among Roma migrants, including in encounters with the social service system, are explored. I subsequently ask how social workers encountering Roma migrants relate to and address such experiences and dynamics, engaging with the concepts of \'professional resistance\' (Strier and Bershtling, 2016) and \'antiracist social work\' (Dominelli, 2018). The analysis shows that while social workers become entangled in subtle processes of racialisation, they also actively challenge and resist overt racial discrimination through advocacy work and what I term micro-level acts of resistance, thus engaging in antiracist social work.

Labour Market Integration in Care Work: Reducing or Reproducing Inequalities for Migrant Women?

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Labour market integration is considered a key factor in supporting the social inclusion of migrants. In Germany, migrant women are significantly less integrated into the labour market compared to migrant men. This disparity cannot be explained by a lack of motivation; instead, it reflects structural, institutional, and personal barriers that are difficult to overcome. As a response, a range of programmes, implemented by social work professionals, has been developed to support women's entry into the labour market. Yet, it remains unclear whether such initiatives genuinely reduce inequalities or inadvertently reinforce them.
The aim of this presentation is to address the question: To what extent do labour-market integration programmes in care work reproduce or reduce social inequalities for migrant women?

As part of a bigger project, this presentation addresses results of a secondary analysis of fourteen qualitative interviews with women participating in a labour market integration project focused on care professions. Interviews were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). A feminist intersectional perspective was used as a conceptual framework.

Findings indicate that participants experience a strong sense of ambivalence: while employment offers opportunities for independence, belonging, and greater autonomy, it is also linked to stress. A central challenge is the burden of unpaid care work, which significantly contributes to emotional and physical strain. Experiences of both systemic and individual discrimination further intensify these pressures. Nevertheless, entering paid employment can enhance women's sense of freedom and social inclusion.

The results highlight the need for gender-sensitive, anti-racist support services. Moreover, the social work profession must continue to critically engage with the structural injustices surrounding unpaid care work and advocate for improved conditions for migrant women entering care-related labour markets."

Refugee-Inspired Ethical Guidelines from Kakuma: Toward Decolonising Research Practice

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Scholarship addressing research ethics with forcibly displaced communities has gained heightened attention in the recent past. While critical, this scholarship has remained largely theoretical and has not included the voices of those who face forced displacement. This manuscript contributes to a more comprehensive discussion on ethical research with refugees and forcibly displaced populations by providing research recommendations from refugee research participants in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Based on focus group discussions in Kakuma Refugee Camp, this article offers researchers practical refugee-inspired recommendations when working in contexts of forced displacement. The paper categorizes these research recommendations into three categories: (a) pre-research, (b) data-collection, and (c) post-research. By framing the analysis in and advocating for a decolonising research ethics prism, we illustrate the broad implications for maintaining the holistic well-being of research participants in forcibly displaced contexts.

Trauma-Informed, Culturally Based Intervention: Integration of Neuroscience and Social Work in Supporting Refugees

Dr. Nimo Bokore[1]
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"In recent years, trauma-informed and culturally based have become buzzwords used across various fields without clear definitions of what they truly mean. As a survivor of war and traumatic experiences with extensive training in trauma intervention, I recognize the challenges of using these terms without substantial content. In my recent book, I explained how to guide social work students from superficial use of these terms to a deeper understanding of trauma, culturally based meaning-making processes, and a genuine commitment to improving survivors' well-being.

With the increase in wars and displacement (both natural and man-made), my work provides multiple benefits for survivors and service providers. First, it improves the knowledge of trauma and the healing process among service providers, leading to better practice outcomes. Second, my work introduces social workers to understanding the neurobiology of trauma; it explains the changes occurring in the brain and body as a result of traumatic experiences and healing processes. This knowledge enables social workers to plan and implement interventions that mitigate the long-lasting effects of trauma, which can cause mental and physical health issues.

At this conference, I will present some of my work, including a step-by-step, proactive, collaborative, and evidence-based clinical intervention.

The silence of stones has no height: early childhood in UNICEF's discourse

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This research examined the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) discourse on early childhood, which, under the guise of equal rights, imposes unequal treatment on children in different nations. We analysed the presence of early childhood in international agendas as a discursive and political strategy to combat poverty adopted by UNICEF, demonstrating why it takes different forms depending on the socioeconomic context. The study is based on historical-dialectical materialism and a qualitative approach. The corpus brings together 104 UNICEF documents (1972-2023) submitted to thematic content analysis focused on key content, discursive strategy, and silences. Since 1973, early childhood has been included in the Annual Reports, linked to nutrition, drinking water and basic education; after 1978, it became a permanent agenda item, moving from specific survival actions to a structured global agenda. The agency\'s discourse follows changes in the economic scenario: in the 1980s, comprehensive primary care was compressed into low-cost interventions; in the 1990s, with neoliberalism and the 1989 Convention, the grammar of rights emerged, linked to the paradigm of human capital and social investment; between 2000 and 2015, the MDGs and SDGs repackaged this logic in terms of cost-effectiveness metrics and promises of high economic returns. Central countries are guided to expand universal services and gender equality, while peripheries receive focused packages anchored in return indicators, reinforcing selectivity and dependence. At all stages, neuroscientific arguments and cost-benefit analyses transform care-affection into a market asset, deepening the financialisation of social reproduction. It is concluded that UNICEF\'s universalist discourse operates as an ideological cog in the capital machine: it legitimises targeted policies in peripheral countries, preserving hierarchies, while allowing for specific rights achievements. By articulating early childhood and social investment, this research fills an academic gap, offering subsidies for the formulation of truly universal and socially just policies.

Organisational Climate and Job Performance of Social Workers in Singapore

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"Facilitating the job performance of frontline social workers to sustain quality services to clients in an ever-changing and dynamic environment has been an ongoing concern for supervisors, social work administrators, and policymakers. This study considers the underlying relationships between organisational climate and job performance of frontline social workers in Singapore.

An embedded mixed methods research design was undertaken to test a theoretical model, the organisational climate and performance (OCaP) model. The OCaP model encompasses a direct relationship between organisational climate and job performance, with variables of self-efficacy, organisational commitment, and reduction in job stressors as mediators.

Using data from a cross-sectional quantitative survey with social work practitioners (N = 300), psychometrically sound instruments were used to measure the independent, mediating, and outcome variables. Following in-depth interviews with social work practitioners (n = 20), thematic analysis (TA) was used to draw insights into the relationship between the variables from the qualitative data.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) revealed that the OCaP model was a better fit to the data than the independence model, which posited only direct relationships between variables. The indirect relationships between organisational climate and job performance with variables of self-efficacy, reduction in job stressors, and organisational commitment as mediators were significant. The direct relationship between organisational climate and job performance was not significant. An additional path between the variables, reduction of job stressors and self-efficacy was found significant. The qualitative findings supported the mediating pathways in the OCaP model.

The study’s findings highlight the critical role played by organisations in proactively building self-efficacy, commitment to the work team, and addressing job stressors of social workers so they can better build their competencies to fulfil their commitments to clients."

The Somali Transnational Collaborative Project (STCP): Capacity Building (CB) Through Social Work Education

Dr. Nimo Bokore[1]
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Social work has the tools necessary to support individuals, groups, and communities by recognizing and addressing their needs. At the beginning of this project, we understood that social work as a profession is relatively new to African countries, with many of its contemporary theories adapted from the West. We started our collaborative project in the mid-2000s, believing that social work in Somaliland could help foster community growth in this breakaway nation. The project included developing a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program, which was launched in 2008, and a Master of Social Work (MSW) program that is currently in progress, along with research and capacity-building training for faculty at the University of Hargeisa School of Social Work. Since 2020, we have conducted qualitative research and short surveys focusing on social work\'s role in Somaliland, graduates\' employment prospects, and the advantages of indigenizing education while expanding to the MSW level. Our findings highlighted the contributions of social work education and practice in addressing issues such as poverty, religion, gender-related challenges, disability rights, and the care of children and the elderly. Additionally, our results emphasized the need for a graduate-level education to tackle concerns like mental health and policy development. Despite the region’s economic challenges and the fact that social work remains a relatively unfamiliar discipline rooted in Western knowledge, we found that social work education and practice have positively contributed to the overall well-being and capacity-building of the local population.

At this conference, I will present the work we, as a committee, did to establish a BSW and MSW program in Somaliland.

Navigating Barriers: Examining the Challenges Faced by Social Workers in Addressing the Social Needs of Looked After Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People in Scotland

Mr Akeem Babatunde[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom

"In the context of global mobility and the ongoing refugee crisis, social workers are increasingly tasked with supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) -a population characterised by significant vulnerabilities resulting from trauma, legal uncertainty, and cultural dislocation. This study examines the experiences of eighteen social workers across Scottish local authorities who work with UASC, revealing the challenges and ethical tensions they encounter in practice. The study critically examines how social workers navigate these complexities while striving to meet the social needs of UASC within a constrained and often contradictory policy environment.
Guided by critical social work theory, the study examines how power dynamics, social inequalities, and systemic issues underlie the challenges confronted by practitioners. It utilises intersectionality theory to analyse how overlapping identities, such as race, age, immigration status, and religion, compound marginalisation and shape both the needs of UASC and the responses of social workers. Findings from in-depth qualitative interviews reveal that social workers face significant challenges, including limited resources, restrictive immigration policies, language and cultural barriers, and emotional burnout. Despite these constraints, many practitioners demonstrate resilience, creativity, and a commitment to social justice, often advocating for the rights of UASC in hostile environments. The study highlights the importance of relational practice, cultural humility, and trauma-informed approaches, while also exposing the tensions between professional ethics and institutional mandates.
This research contributes to the conference theme, “Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges,” by situating the Scottish experience within broader global dynamics of migration and displacement. It calls for transnational collaboration, inclusive policy reform, and renewed commitment to shared responsibility in addressing the needs of displaced children. In the spirit of Harambee - pulling together in unity, this study urges social workers, academics, and policymakers to co-create sustainable futures rooted in equity, compassion, and collective action."

Exploring Counter-narratives and a Global Majority Praxis of Leadership for Social Work

Dr Lace Jackson[1]
[1]The Open University And University Of Bedfordshire, , United Kingdom
This presentation will present findings of a Global Majority Leadership Praxis from primary research which explored the semi-structured interview narratives of 35 Global Majority (GM) Leaders when attaining, practising, and experiencing leadership in organisations within the UK. The term Global Majority used in this paper, acknowledges that 'global majority groups are neither minorities numerically nor subordinate on the worldwide stage or within the urban context of western countries,' (Portelli & amp; Campbell-Stephens, 2009:1). Drawing on critical race theory, the author shines a light on contextual power structures and organisational genres within Eurocentric societies. Using a qualitative-interpretive research strategy and narrative analysis, this paper illuminates their lived experience of leadership collected, over three years between 2017-2020 and discusses the importance of including the voices of those marginalised in a shared understanding of social work leadership. Seven emancipatory leadership practices were found amongst this group which have the potential to contribute to critical organisation and leadership literature.

The overarching contribution of this research to the small body of knowledge lies in the unique and rich insight into the fine-grained detail of the leadership experience and construction of identity of those from a global majority perspective. It problematises the need for social work leadership, theory and practice to consider the complex experience and practice of Global Majority leaders and, in this case, specifically Global Majority Social Work leaders. The research findings emphasises the need and consideration of Social Work leadership and social work education to adopt Responsible, Resilient, Relational, Benevolent and Faith-based leadership practices of Global Majority leaders to reduce a genre of organisational horror and disconnection pertaining not only to this group but to those in receipt of services.

Ethical Crisis Response and Digital Integration: Emergency Mental Health Service Utilization Among Homeless and Crisis-Affected Populations

Prof Rachel Stankus[1]
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This study examines emergency mental health service utilization among individuals experiencing homelessness and/or a mental health crisis in Dallas, Texas, with emphasis on ethical crisis response and the potential for digital mental health integration. People in a mental health crisis disproportionately rely on law enforcement and emergency departments due to systemic barriers, limited outpatient access, and shelter restrictions. These reactive models often fail to deliver sustained care and raise ethical concerns around autonomy, coercion, and fragmentation.

A mixed methods design addressed three aims: (1) identify patterns and predictors of emergency service use through analysis of 911 call volume, environmental factors (e.g., shelter accessibility, time of day), and diversion rates; (2) examine ethical and operational dimensions of law enforcement-led interventions versus mobile crisis units; and (3) evaluate system-level interventions, including feasibility of shelter-based digital mental health services such as telehealth and coordinated care. Quantitative data included 1,215 mental health-related service calls logged between July and September 2025 across Dallas police divisions (CH1–CH7) and crisis response teams.

Police divisions managed over 70% of responses, while crisis teams accounted for less than 30%, confirming law enforcement's dominant role. Referral sources were largely system-driven: 66% of calls were self-assigned by crisis teams and 32% dispatched by police, with minimal direct access or self-referral. Disposition outcomes revealed fragmentation: 50% were unable to locate, 24% disregarded, 10% refused assessment, and 9% received police coverage without services. Only 0.6% of cases were diverted from ER/hospital. Just 4% of calls occurred at night, suggesting underreporting or inaccessibility during overnight hours.

Findings highlight critical gaps in ethical crisis response. Results support shelter-based, technology-enabled interventions to reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments. This research advances digital social work by advocating scalable, trauma-informed, community-centered models that promote sustained mental health support for homeless and crisis-affected populations."

Advancing transdisciplinary experiential education: A partnership for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

Dr Julie Drolet[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Many professionals are being called upon to work in collaborative teams to address planetary health and the complex interactions between environmental, social, economic, and health factors. This presentation will discuss the process in developing a transdisciplinary experiential learning partnership to bridge the gap between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Transdisciplinarity requires merging divergent knowledge bases and value systems to create a new understanding of an issue or challenge and its potential solutions. It is increasingly recognized that multifaceted problems such as climate change, disasters, and sustainable development require transdisciplinary solutions. Experiential learning (EL) is critical for developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to navigate an increasingly complex world. However, there are significant structural and systemic challenges for students to access experiential learning. We need to expand and enhance equitable pathways by reducing barriers, decolonizing experiential learning, creating hands-on approaches that integrate action and reflection and connect trainees with community partners. This is urgent given complex global challenges posed by climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). This presentation will discuss the Advancing Transdisciplinary Experiential Learning (ATEL) partnership that brings together academic, public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to support innovative transdisciplinary approaches to build an effective research training experience for students and postdoctoral researchers, mobilize innovative CCA practices, and enhance DRR in communities via EL in curricular and co-curricular contexts. The partnership aims to develop a continuum of transdisciplinary EL activities that span a variety of methods and approaches. These will include work-integrated learning, creative arts and performance practices, land-based and nature-based learning, media communication, digital storytelling, case study analyses, community-based research, art-based research, and more. Implications for social work research and education will be discussed.

From Evidence to Action: Co-Designing STRETCH Nurture, a Community-Led Integrated Early Childhood Development Intervention in a Refugee Settlement

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Humanitarian responses to early childhood development (ECD) in refugee settings are often fragmented, externally driven, and short-term, limiting their relevance and sustainability. This paper presents the co-design and early implementation of STRETCH Nurture (Twubakane), a community-led, integrated ECD intervention developed in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda, through the STRETCH (Strengthening Research and Evaluation Capacity for Evidence-Driven Policies and Programmes to Improve Refugee Child Wellbeing in Africa) project.

STRETCH Nurture was developed through a participatory, evidence-driven co-design process involving refugee caregivers, community researchers, service providers, and local leaders. Building on baseline mixed-methods research and iterative community engagement, the intervention integrates four interlinked domains of the Nurturing Care Framework: responsive caregiving, early learning, nutrition, and child safety and protection. Central to the model is refugee leadership, operationalised through a Community Implementation Team (twubakane), peer caregiving groups, and locally embedded learning and support structures.

Early implementation experiences demonstrate how community-anchored approaches can transform ECD delivery from externally imposed services to collective caregiving systems rooted in local knowledge, social support, and shared responsibility. STRETCH Nurture strengthens caregiver agency, social cohesion, and problem-solving capacity while addressing structural constraints such as food insecurity, and caregiver distress. Rather than treating refugee communities as beneficiaries, the intervention positions them as co-producers of child wellbeing.

The paper contributes to social work and social development debates by illustrating how co-design, relational practice, and community leadership can support sustainable shared futures for refugee children and families. It argues for a shift from project-based humanitarian programming toward long-term, community-owned ECD systems that align evidence, practice, and social development goals.

School social worker's perceptions of the challenges to implementing bullying prevention programs

Prof. Antoinette Farmer[1]
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Bullying in schools is a global phenomenon and is considered a public health issue. Olweus (1999) defines bullying as a situation in which a student, referred to as the perpetrator, intentionally causes physical, verbal, or mental harm to another student, referred to as the victim. As a result of being bullied, students may experience depression, anxiety, or avoid going to school.

There are effective bullying prevention programs, such as STOMP Out Bullying, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, and Kiva. Many of these programs are being implemented in schools across the globe and are expected to reduce bullying and produce a safe and inclusive environment (Allen et al., 2012). The implementation of these programs may vary across school districts, within school districts within a state, and within countries. Individuals responsible for implementing these programs may vary as well. For example, in some schools, it may be the student's teacher; in others, it may be the school social worker.

Research on school social workers' perceptions of the implementation of bullying prevention programs is sparse. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to assess school social workers' perceptions of the challenges to the implementation of bullying prevention programs in their schools.

The membership of the School Social Work Association of America (n =3542) was administered a survey consisting of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Of these, 202 completed the survey. Hence, the response rate was .06.

A thematic analysis was conducted. Four themes emerged from the data. The challenges were a lack of buy-in from teachers, students had varying definitions of bullying behavior, time constraints when it came to implementing the intervention, and implementing the program with fidelity. To improve the implementation of the intervention, respondents recommended better training, enhancing the buy-in from teachers, support from administration, and additional resources.

Structural Determinants of Youth Health and Climate Justice: An Equity-Oriented Systems Study in Alberta, Canada

Dr Julie Drolet[1]
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Climate change is deepening existing health inequities among youth, who face a convergence of environmental, social, and institutional vulnerabilities. Alberta is one of Canada's fastest-warming provinces, such as recent floods, wildfires, and heat events have underscored how systemic disparities magnify exposure and limit adaptive capacity. Young people, particularly those from equity-deserving communities, are among the most affected yet the least represented in policy and governance processes. Despite policy commitments to equity and inclusion, little is known about how structural determinants interact with identity-based factors to shape health outcomes. This study investigates how these multi-level systems intersect to influence youth health and climate justice in Alberta. This qualitative, multi-phase study was guided by a Critical Systems Thinking (CST) and intersectionality framework situated within a social constructivist paradigm. Methods included an equity-oriented policy analysis of international and government documents using the PROGRESS Plus framework to assess how youth, equity, and inclusion were represented. A policy Delphi was used to identify and prioritize actions for embedding youth voices in policy development. Interviews and focus groups with youth aged 15–24 examined lived experiences of climate-related health challenges, barriers to adaptation, and actionable strategies for equitable adaptation. Policy analysis revealed that youth are often treated as a homogenous group, with minimal attention to intersectional identities such as race, disability, or income. Findings demonstrate that youth health inequities are produced and maintained through the dynamic interplay of structural and ecological systems. Addressing these inequities requires upstream, systems-level interventions that embed health equity and youth participation within climate adaptation frameworks. The presentation will discuss the importance of intersectional, equity-oriented policy design to ensure that climate adaptation supports youth as key partners in building sustainable, just, and climate-resilient futures.

We fled gunfire to protect our children: Reimagining child protection in Australia for South Sudanese communities

Mrs Caroline Speirs[1]
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Drawing on participants across Australia and Uganda, this research reimagines the future of Australian child protection systems by beginning with the cultural strengths families bring rather than the assumptions placed upon them. South Sudanese community leaders involved in the research emphasise that protection means different things in different contexts, describing safety as a collective responsibility rooted in belonging reciprocity and trust. These insights challenge Western interpretations of risk and care and open space for reimagining child protection in Australia in ways that centre cultural knowledge and community-defined understandings of responsibility.

An action research methodology guided data collection across Australia and Uganda with active leadership from South Sudanese communities. 97 participants contributed through 36 interviews and 10 focus groups. Their accounts show how long histories of colonisation displacement intersect with Australia's own colonial structures which continue to influence how families are understood and how child protection decisions are made.

Reimagining guided the analytical process using creative methods such as marbling and mixed media as tools of inquiry to explore relational complexity and the ways ideas blend diverge and reform. Crystallisation supported this approach by holding multiple truths and avoiding simplified interpretations of diverse community experience.

Findings foreground words of wisdom offered by community members as guiding principles for culturally responsive practice. In dialogue with Critical Whiteness Theory and postcolonial perspectives the research shows how Western norms shape knowledge relationships and decision making in Australian child welfare. The research argues that reimagining the future of child protection requires a relational and culturally grounded approach built through partnership with communities. It positions culturally responsive practice as ongoing collaborative and always under construction rather than emerging from fixed policy or singular models.

Implementation outcomes of a RCT on Solution-focused brief interventions for substance use in Chilean primary care.

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Substance use is a major biopsychosocial challenge in Chile, addressed in primary care through mental health programs, involving psychologists and social workers. Evidence on the effectiveness of brief interventions for substance use remains inconclusive, and the only Chilean randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a very brief intervention reported unfavorable results. Despite this, motivational approaches are widely used in Chilean primary care. Solution-Focused Brief Interventions (SFBI) emphasize a strengths-based, client-centered approach. This study reports implementation outcomes of an ongoing RCT (osf.io/875pj) comparing a three-session SFBI with a single-session brief counseling as usual care for individuals with alcohol and drug use in Primary Health Clinics (PHCs). Participant recruitment began in January 2025 using ASSIST screening, with a target of 320 participants; 51 clients are currently enrolled (October 30, 2025). Fifty practitioners from 10 PHCs were previously trained, with 44 still active. To ensure fidelity of SFBI implementation, group technical supervision meetings are held twice a month for all practitioners, and audio-recorded sessions, are assessed with a fidelity check-list. This 15-item instrument has shown an overall adherence of 80%, five items above 95%, and four below 80%. An implementation evaluation, using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research, identified facilitators, such as clear process flows, strong communication, team commitment, and ongoing research team support. Barriers included a lack of ASSIST integration among the clinic teams, leadership communication gaps, practitioner turnover, and limited project awareness among staff who were not trained. These findings will inform strategies to enhance the feasibility and sustainability of SFBI in Chilean primary care for future scaling as public policy. The results will also contribute to identifying facilitators and barriers that social work researchers might encounter in future RCTs involving manualized clinical interventions.

Examining Service Navigation in Neurodivergence: A Mixed Method Study

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Service navigation (finding and accessing needed services) is a critical challenge for many neurodivergent individuals and their supporters/families. Insufficient services, restrictive funding requirements, long wait times, a lack of specialized and affordable service providers all limit access to needed support. Overall, the system of support is fragmented and difficult to navigate, often leaving individuals and families impeded in finding requisite support in daily life.

This study sought to better understand service navigation needs and processes across relevant sectors, including health, education, community access and mental health. Recommendations were sought regarding desired components for improved service navigation.

Emerging from a Community-Based Participatory Research approach, a mixed-methods design was implemented comprising group interviews with individuals with lived experiences, and supporters/caregivers. A survey was administered to service providers offering health and community services. Data elicitation addressed service navigation experiences and needs in the autism community as well as invited co-designed recommendations for navigation system improvement. Data was collected in Alberta, Canada.

A total of 17 neurodivergent individuals and 97 family members/supporters were interviewed. Also, a survey was administered to 136 service providers. Participants identified a lack of awareness about, and availability of, services to address individual and family support needs. Requirements to access services were deemed to be overly restrictive, and many experienced uncertainty about existing services and their ‘fit’ to personal and family needs. In some cases, participants described not knowing what to ask of service providers/systems. Overall, findings amplified the process of accessing and navigating services to be a complex journey, with diverse and convoluted service and resource pathways and barriers. Neurodivergent individuals and their supporters were largely left to find services by themselves.

Participants offered recommendations for a co-designed system of streamlined navigational supports to improve timely access to services. Detailed elements of this approach, and recommendations will be described.

The Socioeconomic Impact of Psychiatric Care on Individuals Diagnosed with Mental Illness and their Caregivers in Ghana.

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This study explores the socio-economic impact of mental illness on individuals and their caregivers in Ghana, a context where poverty, stigma, and discrimination exacerbate the challenges of living with psychiatric conditions. Mental illness remains a critical yet under-researched public health issue in Ghana, often overshadowed by other health priorities. To capture the lived realities behind these statistics, we adopt a qualitative approach grounded in grassroots narratives, drawing on first-hand accounts from 12 individuals receiving psychiatric care and 7 caregivers. Including caregivers addresses a significant research gap, as their experiences—marked by financial strain, social isolation, and pervasive stigma—have received little scholarly attention in Ghana and across Africa. By amplifying these voices, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between mental health and socio-economic vulnerability. We conclude by offering actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening government support systems and enhancing social work practice to promote mental health equity in Ghana and the Global South.

Exploring the Effectiveness of Virtual Simulation-Based Learning in Enhancing Clinical Skills in Social Work Education

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Simulation-based learning (SBL) effectively teaches competency-based skills in social work education, allowing students to practice, reflect, and process their knowledge to improve practice. This study examined the use of SBL to support clinical practice development for both live (online) and virtual gaming simulation (VGS) experiences to enhance responses to childhood experiences of intimate partner violence (CEIPV). 68 students were recruited from a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) course between 2020 and 2024. Participants engaged in either two live (online) simulated client scenarios (SCS) (n = 52) or two live (online) SCS with an additional VGS experience (n = 16) containing the same scenarios with opportunities to practice different responses and observe best practices. Data in the form of reflective practice and observationally coded evaluations of clinical competency performance was gathered before and after the course. Students significantly improved their skills when practicing with SCS, and preliminary evidence suggests better outcomes when students practiced the scenario through VGS. Using both live and virtual SBL is a promising approach to enhancing social work competence. This presentation will involve an introduction to the pedagogy of simulation, an opportunity to experience the virtual gaming simulation, description of study and findings and implications for social work education will be discussed.

From Land Degradation to Community Resilience: How Holistic Land Management Strengthens Livelihoods, Builds Social Cohesion, and Enhances Climate Adaptation.

Miss I Hsuan Tsai[1]
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In West Pokot, Kenya, pastoralism has long served as the primary livelihood for local communities. However, increasing access to education, healthcare, and urban infrastructure has gradually shifted lifestyles from nomadic to sedentary, reshaping traditional grazing systems. Declining mobility and limited access to pasture and water have intensified resource competition, contributing to recurring conflicts among neighboring groups, particularly along the Pokot–Karamojong and Pokot–Turkana–Marakwet borders.

This study examines community-based holistic grazing as a strategy for ecological restoration and socioeconomic strengthening. Five community members were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the impacts and observable changes resulting from the implementation of the grazing plan. The qualitative analysis revealed that the combination of planned grazing areas, well-coordinated rotational systems, and portable livestock night enclosures played a critical role in landscape recovery. Controlled trampling reduced soil compaction, while manure deposition enhanced soil fertility, thereby accelerating rangeland regeneration.

Ecological and livelihood improvements became noticeable within the first year of implementation, with the most substantial transformations emerging during the second year. Regenerated rangelands significantly reduced the need for long-distance cattle movement, lowering exposure to conflict-prone zones and minimizing livestock losses. Improved forage availability supported faster weight gain and higher reproductive rates among cattle, resulting in increased household economic returns and strengthening overall community resilience.

The findings highlight the potential of integrated land and herd management to simultaneously advance ecological restoration, improve livelihoods, promote social cohesion, and reduce conflict in pastoral communities.

Learning from International Models: Advancing Health Equity Through Canada\'s National School Meal Program

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"Canada\'s recently implemented national school meal program presents an opportunity to advance health equity by incorporating lessons from established international models. This analysis examines school meal programs in South Korea and the United States through the Getting to Equity framework to identify strategies that promote equitable access to nutrition and address broader social determinants of health.

South Korea\'s universal school meal program provides free, nutritious meals to all students, effectively eliminating stigma and reducing health disparities while fostering inclusive educational environments. The program\'s comprehensive approach addresses nutritional needs while supporting broader educational and social objectives. In contrast, the United States operates a selective model but has implemented innovative initiatives such as the Community Eligibility Provision, which reduces administrative barriers and expands access in high-need communities.

Using the Getting to Equity framework, this study identifies four critical strategies for promoting health equity through school meal programs: ensuring universal access, reducing participation barriers, enhancing social and economic resources, and building community capacity. These strategies extend beyond basic nutrition provision to address systemic inequities that affect child development and educational outcomes.

Analysis reveals that universal programs demonstrate superior outcomes in reducing food insecurity, improving academic performance, and promoting social cohesion compared to selective models. Key factors contributing to program success include robust nutritional standards, accommodation of diverse dietary needs, community engagement, and integration with broader health and education initiatives.

This paper provides evidence-based recommendations for optimizing Canada\'s national school meal program, emphasizing the adoption of universal access principles, implementation of comprehensive nutritional standards, and development of inclusive policies that address cultural and dietary diversity. By incorporating these international best practices, Canada can effectively combat child food insecurity, enhance health equity outcomes, and contribute to improved long-term educational and socioeconomic development for all children, regardless of background or circumstances."

Social Intrapreneurship in social work: Empowering Minority Communities and Promoting Their Community Involvement

Prof Hani Nouman[1]
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"While the importance of social intrapreneurship in social work is recognized, the question of how it empowers minority communities has remained virtually unexplored. To address this gap, the current study explores the practices adopted of social workers acting as social intrapreneurs within public sector organizations – those who create and implement social initiative services or programs within their workplaces – and examines how their intrapreneurial efforts contributes to the empowerment of minority communities and to promote social change.

The study included 28 in-depth interviews with social workers who function as social intrapreneurs within public sector organizations serving Arab minority communities in Israel.

The analysis revealed that culturally adapted and community-based practices adopted by social workers who are engaged in social intrapreneurship foster personal empowerment, as evidenced by increased self-esteem, self-confidence, greater control over decision-making processes, and a stronger sense of belonging to the community. Additionally, these practices contribute to community empowerment by enhancing local capacities.

Moreover, our findings highlight that personal and community empowerment facilitated a transformative process in which clients shifted from “service receivers” to “service providers” actively engaged in social change processes. These novel findings highlight the significant potential of social intrapreneurship in fostering empowerment and community involvement within minority communities and, furthermore, emphasize the need for supportive policies to realize this potential.

Integrating Social Protection Approaches to Address Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs)

Dr. Mary Mutisya[1]
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Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) occupy approximately 80% of the country's landmass and are home to nearly a third of the population, yet they account for a disproportionate share of national poverty and vulnerability. Recurrent droughts, climate variability, livelihood fragility, and long-standing marginalisation have resulted in persistently high poverty rates, food insecurity, and reliance on humanitarian assistance in these regions. In response, social protection has become a central pillar of national and county-level strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience. However, evidence suggests that the impact of social protection interventions in ASALs is often constrained by fragmented policy frameworks, parallel programme implementation, and limited alignment with local social and ecological realities. This paper examines how integrating social protection approaches can more effectively address poverty and vulnerability in Kenya's ASALs from a social work–informed perspective. Using a desktop review of peer-reviewed literature, government policies, and development partner reports, the study analyses the scope, design, and implementation of key social protection interventions, including cash transfers, adaptive safety nets, and livelihood support programmes. Guided by social protection theory, vulnerability and resilience frameworks, and social work principles of social justice, participation, and human rights, the paper highlights gaps in coordination, targeting, and sustainability. The analysis demonstrates that integrated, context-responsive social protection approaches—linking policy coherence, cross-sectoral coordination, and community participation—offer greater potential to mitigate poverty, reduce vulnerability, and enhance resilience in ASAL settings. The paper contributes to scholarly and practice-oriented discussions on strengthening social protection systems in fragile environments and provides a foundation for advancing inclusive and sustainable social work interventions in Kenya's ASAL regions.

Global Migration Governance: An Expression of the Regulation of the World Labor Force?

Mrs Ariane De Paiva[1]
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Here's a precise English translation of your text:

To understand the diversity of contemporary human displacements, it is necessary to situate them within the structural dynamics of global capitalist relations. Contemporary international migration flows involve multiple determinants such as economic crises, climate and environmental issues, hunger and poverty, geopolitical and diplomatic disputes between states, as well as ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts—products of new forms of expropriation and violent economic and political struggles across the globe.

However, there are many controversies regarding international protection for migrants and their different migration categories. International treaties and domestic state laws, based on the principle of sovereignty, legitimize the regulation of mobility and create different categories for migratory "status," with migration and citizenship policies that limit regular access to territories. Depending on political, economic, ideological, and cultural interests, categories are constructed around who "deserves protection" and who does not, distinguishing between eligible migrants and irregular migrants, which produces exclusionary processes and the criminalization of certain groups. Consequently, there is a growing number of human smuggling cases, migrant deaths of all ages during crossings, and various forms of exploitation and violence.

This work aims to critique the political-legal construction of migration categories within the international system, drawing on Marxist theoretical frameworks to help understand the international hegemonic order that governs labor control and security practices through so-called migration governance. Migration categories are constantly contested and are permeated by markers of class, gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, and other factors that structure forms of oppression and exploitation (or overexploitation) in unequal power relations—both nationally and internationally—embedded in global capitalist accumulation, imperialist forms of domination, and the struggles and organizations of resistance.

Between the Democratization of Access and the Reproduction of Inequalities: Quota Policies and Cultural Capital in Brazilian Higher Education

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Here's a precise English translation of your text:

The state of Rio de Janeiro has stood out as a pioneer in institutionalizing quota policies in Brazilian higher education by passing legislation that reserved spots for students from public schools, Black and mixed-race individuals, and people with disabilities, particularly at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and the North Fluminense State University (UENF). These initiatives, implemented from the 2000s onward, marked fundamental milestones in the process of democratizing access to public universities, serving as a reference for other higher education institutions in the country. The experience in Rio de Janeiro contributed to consolidating the national debate on affirmative action, culminating in the approval of the Quota Law (Law No. 12,711/2012), which expanded access for historically excluded groups to federal universities.

Alongside quota policies, other programs and institutional mechanisms have been implemented to broaden enrollment and support the retention of low-income students in higher education. Notable examples include the National High School Exam (ENEM), the Unified Selection System (SiSU), the University for All Program (Prouni), the Student Financing Fund (FIES), and the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES). Together, these policies have contributed to diversifying the socioeconomic and racial profile of the university student body.

However, in light of the theoretical contributions of Bourdieu and Passeron, it is evident that the educational system continues to be shaped by mechanisms that reproduce social inequalities through the valorization of the cultural capital of dominant classes. Even with expanded access, students from popular classes face symbolic, economic, and institutional obstacles that compromise their retention and academic performance. While quota policies represent progress in democratizing higher education, their effectiveness depends on strengthening student retention policies and addressing the structural logics of social reproduction that have historically shaped the Brazilian educational field.

The Impact of Climate Change on Persons with Disabilities in Ghana

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Climate change poses a high risk for vulnerable populations globally, yet persons with disabilities in Ghana experience disproportionately severe impacts due to intersecting socioeconomic, environmental, and structural inequalities. Evidence shows that individuals with disabilities face heightened exposure to climate related hazards—including floods, droughts, heatwaves, and coastal erosion—because of limited access to early warning systems, inadequate mobility and evacuation support, and persistent exclusion from national adaptation planning. Despite this elevated vulnerability, disability inclusion remains insufficiently embedded within Ghana's climate policies, data systems, and reporting frameworks. During climate related disasters, persons with disabilities frequently encounter barriers to accessible communication, emergency response, and recovery assistance, resulting in preventable harm and loss of life.

Emerging inclusive resilience initiatives, such as those supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), demonstrate the potential of disability responsive interventions to strengthen adaptive capacity, enhance livelihoods, and promote equitable participation in environmental governance. This presentation employs videography as both a participatory research method and an advocacy tool to document and amplify the lived experiences of persons with disabilities affected by climate change in Ghana. Through visual storytelling, the study reveals critical gaps in current adaptation efforts while highlighting the agency, resilience strategies, and priorities expressed by disability communities.

The findings underscore the urgent need for climate action that integrates accessibility, disability disaggregated data, inclusive policy design, and community level empowerment to ensure that Ghana's climate adaptation and mitigation efforts genuinely leave no one behind.

Beyond Survival: Gender, Stigma, and Relational Recovery among Women Survivors of War-Related Childhood Sexual Abuse Introduction

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This paper examines how gendered power relations and stigma shape women's recovery from war-related childhood sexual abuse in post-conflict Northern Uganda. It advances relational recovery as a critical lens, conceptualising recovery not as individual psychological adjustment but as a socially embedded process negotiated through relationships, social roles, and collective belonging, central to both social work and social development in post-conflict settings.

Using qualitative narrative inquiry, the study draws on 40 in-depth interviews with adult women survivors of war-related childhood sexual abuse.

Findings reveal that stigma rooted in norms of sexual purity, marriageability, and motherhood, persistently constrains social belonging, economic security, and emotional wellbeing long after the end of conflict. At the same time, survivors actively mobilise social support to reclaim dignity, rebuild relationships, and reconstruct valued social identities. The narratives show that relational recovery operates as both agency and resistance, enabling women to renegotiate stigma, restore social roles, and re-establish livelihoods within contexts of poverty, caregiving responsibility, and post-conflict precarity. Recovery emerges as simultaneously personal and political, shaped by intersecting structures of gender, poverty, and social exclusion.

Discussion and Implications
Drawing on feminist and intersectional social work perspectives, the paper challenges deficit-based portrayals of survivors and positions relational recovery as foundational to sustainable post-conflict development. It argues for gender-responsive, survivor-centred social work practice that addresses stigma, power, and social reintegration as collective social development concerns, extending recovery beyond individual healing to the restoration of social cohesion, dignity, and community wellbeing.

Refuge and Contemporary Humanitarianism under Analysis

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This essay sought to problematize, through a bibliographic review, the international law of refugee protection and its intersection with recent configurations of humanitarian aid, both of which are intertwined with the development and expansion of global capitalism. The study analyzed some of the most salient aspects of the changes and characteristics assumed by humanitarianism since the late 1980s from a critical perspective, aiming to expand the debate. These changes are related to the restructuring driven by the globalization of capital and neoliberalism, which directly affected the working class, altering and intensifying migration processes, as well as the transformations generated in asymmetrical relations between states after the Cold War, marked by new economic, political, and military disputes.

The research addressed three dimensions considered relevant to the study of contemporary humanitarianism from a critical perspective: the humanitarization of refuge in place of law; humanitarian aid as a tool for containing and regulating migration as part of “global governance”; and the interests of imperialist countries, often referred to as military humanitarianism.

We identified that humanitarianism has many expressions, being understood not only in the context of International Humanitarian Law but also encompassing all practices of solidarity and assistance in situations of mass suffering. This humanitarianism is permeated by moral values that express moral and ethical obligation, often imbued with the substance of Christian religious dogmas, such as compassion and aid, which often bypass rights and the political construction of social justice. Its practices involve multiple interests and represent spaces of contestation that can and should be occupied by professionals, managers, and activists genuinely committed to critical reflection and the struggle for rights.

Gender based violence and Social Work interventions in India: A critical analysis

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Gender based violence is a stark reality in India, despite the presence of global and national policy instruments. Dominant patriarchal, religious and caste systems in the Indian society continuously perpetuate structural violence marginalising women as well as gender and sexual minorities. Social Work interventions in India does not sufficiently address the structural elements that facilitate gender-based violence. Further, the interventions follow a reductionist approach, through a larger focus on violence against women and lesser focus on violence against queer communities. It can also be noted that the Social Work practice in the country mostly follows clinical and welfare approach models of intervention, which fails to address the structural factors perpetuating violence. It is imperative that Social Work models address gender-based violence though the lens of a critical and intersectional framework.This paper analyses the contemporary role of Social Work in mitigating gender-based violence in India through State and non-State actors and interventions. The matter for the paper is drawn through a critical analysis of secondary data sources which include policy documents, annual reports and media reports. The paper aims to propose a theoretical and pragmatic approach model for gender rights focussed development in Social Work education and practice.

Land, Healing, and Identity: Creative Interventions with Incarcerated Women using a Black Feminist Lens

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Incarcerated women live at the intersection of trauma, gender-based violence, and systemic inequity. Yet institutional frameworks frequently reduce them to the status of “offender,” obscuring their broader health and psychosocial needs. This research responds to that erasure by examining how creative, land-based interventions can foster wellbeing, identity restoration, and empowerment for women within and beyond carceral systems. Grounded in a Black feminist epistemological framework, the study centres women’s voices, and experiences, challenging dominant correctional paradigms that prioritise containment over care. Drawing on ethnographic methods, the research employed art-based methods, semi-structured interviews, observation and cocreation with women who have lived experiences of violence and incarceration. The integration of therapeutic gardening and other creative methods provided participants with opportunities to cultivate resilience, self-agency, and relational capacity. These practices not only supported emotional healing but also created collaborative spaces where women could reimagine themselves beyond institutional labels. Findings highlight the limitations of prevailing rehabilitation models, which often neglect trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and culturally grounded approaches. By reframing land as a site of healing and decolonial empowerment, particularly within the Caribbean context, the study advances evidence-based strategies for systemic reform at the intersection of criminal justice, health, and social policy. Participants reported increased self-worth, readiness for reintegration, and a renewed sense of belonging-outcomes rarely prioritised in correctional settings. This research advocates for a policy shift that centres dignity, community, and holistic wellbeing, urging institutions to evolve from spaces of punishment and containment to spaces of care and transformation. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on how carceral environments mandate of rehabilitation might be reimagined as sites of restoration with the inclusion of green spaces, thus challenging professionals to reconsider the possibilities of justice rooted in healing, equity, and reclamation of self.

Establishing a Local Social Worker Network: A Case Study of Community Support from Uganda

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Social work is rooted in community and connection; however in countries across the world, social work and social workers have become more siloed with services, approaches, and catchment areas tied to a single organization's mission and service structure. This can lead to unidentified and under-addressed community needs, limited coordination and collaboration among professionals, redundant or conflicting services, and social workers feeling disconnected from each other.

One approach to increasing community wellbeing, reducing challenges of social workers, and fostering collective advancement of our valued profession, is the establishment of a local network that strives for sustainable support and development. A social worker network can help ensure that practice remains collaborative to support communities and social workers themselves as they work to prevent and address individual, family, and community challenges.

In Uganda, to be a social worker is a way of life, as much as it is a professional title. There is little delineation between personal and professional time; to be a social worker is an identity more than a job. In 2024, Social workers of a rural district in southwestern Uganda established the Social Worker Network of Kisoro (SWNK) that provides coordinated support to its community, cross-training to social workers and social work students, and ongoing peer support and networking to ensure the social worker workforce of the district remains robust and well. SWNK's focus on strengthening capacity, competence, well-being, and solidarity of its members is playing an important role in mitigating struggles faced by social workers in under-resourced communities.

In this session, SWNK founders will present experiences of establishing a professional network. Presenters will share a practical framework for developing a local network that participants can apply to their settings in ways that are contextually relevant and draw from identified strengths of their community.

Harambee in Practice: Social Support as Collective Healing and Relational Agency after War-Related Sexual Violence

Agatha Kafuko[1]
[1]Makerere University, , Kenya

This paper examines recovery from war-related childhood sexual abuse as a collective and relational process, rather than an individual therapeutic outcome. Situated in post-conflict Northern Uganda, the study responds to limitations in dominant trauma recovery frameworks that privilege individualised, Western clinical models by centring African survivor perspectives and collective forms of care grounded in (shared responsibility and mutual support).

The study draws on a qualitative multi-case narrative inquiry informed by symbolic interactionism, feminist theory, and social support theory. Data were generated through forty in-depth narrative interviews with adult women survivors of war-related childhood sexual abuse in post-conflict Northern Uganda. Narrative analysis was used to examine both individual recovery trajectories and shared patterns across cases.

Survivors' narratives conceptualise recovery as a non-linear and unfinished journey, articulated through Acholi expressions such as (a settled mind) and (being alive), which emphasise livability, moral repair, and emotional regulation rather than the eradication of suffering. Social support emerged as a central form of relational agency, enabling emotional regulation, identity reconstruction, livelihood recovery, caregiving, and the navigation of stigma across the life course. Healing was sustained through interdependence within families, peer networks, faith communities, and local institutions, and through culturally grounded meaning-making embedded in everyday relationships.

By foregrounding African survivor epistemologies, the paper challenges individualised, endpoint-focused Western trauma paradigms and advances a holistic understanding of recovery as an ongoing process shaped by social, economic, spiritual, and political contexts. The findings highlight the importance of long-term accompaniment and community-anchored support systems, contributing to social work debates on sustainable shared futures and underscoring the need for policies and practices that prioritise collective healing, stigma reduction, and culturally grounded approaches to post-conflict recovery.

Shaping Global Advocacy for Social Work: How COSW Supports Local Social Workers

Dr David Jones[1]
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This participative workshop will focus on the reality of social work practice across the 56 countries of the Commonwealth, the impact of cuts in aid funding by donors, the response of agencies and the consequences for social workers. The activity of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work in this context will be explored. It will draw on the experience of the COSW Council members from 20 countries, many of whom will be at the conference.

The cuts in funding for social development have had a traumatic impact on social work and social development projects across the global south. COSW focused on this issue in the annual Policy Forum in September, including presentation of the report “From Fragility to Fortitude: Building Resilient African CSOs in the Wake of the US Government Funding Collapse” (https://africanngos.org/2025/08/01/new-report-from-fragility-to-fortitude-building-resilient-african-csos-in-the-wake-of-the-us-government-funding-collapse/). The workshop will seek evidence from participants on local responses to the cuts, provide feedback from the webinar and explore the implications for future social work practice.

The workshop will also showcase the work of COSW at global and local levels, including participation in pan-Commonwealth networks on health and wellbeing, children, ageing and human rights. It will highlight lessons from multi-professional advocacy at global level including partnerships with IFSW and IASSW. The role of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations, chaired by COSW General Secretary David N Jones, will be explored. At a time of unprecedented change and threat to social development, the workshop will enable participants to share experiences, learn more about global developments and contribute to shaping the advocacy strategy for COSW and our partners.

An abbreviated 30 minute workshop would be possible but less effective.

Reimagining Social Work Education in India: Integrating Social Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum

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Over the years, social work (SW) in India has undergone a significant paradigm shift, moving from charity-based interventions to welfare-oriented approaches and, more recently, to empowerment-focused practice. This transformation has occurred alongside significant changes in India's development sector, marked by complex socio-economic and environmental challenges and increasing financial and operational constraints. At the same time, the business sector is entering the development space through CSR, public–private partnerships, and similar initiatives. At the intersection of these developments, social entrepreneurship (SE) has emerged as a promising approach.

SE seeks to address persistent social issues through a market-based approach emphasising sustainability and innovation, while SW is grounded in a people-centric, justice-based, and ethical approach. Though social work practice is increasingly engaging in entrepreneurial initiatives, SW education in India has been slow to integrate SE systematically into its curriculum. The existing literature recognises the relevance of SE for SW practice and calls for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among social workers, but it largely remains conceptual. There is a notable gap in empirical research examining how SE is incorporated into SW education in India.

To address this gap, the present study explores the integration of SE within SW education in India. The study begins with a document analysis of SW curricula from leading institutions and universities in India to examine current SE education through core or elective courses, value-added programmes, and institutional initiatives. This is followed by in-depth interviews with SW faculty to understand pedagogical practices, institutional perspectives, and perceived opportunities and constraints. Data from curriculum documents and interviews will be analysed thematically and triangulated to develop a comprehensive understanding of current integration strategies. The study aims to inform curriculum development and contribute to strengthening innovation and sustainability within SW education and practice in India.

UNSDGs and Environment Impact Assessment in India: A Sustainability Analysis through Systematic Literature Review

Preetha Kizhakkekara Vannadil[1]
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Sustainability has become an overarching global concept influencing development policy and practice. Despite attempts to incorporate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) into its development sector policies and programmes, India has yet to achieve an ambitious position in the global SDG Index. Following neo-liberal policies in India, unbridled industrialisation and urbanisation have resulted in the systemic disruption of socio-ecological systems. With social and environmental inequality on the rise, diverse forms of social injustice, human rights violations, and marginalisation are affecting both short-term and long-term sustainability goals in India\'s development scenario. The inclusion of SDGs in various sectoral policies in India seems to be mere rhetoric and peripheral, given the complicity of the State and the corporate sector in diluting environmental policy and practice. In this context, the paper critically examines the instrumental role of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) as a political tool for achieving developmental sustainability in India. The paper argues that the legal fluidity and dilution in the design and enactment of the EIA undermine a crucial socio-political transformation toward sustainability. Integrating SDGs into EIA policy and practice is crucial for conserving social-ecological systems and preventing further degradation and disruption. Although the existing academic literature establishes the link between EIA and sustainable development, a critical, in-depth analysis in the Indian context is absent. In this context, a Systematic Literature Review of empirical, conceptual, and grey literature on Indian EIA was undertaken. The paper presents a systematic and critical exploration of the linkages between EIA and SDGs in the Indian context by analysing the socio- ecological impacts of development projects and the policy climate for environmental clearances. A conceptual framework that portrays the interlinkages between policy issues, socio-ecological disruptions, and the SDGs has been developed, arguing for integrating sustainability goals into the EIA system in India.

INSPIRARE Global: Building Digital Community, Partnership, and Shared Learning in International Social Work Education

Ass. Prof. Laura Krishnan-Mackie[1]
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The aim of this session is to present the formative steps and initial outcomes of the project <a href="https://www.cswe.org/centers-initiatives/kendall-institute/kendall-grants-program/2025-grantees/">INSPIRARE Global: the International Network for Social Work Partnerships, Innovation, Research & Education. Funded by the CSWE's Kendall Institute, INSPIRARE Global endeavors to expand global perspectives and connections in social work education.

The presentation will include an overview of the project's four core components: a website with international social work education resources, a podcast, webinars featuring global social work experts, and a virtual student exchange initiative. Together, these components are designed to foster connection, build community, and promote shared learning among social work educators, students, and practitioners across global contexts.

In addition, the presentation will review the process of building the project, which included the pilot podcast episode, the inaugural webinar event, launching the virtual exchange program with social work students from Greece and the United States, the use of AI and digital technologies, the application of pedagogical learning and discoveries from the classroom, harnessing project leaders' previous international experiences and knowledge, and connecting with global partners.

Finally, the presenters will address the benefits of digital connections and communities in the modern global age and explore how Harambee can inform collaborative international social work initiatives. The session will conclude with collaborative brainstorming with participants and an invitation for ongoing network building and partnership, grounded in principles of communal care and interdependence that guide Harambee (Musau, 2020).

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Koutra Jenn Crossett, BA

Building an Epistemically Just Global Ethics Community

Dr Bibiana Koh[1]
[1]Salisbury University, ,

Principle 3 in the International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) Global Statement of Ethical Principles (2018) is promoting social justice. Yet justice is not clearly operationalized. A commitment to social justice cannot be promoted without its clear operationalization. An analysis of social justice in social work revealed that social justice was largely defined by the liberal philosophers Rawls, Nussbaum, and Sen (Atteberry-Ash, 2023). These theories of justice fail to critique justice from a power lens and fall short of how justice should be operationalized in epistemically just social work ethics communities. To fill this gap, Fricker's (2007) testimonial and hermeneutical epistemic injustices offer perspectives that are central to our profession's commitment to promoting a just democratic society.

This presentation proposes a global community-based ethics model to advance just and anti-oppressive practice. To this global community, we need to mobilize our power as social workers. Power is defined as exercising individual, collectively, or institutional power over, to, or with (Avelino, 2021). To have power over is to exercise control or dominance over another, often structurally. To have is to work toward a goal, outcome, or change. Power with is that same power but exercised collaboratively toward a shared goal (Avelino, 2021). As global social work leaders, we can use our power to bring about and sustain change toward a shared goal. Using innovative power, we can create new resources and solutions (Avelino, 2021) to remove barriers. Using transformative power, we can create new infrastructures (Avelino, 2021) to support and sustain this global movement. Reinforcive power can uphold the transformation from individual to community-based ethics. It is time to build a "radical imaginary" (Koh, 2023, 2026) that centers justice, mutual aid, and global ethics communities.

Unconditional Cash Transfers in the European Region: Evidence and Design Lessons from New Leaf Czechia project

Dr Melanie Zajacova[1]
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This workshop presents the findings and practical insights of the New Leaf Czechia research project, contextualising them within the broader European debate on unconditional cash transfers (UCT). Participants will gain a concise yet analytically robust overview of the study\'s research framework — specifically, a randomised controlled trial — along with an intervention design combining UCT with exclusive social work for a small number of cases, ensuring continuity of relationships and professional support. Focusing on implementation in the non-profit sector, the workshop will address practical considerations influencing feasibility and fidelity, such as organisational readiness, inter-agency coordination, and documentation requirements. Approaches to target group identification, risk management strategies and basic ethical safeguards in social work will be analysed, including informed consent, data protection, proportionality and accountability. Attention will also be given to governance and evaluation options. Designed for researchers, educators and practitioners, the workshop offers an evidence-based pathway to adopting and adapting UCT-based innovations in local European contexts.

Mapping learnings of sexual and reproductive health services for diverse youth: A scoping review of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services in the pan-African region

Dr Rosslynn Zulla[1]
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A key Sustainability Development Goal is to guarantee healthy lives through universal access to sexual and reproductive health services (SRHS). Historically, youth- and adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services have been an initiative within the African continent that seeks to ensure SRHS services are accessible to diverse youth. While evidence of these programs continues to grow, learnings need to be mapped to understand the multi-level influences that shape the quality of services that diverse youth receive to inform future service delivery models. In this study, we conducted a scoping review that was guided by the Joanna Briggs Institute. The review sought to answer the following: (i) what is the definition of youth- and adolescent-friendly services for diverse groups? (ii) what are the individual, organizational, and regional challenges and assets that shape these services? (iii) what are the discursive factors shaping youth engagement and its sustainability? The review incorporated nearly two decades (2000 – 2025) of published literature from 6 databases. The initial search generated

3,140 total citations, and after 2 rounds of screening, resulted in 120 articles from which data was extracted and full-text review occurred. Preliminary findings revealed (i) variances in the operational definitions of youth-friendly services, (ii) delivery of youth-friendly services that focuses minimally on social identities (e.g., age and gender) and largely on socio-economic and financial barriers, (iii) mixed experiences in incorporating local assets into services, (iv) spatial (e.g., clinical), structural (e.g., lengthy waiting times, discomforting care spaces) and discursive (e.g., cultural and religious attitudes shaping relational service provider-youth dynamics) factors that impede ongoing youth engagement with services, and (v) movements promoting diversity and youth leadership in services emerging largely in Southern Africa region. Implications of these findings will be discussed in identifying key research, practice and policy priorities that can be undertaken to advance this field.

WRAP Across Cultures: Embodying the Spirit of Harambee to Expand Mental Health Tools in Kenya

James Bollinger[1]
[1]West Chester University, , United States

WRAP Across Cultures: Embodying the Spirit of Harambee to Expand Mental Health Tools in Kenya.

This presentation examines the cultural adaptation and implementation of the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) — an evidence-based, peer-led framework for mental health self-management — in Kenya. Framed by the concept of Harambee ("all pull together"), a deeply rooted Kenyan tradition of collective effort and community self-help, the initiative illustrates how shared learning, mutual support, and communal empowerment can sustain recovery.

In collaboration with social work educators and a community-based organization in Kibera, we conducted two WRAP trainings: a general Seminar I and a Facilitator Training for emerging community leaders. Participants included community health workers, teachers, students, wildlife rangers, and individuals with lived experience of recovery. The trainings were deliberately structured to incorporate Kenyan cultural practices — such as storytelling, communal prayer, song, and group dialogue — aligning WRAP's five recovery concepts (Hope; Personal Responsibility; Education; Self-Advocacy; Support) with local values of interconnectedness, resilience, and shared responsibility.

Reflections collected after the training show that participants have embedded WRAP principles into diverse spheres of community life: peer-support networks, health-promotion, environmental mentoring, and school-based wellbeing programs. These results suggest that WRAP's peer-led model is low-cost, scalable, and sustainable, offering wellness tools that do not rely on extensive clinical infrastructure.

During the session, we will present key lessons from cross-cultural adaptation, co-facilitation between local and international partners, and community engagement. Our experience demonstrates how WRAP — grounded in the spirit of Harambee — fosters collective healing and sustainable wellness. This model offers a replicable, culturally rooted approach to evidence-based mental health promotion in global contexts.

Towards a Transformative Memory of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery: From the Perspective of Decolonial and Feminist Social Work

Dr. Osamu Miyazaki[1]
[1]Meiji Gakuin University, , Japan

This presentation examines how the struggles and memories of survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery (commonly referred to as the “comfort women” system) have been transmitted across generations, communities, and societies, and how such memory work holds the potential to foster social transformation, from a decolonial and feminist social work perspective.

The study draws on survivors’ testimonies, historical records of testimonial activism, and the presenter’s direct engagement through visits to survivor organizations and interactions with activists advocating for redress and official apologies. These experiences provided insight into how memory work shapes participants’ awareness and contributes to broader social understanding and engagement.

The analysis suggests that survivors’ struggles and memory work function not merely as historical documentation but also as forms of resistance to silence and historical trauma, while fostering intergenerational, intersectional, and transnational solidarity. Memory work connects historical struggles to contemporary challenges, including ongoing colonialism, militarism, and gender-based violence, and provides opportunities for coalition-building across diverse minority communities. It highlights memory as a tool for historical justice, social awareness, and collective empowerment, while also confronting persistent challenges, such as the influence of neocolonial structures, historical revisionism, and societal reluctance to acknowledge structural injustices. These obstacles emphasize the need for proactive engagement to sustain memory work as a transformative practice.

By conceptualizing these experiences as “Transformative Memory”, this presentation demonstrates how decolonial and feminist social work can engage with historical injustices and leverage memory work as a practice that contributes to meaningful social transformation, both locally and transnationally, while fostering solidarity, awareness, and justice-oriented action.

Sharing Trauma Informed Stories through Video Games ~ Della's Story

Sima Chowdhury[1]
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The multilayered narrative of Della\'s Story, an online escape room, captures Indigenous values of cooperation and storytelling. Players go back in time to help Della understand what happened to her as a child to lead to her eventual healing. Della speaks in the first scene in her own voice, instructing the players what they need to do. She reminds us that while this is a game that is meant to be enjoyed, this is a part of her life that she bravely shares. Della Charles is an Indigenous elder who experienced the '60's scoop. Indigenous children were taken from their families in countries such as Canada, the United States and Australia to be used as farm labor in many cases including Della's acilitated on Zoom, Della's grandson, Jared, helps the players navigate through the rooms and reads the clues to the players. The online game opened up new opportunities for people across Canada to play and learn about the 60's scoop in a trauma informed way without Indigenous Elders leaving their communities to speak to strangers about deeply personal events. While the game will never be a replacement for proper education into the '60's scoop, it starts the conversation and allows learners to interact with history instead of passively receiving it.

Building Mental Health Capacity from Afar: Mixed-Methods Findings from a Diaspora-Enabled Open Trial in Nepal

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"Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face escalating mental health needs amid chronic workforce shortages and uneven access to training. Nepal reflects this acute challenge with only 0.2% of national health spending allocated to mental health, services concentrated in urban centers, and few pathways for structured skill development or supervision for emerging practitioners. In response, we piloted The Missing Counselor Project, a digitally delivered, diaspora-supported training program to assess the acceptability, feasibility, and early efficacy of cross-border knowledge transfer during COVID-19.

Mental health professionals and paraprofessionals (N=14) completed eight 90-minute virtual sessions facilitated by clinical experts in the U.S. and the global Nepali diaspora. Data were collected through pre- and posttests and three-month follow-up assessments, paired with focus group discussions. Quantitative outcomes indicated measurable improvements: resilience increased by 4.65%; stress-management skills rose by 3.28% post-training and 4.40% at follow-up; and clinical-care competency increased by 3.86% initially and 5.90% over time, suggesting durable skill retention. Five themes emerged from qualitative analysis. Participants indicated (1) immediate skill acquisition with real-time clinical application; (2) enhanced confidence and fortified professional identity; (3) reinforcement and validation of knowledge, particularly for recent graduates; (4) a desire for more profound practice environments, including role-play, case conceptualization, and supervised practicum; and (5) structural impediments such as time-zone fatigue, internet instability, and diverse experience levels among trainees.

Findings demonstrate that diaspora-enabled digital capacity building is feasible, acceptable, and impactful in resource-limited systems. This approach expands skill pipelines, democratizes access to expert supervision, and supports clinical readiness while national policy and workforce regulation evolve. With further investment in tiered training tracks, mentored practicum, and ongoing supervision, this model offers a scalable blueprint for mental health workforce development in Nepal and comparable LMIC contexts, advancing global training infrastructure through transnational collaboration and digital innovation."

Reinvigorating and Decolonising Social Work Education and Practice: Promoting Synergies University-Community through Social Labs Methodology in Eastern Africa

Dr Charles Kalinganire[1]
[1]University Of Rwanda, , Rwanda

Today's High Education Institutions (HEI) are, more than ever, faced with changes of different kinds in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. As it is for other segments of the society, the HEI may adapt themselves to the requirements of the incessant changing world, and particularly to the digital age we are living in. It is crucial for them to shift from traditional to new models or approaches of shaping citizens who will help their respective societies advance 'without leaving none behind'; but how to reach this target? In this perspective, the current paper addresses the topic of Reinvigorating and Decolonising Social Work Education and Practice and seeks, above all, to examine to what extent the social labs methodology impacts on the teaching and learning practices, especially in Eastern Africa. This research paper emerges from the analysis of secondary data, the experience acquired during 26 years as teacher and researcher in the social work domain as well as from the implementation of a capacity building and research project initiated by a consortium of four universities. Overall, the results show that to shape a competent social work global citizen for tomorrow requires an innovative integration of the classroom training at university with the field education but also the continuous socialisation of the graduate in the intervention settings. For this to happen, the social labs methodology appears to be well-suited to decolonise social work and to synthesise global standards with local/indigenous practices.

From Rehabilitation to Prevention: Community-Based Programme for Street-Connected Children in Nairobi

Theresa Aschaber[1]
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This poster presents a community-based, bottom-up intervention concept to support children in street situations in Nairobi. The initiative is embedded in an approved master-level research project in Social Work and Human Rights at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. It builds on a four-month internship in a rehabilitation centre for formerly street-connected boys in Nairobi, the resulting bachelor's thesis, literature review and critical reflection. The internship and the thesis were part of a bachelor's program at the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences in Austria. The bachelor's thesis addresses the question "Which methods can social work employ to sustainably support street-connected children in Kenya through rehabilitation centres?".

Limitations of rehabilitation-only approaches became noticeable during the internship, particularly long intervals between recruitment rounds, which often reduce chances for sustainable reintegration. At the same time, home visits revealed strong community cohesion within informal settlements, a resource for early and preventive responses.

This planned project aims to develop a secondary prevention initiative together with a local community in a Nairobi informal settlement. It seeks to raise awareness and foster collective responsibility, encouraging proactive engagement when children enter street-connected circumstances, for instance through timely referral to services. Primary prevention activities, such as workshops addressing family violence, may be additionally integrated if considered meaningful by the community. Guided by a co-production approach and Ubuntu, the project emphasizes facilitation rather than direction, allowing design and focus to be determined by the community's priorities. It explicitly considers children's rights, social work ethics, and the lived experiences of children.

The process will be documented and reflected upon within the master research framework, aiming to support sustainable responses and contribute to scientifically grounded documentation of community-derived knowledge, showing how community strengths can be mobilized to enhance participatory social work and rights-based child welfare responses.

Clinical Perspectives on Authoritarian Parenting and Emerging Adult Wellbeing in Kenyan Family Systems

Miss Jacinta Gitau[1]
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Authoritarian parenting, defined by high control, strict discipline, and low emotional warmth, significantly shapes the developmental trajectories of emerging adults. Existing research links this style to relational hesitancy, reduced self-worth, and challenges in developing autonomy. This scoping review synthesizes current literature on how retrospective experiences of authoritarian parenting influence psychosocial outcomes among young adults ages 19–25, with particular attention to family dynamics and cultural context. Guided by Bowen's Family Systems Theory, the study examines how rigid hierarchies and limited emotional responsiveness restrict self-differentiation, contributing to overdependence, rebellion, or relational anxiety as young adults form identities and navigate independence. Cultural context remains central. In Kenyan collectivist traditions, grounded in the Harambee ethos of "pulling together," child-rearing is shared across families and communities. Discipline and respect for elders are valued, and authoritarian practices may be understood as protective rather than punitive. Such communal norms shape, buffer, or reinterpret the perceived effects of parental control. In alignment with the conference theme of Harambee, this presentation situates parenting within broader efforts to strengthen families, foster intergenerational solidarity, and promote culturally grounded, socially just support systems across the lifespan. The presentation highlights the influence of gender socialization, socioeconomic pressures, and rapidly changing technological environments. Youth raised under authoritarian structures often experience challenges with emotion regulation, assertiveness, and decision-making. Authoritarian parenting is associated with symptoms such as anxiety, behaviors including risk-taking or oppositional tendencies. Yet protective factors, including supportive mentors, peer networks, extended family, and faith communities, can foster resilience and healthier identity development. The presentation also underscores the importance of balanced, responsive parenting that integrates structure with warmth.

Pedagogical Techniques for Social Work Education

Dr Sandra Williamson-Ashe[1]
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Empathy is foundational to effective social work practice, yet research indicates a troubling decline in college student empathy and limited understanding of how social work students learn and develop this essential professional competency. This presentation introduces an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates bereavement academics, student-centered instruction (SCI), cooperative learning, and the reflective “sorrowful empty chair” technique to advance empathy development among undergraduate social work students. Grounded in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) competencies, the bereavement assignment examined in this study required students to apply psychodynamic theoretical frameworks to a real-life traumatic event—the sudden death of a fellow social work student. Through theoretical application, cooperative small-group learning, reflective discussion, and professor-led relational engagement, students demonstrated enhanced critical thinking, improved theoretical articulation, strengthened research skills, and meaningful personal reflection related to loss, purpose, and professional identity formation.

Survey results revealed strong student agreement that real-life application deepened theoretical understanding and that the emotionally grounded context increased dedication to producing quality work. Open-ended responses reflected heightened awareness, empowerment, and emotional insight—core indicators of emergent empathy. The study aligns with existing literature emphasizing intentionality, reflection, experiential learning, and faculty modeling as catalysts for empathy development. This presentation highlights implications for social work educators, particularly regarding the use of current events, experiential reflection, and relational pedagogy to strengthen empathy and prepare students to support grieving clients. As grief affects a significant portion of college students annually, and as social work students often enter the field with personal challenges, this pedagogical model offers a replicable and impactful strategy for fostering empathy, professional growth, and humanistic practice across social work curricula.

The Hidden Costs of Global Migration: Lifelong Impacts on Filipino Children's Well-Being and Implications for Social Work

Mrs Lea Joy Friesen[1]
[1]University Of Windsor, , Canada

Global labor migration has become a defining feature of Filipino family life, with approximately 27% of Filipino children growing up separated from a migrant parent (Zhu et al., 2023). Li et al., 2023; Xue & Sun, 2023 studies demonstrate that these early separations carry significant psychosocial consequences, including heightened risks for anxiety, depressive symptoms, emotional withdrawal, and challenges in forming secure attachments.These impacts often persist in adulthood, shaping relational trust, identity development, and long-term mental well-being, particularly among individuals who later reunite with their parents through immigration (Dominguez & Hall, 2022). Despite these risks, Filipino left-behind children (LBCs) remain an understudied population in global social work scholarship.

Research such by Lobos et al. (2019) and Rendeza (2017) also highlights culturally grounded protective factors, such as extended-kin caregiving, communal support, and faith practices, which can foster resilience during prolonged separation However, Filipino cultural norms can simultaneously complicate emotional expression and help-seeking. Hiya, a value emphasizing modesty, social propriety, and the avoidance of shame, often discourages individuals from disclosing emotional distress. Utang na loob, a deeply internalized sense of debt of gratitude toward parental sacrifice, can create emotional tension, as individuals may suppress feelings of hurt or loss to avoid appearing ungrateful (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). These norms shape how LBCs interpret separation and engage with services, underscoring the need for culturally attuned social work practice.

Fresnoza-Flot (2023) asserts that migration-related family separation is not an individual or family failing, but a structural consequence of global labour inequalities. Recognizing the long-term developmental effects of parental migration is essential for trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and lifespan-oriented social work interventions. Policy-focused scholarship further calls for reducing prolonged reunification timelines and strengthening mental health and community support to address the enduring effects of separation on migrant-affected families.

Learning from Global Experience: Adding Unconditional Cash to Child Protection Services to families at risk for a recurrence of violence against children in the home

Prof Martha Schwartz Bragin[1]
[1]Silberman School Of Social Work At Hunter College Cuny, , United States

The global success of unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) in reducing poverty has led to increasing interest in their use across the United States. UCTs—cash payments provided without conditions that don't affect eligibility for other benefits—are distinct from forms of cash assistance that restrict purchases or require compliance with specified activities. In the United States, however, the belief has persisted that UCTs would not be effective for families whose situation included children's physical or sexual abuse . This assumption stands in contrast to current evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, indicating the positive effects of UCTs for violence affected families (Edwards et al., 2024).

This paper presents an experience of integrating UCTs into child protection services for families affected by violence in New York City, and summarizes outcomes using families' own accounts and verification from external sources. A central feature of the program was its participatory design: parents collaborated in defining the concepts used to monitor and evaluate the intervention, ensuring that measurement reflected their experience.

Families reported that the funds allowed them to meet urgent needs while also providing small but meaningful improvements in daily life. Parents described using the additional resources to prepare more nutritious meals, purchase properly fitting shoes and warm clothing for their children, and devote more time to school engagement, homework supervision, and attendance at important events. The funds also created opportunities for emotional connection - relaxing with children, spending time with extended family, dancing together during household chores, or taking occasional trips to the park. Parents' emphasized reduced stress, describing the cash assistance as akin to having the "backup" of a dependable family member.

These findings challenge US assumptions that UCTs cannot be effective in improving child wellbeing in families experiencing violence and suggest the importance of high income countries learning from the Global South."

Applying "Role Analysis" in Men’s Anger-Management Groups

Mr Gil Gilad[1]
[1]Self Employed Psychotherapist, ,

This lecture presents the integration of Role Analysis (RA) - a methodology originating from Organizational Consulting- into therapeutic work with Men’s Anger-Management Groups.
These groups serve as a space for personal and social change in which anger and aggression management are the central topics in discourse, characterized by an ongoing movement between comfort and discomfort.

RA is designed to help individuals explore the interactions between their personal tendencies and the environment in which they operate, with the aim of enabling perceptual and behavioural change that enhances effectiveness and personal satisfaction. Traditionally, RA is used in organizational peer groups, particularly among managers with high levels of functioning and self-control.

Our work has “exported” this methodology into groups of men who struggle with Anger Management at the Ramat-Gan Family Violence Prevention Center. Within this context, RA was used to examine participants’ attitudes toward partnership and family life, drawing on early childhood memories and current dilemmas or conflicts.

These groups are typically characterized by issues of control, power, and frequent difficulties in emotional self-control across relational, social, and professional domains. Given these characteristics, there was an initial concern that RA, being a process of potentially substantial emotional exposure, might destabilize group cohesion by challenging participants’ protective defences.

However, our findings indicate that RA provided a meaningful space for deep personal inquiry supported by group feedback. While various forms of resistance did emerge, the process enabled more intimate and authentic engagement within the group. Participants were able to explore sensitive and painful experiences while receiving recognition and empathy from their peers, for the complexities of their life stories, both among those who fully engaged in the process and those who expressed some ambivalence or resistance.

Linking Training to Practice: Reimagining Field Education in Global Social Work

Mr Hugh Salmon, Dr Praveen Kumar[1]
[1]Boston College School of Social Work, , United States, [2]Boston College School of Social Work, , United States

This panel examines how field education can more effectively bridge social work training and real-world practice, particularly in global contexts marked by volatility, resource disparities, and evolving expectations for the profession. Grounded in long-standing international partnerships, the discussion highlights how field placements can move beyond primarily observational learning toward structured, competency-based, and goal-oriented experiences supported by clear supervision, assessment frameworks, and collaborative learning models.

The panel draws on the experiences of two organizations and a expert partnership. The Boston College School of Social Work (BCSSW), which has offered global field placements for final-year MSW students since 2006, will describe its approach to aligning curriculum, field preparation, and agency partnerships. Over nearly two decades, BCSSW has collaborated with close to 100 agencies worldwide, emphasizing student readiness, mutual learning, and placements that meaningfully contribute to organizational goals.

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) will discuss its efforts to strengthen and professionalize the global social service workforce through planning, developing, and supporting students, professionals, and para-professionals. Drawing on evidence-informed tools, standards, and capacity-building initiatives, GSSWA will reflect on how it is leveraging partnerships to elevate practice and reinforce workforce systems across diverse national contexts. To further enrich discussion the Ubuntu Partnership, a collaboration of academics and practitioners working across Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, and the United Kingdom will share their expertise in decolonising social work education and practice. Ubuntu focuses on documenting indigenous social work approaches, co-producing contextually grounded pedagogy, and strengthening equitable collaboration. Panel members will also reflect on how it is navigating a shifting environment characterized by funding contractions, changes among international partners, and emerging humanitarian and development needs.

Bridging Continents and Building Competence: Advancing Global Social Work Education through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

Dr. Mary Gitau[1]
[1]University Of Tennessee, Knoxville, , United States

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an experiential pedagogy that brings together international students in shared virtual classrooms to broaden global perspectives, foster intercultural competency, and collaborate on projects that improve human well-being. Amid growing global inequalities, COIL provides a transformative platform to reimagine and co-create social work education that is innovative, pedagogically creative, and globally responsive.

This presentation highlights a COIL initiative linking social work students from the United States and Kenya, creating an interactive learning space to explore global challenges through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Students critically examined complex socio-political, economic, and environmental issues and co-developed multimedia campaigns focused on pressing global health concerns relevant to both local contexts. Through this experience, students engaged in cross-cultural dialogue, applied theoretical frameworks to real-world challenges, and deepened their understanding of how the 17 SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to end poverty and reduce inequality, while protecting the planet and championing human rights.

The COIL model exemplifies how social work education can be reconfigured to support lifelong learning and continuous professional development. By leveraging technology to transcend geographic boundaries, COIL bridges the Global North–South divide in education, promotes cross-continental peer mentorship, and advances epistemic justice through inclusive, collaborative, and contextually grounded learning.

This session will explore how COIL enriches pedagogy and field education by embedding global citizenship, digital literacy, and culturally responsive teaching methods into the curriculum. It will also discuss how COIL aligns with broader goals of democratizing knowledge, promoting indigenous and innovative research approaches, and fostering inter-professional collaboration in social work education.

Rooted in the East African philosophy of Harambee —collective action and mutual support—this approach demonstrates how social work education can be transformed to cultivate sustainable, equitable, and globally engaged futures.

An Africana Womanist Approach to Intimate Partner Violence: Social Work Practice Among African Women of the Diaspora

Dr Patricia Jefferson[1]
[1]University Of Kentucky College Of Social Work, , United States

Intimate partner violence (IPV) among African diasporic men and women is shaped by historical, social, cultural, and racial factors. It is the result of the historical use and intergenerational transmission of maladaptive learned behaviors rooted in helplessness, powerlessness, and fear. Among African American women in the United States and African women on the continent, barriers to safety and access to resources are embedded in sociocultural expectations, gender hierarchies, and biased institutional responses. Family and community-level barriers delay help-seeking for IPV, discouraging disclosure to preserve family over safety, and contribute to mental health consequences. Limited research examines the effectiveness of a culturally sensitive approach to IPV promoting healing and healthy relationships among African diasporic women and men. Therefore, social work students and practitioners are limited to Eurocentric frameworks that fail to meet this need. This oversight may further hinder help-seeking and service engagement by perpetuating cultural oppression, stereotyping, and mistrust. Africana womanist principles, rooted in African cosmology, offer a cultural framework that promotes resilience and interconnectedness of African individuals and families from the diaspora. Africana womanist principles aim to increase awareness of healthy family relationships and empower African diasporic communities. The approach aligns with core social work values of empowerment, dignity, and justice, and emphasizes family and community-centered strategies to promote healing, safety, and self-determination. Incorporating Africana womanist principles into social work practice provides a culturally sensitive response to IPV and supports collective well-being of African diasporic families.

Creativity and Simulation in Social Work and Health Education

Dr Janet Parker[2], Dr Joanne Redcliffe[1]
[1]University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, , United States, [2]Royal Holloway University Of London, , United Kingdom

This presentation considers the impact of creativity and simulation in contemporary practices within social work and health education. The arts are acknowledged to be a valuable means of communication by which citizens/People with Lived Experiences (PWLE) can connect with social workers to consider co-produced solutions to problems. The process may be facilitated by practitioners themselves learning how to use expressive means of communication.

Within this presentation, we offer a definition of creativity and examine how aspects of it can be used as a method by which to enhance contemporary practice in social work and health education. Key terms are defined and a theoretical overview is provided, followed by an examination of three case examples featuring social work and healthcare students. Learning from these examples is considered from the perspective of their utility in increasing knowledge on improving both education and practice domains. Strategies that help integrate the voices of citizens/People with Lived Experience at the centre of developments are suggested. Finally, the challenges of and opportunities for these approaches are weighed up, and future developments are recommended.

The key future research priorities identified are the need for cost-benefit outcomes research led by citizens into if and how co-production influences subsequent services, including research into the factors that ameliorate citizens' barriers to participation.

Social Work Education for the Rapid Deployment of a Child Protection Workforce: UNICEF Models in Somalia, Somaliland, and South Sudan

Brendan Ross[1], Dr Lacey Sloan[2]
[1]Unicef-south Sudan, , , [2]Auburn University At Montgomery, , United States

This presentation describes the collaborative development of one-year Certificate of Social Work education programs in Somalia, Somaliland, and South Sudan to rapidly deploy a trained child protection workforce. Development of the child protection workforce has received considerable attention recently, in part because development organizations such as UNICEF (2019) and Save the Children that have made significant investments to realize the development of integrative child protection systems in low resource countries (Schmid, 2018). Social work training and education are critically important to realizing the goal of developing integrative child protection systems, particularly in Africa which is undergoing rapid transformation (Gray, 2017; Levey, Okoyo, Tanga & Ingram, 2024). One goal of educating a local child protection workforce is to create a workforce that is sustainable after funding from international humanitarian aid organizations is gone. At the same time, this workforce needs to be educated and rapidly deployed—there is not time for a full-time, four-year degree—to respond to the current emergencies. Ad hoc training and workshops held in hotels are expensive, with hotel rooms often costing more per night than attendees' monthly salaries. The development of social work education programs at the certificate level that also supports women and community economic development are shared.

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At the Crossroads: Can Social Work Doctorates Survive Market Pressures and Protect the Profession’s Knowledge and Future?

Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom

"Social work faces not only practitioner shortages and pressure for rapid graduate output but a deeper threat: the erosion of social work doctorial education under neoliberal pressures. This paper argues that the reshaping of the doctorate represents an existential challenge to the discipline’s future, undermining its capacity to generate knowledge. We critically examine whether the doctorate’s purpose is to create new knowledge or simply supply teaching staff, situating this debate within the IFSW mandate and definition to address structural injustice.

Globally, economic efficiency increasingly eclipses intellectual development. The UK exemplifies this trend through fast-track qualifying routes, limited numbers of lecturers with doctorates, and the marginalisation of research in curricula. Here, the doctorate risks becoming a teaching credential, severing the link between practice and knowledge creation. The USA offers a starker case: the rise of unfunded, practice-oriented Doctor of Social Work (DSWs), designed to fill non-tenured teaching roles, has created a two-tiered academic system. This model outsources doctoral education to students and prioritises teaching over research, hollowing out the profession’s intellectual core. In contrast, Brasil maintains a strong commitment to critical theory and ethical-political projects despite scarce funding, while China’s rapidly evolving system reflects unique state-market dynamics in shaping doctoral identity.

We argue that weakening rigorous, well-funded research training and career pathways jeopardises the entire social work ecosystem. Without robust doctoral education, the profession’s knowledge base stagnates, evidence for practice becomes fragile, and its critical voice in social policy fades. The struggle for the doctorate’s soul is not an academic niche debate; it is a strategic battle for social work’s authority and its ability to address the complex challenges it was founded to solve."

A snapshot of the chalkboard writing experiences of Bachelor of Education students with visual disabilities in South Africa

Dr Roshanthni Subrayen[1]
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Article citation and metadata South African higher education policy frameworks highlight equitable access and participation for students with disabilities. However, students with visual disabilities continue to face barriers in their teaching practice school placements.

Objectives: This article aims, to provide early insights into the barriers experienced by students with visual disabilities in their teaching practice school placements in under-resourced schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Secondly, it introduces learning communities and a teaching practice pre-placement booklet to enhance equitable access and participation in teaching practice school placements.

Method: This study adopted a qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews to elicit data from two Bachelor of Education students with visual disabilities, who were part of a teaching practice learning community managed by the Disability Unit at the University. Thematic analysis was used, using Tinto's Learning Community Model which generated evidence for institutional commitments to achieve equitable access and participation for students with visual disabilities.

Results: Integration in teaching practice learning communities and a teaching practice pre-placement booklet, supported the participants to adapt to the chalkboard hence promoting teaching and learning in the classroom. These retention strategies provide evidence to support equitable access and participation. Given the stigma associated with disability and the need for equity at policy level, higher education institutions should consider systemic mechanisms for access, participation and success outcomes in the teaching practice school placements of students with visual disabilities.

Conclusion: Barriers to participation signal the need for accessible teaching and learning strategies for students with visual disabilities in their teaching practice school placements. Teaching practice assessors should be alerted to contextual differences in resourced and under-resourced school settings and the diverse ways in which SWDs navigate these differences.

Connecting theory and practice in social work education – reflexivity as a core competence for sustainable professional development

Felix Manuel Nuss[1]
[1]IFSW, , Germany

"Sustainability as an educational principle In the context of social work, the concept of sustainability encompasses not only ecological sustainability but also social, institutional and generational sustainability. The sustainable training of professionals is achieved when students are empowered to address complex social challenges – inequality, violence, exclusion, ecological crises – in a reflective, responsible and future-oriented manner in collaboration with their clients. The successful integration of theory and practice during their studies, and the scientific validation of their actions, is paramount. Therefore, all actors must pull together and the structural viability of the connection between higher education and practice has to be guaranteed.

Reflexivity as a fundamental competence in professional practice
The synergy between the two learning environments - higher education and practice - is pivotal in facilitating the translation of theoretical concepts into practical applications. Moreover, it fosters the development and nurturing of reflexivity as a fundamental competence in professional practice.

Reflexivity can be described as a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. It therefore enables prospective professionals to identify issues relevant to social work in individual cases – e.g. social inequalities and phenomena of exclusion – and to work together with clients to transform the situation.

Structure of the presentation
In our presentation, we will outline key approaches and measures at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences North Rhine-Westphalia/Münster to establish higher education and practical training as equal learning environments, ensure the quality of practical phases, and achieve key competencies. We will present examples of collective action and shared responsibility between theory and practice and discuss the widely debated ideas of Dewe and Otto and the concept of “reflexive knowledge” (Reflexives Wissen) as a foundation of social work professionalism, including the structure of the “science of action.” Finally, we will critically reflect on the benefits and challenges of our approach."

Dismantling Structural Barriers and Advancing Equitable Access to Higher Education: Voices of First-Generation Women Students

Saibeth Cedeno Avila[1], Dr Wanja Ogongi[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States

"As global higher education systems expand access to students from marginalized populations, persistent inequities continue to limit the educational trajectories of first-generation students. This session will discuss the unique challenges faced by first-generation Latina college students who simultaneously work full-time, shoulder significant family responsibilities and pursue higher education.

In recent years, millions of Latina students have enrolled in colleges and universities, demonstrating a growing desire to obtain academic degrees and improve their economic futures. Despite this increase in enrollment, Latina students' graduation gaps remain, and are lower compared to other races, highlighting ongoing structural, cultural and institutional barriers to academic success (Elengold et al., 2021). The causes of these gaps are complex and layered, tied to the intersecting responsibilities and expectations placed on these students both inside and outside the classroom.

Many first-generation Latina college students manage substantial responsibilities at home that exceed what many of their peers typically face. Cultural values such as familismo provide strength, identity, and community, yet can also create tension when familial expectations contradict the time demands of higher education (Espinoza, 2010). When these expectations are paired with full-time employment, students are left with limited time, energy, and mental capacity to dedicate to coursework, studying, and campus engagement. As a result, even highly motivated students can find it difficult to stay academically focused under these conditions, as the demands of home and work often compete directly with their educational goals (Ramirez & Carrola, 2021). Additionally, without culturally responsive institutional policies, academic flexibility, or representation among faculty and leadership, Latina students often navigate their educational journeys with limited structural support. This presentation situates these experiences within global discourses on inclusive education and social development. Supporting first-generation students from culturally diverse backgrounds is essential to building equitable, sustainable futures and strengthening social mobility within families and communities."

In Their Words: What Every Social Worker Should Know About Sex Work

Sharvari Karandikar[1]
[1]The Ohio State University, , United States

Sex workers have historically been excluded from academic and professional discourse about their lives and labor, resulting in harmful narratives that often portray them as either victims or pathologically deviant. This qualitative study addresses that gap by centering the voices of sex workers and exploring what they want social workers to understand about sex work. Interviews were conducted with 29 self-identified sex workers across the United States in September and October 2023. Participants were recruited through a widely used sex work listserv. The authors\Institutaional Reviewthics board approved the methods and protocol of this study.

Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed three key themes: (1) sex work is diverse and cannot be reduced to a single narrative; (2) sex work is legitimate labor that deserves recognition and respect; and (3) sex workers expect to be treated with dignity and without judgment in professional settings. Participants emphasized the importance of social workers educating themselves about sex work rather than relying on assumptions or stereotypes, and of creating environments where sex workers feel safe, affirmed, and heard.

These findings highlight the ethical responsibility of social workers to engage in self-reflection, challenge stigma, and adopt practices rooted in harm reduction, autonomy, and cultural humility. Listening to the lived experiences of sex workers is essential for delivering informed, ethical, and supportive care. Future research should aim to identify service gaps and institutional barriers affecting sex workers, and to develop evidence-based strategies that enhance access to safe, nonjudgmental, and empowering support. By amplifying sex workers' voices, this study contributes to a more nuanced, respectful, and socially just understanding of sex work within the field of social work.

Harambee for Child Protection: A COIL-Based Collaboration to Advance Global Social Work Education

Dr Felicia Tuggle[1], Dr Abigail Mills[2], Odunayo Irene Fasoyinu[3]
[1]Auburn Univeristy, , United States, [2]Department of Social Work,University of Ghana, , Ghana, [3]Auburn University , , United States

"This presentation responds directly to the SWSD 2025 theme, Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures, by demonstrating how inter-institutional collaboration can foster sustainable, inclusive, and culturally grounded social work education. This presentation will highlight an innovative Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project that brought graduate-level social work students from Auburn University (USA) and the University of Ghana (Ghana) together to explore culturally responsive social work practice with children and youth who have experienced trauma-related abuse and neglect. Presenters will share how they effectively used WhatsApp as a mobile-accessible low-bandwidth platform to facilitate student collaboration. This session will include a dynamic overview of the project design, student experiences, samples of WhatsApp dialogue, completed collaborative assignments, and lessons learned. The session will conclude with an overview of project outcomes that indicate increased student competence in intercultural engagement, social work ethics, and systems thinking. Presenters will also engage participants in a discussion on the practical implications of using low-tech tools to facilitate global social work education.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:
Identify key components of a successful COIL partnership focused on social work practice with children and youth and cross-cultural learning.
Analyze how WhatsApp and similar platforms can support international collaboration in social work education.
Appreciate how COIL projects can promote sustained global partnerships in social work education.

This presentation is targeted to social work educators and researchers, practitioners working with children and youth, and curriculum developers.

Child welfare and disability collaborations

Traci Laliberte[1]
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"Background

In 2022 a collaboration between the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the University of Minnesota (UMN) developed with the intent of creating a research and training center for child welfare (CW) practice. The result of the collaboration was the creation of the Child Research Initiative & Training center (CRIT), housed at UNAM's School of Allied Health, Psychology and Social Work, with focus on research, training, and practice.

Methodology
In 2022, Dr. Nashandi, who had previously studied with Dr. LaLiberte, at the UMN, where she runs the Multidisciplinary Institute for Child Welfare (MICW). The two engaged in bi-weekly calls to discuss both the technical and adaptive components of creating such a center, centering Namibia and its context and realities. Partners were identified and included in early planning for the center, including UNAM faculty and administrators, government partners, NGOs, and funders (including UNICEF). A 3-day kick-off conference was held with representation of all 11 districts in Namibia. Conference proceedings were transcribed and analyzed for themes to inform initial research, and training.

Findings/Outcomes
Disability knowledge and skill was the significant need for both research and training. As one of the first activities of CRIT, comprehensive, on-demand, online disability training was provided by Dr. Hewitt and her team at the UMN. Over 150 people have completed this training. Other outcomes include, strengthened partnership with the ministry/government, the elevation of the CRIT within UNMA to become a Center for Excellence, and formalized partnership with UNICEF who expressed specific interest in partnering on the CRIT's research agenda. The CRIT was also submitted by the Ministry and included as a flagship program in the national development plan 6 (NDP6) of Namibia (2025-2030).

Conclusions
The collaboration between these universities has proven to be wildly successful and is a model, both technically and adaptively, for other international collaborations."

Staying Home Under Fire: A Decolonial Perspective on Older Adults\' Attachment, Resistance, and Displacement in Arab Al-Aramsha

Dr Neveen Ali-Saleh Darawshy[1]
[1]Bar-ilan University, , Israel

Research on older adults affected by war often neglects cultural frameworks, collective identity, and Indigenous knowledge systems that shape coping and decision-making. This study examines the lived experiences of older adults in Arab Al-Aramsha—a Bedouin Arab village in northern Israel and the only Arab community forcibly evacuated during the 2023–2024 war. Despite exposure to violence and inadequate protective infrastructure, many older residents chose to remain or return, resisting displacement in ways that reflect deep-rooted attachments to land, community, and identity.
Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, interviews with 14 participants—those who evacuated, stayed, or returned—highlight the complex interplay between physical safety, emotional belonging, and cultural continuity. The home emerged not merely as shelter, but as a symbol of dignity, sovereignty, and historical rootedness. This case challenges dominant paradigms in social work that frame evacuation solely as a protective measure, calling instead for culturally grounded, decolonial approaches to displacement and trauma.
By centering Indigenous and Bedouin perspectives on place, spirituality, and resilience, the study contributes to broader conversations on decolonizing social work, addressing colonial continuities in crisis response, and strengthening the social service workforce through culturally attuned, community-led practices.

Early Autism Diagnosis and Access to Care: Understanding Barriers for Minority Children Under 5

Mrs Nancy Huerta Ramirez[1]
[1]Millersville University Of Pennsylvania, , United States

"<p class=""p1"">Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impairments across multiple areas of development, including social relationships, speech, and communication. Over the past several decades, global prevalence rates have risen significantly, with current estimates suggesting that approximately 43% of individuals meet diagnostic criteria for ASD (Jeong et al., 2021). In addition, individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders are three to four times more likely than the general population to experience co-occurring conditions and challenges in adaptive functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).</p>
<p class=""p1"">Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social, and emotional growth, underscoring the importance of timely ASD identification and intervention, particularly for children under the age of five (Dziak, 2024). Research consistently demonstrates that early diagnosis is associated with improved cognitive development, social skills, and better long-term outcomes, while delayed intervention increases risks for lower quality of life, heightened parental stress, anxiety, and isolation (Carballo et al., 2023; Rouhani & Hemati, 2024). However, early identification is not equally accessible to all families. Cultural factors, systemic inequities, and structural barriers disproportionately affect minority families, contributing to delays in recognition and service access (Zoppé et al., 2025). This conference session will present qualitative findings from minority parents whose children were diagnosed with ASD before age five. The session will highlight their lived experiences with early identification, the barriers encountered during service navigation, and the cultural and systemic challenges. Understanding these experiences is essential for improving equitable access to early ASD assessment and intervention and for strengthening child- and family-centered support systems. Objectives: Participants will (1) explain the developmental benefits of early ASD identification and describe challenges minority families face when navigating assessment pathways; (2) analyze cultural, social, and structural contributors to diagnostic delays; and (3) reflect on minority parents’ perspectives on early versus delayed intervention to inform equitable practice.</p>"

The Perivoli Schools Trust Research Project - Film Screening

Janet Ananias[2], Dr Vicky Sharley[1], Dr Elizabeth Ndeukumwa Ngololo[2]
[1]University Of Bristol, , United Kingdom, [2]Univerasity Of Namibia, , Namibia
This abstract makes a request for the authors to screen a 13-minute film about the research project. The short film amplifies the voices of community members within the three regions the research study was undertaken in Namibia.

The Perivoli Schools Trust (PST) is an educarer training programme which offers free training for early childcare and education professionals who support children aged 0-4 years old through centre-based provision. The programme began in Namibia in 2012 and has since been expanded to other countries in southern Africa. Namibia is ranked as a lower-middle-income country but has one of the most unequal distributions of income per capita in the world, with more than 43% of people living in poverty (NSA, 2021).

Whilst the PST programme is present in all of Namibia's 14 regions, it is more prevalent in rural and poor areas because of its strong focus upon the capacity building of staff and the sustainable use of waste materials to improvise teaching resources and activities in the absence of funding . The project connects closely with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 3/4/5 (good health and wellbeing, quality education, and gender equality) 12/13 (responsible consumption and production, and climate action), and the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development in promoting sustainable communities and environmentally sensitive development through sustainable human relationships (IFSW, 2012).

<This paper presents the findings (and screens the 13-minute project film from the 3-year collaborative qualitative study between the University of Namibia and the University of Bristol, UK. Interviews (n=74), Africa-centric talking circles (n=6) and creative arts-based workshops (n=6) were undertaken in six early years centres, with educarers, parents and family members, children and members of the community within three diverse regions in Namibia. Data was thematically analysed by academics from both partner institutions using a virtual platform.

Attachment Theory: A Primer from a Non-Westerner Perspective

Jose Carbajal[1]
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John Bowlby developed attachment theory, which was initially formulated within Western contexts and has significantly shaped our understanding of human development and interpersonal relationships. Attachment dimensions—such as a person with a secure style having a positive view of self and others, in contrast with insecure styles—are foundational tenets of attachment theory. Adult insecure styles are conceptualized as follows: a person with a preoccupied style tends to have a negative view of self and a positive view of others; a person with a dismissive style typically has a positive view of self and a negative view of others; and a person with a fearful style often holds negative views of both self and others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). However, cultural differences can shape how attachment is expressed, perceived, and valued across societies (Alareqe et al., 2022; Choate & Torterelli, 2022). Without accounting for and accepting these cultural differences, secure attachment and resilience may be misconstrued and not effectively utilized to support individuals—particularly in helping them leverage their strengths to proactively cope with adverse experiences. Furthermore, attachment theory has historically been applied in institutional contexts without adequate understanding of cultural norms and mores (Choate & Torterelli, 2022). This primer introduces the foundational concepts of attachment theory and explores its relevance and application from a non-Western perspective. By examining cultural norms, family structures, and caregiving practices outside the Western paradigm, this work highlights both the strengths and limitations of attachment theory in diverse settings. The primer aims to foster a broader, more inclusive dialogue that considers how attachment processes may differ across cultures, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of human connection.

Guiding the Guardians: Social Workers' Experiences of Supervision within a Child Protection Organisation in South Africa

Assoc Prof Priscalia Khosa[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa

"Supervision in child protection is distinct due to the complexity and high-stakes nature of the field. Social workers in this sector navigate statutory interventions aimed at protecting children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This study examines how the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa has been implemented within a child protection organisation. Using a qualitative research approach, the study explores social workers\' experiences in applying the framework through an exploratory, descriptive case study. Semi-structured telephonic interviews were conducted with 28 social workers employed in a designated child protection organisation in the Western Cape, South Africa. Data analysis was carried out using thematic content analysis with ATLAS.ti software for coding and data management. Findings suggest that the organisation in question serves as a model for best practices in implementing the Supervision Framework, adhering to its norms and standards. Despite the organisation\'s success in developing and enforcing a supervision policy aligned with the framework, challenges persist. This study advocates for a stronger focus on reflective and clinical supervision, both in South Africa and globally, to enhance the support and guidance available to social workers in child protection organisations."

Financial Stress and Psychosocial Wellbeing: Developing the Individual Financial Access Scale for Clinical Practice

Dr Julie Birkenmaier[1]
[1]Saint Louis University, , United States

Background: Social workers increasingly encounter clients facing financial stress, which directly impacts mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Financial access—the ability to own and use financial products like checking accounts—is fundamental to reducing poverty-related stress and promoting holistic health outcomes. However, existing measurement tools inadequately capture the multidimensional nature of financial access, limiting clinical social workers\' ability to assess and address this critical determinant of client wellbeing. A validated measurement scale can enhance clinical practice by providing standardized assessment tools that support comprehensive patient advocacy and holistic healthcare approaches.

Methods: Following established scale development procedures (Boateng et al., 2018), we conducted a two-phase study. Phase one involved content validation, domain identification, and item generation through expert consultation. We then surveyed over 1,000 respondents for initial testing, followed by item reduction and factor extraction. Phase two involved surveying over 4,000 respondents, conducting confirmatory factor analysis, examining reliability and validity, and using structural equation modeling and Item Response Theory to assess psychometric properties.

Findings: Two validated versions of the Individual Financial Access Scale (IFAS) were developed: 10-item and 14-item versions, both measuring three domains (Products, Institution, and Individual Ability/Actions). The 10-item scale demonstrated superior model fit (RMSEA=0.032, CFI=0.994, TLI=0.992) with strong factor loadings (>0.70), robust reliability (Composite Reliability 0.874-0.945), and validity (Average Variance Extracted 0.695-0.777). Standardized scoring tables convert raw scores to 0-30 point scales across domains.

Conclusions: The IFAS provides clinical social workers with a validated tool for assessing financial access as part of comprehensive health and wellbeing evaluations. By measuring clients\' financial environments alongside traditional clinical assessments, practitioners can better understand how financial barriers impact mental health and develop more effective, holistic intervention strategies that address both psychosocial and financial determinants of wellbeing.

Istos; A systemic community approach for children facing school exclusion due to family problems.

Prof Christos Panagiotopoulos[1]
[1]University Of Nicosia, , Cyprus

School social work plays an important role in maintaining children, who face difficulties, in school environments. However contemporary educational practices show a lack in understanding the rationale behind 'troublesome' youngsters. Nowadays problems such as drug use, antisocial behaviour within schools and severe family disruption make school attainment challenging.

Therefore, Cyprus Anti-Drug Council developed initiatives as to prevent these phenomena and consequently develop a network of community initiatives driven by social workers as to maintain children in schools but at the same time support school and families as to understand each other. Therefore a project called 'Istos' (Web in English) started its functioning 3.5 years ago consisting of school social workers, family therapists and other disciplines as to help children face challenges that make their presence in schools difficult and simultaneously support families and schools to realise that problems are multifaceted. Aim of the project is to develop a system, based on systemic approach, where all involved stakeholders work for the Child\'s Best Interest.

The project has supported over these 3.5 years more than 150 kids and supported schools across the country from the age of 11 until the age of 16. Criteria of inclusion (learning difficulties, severe psychiatric difficulties) exist in order to overcome service being overloaded by cases that do not meet inclusion criteria (drug dependence, antisocial behaviour, socio-economic family problems, family disruption).

Summarising, this article presents operational structure of Istos, challenges faced the past 3.5 years and success story.

From Policy to Practice: Advancing Social Protection for South Africa's Vulnerable Children Through the Foster Child Grant Programme

Dr Nokuthula Ngubane[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, , South Africa

"International conventions and charters recognize the right to social protection for children which many countries are signatories. In South Africa social protection of vulnerable children is seen as especially important due to their exposure to various social ills such as poverty, child abuse, orphanhood. The country offers a variety of social protection interventions for children, primarily in the form of social grants, including the Foster Child Grant, Child Support Grant, Child Support Grant Top-up, and Care Dependency Grant. This paper draws on a doctoral study which focussed on the experiences of foster parents in accessing the Foster Child Grant (FCG) in South Africa. The study employed a qualitative methodology, gathering data through in-depth interviews with 40 foster parents from four different local municipalities. The study findings indicate that under conditions of poverty, the FCG is primarily used by foster parents for nutrition, schooling, clothes, medical expenses and burial insurance. However, despite these favourable impacts, challenges were identified by foster parents in accessing the FCG. Some of the challenges include the lack of information regarding the application procedures and eligibility criteria, lack of required application documents and long waiting periods for application approval. These challenges impact on the distribution and access of the grant. The recommendations of the study include the need to revise the foster care grant programme accessibility and distribution procedures to improve its reach and impact. Other possible alternatives and/or complementing approaches could include: investments in community-based poverty alleviation programs. Achieving this shift will require comprehensive policy reform, increased funding, and strengthened multi-sector collaboration to ensure sustainable social protection for vulnerable children"

Reimagining Social Work: Letting go of Futures Past

Mrs Kristina Carlsson Stylianides[1]
[1]School Of Social Work, Lund University, , Sweden

"Imminent crises and the much-needed transition to a sustainable society bring knowledge about de-implementation to the fore. Using case studies with inspiration from process tracing, and with tools from Charles Tilly's theory on Durable inequality, we identify mechanisms that generate inequality and counteract the implementation of recovery – and strengthbased practices. Our case studies of social work with homelessness in Swedish municipalities, the prospective implementation of Housing First (HF) and the early implementation of Individual Placement and Support (IPS), show that there are recurring similarities in implementation barriers, despite differences in focus of methods and context. They generate knowledge of importance to an emerging critical framework for deimplementation. Such de-implementation knowledge has a strong potential as a practical tool in transforming social and mental health work"

Menstruation, Menopause

Dr. Sevaughn Banks[1]
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Diasporic African women\'s reproductive health is an important global health and wellbeing concern, yet often overlooked by the medical field. When combined with menstrual stigma and shame, the silence about menstrual health, hygiene, and management is deafening. Period poverty, a global phenomenon, impacting millions of women, exists when menstruators are unable to afford menstrual supplies, cannot address their menstrual hygiene adequately, and facilities such as public restrooms are unprepared or do not have the capacity that allows women to manage their periods with dignity. When these challenges occur, women are at higher risk for gynecological diseases and infections. As a solution, administrators, leaders, and policy makers must pull together to build institutions and laws that favor menstruating women. Menstrual friendly buildings and facilities will give menstruators the dignity they deserve. As a result, we envision seeing more girls and women who complete their secondary and post-secondary education. Women will no longer be ashamed to pursue employment in female and male dominated fields when institutions are responsive to their needs.

On the other end of the reproductive spectrum, when women experience perimenopause, menopause, or post menopause, they are misdiagnosed and mistreated by medical doctors. Millions of women suffer in perimenopause and menopause. Their vasomotor symptoms may include night sweats and hot flashes. Physical symptoms include weight gain, pain, hair thinning, and cognitive and mood changes such as anxiety and depression. Menopause is also shrouded in stigma and shame.

It's time to lift the veil off these taboo subjects – menstruation and menopause - and participate in global healing about two naturally occurring reproductive health topics and women’s reproductive health education is necessary. This workshop bridges discussion of first menses and menopause. Social work health and wellness educators must practice harambee while providing biopsychosocial assessments and treatment to a global audience of menstruators.

Doctoral Education in Social Work: U.S. Models, International Comparisons, and Future Directions

Prof Elizabeth Lightfoot[1]
[1]Arizona State University, , United States

This workshop will provide an overview of doctoral education in social work and social welfare in the United States, with attention to how U.S. models compare to those in other countries. The workshop is designed for social workers, educators and program leaders who are interested in doctoral education as program directors, developers of new programs, mentors or prospective students.

In the workshop we will discuss the two primary forms of U.S. doctoral education: the PhD in Social Work or Social Welfare and the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW). The PhD is research oriented and prepares graduates for careers in scholarship, research, and academia. It typically includes two to three years of structured coursework in research methods, statistics, theory, and policy, followed by independent dissertation research. Most PhD students receive funding for their studies tied to teaching or research assistantships. The DSW is a practice doctorate designed for experienced professionals seeking advanced training in leadership, teaching, and applied scholarship. DSW programs are most often part time, oriented toward working practitioners, and usually self-funded. Attendees will learn about the admissions processes for both types of programs. PhD programs generally seek applicants with a master's degree in social work or a related field, research experience, and clearly articulated research interests, while DSW programs prioritize substantial practice experience and leadership potential.

The session will also introduce findings from a national study of GADE-affiliated PhD curricula, illustrating the strong emphasis on research methods relative to theory, policy, and ethics. In addition, participants will explore how the U.S. model, with its focus on coursework and professional socialization, differs from doctoral education in other regions.

The workshop will conclude with discussion of the future of social work doctoral education internationally and implications for program development and plenty of time for questions.

Beyond Theory: How AI and Digital Simulations Can Prepare Health and Social Service Professionals for Workplace Violence

Dr Luce Pretorius[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa

"Workplace violence is a persistent challenge across health and social service professions, with global studies estimating that 40–75% of workers experience verbal aggression, threats or physical assault. In South Africa and other African contexts, violence is intensified by resource shortages, overcrowded facilities and strained service systems. Yet most graduates enter practice with limited preparation for real-time aggression, as current curricula rely heavily on theory and do not replicate the emotional intensity or rapid decision-making required in crisis situations. This conceptual paper examines how AI-driven simulations, virtual reality (VR) and digital learning tools can strengthen workplace violence training and prepare students for high-risk encounters. Aligned with the conference theme of , the analysis positions safety training as a collective responsibility across disciplines, institutions and professional bodies. Using Walker and Avant's concept analysis framework and a thematic synthesis of existing literature, policy documents and global case studies, the paper identifies three core insights. First, AI-generated aggression scenarios can strengthen reflexive decision-making and confidence by allowing repeated, low-risk practice. Second, VR-based simulations enhance emotional regulation and situational awareness, supporting learners in managing escalating behaviour. Third, blended models that integrate digital simulations with problem-based learning improve knowledge retention and real-world application. The paper also considers ethical and practical factors relevant to African institutions, including digital inequality, resource constraints and the need for safeguards against algorithmic bias. Recommendations include embedding digital safety training into competency-based curricula, investing in staff development and aligning simulation-based training with professional regulatory standards. By advancing a technology-enhanced, practice-oriented approach, this work contributes a scalable model for preparing future practitioners to manage workplace violence with confidence, ethical awareness and practical skill."

Reimagining Document Analysis in Social Work: Developing an Adapted Applied Thematic Analysis Model for Policy Texts

Dr Luce Pretorius[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa

"Policy and institutional documents play a decisive role in shaping the environments in which social workers practise, learn and deliver services. Yet methodological guidance for analysing such texts remains inconsistent, with most analytical tools designed for narrative or interview-based data. This creates a gap between the forms of data social workers frequently encounter and the methods available to interrogate them. This presentation introduces a conceptual, adapted model of Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) designed specifically for analysing policy, organisational and regulatory documents within social work. The model reworks established ATA procedures by integrating key principles from interpretive policy analysis, critical discourse theory and institutional ethnography. It responds to a clear need within African and global contexts for methodological tools that recognise the political, historical and institutional layers embedded within written policies and guidelines. By aligning with the conference theme of , the model positions document analysis as a collaborative and accessible approach to democratising knowledge production. The conceptual framework includes four stages: (1) contextual mapping to establish political and institutional positioning; (2) surface and structural reading to identify dominant narratives, silences and contradictions; (3) systematic coding that accommodates both inductive and deductive lenses; and (4) interpretive synthesis that links findings to practice, policy reform and education. While conceptual, the model is grounded in existing South African policy landscapes related to social worker safety, workforce development and education. The presentation outlines the conceptual foundations of the model, its intended application, and its potential contribution to strengthening analytical capacity across academic, organisational and governmental levels. The approach offers a practical, replicable tool for countries seeking to understand how written texts shape power, decision-making and frontline practice."

Performative Gratitude – A Barrier to Understanding the Needs of Older Immigrants Experiencing Homelessness in Canada

Dr Kaltrina Kusari[1], Dr Christine Walsh
[1]University Fehmi Agani Gjakova, , , [2]University of Calgary, , Canada

Houselessness among older adults (50+) in Canada is growing due to a rapidly aging population and a lack of affordable housing. Recognizing this, critical gerontologists emphasize the importance of intersectional examinations of older people experiencing homelessness (OPEH). Specifically, little to no research to date has examines factors impacting the well-being of OPEH, who are also immigrants to Canada. As ageism, settlement challenges, and racism/xenophobia intersect to impact the experiences of this population, it is important to critically engage with this intersection. Thus, we designed a cross-Canada community-based participatory study of homelessness and housing insecurity in later life which aimed to engage older adults with lives experiences of housing insecurity. In this presentation we focus on insights gained from qualitative interviews with 22 immigrant OPEH living in homeless shelters in Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal. Our study identified three core themes: Delivery of care and its reception by older migrants, the role of comparison in shaping perceptions of shelter/housing programs, and performative gratitude. While participants often expressed deep appreciation for housing provisions, this gratitude was shaped by past trauma, social norms, and the structural silencing of critique. Study findings reveal how expressions of thankfulness may serve as both a survival strategy and a barrier to service improvement, masking unmet needs and reinforcing systemic marginalization. In this presentation, we interpret these dynamics through a postcolonial lens and call for a reconceptualization of housing support systems - from sites of charity to spaces of rights-based, culturally responsive, and participatory care. The proposed presentation concludes with practice and policy recommendations to support more equitable housing solutions for immigrant older adults.

Integrating Human Rights into Social Work Education: Perspectives from Students and Educators in Croatia

Antonija Petričušić[1]
[1]University Of Zagreb Faculty Of Law, , Croatia

"Human rights have been increasingly recognised as central to the identity and practice of the social work profession. Scholars have consistently conceptualised social work as a human rights profession (Sousa-Meixell et al., Thomas, 2020; Ife, 2012; Mapp et al., 2019; Reichert, 2011), while key social work profession documents affirm human rights as foundational to social work education and professional ethics. Despite this normative framework, the actual integration of human rights education into social work curricula varies significantly across countries.

This paper explores how human rights and the rights of marginalised groups are taught to students at the Social Work Department of the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, and assesses how human rights education contributes to the professional formation of future social workers in Croatia. Using qualitative methodology, including semi-structured interviews with students and educators, the study analyses how human rights principles are embedded in courses, fieldwork, and pedagogical practices. Special attention is given to the ways students understand and engage with human rights discourse, and how they perceive its relevance to their emerging professional identities.

Research findings suggest that while human rights content is present across the curriculum, its depth, coherence, and pedagogical delivery vary considerably. Students report that human rights-oriented teaching enhances their awareness of structural inequalities, social justice and cultural diversity, all competencies essential in addressing contemporary challenges such as discrimination, inequality, poverty, migration and democratic erosion. In addition, the research reveals barriers, including curricular fragmentation, and insufficient opportunities for experiential learning rooted in rights-based practice.
By situating the Croatian case within broader debates on innovation in social work education, such as co-creation, inter-professional collaboration, and democratising knowledge production the paper highlights avenues for strengthening human rights education to better prepare socially responsive, ethically grounded, and globally minded social work professionals."

Analysis of the program for assisting homeless people in Uruguay

Soledad Camejo[1]
[1]Udelar-fs-dts, , Uruguay

"In Uruguay, the homeless population has been steadily increasing since the first count in 2006. It is currently one of the biggest problems of social deprivation in the country.

To address this phenomenon, a national program was created for the first time in 2005, which, with some modifications, continues to this day under the name of the Program for the Care of People Experiencing Homelessness. Since its inception, it has offered housing and assistance alternatives, as well as a range of services that complement the material aspects of the program. However, the program\'s objectives have not been fully achieved. Namelythe “planning of strategies aimed at the progressive autonomy of people” and “aiming to avoid the continuation of the street process” (public tender specifications).
Based on documentary analysis, a literature review, and, primarily, access to the perceptions of those who perform the caregiving task, we identified four dimensions that account for1) A limited and insufficient amount of human and material resources,2) A program organization designed for the short term, which has effects on the type of relationships that are established.3) As a corollary, a management that violates those who attend (and those who assist).4) A strong need to reclaim the encounter, the warmth in fraternal and affective bonds, as that from where the intervention by those who must carry out the work of assistance is attempted to be framed.
The points above are fundamental elements and indicate an imminent need to rethink social policy aimed at homeless people in the country.

Social work content podcasting: A short but rich and impactful history

Mim Fox[1]
[1]University Of Wollongong, ,

Social work content podcasting has been shown to be a significant contributor to the modern educational delivery landscape, providing a forum for social work students globally to engage with social work practice and research directly. Although podcasting has a short global history, in Australia the impact of this innovation has been evident. Through podcasting a diverse virtual community has been established allowing for collective critical reflection and professional reflexivity. Co-production of podcasting has been shown to bring together social work's capacity for community inclusion, minority voices to be heard, and professional advocacy to be engaged in. This presentation explores the capacity for a diversity of student and practitioner perspectives to be represented in social work education by playing audio clips and highlighting the dialogue between hosts and the social work students and practitioner listeners. PodSocs, the Social Work Stories Podcast, Social Work Discoveries and Social Work Teach are presented as podcast case studies with contributions to social work practice, research and education. Moments of engagement are demonstrated in each podcast through listener comments on social media, audio and narrative techniques. This presentation will speak to the history of social work content podcasting in Australia, as well as to the capacity for social work educators, practitioners and researchers to be engaging in podcast production. Capacity building through tips and tricks will be discussed, alongside lessons learned by the presenters who are also podcast hosts and producers.

Forests, Conservation Policies and Tribal Communities: A Comprehensive Study of Development, Rights and Displacement in India

Prof Keshav Walke[1]
[1]Matru Sewa Sangh Institute Of Social Work, Nagpur, India, , India

"Forest-dependent tribal communities in India have historically maintained symbiotic relationships with natural ecosystems. However, colonial forest policies, post-independence development programmes, and conservation initiatives such as Project Tiger have significantly altered this relationship. These changes have contributed to large-scale displacement, livelihood disruption, and erosion of customary rights. This research paper examines the historical evolution of forest governance, the impact of forest and wildlife conservation policies on tribal communities, and the challenges of balancing ecological preservation with social justice. Drawing upon official reports, census data, and scholarly literature, the study highlights how legal frameworks such as the Indian Forest Acts (1865–1988), the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), and displacement under Tiger Reserves have shaped tribal lives. Findings reveal a persistent tension between conservation imperatives and human rights, ultimately calling for participatory, rights-based approaches to environmental governance."

Natural Disasters and Social Work Interventions: A Critical Indigenous Perspective

Mr Venesio Bwambale Bhangyi[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , Hong Kong

This presentation draws from a large PhD study that explores the co-production of an indigenous disaster management framework between public actors and disaster impacted communities. Drawing from Uganda as a case study, it explores how communities impacted by natural disasters have used indigenous knowledge and innovative local practices to guide community actions that safeguard lives and wellbeing. It also discusses how traces of historical colonial resource extraction, colonial land policy and land alterations for resource extraction, and contemporary infrastructure decay have conspired to destroy land and caused ecosystem imbalance that compound welfare failings in the face of climate disaster crises. The presentation will argue that current flood disaster in these communities are both a natural and man-made occurrence, highlighting an interplay between natural events and man-made issues rooted in colonial and present practices. The presentation will further argue that present statist disaster interventions that hinge on displacing people, loss of land, and loss of cultural connections are vigorously resisted and challenged by local communities. Using critical indigenous theory, I propose that the promotion of environmental justice anchored in indigenous green practices could restore ecosystem balance. The presentation will expose the dynamics of local environmental injustice - colonial land policies, post-colonial land practices, and contemporary disaster interventions policies of displacement. These disconnect people and the displacement from indigenous land becomes an unsustainable solution that does not create a balanced human-nature relationship. This argument contributes to social work knowledge for understanding community resistance to disaster interventions, informs reforms in social work disaster interventions, and escalates traditional indigenous disaster knowing to inform policy in disaster settings."

Exploring the underrepresentation of Black women in management and leadership in social work in the UK

Miss Christina Channer[1]
[1]University Of Bedfordshire, , United Kingdom

"This PhD research study examines the persistent underrepresentation of Black women in management and leadership within UK social work, this is situated within wider debates on governance, politics and social justice. Despite social work's professed commitment to equity and human rights, Black women remain significantly marginalised in senior roles, reflecting structural inequalities embedded in organisational cultures, political decision-making, and historical patterns of racialised and gendered exclusion. This study argues that meaningful transformation requires structural and institutional reform with the amplification and emancipation of Black women's voices in professional, academic and policy arenas.

This qualitative research study implements semi structured interviews with 25 Black women managers and leaders in social work in the UK. The interviews are analysed using thematic and narrative analysis implementing an inductive approach to identify themes and patterns and a deductive approach drawing on Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Black feminism. This theoretical framework centres the voice of Black women in the study and explores their lived experience as knowledge production, and considers the impact of historical perception of race and gender on the impact of contemporary practice to challenge White dominant narratives about prototypical managers and leaders. This study provides a counter story to develop equitable representation across the UK social work profession through the exploration of how Black women navigate management and leadership aspirations while negotiating systemic barriers and challenges and organisational dynamics that often undermine their progression.

Finally, this study examines how perceptions of management and leadership inform discrimination, prejudice, oppression and racism and shape narratives about Black women through stereotypes about their ability to manage and lead organisations. Ultimately, this study positions the advancement of Black women in social work management and leadership as essential for justice and equity to create a diverse and inclusive social work profession."

The Ethical-Institutional Structure of the CFESS/CRESS System in the Defense of Brazilian Social Work

Dr Reginaldo Franca Junior[1]
[1]Federal Universty Of Campina Grande, , Brazil

This abstract aims to reflect on the administrative and ethical-political organization of the social work profession in Brazil. It is a qualitative, bibliographical, and documentary study, grounded in the Marxist dialectical method. The creation of regulated professions in Brazil began in the 1950s, a period marked by the expansion of national capital, combined with the growth of universities and the development of technical and higher-level professions. Within this context of labor control, the State granted professional councils the prerogative to oversee and discipline liberal professionals whose practice may pose some degree of harm, thus constituting them as extensions of the State.

In the field of Social Work, the Federal and Regional Council of Social Workers was established in 1957, assuming responsibility for overseeing and regulating the profession of social workers throughout the national territory. In 1993 its designation was changed by Federal Law 8.662/93 to the Federal and Regional Councils of Social Work (CFESS-CRESS). The system is present in all 26 states and the Federal District, with 242,000 registered social workers.

As a federal autarchy, the CFESS/CRESS system is responsible for safeguarding the Professional Code of Ethics, guiding, disciplining, and monitoring professional practice, and functioning as Regional and Superior Ethics Courts, enforcing the legal prerogatives and professional principles of social workers across various areas of public and private social policies. Beyond legal matters, the CFESS/CRESS system aligns itself with the broader societal project of the working class, upholding an unwavering defense of human rights, deepening democratic processes, committing to the quality of services provided to society, and collectively constructing a new ethical morality in which freedom becomes substantive.

In an unequal society like Brazil, Social Work positions itself as essential in defending the class principles that guide professional practice toward the collective construction of a just and egalitarian society"

Social Work, Intersectionality, and Lived Experiences: Black Women in the Fight Against Poverty and Social Inequalities

Dr Nilza Rogéria De Andrade Nunes[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil
Here's a precise English translation of your text:

This work analyzes the role of Black women from favelas and peripheral communities as protagonists in producing collective responses to poverty, structural inequalities, and human rights violations in urban popular territories. From an intersectional approach, the study understands that race, gender, class, and territory intersect in the production of social vulnerabilities and, simultaneously, in the construction of strategies for coping and resistance.

Anchored in the frameworks of Black feminism, decolonial studies, and the critical production of Social Work, the work recognizes lived experiences as a central analytical category and understands popular territories as political, epistemological, and affective spaces. In these spaces, Black women act as community leaders and architects of collective care, mobilizing networks of solidarity and social technologies that sustain life in contexts of historical inequality and selective public policies.

The study engages with the ethical challenges of Social Work by problematizing the naturalization of poverty and contemporary forms of dehumanization that traverse racialized territories. The practices analyzed highlight an ethic of collective care that counters individualizing logics, asserting care as a political practice and a foundation for social justice.

The research values participatory approaches centered on attentive listening, the recognition of territorial knowledge, and the production of situated knowledge, acknowledging Black women as political and epistemic subjects. By highlighting their practices of community organization and mediation with the State, the study contributes to integrating lived experiences into Social Work and to the construction of social policies more sensitive to structural inequalities.

Finally, it is reaffirmed that addressing urgent social challenges requires recognizing the collective practices produced in popular territories as legitimate strategies of social transformation, guided by ethics, participation, and the defense of human rights.

Social Support Guidelines to enhance medication adherence among patients with mental disorders: Lagos State, Nigeria.

Dr Olabisi Eniola Oladipo[1]
[1]Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, Nigeria; Centre For Mental Health Research And Initiative, Lagos, Niger, , Nigeria

Medications are essential in treating mental disorders and achieving positive mental health outcomes. However, medication non-adherence remains a persistent challenge in many healthcare settings. Among patients with mental disorders, this challenge is often exacerbated by a lack of social support. This study developed social support guidelines that will be used by medical social workers to enhance medication adherence and strengthen social supports among patients with mental disorders in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four objectives, which explored the types of social support available to patients with mental illness, examined the influence of social support on medication adherence, explored existing social work interventions and developed practical guidelines for strengthening social support and medication adherence. A qualitative research design was employed, involving 48 purposively selected participants across two centres, including patients with mental disorders, informal caregivers and medical social workers. The study was conducted in four phases, comprising in-depth individual interviews with 20 patients, in-depth individual interviews with 20 informal caregivers, key informants' interviews with eight medical social workers and a final phase that brought together representatives of each participant group to collaboratively develop the guidelines. Data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and insights. Findings revealed that family members were the primary source of support, providing diverse types of support, including financial, emotional, informational and instrumental assistance that improved medication adherence. Gaps in existing social work practices were identified, particularly the absence of structured guidance for social workers in supporting medication adherence. The study highlights that social workers are integral members of the mental health team, and their interventions can help strengthen social support and improve medication adherence. The developed guidelines, therefore, provide an important framework to guide social work practice and enhance mental health outcomes among patients with mental disorders in Lagos State.

Indigenous and contextual social work and disaster research perspective in Nepal

Dilip Karki[1]
[1]University Of The Sunshine Coast, , Australia

This research sought to explore and examine about social work, disaster, and research perspectives in Nepal. Drawing on a social constructivist paradigm and a multiple case study design, the study collected data through in-depth interviews with participants recruited via inclusion criteria and snowball sampling. The findings highlight the existing gaps in disaster research in social work and how it impacts on education, practice, and policy. This further reveals the need for Nepali social work to comprehensively understand the disaster context, focusing on areas such as disaster marginalization, governance, and education. Therefore, this research proposes an indigenous and contextual social work and disaster research perspective for Nepal. Furthermore, the knowledge produced by this research not only fills the existing gap in Nepali social work research on natural disaster issues but also enhances the credibility of social work education and practice in this field, ultimately fostering disaster resilience to natural disasters in Nepal.

Bridging the Language Gap: A Multilingual Therapeutic Game for Emotional Communication in Mixed Cities and Diverse Populations

Mrs Daphna Loval-Lederer[1]
[1]Early Childhood Center, Ramla + Jerusalem Municipality - Social Services Department + Hebrew University Of Jerusalem (sc, , Israel
Background:

In Israel\'s diverse social reality, social workers often face significant communication barriers in \"mixed cities\" like Ramla and Jerusalem. Practitioners frequently treat children and families where no common language exists—such as Hebrew-speaking therapists working with Arabic-speaking children or migrant families. These barriers are particularly acute when addressing emotional well-being through play therapy.

The Intervention:
To address this, we developed a multilingual \"Memory Game\" centered on emotions. Using emojis and illustrations, the game features names of emotions in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, with phonetic transliteration. This allows therapists and children to pronounce terms in each other\'s languages, creating an immediate linguistic bridge. The tool was conceived by me, Daphna Loval-Lederer (as a project at the School for Peace, in Neve Shalom village) and co-developed with Mahmoud Abd El Nabi, a colleague social worker from East Jerusalem

Findings:
Field experience shows this tool fosters immediate engagement, allowing participants to learn emotional vocabulary in a playful, safe space. When finding a pair, players share personal experiences related to that emotion. Beyond its practical use, this Jewish-Palestinian professional collaboration serves as a vital model for partnership in conflicted realities

Session:
 We will discuss the game\'s development, share case studies, and conduct a hands-on workshop. We aim to demonstrate how play can transcend linguistic borders and facilitate emotional discourse in diverse therapeutic settings

Social work and disaster model in Nepal; A qualitative study’

Dilip Karki[1]
[1]University Of The Sunshine Coast, , Australia

"This research sought to broadly examine how the notion of disaster can be incorporated into Nepali social work education, practice, and research. It also sought to explore disaster-related social works\' standpoint, identify existing gaps, and simultaneously develop a conceptual model to shape the disaster knowledge as a foundation for informing these domains. Grounded in a social constructivist research paradigm and using a multiple case study design, data was collected through in-depth interviews with participants recruited through set criteria and snowball sampling. The findings indicate that entrenched systemic, structural, and institutional shortcomings severely constrain the foundation, scope and depth of scholarly inquiry into social work and disaster in Nepal. These limitations restrict not only the production of robust and contextual disaster knowledge but also weaken disciplines’ capacity to prepare graduates to address disaster marginalisation, inform policy, and strengthen context-responsive disaster resilience practice in Nepal. The resultant Social Work and Disaster in Nepal: A Model acts as an integrated and transformative force for the development of a disaster-informed social work discipline and professional practice in Nepal. Furthermore, the model substantially advances social work disaster perspectives in Nepal by bridging critical gaps in education, practice, and research; strengthening the profession and professional competencies; informing disaster policy; and supporting the building of disaster-resilient communities in Nepal. It also enhances the visibility of social work within national and international disaster management frameworks.

Work Mentalities and Trade Union Orientations amongst Social Workers in Germany

Mr Gian-Luca De Carlo[1]
[1]Otto-von-guericke University Magdeburg, , Germany

The past decade has been marked by the rise of right-wing populist parties and their electoral successes worldwide, with striking examples in Argentina, the USA, and Italy. Research shows that right-wing state control often leads to reductions in public social expenditure (Chueri 2020), creating additional challenges for working-class people who have already experienced downward mobility in recent decades (Moawald & Oesch 2024), or it triggers authoritarian transformations of democratic institutions (Levitsky & Way 2025; Kellner 2025). Yet the welfare state is also under pressure in countries not governed by right-wing populists (Chueri 2020). In Germany, where conservative parties lead the government, people face stricter migration regimes and increasingly repressive welfare policies (Vonk 2025), intensifying the need for social work. At the same time, social work—often publicly funded—faces deteriorating working conditions due to insufficient or withdrawn funding (Hollederer 2022; Ravalier, Allen & McGowan 2023). This “pincer crisis,” in which demand for social work grows while working conditions worsen, raises the question of trade union organization among social workers in Germany. Although several trade unions formally represent social workers, union density appears low in Germany and Switzerland (Heinz 2016; Kindler & Amann 2022), and research on this issue remains underdeveloped. To address this gap, we conducted a mixed-methods study examining both work mentalities among social workers and their attitudes toward trade unions. Our design combines an online survey among professionals and social work students (n = 250) with ten semi-structured interviews. Earlier contributions examined attitudes toward trade unions (Grobys & De Carlo 2026) and work mentalities (Grobys & De Carlo 2025). This paper investigates how these two dimensions are intertwined, offering new insights into the relationship between professional orientations and collective labor organization in social work.

From Margins to Mandate: Repositioning Social Work as a Transformative Global Actor

Dr Cath Hill[1]
[1]Lancaster University, Uk, , United Kingdom

"This paper explores how social work must respond ethically and strategically to the complex, converging crises shaping contemporary life. Climate disruption, forced migration, racialised inequality, and political violence now form an overlapping polycrisis, one that exposes the fragility of care systems and deepens harm for those already on the margins. Social workers increasingly face the consequences of this rupture: in the form of institutional distrust, systemic neglect, and the intensification of trauma that is neither acknowledged nor adequately addressed.

Drawing on two recent empirical studies, the paper traces how global ruptures manifest in localised, but structurally linked failures. The first study explores the experiences of young survivors of terrorism in the UK https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/beethedifference/. Despite the profound psychological toll, many received no professional support. What services were offered often failed to match developmental needs, arriving too late or in inaccessible forms. Survivors described a system that felt indifferent, even punitive, amplifying their trauma.

The second study examines Roma families' encounters with children's services in England. Their experiences of racialised surveillance, communication breakdowns, and bureaucratic opacity are not isolated cultural misalignments but symptoms of a wider regime of transnational marginalisation. Against a backdrop of post-Brexit uncertainty and historical racism, these families encountered a system that too often equated difference with risk, and culture with non-compliance.

Together, the studies reveal a profession caught between commitment and constraint. The paper argues for repositioning social work as a transformative global actor, one that confronts systemic abandonment, rebuilds public trust, and reimagines care as a practice of resistance, solidarity, and repair."

Harambee Begins with Children: Centering Nomadic Voices in Social Welfare

Mr Aman Semwal[1]
[1]Tata Institute Of Social Sciences, , India

"Social welfare systems claim to serve all children across the lifespan, yet are designed for settled, documented populations. What does it mean for nomadic children's futures? This study reveals how educational and welfare architectures systematically silence the political agency of Van Gujjar nomadic pastoral children in Mohand block of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Based on fieldwork (Oct–Nov 2025) with Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra (RLEK), the research employs a child-centred survey, participatory focus group discussions (FGDs), arts-based activities, teacher interviews and home visits, positioning children as active interpreters of the systems governing them. Grounded in Galtung's Structural Violence framework, the analysis examines how educational institutions entrench harm across multiple dimensions: epistemic violence erases nomadic knowledge; administrative violence renders families bureaucratically invisible; economic violence compels child migration over schooling; geographic violence through inaccessible school positioning. These mechanisms operate simultaneously across the lifespan, reproducing intergenerational poverty.

Van Gujjar children's insights illuminate how welfare systems designed for 'mainstream' populations systematically exclude nomadic families across the lifespan. Children articulate what barriers intersect — documentation, digital divide, nutritional insecurity — yet these voices remain systematically excluded from policy decision-making. This research demonstrates that Harambee (or pulling together) cannot succeed through consultation alone. By tracing how children's knowledge informed RLEK's proposals for digital learning spaces and school kitchen gardens, the study reveals that sustainable welfare systems demand genuine co-production: children alongside communities and practitioners, collectively reimagining social protection from childhood onward.

This study calls for Social Workers as facilitators of structural redesign that prioritizes nomadic realities, downward accountability to communities, and ensures recognition of children as knowledge-holders co-building the shared, sustainable futures. By adopting this stance, social work can honor Harambee principles and lead to reimagining welfare systems that protect and celebrate all childhoods across the lifespan."

HOPE for Sustainable Development: A Holistic Model of Vocational Education for Vulnerable Youth in Kenya

Dr Wanjiku Kaime[1]
[1]Mid Sweden University And House Of Plenty Foundation, , Sweden

"The House of Plenty (HOPE) Vocational Training Model is a holistic and community-based approach to empowering vulnerable and marginalised youth in Kenya. Developed from long-term research with street-connected children, the Model integrates practical training in ICT and business with performing arts, counselling, and spiritual support. The Institute provides its education free of charge and is located within a displaced rural community, ensuring accessibility for youth facing socio-economic exclusion.

This study aims to describe the HOPE Model as a pedagogical, psychosocial, and community-based framework for youth development; and to examine its contribution to individual transformation and structural opportunity creation for disadvantaged youth in Kenya.

A mixed-methods design was used. Quantitative data were collected through a digital survey with 500 former and current students, capturing indicators of empowerment, skills acquisition, confidence, resilience, and transitions into employment, entrepreneurship or further education. Qualitative data (N = 50) included narrative reflections, semi-structured interviews, and life-mapping exercises with students and instructors and a focus group discussion with six community members. Qualitative analysis applied reflexive thematic analysis.

Preliminary findings show that the HOPE Model contributes to significant psychosocial and educational gains. Over 85% of graduates transition into employment, entrepreneurship, or further education. Performing arts contribute to trauma healing and increased self-worth; counselling and spiritual support strengthen motivation and emotional wellbeing; and participatory teaching methods enhance agency and goal-setting capacity. Stakeholder narratives indicate that the Model also supports community regeneration by enabling youth to become local change agents.

The HOPE Model expands vocational training beyond technical skills, positioning it as a holistic and context-responsive framework that addresses both structural and individual barriers to youth development. Its integrative design offers a scalable model for inclusive education, poverty reduction, and youth empowerment within the Sustainable Development Goals.

Facilitators: Model Developer/Researcher, School Principal, Two Former/Current Students

MARCHA DAS MULHERES NEGRAS 2025: o que ensina para a universidade brasileira?

Mrs Priscila Beralda Moreira De Oliveira[1], Mrs Daniela Cristina Augusto Campos[2]
[1]Puc/sp, , Brazil, [2]Doutoranda Pela Pontificia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil
"With this theme, we aim to reflect on the precarious nature of social workers\' jobs in African countries within the complexes that dictate the North-South global relationship, through bibliographic, exploratory, and qualitative research, based on all discussions surrounding political economy and its relationship with social work.

The crises of the capitalist mode of production that occurred due to economic depressions between 1873 and 1896; followed by those that began in 1929 and lasted essentially until the end of World War II, and those that spanned the period from 1970, worsening in 2008, dictate the events that Mészáros (2002) emphasizes: there is no capitalism without crisis. Through the movements that express these crises, the capitalist system, since the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), has touched on new geographies that should contribute to the functionality of the new phase of capitalism: monopoly capitalism.

It is at this mature stage of the capitalist system that the geopolitical and economic contradictions of the African peripheries are most evident in the North-South global dichotomy, which has in fact been touched upon since 1494 in the Treaty of Tordesillas by Portugal and Spain, a phase of mercantilism and the European commercial revolution in which the project of Westernization of the world was outlined.

It is in this geopolitical and economic configuration of the African peripheries that the valorization of the African workforce, and especially of social workers, will be fraught with a set of precarious objective and subjective working conditions in social policies, with the overexploitation of labor dominating this space due to the ways in which the global south is being exploited or dominated by the global north. This is dependent capitalism installed on the African continent, whose implications dictate economic, political, ideological, and social forms of domination and exploitation of African peoples by capitalist centers."

Exploring internationalisation for decolonisation of social work in a globally connected world.

Dr Sharlotte Tusasiirwe[2], Ms Kana Matsuo[1]
[1]Japan Women\'s University, , Japan, [2]Western Sydney University, , Australia

Debates on the internationalisation of social work education have historically centred on student mobility, international field placements, academic exchanges, scholarships, and cross-border collaborations. While these initiatives have expanded global visibility, far less attention has been directed toward the internationalisation of the curriculum the space where epistemologies, power, and pedagogical priorities are shaped. This presentation draws on empirical evidence from a multi-country study conducted in Australia, India, Fiji, and Japan to examine the extent to which social work curricula reflect international perspectives amidst rising student mobility and the growing prevalence of international placements in these contexts. Findings reveal both innovative models and persistent gaps in embedding global, Indigenous, and culturally grounded knowledges into teaching and learning. By foregrounding the curriculum as a critical site for decolonisation, this study invites deeper reflection and action on how social work education can more meaningfully prepare practitioners to navigate a complex, interconnected world while resisting the reproduction of colonial hierarchies. The presentation will offer practical pathways for advancing curriculum-level internationalisation that is ethically grounded, contextually responsive, and aligned with global social justice commitments.

Ethnic Tourism as Strategy for Social Development?

Karin-Ulrike Nennstiel[1]
[1]Hokusei-Gakuen-University, , Japan

While structural continuities from the era of formal colonialism have been discussed at least since the 1960s, research on the material and visible remnants of colonial rule in the Global North only began to gain ground around the turn of the 21st century. Now, in many places, street names and statues honoring often particularly brutal colonizers or their military have moved to the center of public debate, yet in many cases only minor changes can be achieved in reality. Other remnants seem scarcely to be recognized as such by most people, and are sometimes even promoted by social workers and recommended to Indigenous people in the name of

In the paper I want to throw light on one of these features in the context of popular tourism. Social workers encourage tourism as a strategy for poor people in remoted areas, primarily in the Global South, to earn cash without having to leave their community and to move to the city. Critical analysis, however, unveils similarities between this instrument and the practices of the in the 19 and early 20 centuries.

Methodologically, the historical part is based on documents and scholarly literature, while the contemporary part relies primarily on field studies and on the analysis of tourist advertisements and guidebooks.

From culture to practice? Measuring what inclusion means to learners with disabilities in Ghanaian mainstream schools using Ainscow’s four dimensions of inclusion.

Edward Asamoah[1]
[1]Kwame Nkrumah University Of Science And Technology-knust, Ghana, , Ghana
"Purpose. The inclusion of learners with disabilities, particularly at the early childhood levels, remains a central policy goal globally; however, evidence on how children with disabilities perceive inclusion across different school domains remains limited. In a Ghanaian context, this study examined the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and perceived inclusion among children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Methods. Guided by Ainscow’s index of inclusion dimensions, we surveyed a cross-sectional gender-diverse quantitative sample (N=214) of in-school children with disabilities from four districts in Ghana’s Ashanti region. Descriptive analyses and multiple logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess the perceived extent of inclusion and the role of sociodemographic characteristics.

Results. The descriptive analysis revealed that CWDs rated their inclusion across the four dimensions as: inclusive culture (2.79), inclusive values (2.87), inclusive resources (2.65), and inclusive practice (2.73). The results also showed significant variations across the inclusion dimensions. Female learners reported consistently higher levels of perceived inclusive cultures and values than their male counterparts. While younger learners reported lower access to inclusive resources, the older learners revealed higher perceived inclusive practices. Also, school level was associated with differences in perceived inclusive culture and values. Additionally, compared with learners with mobility impairments, learners with hearing, intellectual, and visual impairments reported higher odds of perceiving inclusive culture, values, and all dimensions, respectively.

Conclusion. The results highlight uneven implementation of inclusive education and underscore the need to move beyond policy rhetoric toward developing targeted, context and demographic-sensitive, intersectional approaches to inclusive education in mainstream schools. School Social Workers should be engaged in inclusive mainstream schools to strengthen the practice and advocacy for accessible resources and supportive school transitions, while contributing to the adoption of appropriate gender, developmentally, and disability-responsive interventions that address uneven experiences of CWDs.

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Hope Groups Amidst Poly-Crises: An Evidence-Based, Global and Community-Led Model to Prevent Violence Against Children in War, Displacement, and Humanitarian Crises

Nicole Baldonado[1]
[1]Global Hope Groups Collaborative, ,

"
<p class=""paragraph""><span class=""normaltextrun"">Over two billion people live in countries affected by conflict, fragility, or violence. Escalating poly-crises of contagion, conflict and climate leave families vulnerable to violence. Displacement is at record highs globally, almost half of those displaced being children. Caregivers experience trauma, loss, poverty, housing instability, and stress of protecting traumatized children. Consequently, risks of child abuse and neglect increase, resulting in lifelong adverse effects on health, relationships, education, employment, and violence. Amidst displacement and war, social workers are essential for collaborating with affected populations and other experts, to develop, monitor, scale, and sustain community-led interventions that strengthen families and protect children. <span class=""eop"">Hope Groups are<span class=""normaltextrun""> 12-session psychosocial, caregiver support groups co-designed by Ukrainian caregivers affected by war and displacement, with Ukrainian and international social workers and multi-disciplinary experts. They utilize flexible, community-led, and low-cost implementation, critical for providing support in crises. Hope Groups have randomized trial evidence (publication under review) among 510 participants of 65% improvement in caregiver hopefulness and resilience (<span class=""normaltextrun"">95% Confidence Interval 46·9%, 87·3%)<span class=""normaltextrun"">, 54% decrease (-65·1%, -48·5%) <span class=""normaltextrun"">in violence against children, and 56% decrease in child behavioral issues (-64·5%, -46·0%)<span class=""normaltextrun"">.<span class=""normaltextrun""><span lang=""EN-GB""> Over 4,000 Ukrainians have participated in 13 countries, including frontline and military-occupied communities. <span class=""eop"">Demand for Hope Groups escalated rapidly; w<span class=""normaltextrun"">ithin 18 months of RCT results, they were adapted, implemented, and evaluated in Colombia, the Middle East, Sudan, and Chad. Pilots in Kenya and Uganda are ongoing. Our contextualized model is co-led with affected populations, leverages evidence-based mental health strategies, parenting skills and adaptation frameworks, and engages affected populations and local and global experts. Social workers are vital collaborators on advancing such sustainable models to strengthen vulnerable children, caregivers, and communities throughout the world, impacting large-scale change to protect children at risk.</p>

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Beyond Clinical Models: Comparative Analysis of Community-Embedded Psychosocial Care Frameworks in Malawi and Kerala, India.

Mr Felix Tehuti Kakowa[1]
[1]Midlands State University , , Zimbabwe

Aligned with the clinical social work, health, and well-being sub-theme, this paper presents a comparative analysis of how psychosocial care is organized, delivered, and sustained in two distinct Global South contexts: Malawi and Kerala, India. The research moves beyond a clinical, diagnostic lens to map the complex ecosystems of formal and informal PSS, examining the roles of families, community based organizations, traditional healers, and social workers.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including stakeholder interviews and community asset mapping, to answer a critical question: How do communities with limited access to formal mental health services build resilience and provide psychosocial care? Findings identify two robust, yet distinct, models. The Malawian model is heavily reliant on extended family structures and traditional leaders, deeply influenced by the philosophy of collective responsibility. In contrast, the model in Kerala demonstrates a higher integration of local self-government institutions, such as the Kudumbashree in Kerala, with community networks, creating a unique hybrid of formal and informal support.

This comparative analysis offers vital lessons for social work practice and education. It demonstrates that strengthening the social service workforce requires equipping practitioners to recognize, respect, and reinforce these pre-existing, community-embedded care frameworks. The paper provides a concrete model for developing PSS strategies that are not only accessible and sustainable but also inherently empowering and culturally coherent."

Higher Education as a Social Right in Brazil: Between Historical Achievement and the Persistence of Inequalities

Mr Marcos Guilherme Pereira Salgado[1]
[1]Universidade Estadual De Montes Claros, , Brazil

"Education, within the Brazilian legal framework, is recognized as a public and social right, as established by the 1988 Federal Constitution and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB). Higher education is included within this right and is conceived as a fundamental instrument for human development, the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work. However, despite its legal recognition, access to and permanence in higher education remain marked by profound social inequalities.

Historically, higher education in Brazil was developed late, in an elitist and exclusionary manner. From the Imperial period until the early 20th century, access was restricted to socially privileged groups, particularly the economic and political elite, reinforcing the unequal nature of education. According to Cury (2007) and Bianchetti & Sguissardi (2017), the first higher education courses were designed to meet the needs of the Portuguese Court and the aristocracy, reflecting utilitarian and mercantile influences.

Only with the process of redemocratization and the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution did higher education come to be recognized as a social right. This achievement was the result of intense collective struggles, led by social and student movements, demanding democratization of access, policies for student retention, and social justice. In this context, affirmative actions, such as quota policies implemented from the 2000s onward, emerged as mechanisms to confront historical inequalities.

Nevertheless, structural challenges persist, compromising the full realization of this right. The commodification of education, insufficient public investment, and weaknesses in student assistance policies hinder the retention of students in socially vulnerable situations. Understanding the historical trajectory of Brazilian higher education is thus essential to reaffirm its emancipatory role and to strengthen the struggle for the consolidation of education as a universal, equitable, and socially grounded right."

Peacebuilding as Core Business: The Triple Mandate in Glocal Social Work

Dr Sharon Schneider[1]
[1]Deakin University, , Australia

Social work is a profession and a discipline that engages individuals, families, and communities in local settings while remaining structurally connected to processes that move across borders. Homelessness, exclusion from asylum, school failure, or climate related loss are rarely only local events. They are local expressions of global causal mechanisms embedded in market and state orders. Peacebuilding is therefore a core professional task wherever these systems generate direct, structural, or cultural violence that obstructs human need fulfilment and violates human rights. Yet the international literature on social work and peacebuilding remains conceptually dispersed and tends to blur empirical explanation, ethical judgment, and professional strategy.

This presentation maps how peacebuilding is conceptualised and operationalised in international social work and translates this evidence into steps for action. The synthesis uses the triple mandate and W-questions to clarify what peacebuilding is, why it is required, who acts and with whom, where and when cross border peace work occurs, with what knowledge and resources it is pursued, and how interventions can be designed to interrupt, weaken, or replace the causal mechanisms that systematically block need fulfilment and violate human rights.

A scoping review of peer reviewed studies in international social work and conjugate disciplines was undertaken. Records were searched, screened, charted, and thematically synthesised, then mapped to the triple mandate and W-questions.

Peacebuilding is framed as multi-level practice addressing direct, structural, and cultural violence in transnational contexts. Recurring mechanisms include securitised welfare, border militarisation, marketisation of social goods, and climate injustice, each generating predictable mandate conflicts.

From these findings an action sequence follows: describe concrete harms in context, explain the mechanisms producing them, evaluate them against universal needs and human rights, design strategies that shift the mechanisms through case, community, institutional, and policy work, then observe system responses and revise action through empirical evidence.

Dreaming the MSW: The On/Off-the-Ground Cohort Model for Transforming Advanced Social Work Education

Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov[1]
[1]Thompson Rivers University, , Canada

Traditional MSW programs contradict social work's commitment to accessibility and justice. Geographic barriers concentrate advanced training in urban centres. Financial barriers exclude working professionals who cannot abandon employment. Rigid structures force students into singular career tracks. These barriers perpetuate workforce shortages across child welfare, healthcare, community development, policy, and Indigenous services while delaying career advancement for experienced BSW practitioners. This presentation introduces the On/Off-the-Ground Cohort Model a complete MSW program architecture that removes these barriers while maintaining CASWE-ACFTS accreditation standards and preparing graduates for diverse career pathways.

The model's architecture comprises five integrated learning streams spanning 36 credit hours. "Advanced Foundations" establishes identity, assessment, and ethical practice through two courses: "Developing Self" (personality theories, human development, clinical research) and "Diagnosis and Assessment" (psychopathology and critical-social work practice). "Psychotherapy and Professional Practice" builds intervention capacity through, "Designing Solutions" (clinical psychotherapy) and "Defining Ethics" (professional ethics and social change). Advanced Research, Policy and Systemic Inquiry develops macro practice through Dismantling Oppression(critical AOAP counselling theories and macro research) and Doing Justice (AOAP social policy for diverse populations). Practicum and Applied Learning integrates theory with practice through Delivering Results and Dreaming Impact seminars or students may elect the thesis pathway for research-focused careers. Finally, Critical Practice Options offers dual pathways: therapy-focused students complete Deepening Connections(family therapy) and Driving Change(group therapy), while students pursuing policy, administration, or community practice customize through independent study and electives.

Grounded in twenty years of MSW curriculum development this presentation demonstrates how institutions can establish new MSW programs or transform existing ones within eighteen to twenty-four months compared to typical four to six year development timelines. This framework embodies Harambee all pulling together by enabling universities and communities to collaboratively prepare advanced practitioners who remain connected to the communities they serve.

Climate Crisis & Recyclable Material Collectors: Unveiling Existing Socio-Environmental Implications

Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
[1]Puc-rio, , Brazil

"This study presents partial results from the ongoing research titled “Climate Crisis and Recyclable Material Collectors: Unveiling Existing Socio-Environmental Implications” and builds on the work conducted between 2022 and 2025 through the project “Analysis of the Socio-Environmental Law and Its Impacts on the Inclusion of Recyclable Material Collectors” (CNPq PQ Fellowship No. 306655/2021-7). The research aimed to analyze the importance of the work performed by these workers, who prevent tons of waste from becoming additional contributors to the climate transformations observed worldwide. Despite their crucial role, their work is often undervalued and, in many cases, not officially recognized by environmental agencies. According to ABREMA, approximately 90% of the waste supplied to industry comes from cooperatives, highlighting the significance of these professionals.

This study seeks to present findings that emphasize the socio-environmental impact of recyclable material collectors and contribute to the development of public policies aimed at reducing environmental impacts through their work. These actions promote social and environmental justice, strengthen inclusion, and help mitigate factors that exacerbate the climate crisis.

In this context, the communication emphasizes one of the guidelines of Brazil’s National Solid Waste Policy (PNRS/2010), which establishes shared responsibility among manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, and recyclable material collectors for the proper disposal of products and packaging. The study demonstrates that these efforts effectively contribute to reducing pollutant emissions and mitigating the climate crisis."

Recyclable Material Collectors' Cooperatives and Recycling Credit: Can This Be Viewed as a Path to Sustainable Development?

Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
[1]Puc-rio, , Brazil

This communication presents research results analyzing the technical capacity of recyclable material collectors' cooperatives in Rio de Janeiro and Duque de Caxias, supported in Phases I and II of the General Packaging Sector Agreement, signed in November 2015 between the federal government and the packaging industry. The study focused on equipment, volume, sorting, and commercialization of recyclable materials, in light of Federal Decree 11.413/2023, which established recycling credit in Brazil.

The decree places these workers—key socio-environmental actors—at the center of actions; however, for effective participation, cooperatives need to operate fully: not only commercializing materials and issuing invoices but also monitoring waste transport and tracking whether materials return to the production chain rather than being improperly discarded. The objective is not only to enforce the principles of shared responsibility and polluter-pays but also to activate the circular economy cycle and ensure materials effectively re-enter productive chains.

Given that many cooperatives still lack sufficient investment and working capital to implement new practices, government support is crucial to help them restructure and integrate into the market with the capacity to participate sustainably in solid waste management, as prescribed by Brazil's National Solid Waste Policy (PNRS/2010).

Harambee for Ukraine: Sustaining Solidarity Through Weekly Vigils, Academic Partnerships, and Diaspora Community Organizing

Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov[1]
[1]Thompson Rivers University, , Canada

Since February 2022, when Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, a small Canadian city has maintained an unbroken chain of weekly Stand with Ukraine vigils. This presentation examines the social work dimensions of sustained solidarity activism, drawing on four years of community organizing experience in Kamloops, British Columbia, and exploring how diaspora communities can mobilize sustained support while navigating compassion fatigue, political complexity, and the challenges of maintaining visibility for ongoing crises.

Born in Lviv, Ukraine, and having immigrated to Canada in 2004, this presenter brings both personal connection and professional social work analysis to questions of diaspora mobilization, transnational solidarity, and the role of social workers in political action. The presentation traces the evolution of Stand with Ukraine vigils from emergency response to sustained community practice, examining how weekly gatherings create space for grief, hope, education, and collective action.

Beyond street-level organizing, this presentation explores academic partnership-building with Ukrainian universities, the development of international conferences on Ukrainian values, and the creation of scholarship funds supporting students who stand with Ukraine. These interconnected initiatives demonstrate how social work\'s commitment to social justice translates into concrete action during ongoing war.

Grounded in the Harambee philosophy all pulling together this presentation invites global solidarity and examines how social workers worldwide can sustain attention to ongoing wars while building democratic societies. Participants will explore strategies for maintaining activist momentum, building cross-cultural coalitions, and integrating political social work into professional practice.

Social Work within the Public Defender’s Office: The experience of the Rede Apoia project in promoting access to justice for mothers and relatives of victims of state-inflicted lethal violence.

Mrs Daniela Cristina Augusto Campos[1]
[1]Doutoranda Pela Pontificia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, , Brazil

"The Public Defender’s Office (DP), established in the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution and created in the State of São Paulo by State Law No. 988/2006, after social movements fought for access to justice, has become a key institution to the judicial function of the State. Its purpose is to ensure full and free legal assistance—individual or collective, judicial and extrajudicial—to those in need. In 2010, with the creation of the Multidisciplinary Service Centers (CAMs), social workers and psychologists became part of the DP, improving services in the social and psychological fields, strengthening coordination with public service networks, and promoting rights education.

Social Work within the DP is configured as a strategic space for guaranteeing rights, engaging in dialogue with legal knowledge and, through professional practice and technical production, directly influencing the lives of people who seek assistance or who are selected by the justice system. In this context, the Rede Apoia Project stands out. Created by the DP in July 2022, and incorporating Social Work in April 2023, it emerged as a response to mobilizations by movements of mothers and relatives of victims of lethal State violence, especially the Mães de Maio Movement. Its objective is to support families experiencing political grief due to the violent deaths of young Black and peripheral individuals, victims of violence perpetrated by State agents. The work involves practices of qualified listening, referrals to public service networks, and multidisciplinary follow-up.

The presence of social workers in this field contributes to expanding access to justice and strengthening efforts to confront racial violence reproduced by the Brazilian State, which has yet to implement public policies for reparations to these families. Professional practice is marked by an ethical and political commitment to the working class—especially the Black and impoverished population—confronting institutional racism and discriminatory practices inherited from colonial slavery."

Working in the margins: Reclaiming social work practice with highly stigmatized offender groups in Finnish prisons

Tia Vanne-Lindström[1]
[1]Talentia Union Of Professional Social Workers, , Finland

This presentation examines the marginalized and often invisible domain of social work with individuals convicted of sexual offenses in Finnish prisons; an area marked by extreme stigma, ethical complexity, and persistent professional avoidance. While Nordic penal policies emphasize rehabilitation, both international desistance research (e.g., McNeill) and empirical studies on treatment of sexual offending indicate that sustainable change is inseparable from stable relationships, social recognition, and dignity; elements systematically weakened in carceral settings.

Drawing on practitioner-generated data, reflective case analysis, and emerging observations from frontline practice as a senior instructor (erityisohjaaja), the presentation critically analyses how institutional cultures, risk-dominated frameworks, and structural stigma constrain trauma-informed, relationally grounded social work. Consistent with established evidence (e.g., Ward & Maruna's Good Lives Model), findings suggest that current systems inadequately address core human needs that underpin long-term desistance, thereby compromising both rehabilitation outcomes and community safety.

Foregrounding human rights, professional ethics, and the politics of stigma, the presentation advances a bold argument: reclaiming social work's critical, humane mandate in carceral environments is essential for any credible vision of sustainable reintegration. Aligned with the theme "Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures," it calls for collective professional responsibility, stronger advocacy, and a reimagining of practice that centers dignity precisely where it is most contested.

A Critical Feminist Evaluation of Kenya's National Action Plan for the Advancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security

Dr Jocelyn Hermoso[1]
[1]San Francisco State University, , United States

United Nations Security Council enacted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (WPS) in 2000 to recognize the importance of bringing in a gender perspective to peacemaking through increased women's participation in official peacemaking efforts, supporting women's initiatives to create a culture of peace, and by underscoring women's contributions to ending conflict. The resolution is operationalized through National Action Plans (NAPs) which detail the particular priority areas of national governments in terms of women, peace and security. Kenya enacted its first National Action Plan for the Advancement of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (KNAP I) in 2016 . KNAP I's operated around the pillars of participation and promotion; prevention; protection; and relief and recovery. Kenya has crafted succeeding NAPs, Kenya National Action Plan (KNAP II) 2020-2024 and Kenya National Action Plan (KNAP III) 2025-2029. KNAP I and KNAP II focused on institutionalising women's participation in decision-making, strengthening the participation mechanism for women and girls, and enhanced partnership between government, civil society, and development partners. Both KNAPs localised these efforts through the establishment of County Action Plans (CAPs). KNAP III centers on addressing peace and security challenges including violent extremism, climate-related conflict, political transitions, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. This paper will analyze the KNAP III using an intersectional and critical feminist policy analysis model that connects peacebuilding with gender justice. The KNAP III will be appraised in terms of three elements: policy gains (gender justice), civil society gains (stronger constituencies), and democracy gains (broadening spaces in the private and public spheres). Evaluating the KNAP III from the prism of critical and intersectional feminism allows for a more multi-dimensional analysis of violence and conflict.

Systemic Lessons, Emerging Gaps, and the Evolving Role of Social Work in Guyana’s Disaster and Child Protection Landscape

Mrs Dionne Frank[1]
[1]University of Guyana, , Guyana

May 21, 2023, is recorded in Guyana as one of its gravest modern tragedies, where a fire at the Mahdia Secondary School Girls’ Dormitory claimed the lives of twenty Indigenous children from remote communities. Following the fire, our team of researchers used a critical lens to interrogate responses, analysing reports in global news publications, which was supported a disaster response approach adopted after the 2019 tragedy at the Jamaica National Children\'s Home and the person-in-the-environment framework. Findings revealed that the initial response mobilised national grief and a rapid activation of state and non-state professionals, and structural weaknesses in the protection of institutionalised children from the hinterland and Indigenous populations. These findings were corroborated in the outcome of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (CoI) into the tragedy, which further revealed extensive systemic failures, inadequate fire-safety infrastructure and an under-resourced regional fire service.

More than two years after the Madhia tragedy, reports revealed the ensuing legal actions, stalled relief fund distribution, and ongoing concerns from affected families, which further compound and perpetuate the grief experienced and the need for change. The work reported in this paper revisits the Madhia tragedy. It presents an updated analysis through a critical social work lens, integrating technical reports, legal briefs, and local online and print media coverage. The evolving national climate is also analysed, the persistent implementation gaps following the CoI’s recommendations are highlighted, and the social implications for Indigenous communities whose children depend on state-run dormitories for educational access are deconstructed. It concludes by identifying priority areas where social workers in Guyana can lead, such as strengthening institutional accountability, embedding trauma-informed and culturally grounded interventions, enhancing community participation in safety planning, and ensuring that national policy reforms translate into lived protections for vulnerable children.

Community-driven partnerships, UN80, SDGs, eco-social practice, people\'s assemblies, human rights

Sue-Ann Macdonald[2], Ms Evelyn Tomaszewski[1]
[1]International Federation Of Social Workers, Un Commission, , United States, [2]Université De Montréal And Ifsw Representative, , Canada

"The UN80 Initiative, the global push to meet the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and the impact of international conflict, climate change, global trade and migration call for commitment to partnership, engagement, and for the co-design of new solutions. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 has been challenged by issues ranging from global crises (pandemics, conflicts and displacement) and economic uncertainty to governance issues (wavering commitments, gaps in data, and lack of engagement of civil society). A deeper understanding of community led development, of peoples assemblies and living with nature are key themes for governance and social workers to co-learn. Globally, social workers strive to effectively and collaboratively engage with the United Nations and UN Agencies to foster the creation of new eco-social contracts. This global commitment and objectives to forward the SDGs are practiced daily by social workers across communities and countries committed to working for social, economic, and environmental justice through practice and policy initiates; countering systemic oppression and discrimination that hinder human rights.

The IFSW UN Commission, works to increase visibility of social workers globally through engagement directly with the United Nations and UN Agencies. Panelist will highlight how the IFSW UN Commission members work to bridge and co-build visibility of social workers as critical stakeholders within civil society, academia, governance, and the private sector. Through highlighted UN meetings (e.g., Expert Group Meetings and Regional Forums, UN High Level Political Forum) and interventions (Statements, Parallel/Side-Events), presenters will review the processes and possibilities for social workers to have impact on policy. There will be an opportunity to dialog about the work of the IFSW UN Commission and share promising partnerships and opportunities for growing social worker engagement in promoting equitable, inclusive, innovative and community-driven partnerships to forward the goals of the 2030 Agenda."

Black Women\'s and the Power of Harambee in Higher Education Retention

Dr Lashawnda Fields[1]
[1]University Of Arkansas, , United States

"Rooted in the Swahili concept of Harambee— “all pull together”—this presentation focuses on Black women’s mentoring practices in higher education as an essential form of collective care, solidarity, and shared responsibility within social work education. Despite the profession’s declared commitments to social justice and equity, in predominantly White institutions, Black women scholars still face racialized and gendered exclusion. In response, Black women have long enacted Harambee through relational practices that sustain one another’s persistence, productivity, and well-being.

Drawing on a duo ethnographic study, this presentation examines the lived experiences of two Black women social work scholars and the formal and informal mentoring relationships that facilitated their success across multiple career stages, including staff roles, doctoral education, adjunct teaching, tenure-track faculty positions, and senior leadership. Guided by Black Feminist Thought and intersectionality, mentoring is conceptualized as a culturally grounded, collective strategy for survival, resistance, and thriving within exclusionary academic systems.

Findings highlight four interconnected themes: (1) the significance of integrated formal and informal mentoring networks; (2) mentoring as a catalyst for concrete academic results such as research productivity, professional visibility, and career advancement; (3) the importance of long-term, sustained relationships rooted in trust and accountability; and (4) an ethic of “paying it forward,” whereby Black women mentors intentionally cultivate pathways for future generations. These practices exemplify Harambee in action, demonstrating how shared labor and mutual responsibility promoted resilience and collective success.

Centering Black women’s mentoring labor, this presentation contributes to global conversations on sustainable shared futures in social work education. It challenges institutions to move beyond symbolic commitments to equity and instead recognize, resource, and protect the collective practices that already sustain marginalized scholars. Participants are invited to consider how Harambee-inspired mentoring models can be adapted across global contexts to strengthen social work education, promote professional sustainability, justice, and cooperation."

Microfinance and women’s economic empowerment: A comparative study of ‘SuSu’ schemes across rural and urban communities in Guyana

Dr Dianna DaSilva-Glasgow[1]
[1]University Of Guyana, , Guyana

Microfinance schemes are regarded as an innovation in capital markets, allowing for increased access to financing, particularly for sub-groups considered risky borrowers in formal capital markets. While formal microfinance schemes have been useful in circumventing the structural barriers that women have traditionally faced in formal financial markets, there has been an informal arrangement that has quietly complemented formal microfinance schemes. The 'SuSu' or ‘Box Hand’ has a deep and rich cultural and historical relevance to Guyanese and Caribbean women. The language is borrowed from West Africa but the scheme is essentially a rotating savings and credit association (ROSC). It has served as a cultural practice across women in Guyana seeking to achieve financial empowerment, particularly women of African descent. This research explores how informal microfinance schemes contribute to women’s economic empowerment in Guyana, through an investigation of ‘SuSu’ schemes across rural and urban communities in Guyana. The research applies a mixed method approach that entails a non-probability survey conducted among women members of 'SuSu' schemes based on purposive sampling; as well as in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with 'SuSu' groups. Data collection for both was supported by a ‘call for participants’ issued across various social media platforms. The research reinforces the utility of 'SuSu' schemes across various demographics of women in Guyana, including women in low skilled and public sector jobs, both in supporting savings, as well as supporting investments requiring small capital outlays. The 'SuSu' is expected to persist in its relevance and utility even as the financial market in Guyana evolves. However, it is important to consider the role of policy in regulating such associations for the benefit of all members.

From Dispossession to Decolonization: Climate Activists\' Relational Ethics in South Korea\'s Energy Frontier

Dr Eunjung Lee[2], Yoon Jung Chung[1]
[1]Ohio State University College Of Social Work, , United States, [2]University of Toronto, , Canada

The energy industry is characterized by multifaceted power dynamics encompassing geographical contestations over resources, asymmetrical relationships between energy producers and consumers, and territorial politics of extraction. Energy colonialism illuminates how persistent colonial structures within the energy sector perpetuate territorial and resource dispossession, explaining not only extractive relationships between economically advanced nations and resource-rich developing countries but also domestic power asymmetries within national borders, while raising ethical questions for individuals who benefit from energy produced by regions forcefully shaped as energy frontiers. This study examines climate activists\' efforts to disclose power relationships of energy colonialism and adapt alternative philosophies to reclaim colonial relationships with local residents in Samcheok, South Korea\'s primary energy production hub and site of the country\'s most recently constructed coal-fired power plant. Based on the authors\' activist-scholar positionality, this research combines field work experience and interviews with six youth climate activists working in Samcheok, each interviewed for one to two hours. Findings reveal that Samcheok\'s long history of energy colonialism and its path dependency limited regional development beyond the energy industry, devastating the environment and fostering a sense of helplessness among local residents. Focusing on historical contexts interacting across multiple systems—including built and natural environments, communities, and individuals—climate activists\' primary approach centered on restoring and reimagining relational ethics. This encompassed not only recovering from community conflicts derived from economic compensation surrounding coal-fired power plant construction, but also expanding ethical boundaries toward nonhumans such as destroyed beaches and harmed animals, while inviting younger generations to engage with Samcheok\'s energy history. Understanding a region\'s political, environmental, relational, and historical contexts proves crucial for amplifying local resistance voices, as communities long targeted by colonial logics often struggle to act independently from these entrenched historical imprints, necessitating interventions within a decolonization framework.

Integrated Farming: Sustainable Development for Small-Scale Farmers

Sanjay Fulkar[1]
[1]Kumbhalkar Evening College Of Social Work, Nagpur, India, , India

"Integrated farming is a holistic agricultural system that combines multiple farm components such as Crop Farming, Dairy Farming, Poultry Farming, Goat/sheep Rearing, Fish Farming, Agroforestry composting and Vermicomposting and Biogas Production. For small-scale farmers who face limited land, unpredictable climate, and low incomes integrated farming offers a sustainable pathway for improving productivity, food security, and environmental quality.

Through recycling of resources, reduced dependency on chemical inputs, and efficient use of land and water, this system enhances profitability while conserving natural ecosystems. The model strengthens climate resilience, creates year-round employment, and ensures long-term agricultural stability. Thus, integrated farming has emerged as an effective strategy for sustainable development among small-scale farmers.

Integrated farming is essential for sustainable development in Small Scale Farming as it ensures economic viability, Environmental Production and social well-being, it help farmers achieve higher productivity, stable income and long term sustainability, making agriculture more resilient and Profitable.

Integrated farming provides sustainable and economically viable agricultural model for small-scale farmers. By combining crops, livestock, fisheries, agroforestry, and other enterprises, it maximizes productivity while minimizing waste and resource use. The system enhances soil health, conserves water, increases income, and builds resilience against climate change.

In regions where small-scale farming dominates, integrated farming is not just an option—it is necessity for long-term sustainability and rural development. With proper training, government support and community participation. Integrated Farming Systems can transform agriculture into a more productive, environmentally soun, and livelihood-enhancing sector."

Reconsidering International Internship: Ethical, Pedagogical, and Postcolonial Reflections

Dr Linda Sjåfjell[1]
[1]Nord University, Norway, , Norway

Norwegian higher education policy strongly promotes internationalization, encouraging institutions to provide opportunities for students to study abroad. At our faculty, social work students can apply for five-month internships in countries in the Global South, framed as experiences that enhance professional, cognitive, and emotional development. These programs are often presented as offering unique insights into poverty and cultural diversity, yet the dominant perspective remains student-centered, emphasizing benefits for future professional practice.
This paper critically examines whether such arrangements risk reinforcing structural inequalities and perpetuating a divide between the Global South and the West by positioning host countries primarily as sites for Western knowledge acquisition. The research question guiding this study is:
How can international internship programs for social work students be designed to promote equitable and reciprocal collaboration between the West and countries in the Global South?

Drawing on empirical data from student reflection papers, interviews conducted before, during, and after internships in the Global South, and conversations with local supervisors, the analysis identifies a need for more comprehensive pre-departure preparation and post-return support. Key recommendations include integrating postcolonial theory, providing cultural and historical knowledge of host countries, and strengthening collaboration with local supervisors. Such measures can help ensure that internships contribute not only to individual student development but also to mutual understanding and recognition of diverse approaches to global social work.

At the intersection of care and control: Harm reduction, Managed Alcohol Programs, and Cultural Adaptation

Dr Rossio Motta-ochoa[1]
[1]University Of Montreal, , Canada

"Background: In settler-colonial contexts such as Canada, Indigenous Peoples have long been subject to spatial and social control, from confinement on reserves to overrepresentation in carceral and institutional systems. Today, while over 60% of Indigenous people live in urban areas, they continue to face disproportionate levels of homelessness and alcohol-related harms. Managed Alcohol Programs (MAPs)—which offer housing and controlled doses of alcohol—respond to these intersecting challenges. Though initially designed for non-Indigenous populations, MAPs are increasingly accessed by Indigenous users and, in some cases, run by Indigenous-led organizations. Yet little is known about how these programs are culturally adapted within institutional, urban settings.

Objectives: This article explores how cultural adaptation is practiced, experienced, and contested within Montréal's first Indigenous-led MAP. It focuses on how residents and staff navigate tensions between cultural adaptation and perceived forms of control.

Methods: Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork—including participant observation and informal interviews—this study followed a participatory research approach and was guided by Indigenous principles of relationality, reciprocity, flexibility, and respect.

Results: Cultural adaptation efforts provided moments of connection and safety. However, tensions between cultural adaption and control raised at moments when MAP rules and regulations were enforced, cultural differences created conflict, and use of health services was required. Residents' resistance to follow certain rules, to voice their cultural needs and to refuse health service use were understood as a form of unruliness or embodied resistance to be governed by the external power of institutions.

Conclusion: This study contributes to ongoing conversations about decolonizing interventions in social work by highlighting the importance of grounding culturally adapted MAPs in Indigenous self-determination. Recognizing unruliness not as a problem but as a form of resistance, negotiation, and endurance points to the need for more flexible, community-led models of care."

Reframing Youth Economic Empowerment in Kenya: Challenges, Gaps, and Strategic Opportunities

Mr Timothy Okatta[1]
[1]Catholic University Of Eastern Africa, , Kenya

"Youth economic empowerment remains a central pillar of Kenya's development discourse; driven by the country's youthful population and the potential demographic dividend it presents. However, despite numerous policies, programs, and investments targeting youth employment, entrepreneurship, and skills development, many young people continue to face persistent unemployment, underemployment, and economic insecurity. This paper reframes youth economic empowerment in Kenya by critically examining the key challenges, structural gaps, and emerging strategic opportunities shaping youth economic participation.

The paper draws on policy analysis, secondary data, and existing empirical literature to interrogate the effectiveness of current youth empowerment frameworks. It identifies major challenges, including misalignment between education and labor market needs, limited access to finance and productive assets, weak institutional coordination, and the marginalization of vulnerable youth groups such as those in informal settlements and rural areas. The study further highlights gaps in policy implementation, monitoring, and sustainability, as well as the tendency toward short-term, fragmented interventions.

Adopting a rights-based and social development perspective, the paper argues that prevailing empowerment approaches often overemphasize individual effort while underestimating systemic economic constraints. In response, it outlines strategic opportunities for advancing youth economic empowerment, including strengthening skills-to-employment pathways, expanding inclusive financing and digital economy opportunities, fostering public–private partnerships, and enhancing meaningful youth participation in policy and economic decision-making processes.

The paper concludes that reframing youth economic empowerment requires a shift from rhetoric to action, moving toward integrated, inclusive, and sustainable strategies that address both structural barriers and youth agency. Such an approach is essential for translating Kenya's youth potential into equitable and long-term economic growth."

Digitalizing social work services in rural communities: opportunities and limitations

Dr Thabisa Matsea[1]
[1]University Of Venda, , South Africa

The digitalization of social work in rural communities is crucial for overcoming geographical barriers and enhancing service delivery. Digital tools can transform social work service delivery, providing new opportunities for engaging with clients. This study examines the opportunities and limitations of digitalizing social work services in rural communities. The study employs a comprehensive literature review and digital transformation of social work practice across various nations. The findings show that digital technologies are making it easy for social workers to manage complex caseloads, streamline administrative tasks, and provide more personalised and efficient care. They make social work services more accessible to clients who live in remote areas. However, integrating digital technologies into social work practice may result in obstacles that must be overcome. Digital literacy among both staff and clients may be a barrier to the effective implementation of digital tools in social work services. The rapid adoption of digital technology may marginalize groups without access to or familiarity with digital platforms, thereby creating a digital divide that exacerbates inequities by leaving people who cannot access digital services behind. The use of digital technologies can also compromise ethical standards. For instance, ethical considerations, particularly those related to client confidentiality, remain a critical issue. This paper emphasizes technological readiness as a critical driver of digital transformation in social work services, recommending the integration of digital technologies in the social work curriculum to produce technology-ready practitioners.

Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words).

100 Years of Social Work Resistance: Responding to Alt-Right Movements Across the Americas[

Prof Fabiola Leal[1]
[1]University Of Espirito Santo - Brazil, , Brazil

"The increasing crisis of neoliberalism and financialization has impacted globally on social work, alongside the communities that it seeks to support. Rising precarity and insecurity are driving increasing uncertainty, which along with the political scapegoating of “others” has promoted and accelerated the promotion of far-right discourse, retrogressive policy and legislative responses, and a turn towards more authoritarian state policy and funding. This paper explores this through the lens of the Americas. Recent state and federal changes have attacked diversity, equity, social justice, and inclusion, pillars of the social work profession. Grant restrictions, attacks on curricula and academic freedom, and increased hostility toward many minoritized groups, social work has reached a point of tension in different countries with different reactions. While these recent changes have caused panic among social work faculty in the United States, social work faculty across the Americas have actively resisted alt-right regimes for the past several decades. Using a narrative autobiographical approach, this article explores acts of collectivism, organization, and resistance among seven social work faculty across USA (Texas), Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. We collect, analyze, and synthesize seven narratives from faculty in the Americas who have actively spoken out and organized against policies and practices that harm the clients and communities we serve. Together, these narratives highlight challenges and tensions that unite social workers across borders and provide paths forward for the discipline. Leveraging the unique contexts of each country and individual, we map a path of solidarity and resistance for the discipline to reestablish its radical roots and commitment to to anti-capitalism, anti-oppression, anti-racism, combat fascism and defense of social justice as we look to the future of the profession."

Understanding Intersectional Competencies for Social Work in Disaster Risk Management

Mr Robert Koglek[1]
[1]Management Centre Innsbruck / Austria, , Austria

"Social work practice is increasingly shaped by complex global challenges, including climate change, disasters, and widening social inequalities. Within disaster risk management (DRM), these challenges generate layered forms of vulnerability that unfold across the interconnected cycles of prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. While social work contributes to DRM in various contexts, its role remains unevenly recognised and inconsistently integrated, and existing discussions of professional competencies provide limited guidance on how intersecting inequalities shape disaster risk, response, and recovery.

This paper examines how intersectional competencies are currently conceptualised within social work literature related to disaster risk management. It constitutes the first paper of a PhD project and is based on a systematic–narrative hybrid literature review on DRM, disaster social work, intersectionality, and structural vulnerability. The review focuses on how competencies are defined and discussed, and where conceptual gaps or ambiguities remain in relation to social work's engagement across the DRM cycle.

The analysis draws on Nancy Fraser's multidimensional approach to social justice and selected concepts from Michel Foucault's work on power and governance. These perspectives are used to examine how disaster risk management processes shape who is recognised, represented, and able to participate across the DRM cycle, and how professional practices may reinforce or challenge structural inequalities. In doing so, they provide a conceptual basis for identifying the dimensions of competence required for socially just and inclusive social work practice in DRM.

While global policy frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction emphasise inclusive disaster risk governance, intersectionality remains weakly operationalised within social work competency discussions. The paper highlights the need for further conceptual work towards a globally relevant intersectional competency framework for social work in disaster risk management, contributing to debates on professional standards, education, and practice in the context of complex global risks."

The E-learning project on the Global standards for social work education and training

Annamaria Campanini[1]
[1]IASSW, , South Africa

"In this workshop-style presentation we bring three key factors to the fore: (1) a brief overview of the IASSW's Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (GSSWET), (2) the e-learning project that emanated from the GSSWET, and (3) we invite peer participation is reviewing the implementation of the e-learning project. The emphasis of this presentation will be on receiving feedback from peers in understanding the relevance (i.e. alignment to global priorities in social work education), coherence (i.e. how does this fit in with existing standards) and effectiveness (is the GSSWET achieving its stated objectives) related to the GSSWET e-learning project. Thus, we rely on a results-chain perspective to explore the inputs (resources), outputs and outcomes (feedback and who is using the GSSWET), and impact (is there any change in understanding or aspiring to the content of the GSSWET). This feedback will be used to guide amendments to any revision of the 2020 standards so that it is relevant, sustainable and coherent in diverse contexts.

The presenters are all key collaborators on the existing e-learning programme, namely Prof Annamaria Campanini (former IASSW President), Prof Eric Wing-Hong Chui (Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Prof Varoshini Nadesan (University of Johannesburg)."

Codifying the Right to Universal Social Protection: Are Legally Binding Frameworks the Missing Link?

Dr Sergei Zelenev[1]
[1]Icsw, ,

Social protection responds to fundamental human concerns: survival, dignity, and the right to live free from fear and want. By protecting individuals against life-course risks—such as unemployment, illness, disability, and old age—it ensures access to essential services and income security while contributing to poverty reduction, improved health and education outcomes, social mobility, and reduced inequality. As such, universal social protection is indispensable for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10, and constitutes a core area of daily professional engagement for social workers.

Universal social protection refers to a system of guarantees and transfers that enables all individuals, irrespective of socioeconomic status, to live with dignity and security. It is not merely a residual policy instrument for the poorest, but a foundational pillar of human development, economic resilience, and social cohesion. However, the transition from fragmented, or crisis-driven schemes toward comprehensive and sustainable systems raises a critical question: does universal social protection require a legally binding normative framework?

This presentation explores the role of legal codification in advancing universal social protection. It examines how rights to income security and risk reduction can be embedded through constitutional provisions, framework social protection laws, sector-specific legislation, and justiciable social rights.

The author argues that legal codification need not imply rigid uniformity. Well-designed legal frameworks can accommodate progressive realization, fiscal sustainability, and contextual diversity while affirming social protection as a fundamental entitlement. Drawing on international social security standards and human rights instruments, the analysis highlights how legally grounded social protection systems can bridge “freedom from” insecurity with “freedom to” participate and plan. Ultimately, codifying rights to social protection can support a shift from reactive welfare responses toward preventive, inclusive, and well-being-oriented development strategies.

Israeli Women-Led Micro-Enterprise Model: From Marginalized Communities in Israel to a New Pilot in Malawi

Dr Dror Netzer[1]
[1]Be-atzmi Ngo, , Israel

"This presentation introduces a culturally attuned model for empowering low-opportunity women through the creation of sustainable micro-enterprises. Developed in Israel, the model has supported women from some of Israel's most marginalized populations, including Arab women in Umm al-Fahm and Jaljulia, ultra-Orthodox women in Jerusalem, and Bedouin women in Ar'ara in the Negev in Israel Across these communities, the initiative shows that economic empowerment is more than income generation. It represents a deep emotional shift—from dependency to agency, from silence to leadership, and from isolation to belonging. Many describe the program as "the first time someone believed I could succeed," underscoring the centrality of confidence-building in economic mobility.
The model is built on three pillars:
1. Culturally adapted entrepreneurship training in supportive group settings.
2. Year-long individualized mentoring through a coordinated "hand-in-hand" approach.
3. A wrap-around ecosystem linking government agencies, municipalities, businesswomen networks, and financing opportunities.
An external evaluation found high participant satisfaction and significant economic improvement. Over 55% reported increased business activity, demonstrating the model's effectiveness in strengthening business viability, family stability, leadership, and financial resilience.
The proven success of the model enabled its rapid expansion during the "Iron Swords" war, providing targeted support to approximately 3,00small business owners affected by the crisis.
Building on this success, a pilot women's entrepreneurship academy is now in planning and feasibility review with local partners in Malawi.
Like Israel's underserved communities, Malawi holds substantial entrepreneurial potential. Grounded in the same principles—economic skills, personal empowerment, long-term mentoring, and culturally sensitive facilitation—the Malawi program will be adapted to local realities, including rural livelihoods, mobility constraints, and market-access challenges.
This cross-continental collaboration reflects a shared belief: when women receive tools, trust, and community, they transform not only their economic futures but also the social fabric around them.

 "

The Unheard Voices: the Changing Landscape of International Aid and its impacts on community-led organisations working in Kenyan slums.

Dr Eric Kimathi[1]
[1]Department Of Global Development And Planning, University Of Agder, Norway, , Norway

In March 2025, I spoke with Anna (pseudonym), who leads a voluntary initiative in a major Kenyan city providing health and psychosocial support to people living with HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities, and those facing social exclusion. Her program ensures access to essential medication, counseling, HIV prevention campaigns, and nutritional support for vulnerable groups.

In February, similar to many grassroots organizations worldwide, Anna's organization was affected by the suspension of USAID funding following U.S. policy changes by President Trump. For aid-dependent countries such as Kenya, this has triggered severe disruptions in humanitarian and development programs. For example, local media recently reported a worsening crisis in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, which host over 700,000 refugees.

Despite these realities, there is limited documentation on how such financial shocks disproportionately impact community-led organizations, exposing systemic fragilities to global aid structures. Voices from grassroots actors like Anna, who work directly with marginalized populations and rely heavily on international support, remain underrepresented in global policy discourse. Yet, these organizations play a critical role in advancing global health initiatives, including HIV testing, treatment, maternal and child health, and prevention in underserved areas.

Grassroots perspectives are vital for understanding local consequences of global policy shifts. While funding cuts predictably affect program continuity, staffing, and service delivery, in-depth narratives of these challenges rarely surface, as media attention favors large international agencies. My presentation at The Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development will explore these dynamics, departing from the understanding that current aid realignments present an opportunity to re-examine localization in development practice and its implications for social work within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Financial Social Work as a Global Practice: Advancing the SDGs through Financial Capability and Asset Building

Dr Jin Huang[1]
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Financial Social Work (FSW) is emerging globally as a critical practice area within social work, responding to growing economic insecurity, inequality, and financialization of everyday life. Rooted in social work's person-in-environment perspective, FSW focuses on strengthening individual and family financial well-being while addressing the institutional, policy, and structural conditions that shape financial opportunities. FSW is grounded in the Financial Capability and Asset Building framework, which emphasizes the interaction between people's financial knowledge and skills and their access to inclusive financial systems and asset-building opportunities.

We present FSW as a global practice framework that advances financial well-being not only as an economic outcome, but as a foundation for addressing broader social challenges, including poverty, inequality, physical and mental health, family stability, and human development across the life course. We argue that FSW practice and FCAB are closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to poverty reduction, health and well-being, education, gender equality, decent work, and reduced inequalities. FSW offers a scalable and adaptable approach to advancing sustainable development across diverse national contexts.

The global development of FSW reflects an important trend in which the Global North and Global South work and learn together. Innovations in the Global South—such as integrating financial guidance into social protection systems, leveraging digital financial services, and mobilizing community-based service delivery—are increasingly informing practice and policy in higher-income countries. At the same time, asset-building and institutional approaches developed in the Global North are being adapted to varied development contexts, strengthening the global relevance of FSW and FCAB.

The paper concludes with a brief comparative overview of FSW and FCAB development in North America (the United States), Asia (China and Singapore), Europe (Finland), and several African countries, illustrating how FSW functions as a shared global practice agenda for advancing financial well-being and sustainable social development.

AI-Powered Digital Social Work: From Vision to Practice – Challenges, Workforce, Ethics and Professionalism

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The Jerusalem Welfare Department, with 1,200 professionals serving approximately 100,000 residents annually, faces heavy workloads, staff shortages, and manual documentation processes consuming over 50,000 work hours each year. Waiting times for critical services, such as custody evaluations, currently range from 7 to 12 months, causing delays in interventions for vulnerable families and contributing to high burnout rates. Additionally, one-third of staff are Arabic speakers, creating language barriers that significantly impact work quality.

The presented project aims to address these challenges by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into Jerusalem's welfare case management system. The solution will enable extraction and synthesis of structured and unstructured data, speech-to-text transcription, multilingual support (including Arabic), and automated drafting of professional reports according to standardized formats. This is expected to reduce writing time by at least 50%, shorten waiting periods, improve decision-making quality, and ensure professional consistency.

The presentation will cover the development and implementation process, as well as ethical and professional challenges in integrating AI into social work—such as safeguarding privacy, preventing algorithmic bias, and ensuring human oversight. We will also discuss maintaining professional judgment in a technological era and balancing efficiency with human sensitivity. In addition, global trends in digital social work will be highlighted: adoption of AI technologies to improve accessibility and equity, development of data-driven decision-making models, and implications for social work education worldwide.

Participants will gain practical insights into AI integration in welfare services and a model for scaling to other municipalities. Jerusalem's case contributes to the global discourse on digital transformation in social work while preserving core ethical and professional values.

Beyond the Classroom: Designing Short-Term Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Social Work Education

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Social work education prepares students to engage with marginalized populations, yet pedagogy often relies heavily on classroom instruction. To address this gap, we designed a one-day experiential learning field trip in Taipei for first-year undergraduate social work students. Participants were primarily Generation Z learners whose formative years during COVID-19 limited interpersonal interaction opportunities. Most came from non-capital cities as first-generation college students, reflecting structural economic and cultural disadvantages.

Supported by a university grant, the November 2025 field trip was jointly implemented by introductory psychology and sociology instructors. Approximately 70 students rotated through three community learning sites within a single neighborhood, addressing mental health stigma, socioeconomic vulnerability, and visual disability. Activities included viewing artwork from a mental illness clubhouse, exploring exhibitions curated by families experiencing poverty and domestic violence, and participating in disability simulation through temporary blindness.

Through qualitative analysis of post-trip reflection forms (with informed consent), we examined learning experiences and assessed the feasibility and acceptability of short-term experiential learning in undergraduate social work education. Findings indicate that experiential participation substantially exceeded lecture-based instruction in impact, particularly when engaging directly with marginalized community members. Learning progressed through three interconnected levels: sensory engagement via exhibitions, embodied perspective-taking through disability simulation, and relational learning through narrative exchange. Notably, the mental illness exhibition incorporated a Human Library model, enabling direct dialogue with individuals sharing lived experiences.

These layered experiences fostered empathy, critical reflection, and nuanced understanding of stigma and social exclusion while preparing students for future field placements. This study demonstrates how strategically designed experiential pedagogy effectively connects classroom learning with lived realities, offering a model for undergraduate social work education that addresses both pedagogical effectiveness and structural constraints while advancing inclusive education, promoting social cohesion, and developing human and social capital central to sustainable social development.

From Case to Cause: Politicisation in Social Work Practice

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"Across diverse welfare contexts, social workers face a shared paradox: while the profession is normatively rooted in social justice, practitioners often work within institutional systems that reproduce inequality and silence. In the Netherlands, for example, this is visible in (digitalised) welfare access and fragmented local policies. Elsewhere, legacies of colonial governance, donor-driven agendas, or authoritarian policymaking similarly constrain the capacity of social workers to address structural causes of social injustice. This creates tensions between institutional loyalty and moral responsibility for social workers.

This presentation draws on the early stages of a doctoral research project that investigates politicisation in social work as a way of addressing structural causes of social injustice. Politicisation is conceptualised as the deliberate reframing of social problems as collective and systemic, a process explored through Participatory Action Research conducted in collaboration with frontline practitioners. Based on two sub-questions (1) how social workers frame the social problems they encounter, and (2) how they reflect on their own role in reproducing or challenging structural injustice, this contribution examines how these framings shape their ability to act upon social injustice.

While grounded in the Dutch context, this contribution resonates with social workers globally who navigate similar institutional and moral tensions. This research aligns with the subtheme Social Movements, Political Social Work and Building Democratic Societies. It positions politicisation as a form of grassroots political engagement: relational, situated, and inherently democratic. In this sense, politicisation reflects the spirit of Harambee: a collective effort to confront injustice, reframe what is possible in professional practice, and sustain hope in the face of systemic adversity."

Productive Aging in Rural Contexts: Opportunities and Challenges for Elderly Artisans in Rural Tanzania

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While productive Aging is widely studied in Western gerontology, limited attention has been given to its meaning, opportunities and constraints in rural settings. This study explored productive Aging within the rural African context by examining the lived experiences of 18 elderly artisans engaged in handcraft work in Masasi district in Tanzania. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews to examine the opportunities and challenges that shape elderly artisans continued participation in handcraft activities. Findings revealed that productive aging for elderly artisans is less a voluntary engagement and more a necessity driven by poverty, cultural identity and absence of social protection. This is contrast to the Western understanding where productive aging is supported by strong institutions, health systems and inclusive policy frameworks.
Findings demonstrated that handcrafting provided elderly artisans with income for their livelihood, a sense of purpose, identity and community belonging while preserving cultural heritage and traditional skills across generations, and opportunity to mentor others and social recognition, and a digital online platform which offered new market opportunities while most elderly artisans lack the skills and tools to benefit. Despite these benefits, several challenges undermine sustained productive engagement, including exhaustion due to physical demand of handcraft work, weakening of the handcraft profession, limited market for selling handcraft products, shortage of capital, seasonal availability of raw materials, and lack of formal and inadequate informal support.
These constraints threaten both artisans well being and the continuity of traditional handcraft profession. The study highlights the need for social work and community based interventions that promote intergenerational participation, enhance familial and institutional support and provide access to finance, training and markets to sustain the livelihood and contributions of elderly artisans in rural Tanzania. Such efforts are essential for advancing social welfare across the lifespan and supporting productive aging in rural African communities.

Preventing IPV in Crisis: A Collective Impact and Men's Engagement Approach from Israel

Dr Dror Netzer[1]
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"Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) consistently escalates during periods of displacement, economic instability, collective trauma, and armed conflict. Since October 7, 2023, Israel has experienced a marked rise in IPV. A rapid-response study by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (2024) found that families under financial, displacement, or security stress experienced increased IPV levels. Similarly, a national analysis by the Michal Sela Forum (2024) recorded a 39% increase in femicide during the first months of the crisis, alongside sharp surges in calls to helplines and social services. These trends underscore the urgent need for prevention systems that remain functional under high stress and prolonged emergency conditions.

This presentation introduces Drawing the Lines, a national multi-sector partnership led by Sheatufim – The Collective Impact House. The initiative convenes more than 100 partners from government, philanthropy, civil society, academia, local authorities, and the business sector to strengthen Israel's IPV prevention ecosystem through systemic change rather than isolated programs. Its core strategic pillars include:

(1) engaging men as partners in prevention through culturally attuned models.
(2) enhancing early detection across frontline systems.
(3) equipping bystanders and natural helpers with trauma-responsive tools to intervene safely; and
(4) supporting communities in developing crisis-ready infrastructures for identifying and responding to IPV risks.

The initiative integrates Collective Impact governance with crisis-responsive methodologies tailored to wartime realities, ensuring that prevention efforts remain active even when services are strained and communities are disrupted.

As this national model progresses, a structured evaluation process is being conducted to better understand its implementation and emerging influence. Data is being gathered to inform future refinement of the initiative's crisis-responsive strategies. Insights from this ongoing learning process—rather than finalized outcomes—will be shared at the conference."

“The relevance and inseparability of Community Social Work in the face of emerging local challenges.”

Miss Cláudia Cláudia Garcia[1]
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The relationship between education and community intervention/action in Social Work, particularly with regard to Social Work training frameworks, is the line of research we propose to present, sharing the results of the study: How does Social Work practice influence the territorialization dynamics of social policies?
The focus is on the relevance of working with the theoretical–methodological frameworks of Community Social Work and repositioning it in relation to other fields of knowledge concerning community intervention. This requires a critical and reflective vision of its action, aimed at strengthening the capacity and empowerment of social workers within the community, grounded in the connection between academia and practice.
The community dimension of Social Work is not merely a contemporary issue; rather, it has intentionality and inseparability in relation to social policies and emerging local challenges. Recovering or valuing the foundations of the community dimension of Social Work fosters dynamics of community empowerment and resilience, as well as strengthening the Social Work workforce.

Embedding Career Development and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in African School Curricula: A Social Work Approach to Youth Empowerment and Prevention of Irregular Migration

Ms Augustina Ugbana[1]
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"<div dir=""auto"">This paper explores the integration of Career Development and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into African school curricula as a social work–informed strategy for youth empowerment and the prevention of irregular migration. Career development is a lifelong process through which individuals understand their interests, skills, values, and opportunities to make informed educational and occupational decisions, while SEL equips young people with competencies for self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-management, goal setting, and responsible decision-making. The absence of structured career guidance and SEL programming in many African education systems has contributed to youth unemployment, psychosocial vulnerability, and increased migration risks. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory, this study presents an ecological intervention implemented in The Gambia that embedded career development and SEL within schools and surrounding communities. Implemented through three-year memoranda of understanding with Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and Nigerians in Diaspora Organization, the program engaged students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders through group sessions, teacher trainings, interviews, research, school career day celebrations, community caravan sensitization, and engagements, with migration returnees, using mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and culturally appropriate engagement were strictly observed throughout implementation. Drawing partly on the presenter's lived experience of navigating career choices shaped by parental influence, findings indicate enhanced student resilience and career adaptability, improved teacher capacity, stronger parental and community engagement, and reduced interest in unsafe migration, demonstrating the feasibility, protective value, and scalability of integrating career development and SEL into African curricula.
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The Community Dimension of Social Work: A Contemporary Strategy to Address Emerging Local Challenges

Miss Cláudia Cláudia Garcia[1]
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The community dimension of Social Work is both current and inseparable from social policies, given that understanding emerging local challenges is built upon the recognition that reality is socially constructed and therefore subjective. This occurs through a continuous process of seeking to understand social phenomena and constructing theory both for and within action.

The present research focuses on the relevance of strengthening the theoretical–methodological frameworks of Community Social Work and repositioning it in academic and professional terms. This requires a critical and reflective perspective on its practice, aimed at enhancing the capacity and empowerment of social workers for community intervention, grounded in the connection between academia and practice.

The need to recover the foundations of Social Work with communities and the potential of its methodological instruments is emphasized as a strategy for addressing global–local tensions. It promotes practices that create opportunities for the development of individual and collective capacities, based on professional experience in direct engagement with the field and with the needs of the population, while acknowledging the political dimension of the profession.

The role and contemporary relevance of Community Social Work are highlighted, requiring a revision of academic curricula to include training in network co-management, governance, mediation among stakeholders, and participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social policies. Social Work connects individuals with social structures, mediating barriers and opportunities; therefore, its action within territories must be that of an active agent in promoting local autonomy and implementing strategies in the field of social policies. In this repositioning, academia plays a central role, as do professional bodies and international associations, in empowering social workers for community intervention and strengthening their power—not as an end in itself, but as a form of power that creates and transforms the action of the subjects involved in intervention.

Men and Women’s Discourses on Family Life in Rwanda: Between Tradition and Change

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This paper explores how contemporary Rwandan families negotiate gender roles and family life amid rapid social change. The paper aims to examine how men and women construct meanings of “doing family,” reconcile traditional values with gender equality policies, and sustain family cohesion in post-genocide Rwanda. Anchored in feminist theories, the “doing family” framework, and equity and gender equality theory, the study conceptualizes family life as a dynamic and negotiated social process shaped by cultural norms and policy contexts. Using a qualitative design, the study drew on semi-structured interviews with 15 legally married couples (30 participants) from both urban and rural settings. Participants varied in age, occupation, and exposure to gender equality interventions by community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Individual interviews with spouses were followed by joint couple interviews, to capture both personal perspectives and relational dynamics. Data were analyzed thematically through inductive, discourse, and narrative approaches. Findings highlight five interrelated themes: organization of gender roles and responsibilities; experiences of change and continuity in family life; perceptions of gender equality implementation; negotiation of cultural values such as mutual respect and complementarity; and shared visions of a harmonious family. While policy reforms have expanded women’s public and economic roles, everyday practices reveal persistent tensions between patriarchal norms and emerging ideals of partnership and shared responsibility. NGO and CBO interventions play an important mediating role in fostering dialogue, reducing conflict, and strengthening cooperative family practices. The study recommends future research with larger and more diverse samples, including longitudinal designs, to better understand intergenerational change. For social work education and practice, the findings highlight the importance of culturally grounded, family-centered approaches that engage both men and women, strengthen relational capacities, and align policy goals with lived family realities to support resilient families and communities.

Utilizing the Native Hawaiian Concept of Kapu Aloha in Other Social Movements

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"In 2019, Native Hawaiian kia‘i (protectors) blocked the Mauna Kea Access Road to prevent construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on the summit of Maunakea, a mountain Native Hawaiians hold sacred. During the blockade, 38 Native Hawaiian kūpuna (elders) were arrested, but law enforcement officers were unable to clear the road, in part because they were overcome with emotion. Those gathered at the Mauna Kea Access Road had taken upon themselves a strict duty to show nothing but kapu aloha (sacred aloha) to all – including those perceived to be their enemies. Instead of responding to their beloved kūpuna being arrested with anger and malice, they responded with aloha, love, and respect. Keiki (children) gave beautiful lei to law enforcement officers and people sang mele (songs) while tears rolled down their cheeks as they watched their eldest and most respected led away. Many of the officers tasked with clearing the road were Native Hawaiians who cared deeply for those they were asked to arrest, and the weight of emotion became too much for them to bare. Today, more than 6 years later, construction of TMT on Maunakea still has not begun.

Social movements have long advocated nonviolence, but the Native Hawaiian concept of kapu aloha is a step further. Kapu aloha is not just making no response to provocation, but making an affirmative response, by showing compassion, love, and respect to all – including those deemed the who stand in opposition. Kapu aloha has the potential to not just prevent violence, delay action, and force reconsideration – it has the power to change heart and minds. This presentation will explore how the concept of kapu aloha can be used in other social movements in hopes of achieving similar success."

Bridging the divide: Collaboration, challenges, and proposed strategies for school social work practice in South African education

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In collaboration with various stakeholders, including learners, parents, teachers, district administrators, and community organizations, school social workers have the potential to positively influence the school ethos, reduce risks and barriers to learning, and increase resilience in learners. This collaboration is particularly crucial in low- and middle-income countries, where psychosocial support structures are lacking, significantly affecting learners' well-being. As part of a bigger PhD study, this current study aimed to explore the nature of collaboration in the practice of school social work in South African public schools. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted in 2024 using semi-structured interviews with 22 social workers from the Gauteng province. Data analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis methods. The study confirmed that school social workers actively promote and participate in interdisciplinary and inter-organisational collaboration when supporting learners and schools. These collaborations were a crucial aspect of school social work, and partnerships were initiated to effectively address complex issues such as child protection, substance abuse, mental health, and poverty. However, the study also revealed contextual challenges, including a lack of participation from professional experts, essential stakeholders, and parents, as well as poor inter-departmental cooperation between the departments of social development and basic education. Consequently, these challenges hinder school social workers' ability to provide support and address the diverse needs of the learners. The study argues that overcoming these challenges requires a shift toward more formalized, uniform partnerships; therefore, it proposes operational strategies to strengthen collaboration and the practice of school social work within the broader educational system.

From Development to Implementation: Parenting Support for Migrant Families

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Migrant parents in Nordic welfare states often face challenges when navigating social services, partly shaped by institutional distrust and limited culturally responsive support. While parenting interventions have shown effectiveness in improving family well-being, few studies have examined their development or early-stage implementation within Nordic public services. This presentation draws on findings from two published articles of an ongoing doctoral project and outlines the focus of a forthcoming third study. The first article details the development and feasibility testing of Being a Parent in Finland, a psychoeducational group intervention designed for migrant parents to foster institutional trust. The intervention's content and structure are outlined using the Six Steps for Quality Intervention Development (6SQuID) framework. A small-scale pilot, including thematic interviews with 16 parents and a pre–post survey with 14 parents, indicated high acceptability and perceived benefits, although no quantitative changes in institutional trust were observed. The study highlights implications for future development, practice, and research. The second article examines the early implementation of Being a Parent in Finland within regional social services, drawing on nine thematic interviews with six service providers and an analysis of project documentation. Using Proctor's Implementation Outcomes Framework, a hybrid thematic analysis revealed the interdependence of outcomes. Changes in a single factor, such as eligibility criteria, simultaneously affected multiple outcomes. Iterative adaptations, particularly integrating the intervention into universal services, improved both accessibility and organisational legitimacy. These findings highlight the complexity of implementing culturally responsive practices and the importance of aligning service structures and organisational goals with the needs of minority families to ensure accessible and equitable interventions. Because the sustainability and effects of implementation on psychoeducational interventions for minority parents remain understudied, the forthcoming third article will examine factors, including organisational, structural, and professional conditions that support the long-term sustainment of psychosocial interventions.

Culturally targeted Interventions to Address Gender-Based Violence and Related Mental Health among Immigrants and Refugees in North America

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"The population of immigrants and refugees in the US continues to increase, with more than one million immigrants arriving in the country each year. More than half of immigrant and refugee women experience some form of gender-based violence (GBV). Experiences of GBV have significant impacts on survivors' well-being. Culturally responsive interventions are emerging worldwide to address GBV and related mental health challenges in this population. There remains a significant gap in the knowledge of these interventions. This systematic review examines the state of knowledge related to culturally targeted interventions that address immigrant and refugee experiences with GBV and related mental health in North America (USA and Canada). A synthesis of intervention program components and outcomes, along with implications for social work education, practice, and policy globally, are discussed.

Peer-reviewed articles were identified using two methods. The first method included searches using key words that were entered into nine electronic databases. Articles were screened for inclusion and exclusion criteria. The authors also conducted a hand search of reference lists from key articles. Studies were included if they addressed both GBV and related mental health among immigrant and refugee populations in North America. The initial database searches yielded 382 articles. After screening for inclusion and exclusion criteria, 13 articles remained.

Findings indicate that intervention outcomes that were culturally targeted demonstrated a wide range of positive results. Some of the notable outcomes included an increase in positive mental health, resilience, safety behaviors, self-esteem, social support, access to referral services, and knowledge about domestic violence, suggesting that the participants were more receptive to culturally tailored interventions.

This systematic review helps to illuminate a path forward for addressing the needs of the growing immigrant and refugee population in North America while improving the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee survivors of GBV.

Social Rights Advising as Radical Social Work Practice: shifting power, building solidarity

Prof Jill Hanley[1]
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Social workers in civil society organizations spend significant time working with individuals, families and groups to advise them about their potential eligibility for public services. “Social rights advising” is a solidarity-based model of practice that takes this traditional form of direct practice and brings it into the political realm. Most people only seek out civil society organizations when they themselves are facing hardship. The “social rights advising” practice allows civil society workers to respond to the immediate needs of community members, while making links to political collective challenges. Organizations learn from social rights advising to identify patterns in people’s experiences to inform organizing and campaigns, and community members can be mobilized to support collective action. In this presentation, we present the way that social rights advising has been used in two organization - the Immigrant Workers Centre and the Just Solutions Clinic (Montreal, Canada) – to address migrants’ needs, to identify collective cases, to inform policy campaigns and to build leadership among community members. We present the step-by-step process of social rights advising, and discuss how this solidarity approach changes social work students’ concept of their relationship to the people they serve. With this method’s insistence on community members’ entitlement to human, economic and social rights, there is a shift in power as people begin to feel not only that they deserve dignity and equality, but also that it is possible to do something about it.

Understanding Resilience Among Immigrant and Refugee Women Survivors of IPV

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"Experience with intimate partner violence (IPV) has significant negative impacts on women's health. These consequences are likely worse among immigrant and refugee women because of the intersection of several structural barriers. Scholars point to the vital role of supporting their resilience, positive coping mechanisms as key strengths and avenues to achieving favorable health outcomes and free abuse. However, studies have not fully explored and documented these key strengths and how immigrant women survivors utilize them to navigate their new environments. Our study aims to synthesize qualitative studies that have explored the resilience, coping skills, help-seeking behaviors as strategies that immigrant women survivors of IPV utilize to improve their overall health outcomes and live a life free of violence.

We conducted a qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis (QIMS) to create a synergy of qualitative findings regarding resilience and coping strategies among immigrant and refugee women survivors of IPV in the US. Studies were included if they were qualitative, mixed methods (we only focused on the qualitative findings), and grey literature. Three reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts and performed a full-text review. A total of 741 peer reviewed articles were extracted using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. About 45 peer reviewed studies qualified for our analysis.

Overall findings suggest that immigrant and refugee women survivors utilize different mechanisms to enhance their resilience, cope and address abuse. They specifically rely heavily on (1) family and friends, (2) formal legal systems (3) community-based ethnic organizations, and (4) spirituality or religious organizations to seek help and cope with IPV.

These findings indicate that engaging the formal and informal support systems such as friends and family members, spiritual leaders, community-based ethnic organizations, and formal legal systems is crucial in adhering to the needs and challenges of this population."

Let’s Talk About Sex: Integrating Sexuality Discourse into Recovery Pathways for Substance Use Disorders

Mrs Niva Lev-el[1]
[1]Israeli Association For The Advancement Of Social Work, , Israel

Let’s Talk About Sex: Integrating Sexuality Discourse into Recovery Pathways for Substance Use Disorders

Lev-el Niva, MSW

Background: Social work practitioners face complex challenges related to health and wellbeing. Within this framework, the right to healthy sexuality is a fundamental human right. However, in the field of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment, a "wall of silence or fear" often exists regarding sexuality. Issues of sex and sexuality preoccupy people recovering from SUD and may lead to a lapse or a relapse, yet they are often neglected in normative treatment settings.

Aims: This presentation advocates for the social worker's duty to promote healthy sexuality as a core component of clinical practice. It suggests a structured recovery pathway that integrates sexuality into provided treatment to improve quality of life and prevent relapse.

Content: The presentation presents the theoretical model of an innovative program of short-term psycho-educational group intervention held in public SUD treatment centers in Israel. The session will provide insights into:

1. Parallel Dynamics and Complex Links: An exploration of the psychological, behavioral and neurobiological interconnections between sexuality and substance use. This includes a comparison of shared hormonal and cycle stages.
2. The Motivational Link: Analyzing the specific drivers where substances are utilized to enhance sexual performance or used as a mechanism to mask perceived sexual dysfunctions and inhibitions.
3. Barriers to Practice: Addressing obstacles that prevent practitioners from discussing sexuality with clients.
4. Clinical Model: Adaptation of the PLISSIT (Permission, Limited Information, Specific Suggestions, Intensive Therapy) model of sexual intervention to the addiction field, Including examples from the group intervention.

Implications: By integrating sexuality into addiction recovery pathways, social workers can move beyond abstinence toward holistic wellbeing, and face the challenge of SUD treatment more successfully. This approach empowers clients and upholds the profession's commitment to healthy sexuality as a human right.

Keywords:
Sexuality, Substance Use Disorders, Recovery Pathways, Relapse Prevention, Psychoeducational Groups, Sexual Health

Affiliation: Israeli Association for the Advancement of Social Work

Toxic Masculinity and Mental Health: Experiences of male survivors of intimate partner violence in seeking support in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe

Miss Ashely Ropafadzo Tome[1]
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Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) affects men globally, yet their experiences often remain hidden because of societal expectations of masculinity. In Zimbabwe male survivors of IPV encounter significant barriers in seeking support thereby exacerbating mental health issues. The main objective of the study was to explore the lived experiences of male survivors of Intimate Partner Violence in Harare Metropolitan Province, focusing on the effects of toxic masculinity on their help seeking behaviors. The researcher used a qualitative method with a descriptive multiple case study design to examine the well-being of the men. Seven in-depth interviews with the male survivors were conducted. Three key informant interviews with a social worker, a representative from one men's organization and a psychologist were carried out during data collection. Through in-depth interviews this research examined the challenges male survivors of IPV face in accessing mental health services. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes in the data. Societal expectations of masculinity, feelings of shame, isolation and stigma discourage men from disclosing abuse and seeking help hence mental health deterioration. The findings will inform the development of targeted interventions and support services thereby promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment for male survivors. By shedding light on this critical issue, this research aims to spark meaningful discussions and drive positive change in policy.

Reducing Stigma and Building Resilience: Adapting a Psycho-Educational Program for HIV-Affected Girls and Young Women in Namibia

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HIV-affected adolescent girls and emerging adult women in Namibia face persistent challenges, including depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, stigma, and limited psychosocial support. This study adapted and piloted three evidence-based psycho-educational interventions tailored to the cultural context using the ADAPT-ITT framework. The aim was to address mental health symptoms, strengthen self-esteem, reduce stigma, and improve emotional regulation.

The interventions, which were workshops, peer support activities, and stigma-reduction sessions, were delivered by University of Namibia faculty over three consecutive Saturdays at a drop-in shelter serving HIV-affected youth. The ADAPT-ITT framework guided systematic refinement, ensuring participants shaped content and cultural fit through interviews, focus groups, and interactive feedback. A mixed-methods design was used with 25 adolescent girls and young women (ages 13–22) living in an informal settlement in Katutura, Windhoek. Data included qualitative interviews, pre- and post-focus groups, and standardized mental health assessments. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, and quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics.

Post-test results (n=22) showed moderate reductions in stress (17.47 to 14.89) and depression (17.87 to 15.44), with stress shifting from moderate to mild. Emotional regulation improved, especially cognitive reappraisal (4.52 to 5.22). Self-esteem increased substantially (81.6 to 91.33), with notable gains in performance-related confidence (27.6 to 33.56), though social self-esteem improved only slightly (26.07 to 27.56).
Qualitative findings reflected reduced stigma, greater coping capacity, and a stronger sense of belonging. Participants reported feeling less alone after realizing their struggles were shared, and many expressed interest in continuing regular meetings. Economic hardship and family instability remained ongoing challenges.

The adapted interventions improved stress, self-esteem, and emotional regulation, but anxiety and social self-esteem require further attention. Future efforts should integrate focused anxiety-management strategies, strengthened social support, and economic empowerment. The findings highlight the value of culturally adapted, youth-centered interventions for HIV-affected girls and young women in resource-limited settings.

Engaging social work students to explore how their material possessions, consumer habits, and political location influence their views on sustainability

Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö[1]
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"Taking the standpoint that none of us is an outsider to the material world and the current environmental crises, and that power works through materials and labour, this presentation discusses ways to address these topics in the education of future social professionals. I elaborate on what kind of exercises could equip future professionals, or anyone interested, to explore and rethink both one's personal as well as broader societal relations to 'stuff', and the material underpinnings of life.

The presentation draws from my own experience as a social work educator, in which role I have, among others, applied certain exercises developed by the American social work professor Fred Besthorn, as well as the Finnish theologian Panu Pihkala. These exercises help to grasp one's material possessions, their varied meanings and significance, to acknowledge and deal with the emotions that may arise.

Furthermore, they support figuring out whether and how one's political and socioeconomic heritage influences one's readiness to engage politically for more sustainable forms of materialism. The presentation is founded on the understanding that the sustainability transition underway requires massive social and cultural change, which social professionals can and should on their part facilitate."

Are you safe to chat? Advocate approaches to safety on digital crisis hotlines

Dr Rachel Voth Schrag[1]
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"NGOs addressing the needs of survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual assault (SA) have long included phone crisis hotline support as a key service. Increasingly, organizations are adding chat and text (digital) hotline platforms. While this mode of services is rapidly expanding, little is known about the actual interactions between social workers and survivors on digital hotline. Thus, the current study explored service characteristics, service recipient expressed needs, and advocate strategies related to safety on digital hotline.

The study team partnered with NGOs in two large metropolitan areas in the Southwest United States to recruit staff members (n=17) for semi-structured interviews and access deidentified transcripts of 378 digital hotline interactions. Transcripts and interviews were analyzed qualitatively via inductive content analysis. Quantitative data were extracted on each interaction. Descriptive and bivariate analysis were used for quantitative data.

65% of sessions were focused on experiences of IPV, with others focused on SA, human trafficking and child abuse or neglect. Analysis of transcripts and interviews revealed a phased process in which advocates 1) identify immediate safety, 2) assess participant needs and goals, and 3) pursue individualized safety planning strategies based on expressed wishes. Methods of individual safety planning included: psychoeducation to enhance current and future safety; exploring specific methods of safety support; addressing environmental risks; and enhancing connections.

Digital hotline is a promising practice for safety planning in a low-barrier and confidential manner. These data highlight the ubiquity of safety planning tasks like assessing needs and goals and building a survivor driven list of options within the digital hotline format, and also the pressing need for more specific strategies that are temporally bound. Future work to understand the efficacy of these interactions in reducing exposure to violence can help to build the evidence base for this emerging service modality."

Technology Facilitated Abuse: Survivor and Staff Experiences and Intervention Needs

Dr Rachel Voth Schrag[1]
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"Technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) refers to the use of digital technologies (e.g., phones, laptops, smart home devices) to stalk, harass, threaten, or coercively control another person. Research indicates that TFA is increasingly common within intimate relationships and is a universal component of modern intimate partner violence. However, little empirical research has explored survivor intervention needs in the face of TFA. The current study explored the experiences and preferences of survivors, social workers, and law enforcement staff related to TFA focused intervention.

Survivors and staff recruited from 6 community-based violence agencies a southern state in the United States (n = 27) participated in semi-structured interviews. Participants were racially diverse, were all women, and ranged in age from 21-60 (M = 35). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically.

Survivors and advocates report TFA as pervasive and frame it as a significant threat to survivors' physical safety, financial stability, and psychological well-being. Despite its commonality, participants reported that the agencies in our sample do not systematically assess for TFA. Within most agencies, the only explicit safety strategy recommended for TFA was instructing clients to turn off their phone's location tracking. Advocates reported feeling undereducated on how to help survivors develop tech-related safety plans. Nearly all survivors engaged in safety strategies to combat TFA which they identified through their own research. However, they reported feeling uncertain about what resources are trustworthy for addressing complex cybersecurity concerns. Participants were eager to learn more about TFA and receptive to incorporating cybersecurity experts into the process of safety planning.

This study suggests that advocates feel unprepared to meet the contemporary needs of clients, resulting in survivors experiencing lower levels of safety. Our findings highlight the importance of universal assessment and safety planning for TFA, and the need for creative interdisciplinary collaborations between experts in IPV and digital technologies."

The Social Work Climate Handbook by the Finnish professional organization Talentia in nutshell

Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö[1]
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"The presentation summarises the key contents of the Social Work Climate Handbook, published in Finnish (only) in August 2023 by Talentia, Finland's only professional organization of higher education graduates in the social sector, reflecting also briefly how the handbook has been so far received.

While explaining the basics of climate change and the importance and urgency of mitigation and adaptation measures, the focus of the altogether 24-paged (online) handbook is on the reasoning and concrete measures why and how social professionals should and can do their part. Besides envisioning the role of social work in the ecological reconstruction process aka sustainability transition of societies, the Climate Handbook addresses the importance of social and cultural change as a core of the sustainability transition underway, working out which social professionals have expertise.

Othe topics addressed include importance of visions of good life within ecologically sustainable limits, need to develop intergenerational and future ethics, nurture connectedness and sense of being part of nature, importance of emotional work and maintaining hopelease write here your abstract."

Harambee Healing: Clinical Interventions for Debt, Poverty, and Health Equity in South Africa\'s Workforce.

Dr Johanna Deka[1]
[1]University Of Witwatersrand, , South Africa

Introduction: Indebtedness functions as a systemic disease, eroding the wellbeing of the South African workforce. A pervasive debt trap fuels cycles of poverty, exacerbates mental health challenges, and triggers organizational decline through absenteeism and lost productivity. Current occupational social work (OSW) interventions, often limited to generic financial wellness events, fail to provide the clinical, tailored support needed for sustainable rescue. This study, titled Harambee Healing Debt Traps, investigates this crisis through the lens of poverty, health equity, and the imperative for shared workforce futures.

Aim & Objectives: The aim is to critically analyse the multi-systemic impact of indebtedness and propose a framework for transformative clinical intervention. Objectives are to explore the financial trend of the workforce, and the effect indebtedness has on the workforce and the organization, and develop guidelines for targeted, emancipatory interventions.

Methodology: A Qualitative Evidence Synthesis (QES) will be conducted. Using purposive sampling of relevant qualitative studies, data will be collected and analysed thematically through an ecological systems framework to map the micro to macro consequences of debt.

Discussion & Findings: The synthesis will generate insights into how debt disrupts individual, familial, organizational, and community systems. Findings will advocate for a shift from accommodative to clinical OSW practice, emphasizing critical discourse, co-created financial coaching, and monitored interventions. The discussion will position this \"Harambee\" (collective) model as essential for advancing health equity and shared economic futures.

Conclusion: The findings will equip stakeholders to co-create interventions that disrupt the cycle of indebtedness at its source. This contributes to the shared future of a healthier, more equitable, and economically secure working community.

Social Workers Engagement with Client Information using Social Media In England.

Dr Paul O Onginjo[1]
[1]Buckinghamshire Council, , United Kingdom
"Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words).

In England, limited research exists on how children, young people, and families' social workers use social media in practice. Social workers have long faced the challenge of balancing care and control responsibilities, a dilemma now complicated by the integration of social media. While social media offers opportunities for enhanced communication among professionals and between social workers and clients, its use raises significant ethical and legal concerns. The Children Acts (1989, 2004) emphasize safeguarding and welfare as paramount, while the Human Rights Act (1998) upholds rights to family life and privacy. These frameworks create potential tensions when social workers adopt social media, generating anxiety among practitioners and organizations regarding ethical implications and associated risks.

This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with 87 social workers to examine their perceptions and practices concerning social media. Findings reveal varied experiences, highlighting both ethical and unethical, legitimate and illegitimate uses of social media in professional contexts. Notably, the absence of clear policies and guidelines exacerbates uncertainty, leaving practitioners to navigate complex decisions without formal direction. Evidence suggests that, in many cases, social workers prioritize child protection over ethical considerations, particularly when safeguarding children and young people at risk of significant harm.

Given the uniqueness of this study it underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policies and training to guide social media use in social work. Without such frameworks, practitioners remain vulnerable to ethical dilemmas and legal challenges, potentially compromising both professional integrity and the rights of service users.

A key observation in this study illuminate that social workers were overriding ethical concerns with a need to protect children and young people in their care, who were at risk of suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

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Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents: Professional Roles, Challenges and Strategies

Prof Christian Ghanem[1]
[1]Technische Hochschule Nuremberg, , Germany

"Parental incarceration is a situation affecting millions of children worldwide and represents a matter of global significance. Parental imprisonment is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience that can have far-reaching negative effects due to its potentially stressful and traumatic impact (Herreros-Fraile et al., 2023). The lived realities of children of imprisoned parents is often characterized by exclusion, secrecy, and social isolation. They also frequently show psychological and physical issues such as anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints, as well as social consequences including stigma, bullying, and a deterioration of their socioeconomic situation. Research findings indicate, that these individual and social consequences can be mitigated under certain conditions (Obus et al., 2024): through the strengthening of resilience factors, support provided by educational institutions, or the presence of a reliable caregiver.

This three-year study in Germany investigates how social workers and educational professionals can support children of incarcerated parents across different contexts. Problem-centred interviews (Witzel & Reiter, 2022) are conducted with affected children, their non-incarcerated caregivers, and professionals. The relational research design extends existing approaches by systematically linking the perspectives of all groups. In line with the exploratory approach of the study, data analysis follows an iterative process based on Grounded Theory Methodology. Initial results indicate that educational professionals are in contact with children of incarcerated parents more often than previously assumed, yet report uncertainties and a lack of institutional support. Over the next few months, further interviews will be conducted with various affected groups, and the results of this empirical study as well as an initial systematic review will be presented at the conference. Based on the results, an e-learning tool is being developed to provide professionals with accessible, practice-oriented training. The project aims to give children an audible voice, enable them to co-shape their support networks, and sustainably improve their life circumstances."

Harambee to Prepare Anti-Racist Social Workers: A Qualitative Study of Faculty Perceptions Social Work Faculty's Perceptions and Implementations of Anti-Racist Pedagogy in the United States

Dr. Allison Buzard[1]
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"For the first time since it was founded in 1952,, the Council on Social Work Education's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards now require that social work programs in the United States teach students the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to practice anti-racist social work.

Understanding that current United States-based social work faculty were not trained in social work programs that required pedagogy on anti-racism, this raises the question of whether current social work faculty have the sufficient knowledge, awareness, and skills to teach an anti-racist pedagogy? While numerous studies suggest that formal social work education does not have a strong anti-racist foundation (Cane & Tedam, 2022; Haynes, 2017; Hollinrake et al., 2019; Kishimoto, 2018; Olcón et al., 2020; Werman et al., 2019), formal social work education is not the sole influence on faculty pedagogy.

In the spring of 2022, a qualitative study of 29 semi-structured interviews was conducted to learn: "How do social work faculty perceive and engage anti-racist pedagogy"? Four themes emerged from this research: There is a lack of agreement and shared knowledge about racism and anti-racism, experiences of social work faculty related to anti-racist pedagogy are varied and racialized, context impacts perceptions and implementation of anti-racist pedagogy, and more support and resources are required for faculty to implement anti-racist pedagogy effectively. Based on this study, recommendations for social work education in the United States include:

The development and distribution of a shared social work knowledge base related to anti-racism, the creation of safe spaces for collaboration, strategy, practice, and respite, a recognition of context with region-specific resources, support for social work faculty emotionally and institutionally, and advocacy at the federal and state levels to ensure that social work faculty can continue to equip future social workers to practice from an anti-racist perspective."

Innovation in Professional Training: The Experience of The First Mba in Social Work and Artificial Intelligence in Brazil

Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]
[1]Cfess/abepss, ,

This paper presents the experience report of the first MBA in Social Work and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Brazil, a pioneering initiative by InoveSaber and Nezo Educacional, with the program accredited by the Ministry of Education (MEC). In the context of the growth of smart cities, the digital transformation of public policies, and the rapid expansion of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) tools, there is an urgent need to train social workers for critical and ethical practice in digital environments.

Capitalist societies drive socioeconomic transformations through technological advances, profoundly impacting culture, the economy, and politics. At the center of this landscape, technology emerges as the primary arena for global power struggles. In this context, the rise of digital information redefines social paradigms while simultaneously exacerbating longstanding contradictions.

The MBA course was designed as a 360-hour program, grounded in the Ethical-Political Project of the profession, seeking to move beyond mere technical instrumentalization toward emancipatory technological appropriation. The curriculum spans from the fundamentals of AI to complex discussions on algorithmic bias, data protection (LGPD), and the impact of automation on the labor market.

The experience demonstrates that continuing education is essential for professionals to use AI tools judiciously while advancing their theoretical and practical knowledge. This enables the profession to act proactively in mitigating inequalities amplified by the digital environment and to safeguard the rights of populations marginalized by technological development.

It is concluded that integrating AI into Social Work education prepares professionals to be at the forefront of digital transformation projects in both public services and private initiatives, contributing their societal perspective to promote social justice and collective well-being in the process of technological innovation.

Enhancing Children’s Participation in Community by Organizing Adult Support Group: A Case Study

Miss Karleen May Reodique[1]
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The paper aims to present a case study of a child focused non-government organization in organizing adult support groups in communities to assist in promoting and advancing children’s rights, particularly, in the areas of child participation in governance and child protection. It discusses the challenges, and strategies and opportunities in organizing adult support groups to facilitate the creation of a safe and enabling environment for children to participate meaningfully in matters that affects them in different settings. The paper will also hopefully be able to impress the significant role of social work in promoting child participation in governance and child protection through formation of adult support groups using various social work methods such as community organizing, community education and training, and advocacy, and the application of child’s rights lens and approaches.

Strengthening the Social Service Workforce in ASEAN: Capacity Development through International Technical Cooperation

Dr Akiko Yokoyama[1], Mr. Chinchai Cheecharoen[1]
[1]Japan International Cooperation Agency / Asean Training Centre For Socail Work And Social Welfare, , Japan

"The Project for Human Resource Development on Social Work in the ASEAN Region was launched in August 2025 with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in collaboration with the ASEAN Training Centre on Social Work and Social Welfare (ATCSW) and the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

Established in 2019, ATCSW has functioned as a regional hub for capacity development, delivering training programs in three thematic areas: Global Social Work and Social Welfare, Social Protection, and Anti-Human Trafficking. These programs were developed in partnership with international organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and ILO, with a particular emphasis on training of trainers.

Despite these achievements, ATCSW faces challenges in ensuring the long-term sustainability, quality, and strategic coherence of its training initiatives. In response, the JICA-supported project aims to strengthen ATCSW's organizational and technical capacity to deliver high-quality training for social workers and the broader social service workforce across ASEAN. The project focuses on three interrelated components: supporting the implementation of ATCSW's forthcoming Five-Year Strategic Plan (2026–2030), enhancing the design and delivery of training programs, and establishing a robust regional network of stakeholders.

A key feature of the project is a regionally grounded needs assessment of social service workforce training, with a particular focus on social protection. Recognizing the diversity of regulatory, institutional, and cultural contexts in ASEAN, the project will conduct surveys and pilot initiatives in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. These countries, while at different stages of social welfare development, share geographical proximity and regional linkages, enabling the development of a sub-regional South–South cooperation model.

By integrating international technical cooperation with locally grounded evidence and regional collaboration, the project seeks to reimagine social work practice in ASEAN and contribute to the sustainable strengthening of the social service workforce in the region."

From Childhood Trauma to Digital Dependence: Identity Vulnerabilities and Addictive Social Media Use Among Young Men

Sabina Lissitsa[1]
[1]Ariel University, , Israel

Digital addictions represent an emerging field of concern for social work, reflecting new forms of dependency rooted in emotional and relational vulnerability rather than substance use. This study investigates how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) contribute to the development of social media addiction (SMA) among young men, highlighting the mediating roles of self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO). Drawing on Sociometer Theory and Compensatory Internet Use Theory, it conceptualizes SMA as a behavioral manifestation of unresolved attachment needs and compromised self-worth. An online survey among 361 men aged 18–29 demonstrated a fully mediated pathway from ACEs to SMA. ACEs were associated with lower self-esteem and higher FOMO, while self-esteem negatively predicted both FOMO and SMA. The direct effect of ACEs on SMA was non-significant, indicating that psychological vulnerabilities, rather than early adversity alone, drive compulsive online engagement. These findings suggest that addictive social media use may function as a coping mechanism that temporarily alleviates feelings of exclusion and low self-regard through digital validation and social visibility. The study situates these mechanisms within the broader context of contemporary masculinity, where young men face contradictory social expectations—encouraging emotional expression while still valorizing independence and control. Digital platforms become both a refuge for emotional connection and a site of intensified social comparison and self-monitoring. The results underscore the need for trauma-informed and gender-sensitive approaches in social work practice. Effective prevention and intervention should target not only behavioral control but also the underlying emotional and identity vulnerabilities that drive digital dependency. Integrating early trauma screening, psychoeducation on digital coping, and self-esteem–focused therapeutic strategies may enhance resilience and promote healthier patterns of digital engagement among young adults.

Evaluating an innovative socio emotional learning program for asylum-seeking children living in shelters

Dr Maria Emilia Bianco Galindez[1]
[1]Boston University School Of Social Work | University Of Massachusetts Lowell | Boston University School Of Social Work C, ,

The migrant population in the US increased by 1.7 million in 2022 and 2.3 million in 2023. In Massachusetts (MA), by October 2024, over 7,000 families and 23,000 individuals occupied emergency shelters across the state. In response, MA declared the state of emergency and different community programs were established to provide support. One of these programs was a socio-emotional learning initiative targeting migrant children aged 3-5. Migrant children living in emergency shelters face unique challenges that can have long-lasting effects on their socio-emotional development; therefore, targeted social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives are crucial for supporting their well-being and long-term success. The current study evaluated an innovative mobile socio-emotional learning program for asylum-seeking children living in shelters in Massachusetts, while it explored the experiences and needs of their families. Using mixed methods, this study combines quantitative surveys with parents and teachers, in-depth interviews with parents, and interviewers' observational notes. Preliminary findings suggest that parents perceived the program as having a positive impact on their children, especially in increased play, creativity, communication, and language acquisition; however, they expressed a need for longer-term and more consistent interventions with their children. Parents also emphasized the importance of having additional familial support and resources such as job placement, child-care arrangements, and housing assistance. The study found varying levels of awareness among parents regarding the impact of the migratory journeys on their children\'s well-being, as well as concerns about developmental delays, language barriers, and school disruptions. Emerging themes highlighted the impact of trauma on both children and families, underscoring the importance of holistic, long-term programming to effectively address the complex needs of both children and their parents. This presentation will discuss the study's findings and explore implications for socio-emotional learning programs, as well as for evaluation research, in global humanitarian emergencies.

Building together: Diaspora-Led Mental Health Collaboration During Political Unrest

Ms Belinda Taka Onyango[2], Elizabeth Mukasa[1]
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Africans in the diaspora have played a key role in supporting African social and political reforms. In June 2024, following the widespread youth-led protests in Kenya against a controversial finance bill, social work students living abroad mobilized mental health practitioners to provide peer support following the protests. Through these efforts, Kenyan social workers, counselors, and psychologists—locally and in the diaspora- came together to provide peer support amid collective grief, trauma, and political instability. This workshop is a summary of the steps the social work students took while coming together and incorporating principles of Harambee to develop an online peer support network for practitioners. Grounded in decolonial theory, this collaboration critically explores how historical injustices, and colonial legacies shape political violence, public mental health responses, and professional practices across various regions. The group serves as a space for grief and a testing ground for developing decolonial, mutual support models.

The workshop is aimed at social workers seeking cross-national collaboration. The session includes breakout discussions and scenario-based exercises to help participants apply the lessons to their contexts. Participants will:

Reflect on the emotional and professional effects of political unrest on mental health practitioners both locally and in the diaspora.
Examine state violence, historical trauma, and transnational solidarity from a social work, decolonial lens
Explore how informal peer support systems can develop into lasting, collective care networks as a strategy that fosters professional resilience across different countries.
Collaborate to develop a policy and practice-informed lens that appreciates the contribution of social workers in advocacy and macro change.
A customizable framework for initiating similar collaborations in their own context.

This session aims to inspire and equip practitioners to build sustainable, culturally responsive support networks that transcend borders, especially during political unrest and collective trauma.

(Neo)Social work and the challenge of resistance

Mrs Carolien Terhorst[1]
[1]Han University Of Applied Sciences, , Netherlands
Over the past decades, Dutch social work has struggled with interventions at the societal level. Efforts to promote inclusion and strengthen social cohesion have become increasingly complex, partly due to globalization and digitalization. At the same time, the profession itself is being undermined by neoliberal policies. In my PhD, I address the question: How can Dutch social work strive for inclusion and cohesion in times of growing polarization and conflict?

The first study focuses on social work students and their positioning in society. Their everyday reality—largely shaped by digital interactions—is not fully recognized or integrated within social work education. As a result, valuable skills and knowledge remain untapped, creating a gap between students' lived realities and the way the profession is conceptualized.

The second study examines how youth workers pioneer in digital youth work. In relation to cultural diversity, they succeed in fostering more inclusive spaces and counteracting exclusion. However, regarding gender equality, the results are more ambivalent. Here, youth work sometimes unintentionally reproduces existing patterns of inequality rather than challenging them.

The third, follow-up study, explores how youth work navigates an increasingly polarized public sphere. In this context, youth workers often adopt a so-called "neutral position." While neutrality might seem pragmatic to maintain access to diverse groups, it carries significant risks. By not taking a stance, social work risks reinforcing rather than reducing existing divisions.

Taken together, these three field studies illustrate the challenges and opportunities facing Dutch social work in times of globalization, digitalization, and polarization. I argue that frontline social work—especially youth work—stands at the heart of these struggles. It directly engages with global processes of exclusion and division, sometimes responding successfully, but at other times reproducing the very inequalities it seeks to overcome."

From \"Me\" to \"We\": Ubuntu and Integrated Social Work Practice for Innovation and Sustainability

Dr Bronwyn Cross-Denny[1]
[1]Sacred Heart University, , United States

The conference location of Africa offers a unique opportunity to explore integrated social work practice through the lens of Ubuntu, a philosophy emphasizing our shared humanity and interconnectedness. In many Western contexts, social work often centers on the \"me\" or the individual, focusing on micro-level or clinical interventions. Yet, the importance of community, the collective “we”, prominent in Eastern philosophies and in Ubuntu, can be overlooked. Integrated practice bridges these perspectives by addressing both individual and community needs simultaneously. As humanity confronts complex global challenges such as climate change, hunger, and health threats, sustainable solutions require innovation at every practice level. Additionally, incorporating alternative ways of knowing, such as indigenous knowledge and practices, as well as collaborating across disciplines, enables the development of more informed and holistic responses. The presentation will introduce the principles of integrated social work practice, illustrated with case examples from both the presenter and participants, drawing on individual and collective strengths to create lasting change.

Social Work Education and Palliative Care

Assoc Prof Somaya Abdullah[1]
[1]University Of Cape Town, ,

Research from hospital and hospice settings shows that social workers contribute significantly, as part of multidisciplinary teams, to the effective management of palliative and end-of-life care. Their interventions span different domains that affect patients' quality of life, including caregiver support, community engagement, education, and cultural and spiritual care. Despite this important role, palliative care remains limited within social work curricula. This presentation examines these circumstances and assesses the inclusion of palliative care in social work education with a focus on South Africa. It identifies key themes for curriculum design in the context of the country's health system challenges and the poor socio-economic conditions experienced by most of the population.

Experience and Reflection on Public-Private Cooperation in Post-Disaster Emergency Shelter: A Comparative Analysis of the Two Hualien Earthquakes in Taiwan

Dr Ying-hao Huang[1]
[1]Associate Professor / National Dong Hwa University, ,
"<p style=""text-align justify"">The experience of collaboration among civil disaster relief platforms after major disasters is extremely valuable. Hualien has been struck by two strong earthquakes of magnitude 6 or above within six years. From the February 6, 2018, earthquake to the April 3, 2024, earthquake, significant progress in emergency response and sheltering has been observed in Hualien. It is worth comparing the experiences and accumulated knowledge of civil professional manpower and organizational mobilization in post-disaster reconstruction from these two events. Furthermore, this study explores the potential development of intermediary support organizations in Hualien. </p>
<p style=""text-align justify"">This research adopts a case study approach combined with in-depth interviews and focus groups as the primary research methods. It aims to consolidate past experiences of disaster relief platforms or intermediary organizations in Taiwan. Using the sheltering experiences of Hualien's two major disasters (the 0206 earthquake and the 0403 earthquake) as case studies, this research discusses the role of organizations and professional manpower in post-disaster reconstruction. It also engages in dialogue with the experiences of Japanese NPO intermediary support organizations to provide practical recommendations. Through local focus groups and workshops, the study seeks to construct possible pathways for the development of intermediary support organizations. </p>"

Youth Mental Health Mobile App: A Journey of Co-Creation

Dr Dora Tam[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Mental health issues are increasingly prevalent among young people in Canada and worldwide, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth who have experienced adverse childhood events, lived in poverty, are newcomers or racialized, are living with disabilities, or are gender diverse, or who reside in geographically isolated or under-resourced communities, are particularly vulnerable. A key strategy for engaging young people born in the digital era is to “meet them where they are.” Accordingly, mental health researchers and clinicians are turning to digital technology to develop innovative and targeted solutions. This presentation introduces a participatory research project conducted in collaboration with high school and university students to co-design a mobile app that supports youth mental wellness. Eight high school students worked with four university mentors, and the research team met biweekly for five months in 2024. The mentors and mentees formed two groups: a content development team and a coding team for app development. The co-design process included: (1) team building; (2) problem prioritization; (3) social impact analysis; (4) content development; (5) interface prototyping; and (6) AI-assisted prototyping. The presentation will share both the co-creation process and the outcomes of participation, including the youth’s first-hand accounts of transformative experiences through co-design.

Care and Revitalisation of Indigenous Culture Health Stations in Taiwan: An Analysis of a Productive Ageing Perspective

Dr Ying-hao Huang[1]
[1]Associate Professor / National Dong Hwa University, ,

The elderly in indigenous communities face a lack of medical services, isolation and a welfare colonialism process. The tribal culture health station can be considered the most impactful indigenous village social welfare policy in tribal society in recent years in Taiwan. During the fast deployment of tribal culture health stations, they were challenged by overturning the top-down standardized external service model and adaptively developed a caretaking model equipped with subjectivity and local cultural context. Apart from driving elderly care related services like most stations do, this study observes how culture health stations deal with the sustainability problem of tribal care service from the view of the project management center by analyzing the experience of supervisor's visits and frontline culture health stations. It employs a case study approach combined with in-depth interviews as the primary research method, organizing the experiences of community care and indigenous social work in Taiwan. Whether the stations have developed alternative service models and other decolonization local experiences, focused on 'productive ageing' and discovered local experiences of integrating care service with tribal businesses or social participation and economic activities of elderly to develop a possibility of 'care revitalization' is also studied.

The Many Faces of Loss and Grief Concurrently Applied with Instillation of Hope Through a Trauma Informed Approach

Dr Jessica Weiss[1]
[1]Millersville University/sunpoint Foundation Counseling, ,

Loss and resulting grief are an extension of life domains/trauma informed work as this usually impacts our relationship domain and overall sense of self within interpersonal dynamics. All individuals experience loss and grief, but what situations lead to them can be different. Clinicians/service providers and other human service professionals tend to label loss as a death and forget other forms of loss resulting in missed opportunities to address grief and related distress in the therapeutic setting. Grief and loss also is being seen with a desire to see the world as hopeful and goals to achieve while rights are being taken away. Loss can be felt on micro, mezzo, and macro levels as a result of these intertwining dynamics that individuals and communities are facing regularly.

Further, grief dynamics are usually given time limits and expectations to what should be displayed after a loss, which causes clients or those we serve to feel compounding distress due to not following the narratives/constructs being provided. Narratives on how to express emotions and ideas of strength and resilience may be influenced by the intersectionality and cultural components of self and community, which need to be acknowledged during assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning. We also concurrently need to provide hope as Yalom's work on instillation of hope and others have noted to be a resiliency factor in trauma informed work. Trauma informed work addresses the loss and grief dynamics comprehensively examining all life domains and how the loss and grief influences them. We will discuss these domains and potential signs of distress in them and ways to provide productive and hopeful movement.

Rethinking our cities: contributions from feminist urbanism and the construction of the commons

Prof Beatriz Rocco[1]
[1]Departamento De Trabajo Social- Facultad De Ciencias Sociales- Universidad De La República-Uruguay, ,
"

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Feminist urbanism, through its various contributions, has helped to question the capitalist and Western city model, but also the patriarchal and colonial one, as well as to provide new methodologies and approaches for its understanding.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">It stands out for the importance it gives to everyday experience in planning and designing cities, proposing alternatives, from a critical point of view to the functionalist and developmentalist urbanism model.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">It invites us to think about urban spaces considering the needs of the productive sphere, but also the reproductive one, traditionally relegated to the domestic space and, therefore, not considered in its planning and design (Collectiu Punt 6, 2019; Falú, Ana, 2018).

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">For their part, debates surrounding the commons emphasize the collective action of producing, appropriating, and re-appropriating what exists and what is made through the articulation and effort of men and women situated historically and geographically. Understanding the production of the commons, its associative logics, and its internal dynamics is central to the constitution of political horizons that transcend private and even state logic. (Gutierrez, Raquel, 2017)

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">On the other hand, the commons can be considered as a strategy opposed to the fragmentation offered by the city, showing how different urban experiences are generated and reactivated to resist capitalist dispossession and recreate forms of production of the commons for the reproduction of life. (Navarro, Mina, 2016)

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">These contributions are extremely relevant for thinking about our cities, the ways in which they have traditionally been conceived and designed, the meaning of inhabiting them, and making visible the struggles, networks, and collective actions that contest the commons in order to build another right to the city."

Multiplicitous Vectors of Knowledge: A Multi-Case Classroom Ethnography of Antiracism Pedagogies and Racial Learning in MSW Diversity and Social Justice Courses

Amber Williams[1]
[1]University Of Michigan Ann Arbor, , United States

"The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation commission filed an amendment to its recent social work accreditation policy, which states that programs must demonstrate “explicit curriculum related to antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion” that advance students’ racial consciousness in all curricular efforts (CSWE, 2022). Studies of social work education conclude that diversity and social justice competencies taught in designated and required diversity and social justice (DSJ) courses benchmark racial learning outcomes and convey the field’s commitment to equity. However, the learning processes and effects of race-centered education approaches are loosely examined and theorized in social work education studies. This study seeks to understand how DSJ courses that include antiracist pedagogies promote students’ racial learning and, potentially, the development of racial consciousness. The study adapts a qualitative critical constructivist methodology to illuminate how participants make meaning of antiracist teaching and learning within racialized learning ecologies.

Using multi-site ethnographic methods informed by Critical Race Theory philosophical insights, the study approach addresses the following research question: How and to what extent do courses that seek to teach antiracist competencies and content using antiracist pedagogies shape graduate students’ racial learning? Data collection included course observations, fieldnotes, artifacts, and longitudinal interview data from instructors and a subset of students enrolled in two DSJ courses in an MSW program. One key finding from the study demonstrates how teaching practices that converge critical epistemologies with principles of universal design promote multiplicitous vectors of racial knowledge within and beyond the classroom. Students’ capacity for iterative racial learning fosters ongoing criticality about race, racism, and racialization in social work. This study contributes to social work education by advancing antiracism education among graduate student learners."

Reimagining Social Work Education to Address the Global Mental Health Treatment Gap

Dr RoseAnne Droesch[1], Shahnaz Savani[2]
[1]Washington State University, University Of Texas Arlington, University Of Houston Downtown, University Of Houston Dow, , , [2]University Of Houston Downtown, , United States
Globally, 75-90% of individuals with common mental disorders lack access to treatment. Innovative strategies are needed to close the mental health treatment gap. Integrating scalable interventions into social work education may expand the mental health workforce and address the treatment gap. Problem Management Plus (PM+) is a brief, transdiagnostic intervention developed as part of the World Health Organization\'s Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP Programme) to address common mental health problems across cultural contexts. This study evaluated a novel Bachelor of Social Work course that trained students to deliver Problem Management Plus (PM+) in field placements. Results indicated that students developed the foundational skills required to translate PM+ into real-world practice settings. These findings suggest that social work education may offer a scalable strategy to help reduce the mental health treatment

gap.<span class="EOP SCXW90577495 BCX0" data-ccp-props="{"134233117":false,"134233118":false,"201341983":0,"335551550":1,"335551620":1,"335559685":0,"335559737":0,"335559738":0,"335559739":160,"335559740":279}">

“Are we Still Learning Anything”? Perceptions of Nigerian University Students on the Utilisation of AI Models for Academic Work

Dr Prince Chiagozie Ekoh[1]
[1]University Of Nigeria, Nsukka, , Nigeria

The rapid advancement of technology and global digitalisation has positioned artificial intelligence (AI) as a transformative force across multiple sectors, including education, healthcare, and governance. Within this evolving landscape, AI is increasingly shaping the experiences, learning practices, and cognitive engagement of 21st-century youths. This study examines the perceptions of Nigerian university students regarding the use of AI in academic and educational contexts. Adopting a qualitative research design, data were collected from 20 university students through in-depth discussions exploring their experiences with AI tools such as ChatGPT. The findings indicate that AI significantly influences students’ educational practices by enhancing access to knowledge, improving learning efficiency, and supporting academic performance. However, the study also identified concerns related to overreliance on AI, diminished critical thinking, and ethical implications surrounding its use. The paper concludes by emphasising the need for institutional policies and digital literacy initiatives that promote the ethical, critical, and informed utilisation of AI tools within Nigeria’s tertiary education system.

Unfreezing Social Workers: A Practice Research from the Perspective of Discursive Psychology

Hui Quan Chen[1]
[1]Chengdu University Of Information Technology, ,
"Abstract: Social workers over reliance on theoretical frameworks hinder their practical effectiveness. Conversely, young social workers are prone to ‘freeze’ when facing complex real-world scenarios. By reviewing the dialogue between social workers and clients, social workers can see their work habits and direction for improvement. This process also reveals the subjectivity of social workers. reviewing the dialogue, social workers can get out of the frozen state and transform from seeking recognition to cultivating professional self-confidence, from passively waiting for answers to actively discovering them, and from being compelled to practice to eagerly desiring to do so."

Afro-descent birth persons level of trust in their relationships with maternal health medical providers compared to doulas during the perinatal stage!

Mrs Crystal Jones[1]
[1]Boston University, , United States

This study aimed to explore how trust is experienced in the relationships African American birthing persons have with their maternal health medical provider (OB/GYN, Midwife) and how this relationship differs from the relationship they have with doulas during the perinatal stage with with regards to level of trust. This study offers an opportunity to more closely examine the development of trust in the provider-client relationship, which can contribute to improved maternal health outcomes among Afro descent American birthing persons. Therefore, our question is: How do Afro-descent birth persons level of trust in their relationships with maternal health medical providers compared to doulas during the perinatal stage? : We conducted a mixed methods study by conducting qualitative interviews for 45 minutes with Afro-descent birth persons about their birth experiences. These questions are from the Bova HCR Scale (likert scale). Participants were recruited from local providers based on them having a doula support and a live birth between 2024 and 2025. Interviews were conducted via Zoom. To reduce confounding, those with high-risk pregnancies (e.g., preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, multiple gestations) were excluded. NVivo was used to establish codes for thematic analysis followed by Cohen’s Kappa to assess agreement among responses. : Participants were able to differentiate between the relationship they had with their maternal health medical team from the relationship with their doula with regards to trust in (3) main thematic domains: Collaborative treatment planning, Active listening with concerns, respect for the birth person\'s cultural or personalized needs. Discussion Doulas have demonstrated an ability to connect with and service birth persons in ways that maternal health medical team providers are not able to due to access, systemic oppression, and mistrust.

From the Critique of Fanon and Freire to Community Practice: Participatory Action Research as a Way to Decolonize Social Work in Africa

Mr Hafiz Jamú[1]
[1]Universidade Católica De Moçambique, , Mozambique

The post-colonial world faces a systemic crisis marked by inequalities, climate change, poverty, authoritarianism, exclusion, and conflict, demanding structural transformations in the global political economy of development. Based on the hypothesis that such transformations in post-colonial African societies do not necessarily emerge from the bourgeoisie—often linked to the state and NGOs—this presentation engages with Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire, who critique the historical role of this class as an effective agent of social change.

Building on these theoretical assumptions, a pilot initiative guided by the philosophy of Obuntu was designed to strengthen community leadership in collective mechanisms of social protection and security. Implemented in northern Mozambique—a region affected by armed conflict, internal displacement, climate crises, poverty, and political instability—the initiative provided unconditional cash transfers, was accompanied by a research team, and adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology.

The project emphasized radical participation and methodological flexibility, creating collaborative spaces for political awareness and valuing local and indigenous knowledge, involving three community groups composed of displaced and host families. Results, collectively analyzed in 2025, demonstrate significant advances in community development and transformative social change driven by the communities themselves, contributing to the construction of a decolonial African approach to social work.

Reclaiming and Reimagining Child Welfare: Decolonizing Practice and Advancing Equity

Dr Christa Gilliam, Dr Belinda D. Smith[1]
[1]Morgan State University, ,
"Abstract

This presentation draws from our forthcoming edited textbook Advancing Equity for Anti-Racist Child Welfare: Navigating Policy, Practice, and Research. In this book we examine how colonial logics continue to shape child welfare systems, particularly through surveillance, regulation, and family separation. The book's introduction traces the historical continuities between the current U.S. child welfare system and earlier institutions rooted in slavery, Indigenous child removal, and racialized social control.

Grounded in anti-racist and decolonizing frameworks, the presentation highlights how family policing disproportionately targets Black, Indigenous, and marginalized communities. We also explore community-rooted alternatives that reflect philosophies such as Ubuntu, Sankofa, and collective care, approaches centered on relationality, interdependence, and community resilience rather than punitive state intervention.

The session further examines the essential role of child welfare workforce in reclaiming and reimagining child welfare practice. This includes shifting from compliance-based intervention to healing-centered, culturally grounded, and community-led models of care. It also outlines necessary workforce competencies for challenging structural inequities and engaging in liberatory social work practice.

Ultimately, this session argues that transforming child welfare requires dismantling harmful colonial continuities while investing in family- and community-based systems of care. By centering anti-racist, decolonizing, and community-rooted values, social work can reclaim its global mission as an agent of dignity, justice, and collective healing.
<h3>Learning Objectives</h3>

Analyze how colonial histories and racialized systems of control shape contemporary child welfare practices.
Evaluate decolonizing and community-centered alternatives to traditional child welfare models.
Identify workforce competencies needed to support anti-racist, healing-centered, and community-led social work practice.

 "

Childhood Polyvictimization and Mental Distress Among Adolescent Girls in Namibia

Dr Ntandoyenkosi Maphosa[1]
[1]University Of Sussex, , United Kingdom

Adolescents in Namibia experience high rates of violence exposure, yet the cumulative effects of multiple victimizations (polyvictimization) on mental distress are not well understood. This study examines the prevalence and associations between polyvictimization and mental distress using nationally representative data in Namibia.

We conducted a secondary analysis of the 2019 Namibia Violence Against Children Survey (VACS), including 13- to 19-year-olds . Polyvictimization was defined as exposure to two or more types of violence (physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and witnessing violence). Mental distress was assessed via the self-reported Kessler 6 scale. Weighted cross-tabulations and multivariate linear regression models were used to determine associations, adjusting for demographic covariates.

Results: Polyvictimization was significantly associated with higher mental distress scores (β = [value], p < 0.001) and increased odds of suicide risk (AOR = [value], 95% CI: [range], p < 0.001). Mediation analysis indicated that mental distress partially mediated the relationship between polyvictimization and suicide risk.

Conclusions: Polyvictimization is a critical public health and social issue linked to elevated mental distress and suicide risk among Namibian adolescents and youth. Social Work services integrating violence prevention programmes are urgently needed to reduce psychological and psychosocial harm and prevent suicide in this vulnerable population."

Suppression of Palestinian Liberation Movements by Canadian Institutions: Implications for Social Work Practice

Ms Noni Nabors, Lindsay Morris[1], Tys Burger[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada
"<span style=""font-weight: 400"">This presentation explores how Canada's colonial history, and denialism thereof, incentivizes the active suppression of Palestinian liberation and complicity in the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Applying a social justice lens, it is clear that if Canadian institutions were to support Palestine, it would have large-scale implications for Indigenous Land Back movements in Canada that would challenge the legitimacy of colonial institutions.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">We analyze the response of Canadian institutions, including the federal government, media, legal justice systems, and healthcare and education systems, to the Israeli occupation and genocide of Palestinians. We demonstrate how suppression of the truth about Palestine is connected to Canada's colonial reality and historical denialism, which is exemplified by the under-resourcing of Indigenous communities, the over-representation of Indigenous people in federal custody, and highly disproportionate rates of violence against Indigenous peoples.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">We contrast Canada's stance on Palestine with South Africa's support of Palestine, and explore why these two nations with similar colonial histories and reconciliation processes have responded so differently to the Palestinian genocide.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Our analysis is rooted in decolonial theory, which is defined by a de-centring of colonial perspectives, life ways, and land rights in favour of Indigenous ones. Since decolonial theory does not address economic incentives, security relationships, or political alliances, we also draw from neocolonial theory and complement foundational literature by Fanon, Said, and others with non-academic sources and commentary.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Noting the action-oriented nature of decolonial theory, and drawing on the International Federation of Social Workers' Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, this presentation examines social work's response to the roles that various systems play in both shaping social narratives and resisting denialism of our true histories – by our institutions and within ourselves – as we collectively work towards freedom for all."

Reclaiming Global Social Work: Centering Afrocentric and Indigenous Ways of Knowing to Transform Global Practice

Ms Sheryl Thompson[1]
[1]Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (usa), , United States

Guided by the six core values of The People's Charter for an Eco-Social World =, dignity and worth, diversity, sustainability, equality, participatory inclusion, and social justice, this interactive workshop reclaims global social work as a movement grounded in collective responsibility and shared humanity. It centers the voices, lived experiences, and knowledge systems of equity-deserving communities, particularly those rooted in Afrocentric and Indigenous worldviews that emphasize interdependence, community well-being, and ecological balance. Participants will critically explore how global social work can move beyond externally imposed development frameworks toward practices that embody mutual respect, cultural continuity, and environmental sustainability. Drawing on guiding philosophies such as Ubuntu ("I am because we are"), Ujamaa (collective economics), Harambee (pulling together), and Sankofa (learning from the past), the workshop repositions social work as an act of solidarity, co-creation, and relational accountability. Through storytelling, dialogue, and reflective exercises, participants will examine how Afrocentric and Indigenous approaches expand our understanding of empowerment, healing, and justice. These frameworks invite practitioners to advance dignity and worth by affirming the inherent value of every community; to embrace diversity by uplifting multiple ways of knowing; to promote sustainability through respect for people and the planet; and to ensure equality by addressing systemic inequities. The workshop further emphasizes participatory inclusion, engaging communities as co-creators of knowledge and change, and advances social justice as a collective process of transformation. By the end of the session, participants will have developed a framework for decolonizing international social work that integrates Afrocentric and Indigenous epistemologies, centers equity-deserving groups, and contributes to a more just, inclusive, and sustainable eco-social world.

Gender Equity of Women Migrant Labourers in Tiruppur Textile Industries

Dr M.Hilaria Soundari[1], Ms A.Viyakula Mary[1]
[1]The Gandhigram Rural Institute (deemed To Be University), ,

"Tirupur, a knitwear capital of India’s textile and garment industry, relies extensively on women migrant laborers from economically and socially marginalized backgrounds, yet gender inequities continue to shape their everyday work and well-being. Wage disparities, occupational segregation, unsafe working conditions, restricted mobility, and limited access to justice remain widespread. Migration-related constraints such as language barriers, informality, fear of retaliation, and exclusion from social protection systems further weaken women’s ability to raise concerns through conventional grievance channels.

<p data-start=""974"" data-end=""1548""> Field-based engagement with women migrant workers across garment production and supply chain in Tirupur informed the design of a digital social work intervention. Primary data were collected through surveys, in-depth interviews, and group discussions conducted in multiple languages commonly used by workers. Digital tools such as mobile-based surveys, audio narratives, and messaging platforms enabled participation among women with limited literacy, irregular work schedules, and restricted physical mobility. Secondary sources provided the institutional and policy context. </p>

<p data-start=""1550"" data-end=""2208""> The research identified persistent failures in existing grievance mechanisms, including a lack of confidentiality, language exclusion, power asymmetries, and delayed responses. Building on these findings, an artificial intelligence–supported grievance redressal system was conceptualized to enhance gender equity. The proposed system centers on multilingual voice and text intake, anonymous reporting, pattern recognition of recurring violations, and risk-sensitive escalation pathways connecting workers to social workers, legal aid, and support services. Worker narratives informed system design to ensure cultural sensitivity, safety, and accessibility. </p>

<p data-start=""2210"" data-end=""2734"">Gender inequity within Tiruppur’s textile industry emerges as structural outcome of intersecting labor, migration, and gender regimes. Integrating artificial intelligence within digital social work practice offers a pathway to strengthen worker voice, reduce retaliation risks, and improve institutional accountability. An ethically designed grievance system grounded in workers lived realities contributes to more equitable, responsive, and transparent labor governance within labor-intensive global supply chains. </p>"

Disasters and the need for Glocal Social Work

Assoc Prof Panagiotis Pentaris[1]
[1]Goldsmiths University Of London, , United Kingdom

As climate change increases the risks of extreme weather conditions, the likelihood of disasters increases, too. Under those circumstances societies need to explore the degree to which they are prepared to respond to them and mitigate the potential risks from such events. There are approximately 60,000 deaths recorded during disasters annually, while the number of displaced populations surpasses the millions, and the economic impact affecting infrastructures and services in communities is tremendous. This presentation draws on these facts and argues that as the prevalence of disasters and their impact increase, so must the advancement of social work skills and knowledge which will adequately and effectively respond to the needs of individuals and communities. The talk argues the need for data- Glocal Social Work , which considers the global phenomena and circumstances regarding disasters but finds suitable methods to apply this knowledge onto local communities and respond directly to the populations affected.

What are the menstrual health and hygiene needs of school-age girls in northeastern Ghana, and how can sustainable, locally-implemented interventions improve their educational outcomes and well-being in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals?

Dr Roenia Deloach[1]
[1]Savannah State University,, , United States

Menstrual health is increasingly recognized as a determinant of gender equity, educational attainment, and adolescent well-being, particularly in low-resource settings. According to World Health Organization (2024), worldwide only 2 out 5 school provide menstrual health and hygiene education. In Saharan African only 12% of the school provide menstrual product for free or for purchase. In northeastern Ghana, many school-age girls face barriers to adequate menstrual hygiene management (MHM), including limited access to sanitary products, lack of knowledge, and cultural stigma (WHO, 2024). These challenges contribute to school absenteeism, psychosocial stress, and compromised health. Addressing these needs through sustainable, community-driven solutions can support progress toward multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly, SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production.) (United Nations 2023). Specifically, this study explores the intersection of menstrual health, sustainable development, and girls' empowerment by addressing both immediate hygiene needs and long-term sustainability.

Methods: This mixed-methods, cross sectional, community-based study will engage approximately 350 school-age girls from northeastern Ghana. Participants will complete the 18-item Menstrual Practice Needs Scale (MPNS) to quantitatively assess menstrual hygiene practices, access, and unmet needs. Following the survey, participants will take part in menstrual health education sessions and skilled based practical workshops on sewing reusable sanitary pads, designed to promote sustainable and culturally appropriate MHM strategies. To incentivize continued engagement and skill dissemination, each participants will receive one handheld sewing machines.

This research contributes to the limited but growing evidence base on sustainable menstrual health interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. By embedding principles of sustainability, health equity, and community empowerment, the project offers a scalable model for advancing menstrual health and related SDGs.

Social Work in Addressing Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents: Reflections on Professional Competencies

Mr Alan Alves[1]
[1]Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio De Mesquita Filho, ,
"The objective of this paper is to discuss and reflect on the role of Social Work in addressing sexual violence against children and adolescents in Brazil. The methodology adopted is exploratory and qualitative, followed by a literature review of works published over the last two decades.

Sexual violence against children and adolescents encompasses any act, attempt or sexual advance carried out through the abuse of a position of power and may involve intimidation, coercion, physical force, psychological influence, or even the use of weapons (World Health Organization, 2012). In Brazil, sexual violence against children and adolescents is a manifestation of the historical “social question”, grounded in structural inequalities of class, race-ethnicity and gender. It is present throughout the national territory, with girls –especially, Black girls (both preta and parda)—from working-class families being the most affected. The response to this form of violence entered the country’s political agenda in the late 1980s and early 1990s though the enactment of legislation and the implementation of policies, plans, and projects aimed at protecting children and adolescents. The participation of the Social Work profession in confronting sexual violence requires recognizing the “internal and external conditions” of professional practice, as well as professional competencies grounded in the interrelation of the ethical-political, theoretical-methodological, and technical-operational dimensions. The ethical-political dimension guides professional positioning in the defense of the human rights of children and adolescents. The theoretical-methodological dimension concerns the theoretical and methodological rigor needed to interpret the complexity surrounding sexual violence and the broader “social question” beyond immediate appearances. The technical-operational dimension refers to the professional action itself, including direct services to victims, families, and communities, the production of research on the subject, and management and planning processes, proposing and developing strategies oriented toward a social project that differs from the bourgeois social order"

Building Proposals to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in MERCOSUR

Mr Alan Alves[1]
[1]Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio De Mesquita Filho, ,
"This paper aims to present proposals to address commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the full member countries of the MERCOSUR. The methodology is based on a qualitative study through literature review of Argentine, Brazilian, Paraguayan, and Uruguayan authors, leading references on this topic over the past two decades.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents constitutes sexual violence, a violation of human rights, and one of the worst forms of child labor. It is embedded within the transnational sex market that operates in the reality of MERCOSUR full members through organized and interconnected networks which often involve the participation of individuals linked to the child and adolescent protection system. Efforts to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in these MERCOSUR countries began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following the end of military dictatorships, as a result of pressure from social movements and various social actors, including social workers. During this period, legislation and social policies aimed at protecting children and adolescents were implemented. However, since the 2000s, such actions have increasingly taken on a neoliberal orientation.

The proposed approach to confronting this form of violence calls for the State to assume a central role in social protection by investing in social policies; creating support and protection networks for victimized children and adolescents and their families; ensuring high-quality services and specialized, attentive care; conducting diagnostic assessments in areas with high concentrations and flows of children and adolescents in situations of social vulnerability; promoting effective coordination among professionals from different fields; strengthening professional training and capacity building; providing specialized intervention programs for perpetrators; systematizing and integrating official data; and fostering the development of research. The eradication of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents necessarily requires anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-sexist, and anti-racist commitments."

Reimagining Social Work Education in Africa: Co-creation, Indigenous Pedagogies, and Epistemic Freedom for a Transformative Future.

Dr Andiswa Pamella Bottoman-Mdlankomo[1]
[1]University Of Kwazulu Natal (ukzn), , South Africa

Across Africa, social work education is being called to reimagine itself in response to persistent socio-economic inequalities, postcolonial realities, and global sustainability imperatives. As a lecturer in social work at a rural university, I have recognized the pressing necessity to rethink social work education in Africa. This conceptual paper is informed by my teaching experiences in limited-resource and culturally rich contexts and proposes innovative curriculum approaches based on co-creation, interprofessional collaboration, and Indigenous knowledge rooted in Ubuntu. Informed by critical pedagogy, African humanism, and transformative learning theories, I support a decolonized, contextually relevant, and ethically engaged framework that combines classroom and field learning. The paper emphasizes that participatory research and mentorship can democratize knowledge, bridge the North–South divide in scholarship, and promote epistemic justice in social work education throughout the continent. In connecting innovative teaching practices with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), I hope to draw attention to the transformative power of social work in promoting lifelong learning, social cohesion, and inclusive development. An emancipatory paradigm of social work education that enables African scholars, students, and communities to jointly produce knowledge based on their lived realities and aspirations for social justice is the ultimate goal of this article.

Social Worker’s Role in Strengthening Livestock and Fisheries for Rural Food Security of Marginalized Communities

Dr Kadimi Madhu Babu[1]
[1]Acharya Nagarjuna University., Andhra Pradesh, , India

India’s aspiration to attain Developed Nation status by 2047 requires development pathways that are economically viable, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable. Within this vision, the livestock, poultry, and fisheries sectors remain central to the livelihoods of marginal, small, and landless rural households despite rapid economic transformation. India sustains the world’s largest livestock population, supporting 10.56 per cent of global livestock on only 2.4 per cent of the world’s land area and about four per cent of freshwater resources, intensifying ecological stress and livelihood vulnerability. These challenges are rooted in issues of equity, access, participation, and institutional responsiveness. Climate change, shrinking landholdings, and market uncertainties disproportionately affect small producers, women, and socially marginalized communities. The transition toward higher productivity with fewer animals and sustainable fisheries management therefore demands social workers role.

Social workers function as key facilitators of sustainable development by mobilizing communities, strengthening producer collectives, and promoting participatory planning. Their roles include enhancing access to welfare schemes, credit, extension services, and markets, while advocating for rights-based and socially just policies. In fisheries, social work practice contributes to cooperative development, conflict mediation, and inclusive governance of common property resources, ensuring conservation measures do not undermine livelihood security. As specialized production systems become economically unviable for smallholders, integrated livestock–poultry–fisheries systems, including Zero-Budget Natural Farming Systems, offer resilient livelihood alternatives. Social workers support their adoption through social mobilization, gender-sensitive approaches, and empowerment of vulnerable groups. This empirical study emphasizes embedding social work’s role to enhance sustainability, resilience, and inclusiveness of livestock and fisheries-based livelihoods among the marginalized communities in rural India."

Improving Collaborations to Mitigate Non-Economic Loss and Damage Attributed to Disasters and Disruptions to School Feeding Programs: The Case of Malawi

Ms Tsogololathu Angel Itaye[1]
[1]University Of Malawi, , Malawi
"Background

Recurrent climate-related disaster in Malawi, including Tropical Cyclone Freddy in 2023 and El-Niño-induced climate variability in 2024 have disrupted school feeding programs [SPs] and intensified Non-Economic Loss and Damage [NELD] among primary school children. These losses include psychosocial distress, compromised cognitive development, reduced school attendance and declining educational quality. This study adopts a policy lens to examine how social workers can strengthen collaborative governance to protect SFPs during climate shocks.

Methods

This is a preliminary study that used a mixed method approach, combining primary data from interviews with teachers, learners and Mary's Meals. Secondary data was obtained from analysis of national education, social protection and national policies, including Malawi National Social Support Programme [MNSSP II] and the School Health and Nutrition Policy. The analysis focused on institutional coordination, policy coherence and implementation gaps affecting continuity during emergencies.

Results

Findings reveal fragmented inter-sectoral coordination between education, agriculture and disaster management institutions, alongside limited intergeneration of disaster risk reduction within existing policy frameworks. However, cases of coordination action between government agencies and development partners demonstrate the effectiveness of clearly defined roles, joint planning and rapid response mechanisms.

Conclusion

The study argues for policy reforms that institutionalize social work leadership in intersectoral coordination, embed disaster-resilient measures within SFPs and integrate psychosocial support into emergency responses. Therefore, strengthening collaborative policy frameworks is critical to mitigate NELD and safeguarding children's educational and developmental outcomes in disaster-prone contexts."

Towards an Ecological Society: Social Work and the Social Institutions of Sustainable & Just Shared Futures

Dr Robert A Case[1]
[1]Social Development Studies, Renison University College, Waterloo, Canada, , Canada
\"Nearly all our current ecological problems originate in deep-seated social problems, \" wrote social ecologist Murray Bookchin (Towards an Ecological Society, 1980). Ecological sustainability, in other words, can only be achieved through progressive social transformation. Drawing on the literature of social ecology and my own research on community based environmental activism, I advance the argument that (1) the concentration of power and domination through the reinforcement and reproduction of hierarchical institutions such as capitalism, the state, colonization, patriarchy, white supremacy, et cetera, is at the center of both social injustice and the climate crisis, and (2) that the possibility of a just and sustainable ecological society of the future therefore lies in the dissolution of such hierarchies of domination. Based on this premise, my presentation will include a brief summary of the ways in which social work, in some contexts, has served (intentionally or inadvertently) to uphold systems of domination and/or undermine alternative ways of being, before highlighting contexts in which social work (and social workers) can (and sometimes does) contribute to challenging hierarchies of domination and reinforcing alternative organizational forms based in cooperation, reciprocity, and mutual aid. Complementing eco-social work approaches that mobilize the healing power of nature, engage in environmental policy advocacy, and support community-based resistance to ecological harm — and aligning with the concept of \"Harambee\" and with calls from eco-social work scholars to support Indigenous approaches and to decolonize social work — the goal of this presentation is to encourage a redoubling social work\'s focus on challenging dominant, hierarchical social relations, facilitating grassroots democracy, and strengthening mutual aid by applying our collective effort to the building of the counter-institutions needed for the realization a just and ecologically sustainable future and by protecting and reinforcing those that already exist.

Recapitulation of Participation and Position of Social Workers in Social Movement: A Legacy of Hong Kong and its Impact to the World of Social Work

Dr Timothy Ka-Kit Chen[1]
[1]Gratia Christian College, , Hong Kong

The presentation is based on a literature review and discourse analysis on the participation of social workers in social movement in Hong Kong in the past decade. It aims to illustrate how they performed their professional identity to walk with those suffered in the social movement. Then, there is the totally societal change in Hong Kong and social workers find it hard to participate in advocacy and contribution to the civil society (Ngai, 2024). It is to discuss how Hong Kong social workers can persist to actualize core values—democracy, social justice and human rights and their vitality in contributing social change and empowering the vulnerable communities under the impact of changing regime who monitors rigorously the practice of advocacy for the wellbeing of citizens and modifies social work as a \'constrained\' profession in Hong Kong. The role and functions of social workers in Hong Kong civil society are to be discussed and elaborated in this new era. Besides, how this change in Hong Kong, possibly as the niche connection of social work in China with the international, impacts the road of advocacy and philanthropy among social work profession in our world.

Healing Beyond Bones: Integrating Orthopaedic Surgery and Social Work to Restore Child and Family Wellbeing

Dr Khetani Solly Bila[1]
[1]University Of Pretoria, , South Africa
"<p style=""text-align justify; line-height: 150%""><span style=""font-size: 11.0pt; line-height: 150%"">Orthopedic anomalies in children require more than surgical correction, as they present complex biomedical, psychosocial, and emotional challenges that affect children, parents, and family systems. This paper presents an interdisciplinary approach to pediatric orthopedic care, jointly developed by a healthcare social work lecturer and an orthopedic surgeon, to demonstrate how collaborative practice enhances the well-being of children and their families. The presentation examines how corrective surgical interventions, when intentionally integrated with social work, lead to improved physical outcomes, psychological adjustment, and strengthened family resilience. Social work contributions include pre- and post-operative psychosocial assessments, family-centered counselling, caregiver education, advocacy, and coordinated referral to rehabilitation and community-based services. From a surgical perspective, interdisciplinary collaboration improves communication, treatment adherence, and long-term recovery outcomes. The paper highlights how shared decision-making, mutual professional respect, and coordinated care planning enable children and families to navigate hospitalization, rehabilitation, and social reintegration more effectively. Anchored in the principle of Harambee—collective action for shared futures—this interdisciplinary model demonstrates how collaboration between orthopedic surgery and social work restores dignity, hope, and social functioning. The paper underscores the pivotal role of social work education in preparing practitioners for integrated healthcare practice and advocates for sustained interdisciplinary partnerships to advance holistic, sustainable pediatric health outcomes. </p>
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Effect of Gerontological Services Access on the Welfare Status of Older Persons in South-Western Uganda.

Dianah Aharimpisya[1]
[1]Makerere University; Nkumba University, , Uganda

Purpose – This article examines the influence of gerontological services access and its indicators on the welfare status of elderly persons in Western Uganda

Design/methodology/approach – The study espouses a cross-sectional design where data are obtained through both a close-ended questionnaire and interview guide. The author employed structural equation modeling (AMOS version 23) to test hypotheses and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Findings – The study found a positive and significant association between health care services access and the welfare status of older persons in Western Uganda. The study further discovered that social protection services access is a positive and significant predictor of welfare status. This study did not find both legal services access and social security services access to significantly predict welfare status. This was due to limited or no access to legal and social security services. Results also revealed that access to gerontological services is hindered by various factors including limited specialists in geriatrics at the health centers, poor service delivery by service providers, poor accessibility to healthcare centers, ageism and marginalization.

Practical implications – The study provides relevant insights for policy makers and implementers to apply these findings as a guideline for improving gerontological services access for the enhancement of welfare status for the elderly persons.

Originality/value– In this paper, the author offers empirical evidence on the connection between gerontological services access and the welfare status of elderly persons in Uganda. Moreover, the study also offers evidence on how the different gerontological services access measures impact welfare status of elderly persons. The study further extends the theoretical implications to the practice on gerontology and welfare status literature.

To Re-examine the Concept of Self Determination among Social Work Students: a dialogue between different cultural and socio-political contexts

Dr Timothy Ka-Kit Chen[1]
[1]Gratia Christian College, , Hong Kong

"The research is a joint effort among social work scholars/educators in Germany and Hong Kong, aimng at investigating how the concept of self-determination is shaped in different cultural, socio-political and economic contexts among students and fresh graduates in social work. Also, it is to address the impacts of their ideas of self-determination on their social work practice and understanding of professional identity of social work in different contexts.

Spicker (1990) suggests that as social workers gain more power and influence, the concept of client self-determination becomes increasingly irrelevant and difficult to implement in practice. It highlights that the social work relationship often occurs within a context of authority, making true client self-determination challenging. Other scholars challenge the level of significance of self-determination in social work practice by questioning that is not an all-or-nothing concept, and that it can coexist with human vulnerability and external influences (Ryan & Deci, 2006; Ryan et al, 2012; Wolfer et al, 2018). It calls for the need for a more nuanced understanding of the concept and its application in different cultural and philosophical contexts. Conclusions drawn from the studies (Akbar, 2019) highlight the ongoing struggle in social work to balance client autonomy with worker authority, and the need for social workers to navigate complex power dynamics in promoting self-determination. The study concludes that there is a need for further research on its operationalization of self-determination in practice.

By conducting in-depth interviews in phenomenological approach with thematic analysis, the researchers can delve into the unique perspectives of social work students as interviewees, taking into account their life journeys, cultural backgrounds, social discourses, and other factors that shape their views and knowledge on self-determination."

Care needs of older Australians living in rural areas: Key Issues and Challenges identified by case managers

Mr Ignatius Chida[1]
[1]Charles Sturt University, , Australia

"Introduction
Optimal home care service delivery for older Australians in rural settings is critical and complex, particularly in light of recent changes to the Support at Home Program.

Objective
This paper (1) examines the revised provisions relating to home care support services; (2) explores the main issues experienced by case managers who coordinate support for rural older people receiving Home Care Packages in New South Wales (NSW), Australia; and (3) suggests strategies to address the gaps in the delivery of support services to older people.

Design
Employing the qualitative research method, both primary and secondary data were collected. The primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews with five case managers who coordinated support for older Australians living in rural areas, and the secondary data comprised policy changes relating to home care services and stakeholder responses reported in both print and digital media.

Findings
The thematic analyses of the case managers\' interviews revealed four key issues. First, case managers experienced communication challenges while arranging services; second, insufficient interagency coordination resulted in fragmented support services; third, workforce and resource constraints affected service delivery; and fourth, they identified ethical issues relating to cost, technology, and service provision. In response to recent changes in home care provisions, providers raised concerns about financial burden, equity, administrative complexity and the impact on service quality. The study argues that home care programs should be designed to be flexible and adaptable, enabling them to address the unique needs of rural older Australians. This can only be achieved through the delivery of appropriate and optimal care and support through government, nongovernment and community partnerships. These findings have significant implications for older people\'s human right to quality care. The study suggests several strategies to address these issues."

Engineering and Social Work Student Teams Build International Success in India, Costa Rica, Greece and beyond

Ms Tanya Voss[1]
[1]The University Of Texas At Austin School Of Social Work, ,

"Projects with Underserved Communities brings together social work and engineering students to identify, develop, and implement engineering projects. Since 2010, University of Texas students have worked with local NGOs to engage communities in 12 countries to identify projects that have included work to:

Improve and increase sustainable cooking stoves;
Increase accessibility for community members with disabilities;
Increase sanitation;
Create solar power for a children\'s clinic;
Build a fire escape at a school; and
Improve and expand a playground at a refugee camp.

Social Work and Engineering professors will share the interdisciplinary model including funding raising, academic structure, and accountability. In addition, presenters will share lessons learned over the years and during the 2025 in-country program evaluation that involved listening to residents talk about the pitfalls and successes of different projects in their rural communities.

https://presidentsglobalaward.utexas.edu/project/impact-of-service-learning-projects-on-rural-communities-in-india/

https://global.utexas.edu/abroad/programs/service-learning/projects-underserved-communities"

Living on the Edge of Care and Survival: A Situational Analysis of Single Mothers in Nepal

Dr Arati Maleku[1]
[1]The Ohio State University College Of Social Work | The Ohio State University College Of Social Work | Louisiana State Un, , United States

"Poverty, unpaid care burdens, labor migration, and structural exclusion from economic opportunities disproportionately affect single mothers across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Nepal reflects this global pattern but remains understudied as a social policy priority. This study presents a baseline situational analysis of 912 single mothers participating in a Conditional Basic Income (CBI) program, contributing one of the first empirical datasets focused exclusively on this demographic group in Nepal.

Guided by the capability approach and feminist economics of care, data was collected through community-based survey interviews conducted by trained local enumerators. Findings reveal a compounded cycle of deprivation. Nearly 60% of respondents have no formal education, restricting access to skilled labor and reinforcing intergenerational vulnerability. Although mothers prioritize their children’s education, 88% report severe difficulty affording school fees, uniforms, and learning materials, a pattern consistent with LMIC contexts such as Bangladesh, Kenya, and Nigeria. Financial scarcity is further intensified by psychosocial distress: 93% of mothers report persistent financial anxiety, and 90% experience low financial self-efficacy, mirroring toxic stress patterns observed among resource-constrained mothers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The quality of life scores mirror these pressures, revealing gaps in agency, autonomy, and well-being, with 68% of mothers expressing dissatisfaction. Findings demonstrate that single mothers in Nepal live within a gendered poverty trap shaped by unpaid labor, emotional care work, and weak formal support structures.

The baseline trends align with global LMIC research showing that cash-based interventions, when designed with care and recognition, can reduce financial stress, improve educational continuity, and expand women\'s decision-making power. As Nepal advances toward rights-based social protection reform, these findings offer actionable policy insights. CBI is a promising way to not only redistribute income but also to restore psychological stability, time autonomy, and intergenerational well-being. This study sets the stage for long-term impact evaluation."

Dignity of Risk in Global Assisted Living: A Comparative Analysis

Dr Josephine Misaro[1]
[1]University Of Nairob, , Kenya

"Aging is not 'lost youth' but a new stage of opportunity and strength. Assisted Living (AL) communities are residential care settings designed to help older adults embrace this new stage with essential support and care. AL provide an environment where residents feel “at home” and can maintain the lifestyle and preferences they had before transitioning—signifying autonomy. Denied autonomy in AL involves staff and family overriding residents’ choices in the name of safety and best choices even when the resident can make decisions. AL administrators are gatekeepers, policymakers, and culture influencers in a setting. The level of protection entrusted to them and their role in governing residents’ needs while understanding their autonomy and safety is worth studying. Existing theoretical and empirical research on cross-cultural analysis of residents’ autonomy is not sufficient. We examined how AL administrators and direct care workers negotiate residents’ daily life and personal preferences including mandatory schedules, clothing, hygiene, choice of food, use of personal appliances and social interactions against ensuring residents’ health and safety. We reviewed existing literature to synthesize knowledge and identify research gaps. Expanding on previous studies into autonomy and safety of older adults, our research examines the complex ways administrators negotiate and balance residents’ needs and safety using various strategies. We utilized a new theoretical framework to investigate the critical, yet often overlooked, challenge of how AL staff navigate the needs of residents across different cultures. Informal policies regarding residents’ needs are shaped by many factors that tend to stifle residents\' autonomy. Health, safety, and family expectations often trumped the autonomy of AL residents. Findings highlight oversight strategies, such as surveillance, redirecting, and reporting, that care workers employ to undermine residents’ privacy, dignity, and respect."

Doctoral Education in Social Work in China: Opportunities and Challenges

Assoc Prof Quancai Li[1]
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"China’s Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program officially launched in 2025, with the first cohort of students now enrolled. This marks a significant step forward in cultivating high-level, practice-oriented professional talent. This article analyzes the opportunities and challenges in this emerging field. Key opportunities include strong policy support driving professionalization, a growing societal demand for mature, evidence-informed leadership in practice, and the potential to integrate international educational frameworks with local knowledge and practical wisdom.
However, numerous challenges remain. The primary task is to establish a distinct professional identity and competency model for the DSW, clearly differentiating it from the research-focused doctoral degree by emphasizing advanced clinical intervention, supervision, organizational management, and policy practice. Curriculum design must effectively integrate cutting-edge theory, applied research methods, and transformative practice training. A current bottleneck is the shortage of faculty who possess both top-level practical expertise and doctoral education experience. Additionally, systemic foundations such as professional accreditation standards, sustainable university–agency partnerships, and clear career pathways for graduates require further development.
The article argues that the future of DSW education in China depends on systematically addressing these challenges. Advancing this process requires focused efforts to establish clear national standards, foster deep collaborations between academia and leading practice institutions, innovate teaching methods, and actively engage in key international dialogues. Through these measures, DSW education can strengthen the localization and professionalization of social work in China, contributing to the development of a strong, locally grounded, and globally informed social work knowledge system."

Professional alliances as political actors: institutionalizing social work in Kazakhstan

Ayagoz Aubakirova[2], Yessimova Dinara[1]
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"In contexts where social work lacks full legal recognition and remains institutionally fragmented, professional alliances can emerge as key actors of political social work and bottom-up institutional change. This paper analyses the National Alliance of Professional Social Workers of Kazakhstan as a case of collective professional mobilization aimed at advancing the institutionalization of social work through advocacy, policy engagement, and coalition-building.

Drawing on a qualitative case study that includes expert interviews, document analysis, and policy tracing, the study examines how the Alliance operates at the intersection of civil society and the state. The findings demonstrate that the Alliance has moved beyond a traditional professional association role to function as a policy entrepreneur and political actor within the social welfare system. Through sustained participation in expert councils, parliamentary working groups, and inter-ministerial platforms, the Alliance has contributed to the development of key regulatory frameworks, including the Social Code of Kazakhstan and national professional standards for social work.

The analysis highlights several mechanisms of political social work enacted by the Alliance: collective advocacy grounded in professional expertise, strategic use of pilot projects and international partnerships, and the translation of practice-based knowledge into policy reform. These mechanisms have enabled social workers to gain institutional visibility, professional legitimacy, and a voice in policy-making processes, even within a constrained political environment.

By conceptualizing the activities of the Alliance as a form of political social work, this paper contributes to global debates on social movements, professionalization, and democratic capacity-building. The case illustrates how professional alliances can act as drivers of institutional change and democratic participation in emerging welfare systems beyond liberal democratic contexts."

Social work as a tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: evidence from HIV-affected families in Kazakhstan

Ayagoz Aubakirova[1], Ms Sholpan Primbetova[1]
[1]Al-farabi Kazakh National University, National Alliance Of Professional Social Workers Of Kazakhstan, , Kazakhstan

"Despite its significant potential to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social work in the context of HIV in Kazakhstan remains insufficiently visible within service systems and to families affected by HIV. Social workers are uniquely positioned to address social determinants of health, reduce inequalities, and strengthen access to psychosocial and rights-based support for families living with HIV. However, limited recognition of social work functions and weak intersectoral coordination constrain the full contribution of social work to sustainable development outcomes.

Drawing on evidence from a national needs assessment and qualitative materials from social work practice, this paper analyses how psychosocial support, case management, and intersectoral coordination are organized for families affected by HIV in Kazakhstan. The analysis identifies three interrelated challenges. First, social work services remain largely invisible to families, with many parents lacking awareness of available social support and professional roles. Second, fragmented coordination between healthcare, social protection, and community-based services undermines continuity of care and reinforces inequalities in access to support. Third, the absence of systematic needs assessment tools and routine professional supervision weakens service quality and sustainability.

The findings demonstrate that strengthening social work practice is essential for advancing SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by supporting treatment adherence and family resilience, SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by addressing stigma and unequal access to services, and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) through more responsive and integrated service delivery. By positioning social work as a key instrument for achieving the SDGs in national HIV responses, this paper highlights the importance of embedding psychosocial and social protection approaches within sustainable development strategies. The study offers practice-relevant insights for countries seeking to align HIV services with the SDGs through strengthened social work systems."

Rewards and Challenges of Knowledge-Sharing Leadership: Experiences of Racialized PhD Students

Dr Johanne Thomson-Sweeny[1]
[1]Mcgill University | University Of Toronto | University Of Ottawa | University Of Toronto | Wilfred Laurier University, ,

"Racialized and marginalized individuals are under-represented in academic leadership roles, including in social work higher education. Without representative leadership and mentorship, it can be difficult for racialized students to find their place in a predominantly white environment that systemically has and continues to exclude them. It can also prevent them from advancing to leadership and mentorship positions and deny opportunities to create equity initiatives and inclusive spaces, as well as pursue social justice.

A panel is proposed to present the authors' lived experiences as racialized women who are currently enrolled in or have recently graduated from their doctoral studies and have been in leadership roles. The idea for this panel stems from our shared experience as racialized women in leadership positions through organizing a Canada-wide doctoral social work student conference via the Canadian Social Work Doctoral Student Network.

The findings, drawn from an autobiographical approach, highlight the embodied and intersectional meanings of the authors' experiences, the associated expectations and challenges they faced, and the peer mentorship and support network formed through navigating these challenges alongside other racialized student leaders. Our experience has shown that being a racialized doctoral student in a leadership position is both rewarding, such as advancing social justice, and frustrating, for example when confronted with bureaucratic or financial barriers. Navigating this tension has taught us the importance of creating and accessing a community not only with members who share like-minded values, but also with those who have similar lived experiences.

Our leadership roles allow us to pave the way for future students, so their own leadership experiences can be less challenging and more focused on creativity, knowledge advancement, and solidarity. By sharing our experiences, we aim to contribute to broader conversations on equity, representation, and transformative possibilities of leadership undertaken by racialized doctoral students in social work."

Sa Bahay Ampunan (At the Orphanage): Filipino Values in Residential Care Facilities for Children

Dr Hazel Cometa-Lamberte[1]
[1]College Of Social Work And Community Development, University Of The Philippines, , Philippines
"Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) for children, locally known as bahay ampunan, are among the oldest institutional responses for Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP). Introduced during the Spanish colonial period, these institutions have significantly shaped the development of child welfare in the Philippines and continue to operate today through both government and private initiatives. This ethnographic study examines how Filipino cultural values influence social service delivery within two RCFs.

The study examines respondents\' values and harnesses them to design culturally appropriate interventions for children in care and their families. It uses the Pag-ako (taking on responsibility) Spiral Framework to illustrate how Filipino values are developed, enacted, and sustained within residential care settings. It explores how pag-ako and related values shape the shared responsibility of caring for children, influence everyday practices, and mediate relationships among key stakeholders, including children, families, staff, and donors. The study also examines how these values shaped the culture of care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Findings highlight the central role of Filipino values such as pag-ako, pagtulong (helping), pagpapasalamat and utang na loob (gratitude and reciprocity), katatagang loob (emotional resilience), paggalang (respect), pagpapahalaga sa pamilya (valuing family), ginhawa (well-being), pagmamalasakit (concern for others), bahala na (acceptance amid uncertainty), and kagandahang-loob (kindness). Among these, pag-ako emerged as a foundational value expressed through collective responsibility and role-specific obligations. These values function as guiding principles that motivate commitment, regulate emotions, facilitate cooperation with institutional rules, and strengthen relationships.
During the pandemic, Filipino values enabled systems of self-care and mutual care, supporting adaptive decision-making and sustaining institutional life. The study recommends integrating a Filipino value-based framework into psychosocial interventions, administration, supervision, and accreditation processes of RCFs. This research contributes to broader discussions on culturally grounded child welfare practice in Philippine studies.

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Making (Radical) Change Real: Relational Criteria Needed to Create and Sustain Transformational Social Innovation between Nonprofit Organizations and Local Governments

Dr Trish Lenz[1]
[1]York University, School Of Social Work, , Canada

"Social innovation is positioned as a key strategy for addressing persistent social and economic challenges, including chronically underfunded income supports, housing systems, and healthcare services. As pressures on social service systems intensify, nonprofit organizations and local governments are frequently called upon to respond in increasingly innovative ways. Yet social problems are not neutral or fixed; they are historically and socially constructed, and interpreted through political and ideological frameworks. These conditions shape how social innovation is defined, funded, and operationalized, raising important questions about how nonprofits and local governments can cultivate relationships that enable transformational social innovation within constrained environments.

This study examines the relational conditions necessary to create and sustain transformational social innovation between nonprofit organizations and local governments. Using an exploratory qualitative research design, in-depth interviews were conducted with nonprofit and local government leaders engaged in the development and implementation of social innovation initiatives. Findings indicate that local governments play a critical role in fostering transformational social innovation primarily through the creation of supportive policy environments, while nonprofit organizations often assume leadership roles in initiating and advancing innovative practices.

Across both sectors, the most salient relational criterion for sustaining transformational social innovation was network formation. This included the development of collective networks, connections with local government actors, and intentional relationship-building practices. Within this theme, connection to local Indigenous governments emerged as a significant and underexplored relational dimension, highlighting Indigenous governance and partnership in social innovation processes.

Practitioner reflections further revealed that empowerment-oriented dimensions of social innovation (e.g. inclusivity, education, and legislative change) alongside content and product development (e.g. new services, programs, knowledge creation, and community support) were most prominent in practice. Key challenges identified included securing political buy-in and navigating funding constraints. This research contributes to social work scholarship by foregrounding relational and governance dynamics as central to transformational social innovation"

Every Home Tells a Story – Rebuilding Community Narratives During War and Displacement

Mrs Carmit Palty Katzir[1]
[1]Mental Health, ,

"On October 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants carried out a coordinated massacre and abduction attack across southern Israel, killing approximately 1,200 people and abducting 251 civilians and soldiers from their homes, communities, and a music festival. Victims included Israelis and foreign nationals of diverse ages, genders, and faiths, underscoring the scale of the violence and its transnational impact. Kibbutz Nir Oz, a main target of the attack, is a small community where 117 of its 400 residents were murdered or kidnapped, and many homes destroyed. My father, Rami Katzir, was murdered; my mother, Hana, and my brother, Elad, were abducted.

Following the attack, surviving residents were evacuated to multiple locations. As the war continued, community members found themselves in a multifaceted struggle: advocating for the release of hostages, processing loss and trauma, and up-keeping their tight-nit community in a shattered reality.

In response to this profound communal rupture, Carmit Palty Katzir (MSW) and Renana Gome Yaakov, both raised in Nir Oz and members of hostage families, initiated grassroots, community-based intervention, inviting residents to narrate their experiences by describing their homes in three different time points - before the massacre, the day of the massacre, and since. To date, 120 stories have been documented and shared physically through story-signs placed among destroyed houses, and digitally accessible via website.

This approach integrated place-based memory and collective witnessing (Johnson, 2012), offering an early model of post-traumatic continuity and community resilience. Narrative methods supported the organization of fragmented memories, linking between pre-trauma life and traumatic rupture, and the positioning of grief within an ongoing personal and collective timeline (Jirek, 2016). In times of ongoing global conflicts and mass displacement (Ramon & Zaviršek, 2025), this project entails a unique approach for supporting trauma processing and the reconstruction of disrupted communal identities and futures.

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Walking together: Rebranding Rural Social Work for Transformative Change for Sustainable Community Partnership and Social Development.

Mrs Heidi Fuentes[1]
[1]Nova Scotia Health Authority, Nova Scotia, Canada., , Canada

"A call for action, “Leaving no one behind” is at the core of Canada’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs). The time is now for social work to foster partnerships aimed at progressing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in rural Canada.

Social work can be identified as a profession and an academic discipline that promotes social justice and equality. Nonetheless, challenges in social work identity arise in rural communities that are rooted in historical trusts, systemic racism, funding challenges, and knowledge marginalization. Social work is under pressure to foster partnerships and cultivate transformative change in rural communities. The need to strengthen partnerships by disseminating its rooted identity has become essential. Rebranding rural social work can create opportunities where constraints are often experienced by service users and services providers within rural communities.

A focus will be on sustainable development goal (SDG) 17, which is aimed to revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development in support of the 2030 Agenda. A systematic meta-analysis will explore current limitations in rural social work with emphasis on collective action and mutual support. Transformative change requires inclusivity, collaboration, trust, and relabeling social work as part of a collective initiative of walking together towards revitalizing communities and partnerships. Findings will aid in fostering collective learning, respect and cohesion toward social development in rural communities in Canada and neighboring countries."

Social Work Supervision: Advancing Quality Care and Decision-Making

Dr Rebecca Davis[1]
[1]Rutgers University School Of Social Work & Iassw, ,

The Global Charter on Children's Care Reform launched at the UN on September 24, 2025 advocates for increased investments by governments to adequately support vulnerable children and families in their communities. Even with the evidence of the long-term, detrimental affects on children, 96 out of 100,000 children, globally, reside in institutional care today (UNICEF, 2025). Children with disabilities are more likely to be placed in institutions, remain in care longer, and be segregated and stigmatized. Strengthening the child protection workforce while addressing the high levels of burnout and turnover is a key strategy to increase the quality of services and reduce reliance on institutional care. Supportive and reflective supervision have consistently been shown to mitigate stress and burnout, improve decision-making, and increase positive outcomes for social workers and families (Newcomb, 2022). Based on the research evidence available, social work supervision practices are primarily administrative rather than reflective and supportive across the social work practice settings (Ravalier et al., 2022). This presentation explores the definitions and conceptual models of social work supervision within the literature, with a primary focus on supportive and reflective supervisory practices, highlighting the evidence base on outcomes for social work supervisors, supervisees, and children and families. Special attention will be given to systemic challenges and the structure of supervision as compared against best practices. Supervision models for students and practitioners that increase resilience, moderate stress, improve job satisfaction, and improve care will be highlighted. Finally, mechanisms for advancing a professional cadre of social work supervisors through curriculum development and teaching initiatives that integrate the evidence-base will be proposed. This includes a balanced and integrative model of educational, supportive, and administrative practices that advance quality of care and a potential career track for social workers as professional supervisors.

Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Naresh Dhurve[1]
[1]Tirpude College Of Social Work, Nagpur, India, , India

"In term of development women stand for more significant contribution than that of men. However, their work of produce, process and sell is often ignored in the developing countries. A major component in rural development policy is the equality of women when it comes to access to and use of land, social services and agricultural consultancy, and also loans adapted to their needs. Of equal importance is the empowerment of women through suitable training measures and information with a view to increasing their opportunities for direct participation in social, political and economic decision-making processes. The women make half of the India’s populations.

Development of an adequate understanding of mainstreaming requires clarity on the related concepts of gender and equality. Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision–making, and when the different aspirations and need of women and men are equally valued and favored.

Women are key agents for development. That is if a country cannot develop well, they will face the problems of poverty and resource, and empowerment are essential for achieving our development goals. Unless both women and men are able to attain their social economic and political aspirations, about the future, the global community will not successfully promote peace and prosperity. Realizing some of the policy in all of the states can become a catalytic force for gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide and bring to effect the vision of a world in which all people are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities."

From Identification to Reintegration: Leveraging Digital Social Work to Strengthen Social Protection Responses to School Teenage Pregnancy

Dr Namakau Kakanda-Sinkala[1]
[1]National Institute Of Public Administration (nipa), ,

"Zambia aspires to enhance the re-entry of teenage mothers as well as reduce teenage pregnancies through the 1997 Re-entry policy complimented by other policies across ministries and the One Stop Centre model. However, rates of teenage pregnancies are still high amongst primary schoolgirls compounded with low school re-entries of teenage mothers. My study established that some key informants were uncomfortable with the responsibility of tracking teenage mothers which is given to teachers at school level who are already overloaded with teaching responsibilities. Lack of guidance and counselling could be argued to be a contributing factor to lack of re-entry of teenage mothers and also worrying numbers of pregnancies amongst schoolgirls. The intersectionality of factors linked to teenage pregnancy and education of adolescent teenage mothers can be addressed through the life cycle approach to safeguard social protection as spelt out in Zambia's 2025 National Social Protection Policy. Based on the findings from my PhD study, there is need for a digital case management information system (MIS) coordinated by social workers in various ministries – Education, Social Services and Community Development, Home Affairs and Internal Security, Health, and Gender division to offer services that will reintegrate teenage mothers into school, and also curb teenage pregnancies in schools. This approach is grounded in Bronfenbrenner\'s five tier ecology system to enhance human development. It will involve the piloting of MIS across the ministries and gender division centred on social workers as the coordinators. Social protection of adolescent girls to overcome the consequences of teenage pregnancy requires a comprehensive digital dashboard coordinated by social workers as experts in case identification and intake, assessment and individual care planning, referral and coordination, monitoring re-entry and retention, as well as safeguarding and ethical handling of data

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Incest, Silence, and Social Work: Addressing a Hidden Child Protection Challenge in Zambia

Dr Namakau Kakanda-Sinkala[1]
[1]National Institute Of Public Administration (nipa), ,

My exploration of the Re-entry policy at primary school level in Chongwe District unearthed a suppressed dimension of teenage pregnancy which is not openly discussed at family and community level- incest. I established that sexual gender based violence (SGBV) of girls which in some cases results in teenage pregnancy is prevalent at household level. Teenage girls are abused within the home with their outcry to mothers being received with negativity in most cases. Most mothers were said to be in denial when their daughters give such reports especially when it involved their partners. Some girls were said to have been taken to Church for exorcism claiming that they are demon possessed to have made such allegations. This creates a scenario of rejection by the very people who are supposed to protect them. The welfare system in Zambia was found to be incapacited in terms of government operated safe houses thus relying on safe houses owned by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are in short supply, found in few places across the country, and their operations determined by donor funding. At community level, the findings were that community members tend to protect perpetrators who are considered to be responsible members of the community. These findings on SGBV of girls leave the girls and their families with trauma, and rejection which underscores the importance of psychosocial counselling. Incest in this case is situated in the Human Rights Based Approach contextualised within the Children's Code Act of 2022 in Zambia. The study will be qualitative in nature using a semi structured interview guide to establish how Social Workers are handling cases of incest. Child protection is a key component of Social Work practice of community development in Zambia thus underscoring the importance of their role in dealing with incest.

Integrating Sexuality Social Justice concepts within Social Work Education

Dr Becky Anthony[1]
[1]Salisbury University, School Of Social Work, , United States

"The Sexuality Social Justice open access freely available book is the result of efforts to increase awareness and understanding of sexuality social justice within social work education. Sexuality social justice emphasizes the notion that all people, regardless of their sexual, gender, racial, and ethnic identities, sexual health status or related behaviors, deserve equitable access to societal opportunities and equalities. Furthermore, the impacts of systemic oppression such as white supremacy and racism on individual and community experiences of sexuality and gender creates additional challenges for individuals navigating needed resources, support, and affirmation McConnell, Janulis, Phillips, Truong, & Birkett, There is often a hesitancy on the part of social work educators in adopting a sex educator lens/role in the classroom (Ballan, 2008). Unfortunately, this often means the impact of sexuality social justice and the intersections of racial justice on micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice is rarely discussed (Turner, Vernacchio, & Satterly, 2018). Incorporating inclusive sex education and discussions on the intersections of sexuality social justice in the classroom, is fundamental to expanding the core knowledge areas of social work students (Turner, Vernacchio, & Satterly, 2018).

Within this workshop, the presenter will share the link to the Sexuality Social Justice open access book: Pressbooks.pub/sexuality socialjustice and provide an overview of its components as well as how this resource has been integrated into social work education. This workshop will assist participants in identifying practical strategies for utilizing this resource within classroom discussions, fostering connections to a changing sociopolitical landscape around the world. Information will be shared to encourage future contributions to continue to expand the knowledge around sexuality social justice and social work."

Need for Social Work Intervention in Combating Violence against Women in Indian Society

Prof Saraswati Raju Iyer[1]
[1]Acharya Nagarjuna University, , India

"Violence against women remains a pervasive social issue in Andhra Pradesh, deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms, economic disparities, and systemic gender inequalities. This study aims to investigate the prevalence, forms, and underlying causes of violence against women in the region, with a focus on domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry-related abuses, and trafficking. Through a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with survivors, social workers, law enforcement officials, and community leaders, the research uncovers the multifaceted nature of violence and its impact on women\'s physical, psychological, and social well-being. The study adopts a descriptive research design and through random sampling method 300 sample respondents were selected from Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The findings reveal that despite legal provisions and awareness campaigns, violence against women persists due to entrenched patriarchal attitudes, lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, and inadequate support systems for victims. Economic dependency and social stigma further limit women\'s ability to seek help or escape abusive environments. The study highlights gaps in existing intervention strategies and the critical need for comprehensive social work intervention.

Social work intervention emerges as a vital component in addressing this issue, offering a holistic framework that encompasses advocacy, counseling, community education, and policy lobbying. Social workers play a pivotal role in empowering survivors, facilitating access to legal and health services, and mobilizing community resources to foster gender-sensitive environments. The study advocates for strengthening social work education and training focused on gender-based violence, enhancing collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, and promoting gender justice through sustained social action.

In conclusion, this research underscores the urgency of integrating social work interventions in the fight against violence towards women in Andhra Pradesh, aiming to create safer and more equitable spaces that uphold women\'s rights and dignity.

Centering Student Voices: Reimagining MSW Education to Foster Belonging and Well-Being

Dr Lana Elkins[1]
[1]University Of South Carolina, , United States
"<p data-start=""983"" data-end=""1712"">Full-time graduate students in social work face disproportionate levels of academic, financial, and emotional stress compared to peers in other disciplines, posing significant challenges to their well-being and professional formation. This qualitative action research study explored how full-time Master of Social Work (MSW) students at a large southeastern U.S. university experience stress and belonging, and how social work programs can better support them. Guided by humanistic learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the study employed a two-phase design: analysis of four student feedback surveys (2021–2023) followed by in-depth interviews with MSW students and program employees. </p>
<p data-start=""1714"" data-end=""2367"">Findings revealed that students desire clearer communication, more supportive teaching, stronger cohort relationships, and greater opportunities for input into program decisions. Six overarching themes emerged across ecological levels: time management (individual), employee guidance and supportive teaching (microsystem), coordinated curriculum and cohort development (mesosystem), stakeholder engagement (exosystem), and financial support (macrosystem). These insights informed a collaborative action plan for systemic improvement, emphasizing participatory program evaluation, curriculum coordination, and advocacy for student financial well-being. </p>
<p data-start=""2369"" data-end=""2942"">This study demonstrates how co-created inquiry and reflexive pedagogy can transform social work education by centering student voices as agents of change. By integrating principles of self-care, belonging, and communication into both explicit and implicit curricula, programs can model the very social work values they teach human dignity, empathy, and relational connection. The findings contribute to global conversations on innovating pedagogy, democratizing knowledge, and cultivating educational environments where all social work students can truly belong and thrive. </p>"

Lived experiences of transgender and gender diverse people living with neurodivergence and disability in Hong Kong and Taiwan

Chenxi Yang[1]
[1]The University Of Hong Kong, , Hong Kong
"Objective: This study examined the experiences of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people living with disabilities and neurodivergence.

Method: Between May and October 2025, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with five transgender women, non-binary, and agender people (aged 22–43) living with blindness, ASD, and/or ADHD in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Data were analyzed using IPA.

Results: Stigma related to their gender identity, disability, and neurodivergence was frequently reported and often co-occurred with gender dysphoria, depression, and anxiety.

Participants reported compounded marginalization at the intersection of CIS genderism and ableism across various social settings, including schools, workplaces, and healthcare systems. In the workplace, for instance, one blind transgender woman described facing unique job-seeking barriers that went beyond the challenges typically experienced by either blind people or transgender people alone. In healthcare, barriers included professionals' lack of understanding of the intersection between neurodivergence and TGD identities. This often resulted in misdiagnosis, delayed mental health care, and denial of gender-affirming care. For example, one non-binary participant with ASD and ADHD shared that their neurodiversity led gatekeepers to question their gender identity, ultimately denying them access to gender-affirming care, including speech and occupational therapy.

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated resilience by seeking mental health therapy, taking medication (e.g., mood stabilizers), practicing mindfulness, and engaging in sports. These efforts helped them manage depressive episodes, suicidal ideation, and gender dysphoria. Engaging in spiritual conversations also supported some participants in embracing their intersecting identities. Participants sought gender affirmation through hormone therapy and interpersonal validation from community support, wearing affirming clothes, and pursuing affirming sexual experiences/intimacy. These practices fostered gender euphoria and contributed to their gender affirming experiences.

Implications: This study highlights the need for intersectional, neurodivergence-informed, disability-inclusive, and gender-affirming services and policies to support TGD communities."

Gender affirmation experiences among Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Hong Kong and Taiwan

Chenxi Yang[1]
[1]The University Of Hong Kong, , Hong Kong
"Objective: This qualitative study explored gender affirmation experiences of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people.

Method: Semi-structured interviews with 48 TGD people (28 in Hong Kong and 20 in Taiwan) were conducted in April-October 2025.

Results: In the psychological domain, participants described experiences of gender dysphoria and euphoria, including joy when wearing affirming clothing or navigating menopause. Many navigated conflicts between gender identity and religious beliefs. Some non-binary people embraced feelings of ambivalence. Others countered internalized transphobia and dysphoria through self-care and community advocacy.

In the interpersonal domain, some transgender women participants concealed their gender identities from family by maintaining masculine presentations at home while storing feminine clothes elsewhere (e.g., lockers, storages, and dormitories). Many TGD participants faced familial nonacceptance, while some reported acceptance, with parents who educated themselves and supported their children’s gender expression. Many also experienced marginalization in schools, religious communities, and workplaces.

In the medical domain, many transgender women and men participants accessed gender-affirming hormones, including DIY hormone therapy. They acquired knowledge about gender-affirming procedures, including surgeries, self-injection, and voice training, from the online TGD community and local NGOs. Some participants underwent gender-affirming surgeries in Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, while others were saving money for procedures or waiting in public hospital queues for hormones and surgeries. A few were unable to pursue medical affirmation due to health and ageing concerns. Furthermore, non-binary participants who expressed interest in accessing hormones and surgeries were discouraged by binary gatekeeping requirements.

In the legal domain, many had changed or planned to update their name/gender markers on IDs and institutional records. Some Hong Kong participants expressed despair at being unable to amend their birth certificates, raising concerns about police interactions, public encounters, and marriage rights.

Implications: The findings offer practical implications to better understand and support TGD communities."

Determinants of Willingness to Use Home-Care Robots Among Older Adults in Chinese Mainland

Prof Mei-chun Cheung[1]
[1]The Chinese University Of Hong Kong, , Hong Kong

Introduction

Amidst the growing demand for eldercare and a shortage of qualified caregivers, the Chinese government is actively promoting the development and deployment of robot-assisted care services for community-dwelling older adults (OAs). Understanding the factors that drive this population to embrace home-care robots is crucial for the successful implementation of such technologies. This study specifically aimed to delineate the determinants influencing the willingness of Chinese OAs aged 60 and above, who have not previously used home-care robots, to adopt this emerging technology as potential users.

Method

A total of 589 community-dwelling OAs (mean age 68.6 ± 7.5 years) were recruited through convenience sampling in Shanghai, China. The OAs completed a structured questionnaire designed by the research team, administered via a cross-sectional survey methodology.

Results

Among the OAs, 57.3% (n = 337) expressed willingness to use home-care robots. Statistical analysis indicated that OAs with higher education levels, greater monthly income, and elevated expectations regarding filial care were more inclined to adopt the technology. Additionally, those living alone, currently receiving long-term care, and possessing greater experience with technology demonstrated a higher likelihood of willingness to use home-care robots. Older adults, who were open to the ethical use of robots, valued convenience and economic efficiency, and emphasized less confidentiality and the opinions of people close to them, expressed a higher willingness to use home-care robots.

Conclusion

The findings highlight the importance of socio-demographic and experiential factors in determining OAs' willingness to use home-care robots in China. To enhance their willingness, targeted strategies should focus on improving digital literacy, especially for OAs with lower educational attainment. Furthermore, addressing the specific needs of those living alone or receiving long-term care might also increase their willingness."

650

We All (Should) Stand Together: A Collaborative Response to the Support and Development of Newly Qualified Social Workers- Insights from Graduates and Supervisors

Mrs Leanne Jordaan[1], Dr Corlie Giliomee[1]
[1]University Of Pretoria, , South Africa
"<p style=""text-align justify; line-height: 150%"">Newly qualified social workers often experience a challenging transition from university to practice, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. This qualitative study, guided by the Theory of Collaborative Advantage and using an instrumental case study design, explored the support and continuing professional development needs of NQSWs in South Africa. Data was generated through online World Café sessions with 23 participants, including newly qualified social workers and social work supervisors, selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Reflexive thematic analysis generated four themes: (1) <em data-start=""994"" data-end=""1018"">Preparing for practice: highlighting gaps between social work education and the realities of practice; (2) <em data-start=""1102"" data-end=""1126"">Organizational factors: including high workloads and limited supervisory support; (3) <em data-start=""1189"" data-end=""1211"">Development of NQSWs: emphasizing the importance of structured professional and personal growth opportunities; and (4) <em data-start=""1309"" data-end=""1336"">Solution-based strategies: proposing induction programs, accessible continuing professional development, and stronger partnerships between educators and employers.</p>
<p style=""text-align justify; line-height: 150%"" data-start=""1447"" data-end=""2203"">Findings support collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches as critical for reshaping the social work curriculum and bridging the gap between education and practice. The study advocates for a contextually relevant continuing professional development framework that promotes co-creation, mentorship, and inter-professional collaboration to enhance NQSWs' competence and well-being. This approach aligns with global priorities in social work education to prioritize and facilitate continuing professional development. The study contributes to innovative pedagogical strategies by positioning collaboration as central to preparing and retaining the next generation of social workers in South Africa and similar low- and middle-income contexts. </p>
Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words)."

Uganda Women\'s Immigrants Experiences of Social Integration into the Swedish Culture

Ms Doreen Ainembabazi[1]
[1]Uganda Christian University, , Uganda

"Migration is a complex global challenge. Currently there are over 304 million international migrants across the globe (UNDESA, 2024). Immigrants face vast issues in the host communities including integration. Integration is a multi-faceted and contested term that is used to denote a process that is enumerated through a range of complex and at times inter-related manifestations including social mobility, economic indices, language and cultural adaptation and citizenship(Phalet and Swyngedouw, 2003;Phoenix, 2008). Social integration is one aspect of integration. Different perspectives such as assimilation, multiculturalism and integration have explained integration. Assimilation looks at immigrants taking on the identities of the host society by completely melting into the main culture and adopting characteristics similar to the natives, multiculturalism is a process in which immigrants' characteristics are preserved and integration where by immigrants retain their original cultural characteristic but also adopt new culture in the host society.

This study aimed to explore Ugandan women immigrants understanding of social integration, their strength, weaknesses and challenges they experience when socially integrating into the Swedish society. Using qualitative design, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted on Ugandan women immigrants with a Ugandan background. The study used purposive snowball sampling to establish contact with these women. Analysis of findings was done using thematic analysis. Findings were analysed using Crenshaw's intersectionality theory that looks at multiple inequalities that these Ugandan women face and experience based on gender and race in order to find out how gender and race intersect to influence social integration in the Swedish society. According to study findings,Ugandan women defined social integration as being accepted, fitting in the society socially, access to opportunities, rights and services in the society. Furthermore, Uganda women's strength in integrating included having religious affiliations, increased social networks, and their ability to learn and speak the Swedish language."

Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse Involving LGBTQ+ Youth

Dr Assaf Vital, Dr Amitai Marmor[1]
[1]University Of Haifa And University Of Edinburgh, , , [2]Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Ramat-Chen Brull Mental Health Center, Clalit Health Services, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

"Mandatory Reporting (MR) laws are a fundamental component of child protection systems worldwide, requiring professionals such as teachers, doctors, and social workers to report suspicions of child abuse. In Israel, every citizen is legally required to report suspected abuse; however, professionals in education, health, and welfare carry additional statutory and ethical responsibilities, making the process of decision-making particularly complex.

This study explores how professionals navigate these challenges when faced with disclosures of child sexual abuse by LGBTQ+ adolescents who are not openly identified (“closeted”). Findings reveal the tension between fulfilling legal obligations and protecting the youth’s emotional and social safety. Many professionals describe profound internal conflicts when they fear that reporting may result in additional harm, such as forced outing to unsupportive families, loss of trust, or fear of the teen from stigma. The participants recounted cases in which adolescents disclosed sexual harm but explicitly refused to share further information due to fears of being reported, outed, rejected, or shamed. These narratives highlight how the intersection of sexual identity, law, and professional ethics produces deep moral and practical dilemmas. While grounded in the Israeli legal and cultural context, the study contributes to a broader international discussion about the unintended consequences of rigid reporting frameworks. It calls for trauma-informed, context-sensitive, and inclusive approaches that empower professionals to protect children while preserving autonomy, trust, and safety for LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual abuse."

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDERS IN HOMES FOR THE DISABLED IN IBADAN, OYO STATE

Oluwapelumi Iyanuoluwa Ogunmola[1]
[1]Aanu Olaitan, , Nigeria

"Children with ADHD in institutional care settings often face compounded psychosocial challenges that hinder their holistic wellbeing. In Nigeria, limited awareness, inadequate resources, and minimal psychosocial support exacerbate these issues. This study explores how psychosocial factors influence their wellbeing, aiming to inform effective interventions and improve caregiving practices.

This study investigated the relationships between psychosocial factors and the multidimensional wellbeing of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) residing in homes for children with disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Using a purposive sampling technique, a total of 150 children diagnosed with ADHD were selected from various care institutions. Data were collected through a validated instrument titled Psychosocial Factors and Wellbeing Questionnaire (PFWQ), which demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.839$). The data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), with four hypotheses tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Findings revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between psychosocial factors and both the physical wellbeing ($r = .786$, p<.05) and psychological wellbeing ($r = .452$, p<.05) of children with ADHD. However, no significant relationship was observed between psychosocial factors and social wellbeing ($r = .152$, p< .05). A significant positive relationship was also found between psychosocial factors and spiritual wellbeing ($r = .192$, p < .05). The joint overall prediction of psychosocial factors to overall wellbeing was substantial ($R = .943$, $R^2 = .890$).

The study highlights that, psychosocial factors get to shape the overall wellbeing of children with ADHD in institutional care settings. It recommends the creation of enabling and inclusive environments within children's homes, enhanced clinician awareness for early identification and referral of ADHD cases, financial support systems for caregivers, and greater involvement of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial and spiritual care.

When Parents Struggle, Teens Suffer: Understanding the Impact of Parenting on Adolescent Well-being from a Clinical Social Work Perspective

Dr Violet Simiyu[1]
[1]Catholic University Of Eastern Africa, ,

Contemporary society is witnessing profound shifts in family structures, values, and relationships that are reshaping the landscape of parenting. Rising rates of divorce, separation, single parenthood, and co-parenting arrangements have redefined traditional family ties and introduced complex emotional realities for both parents and adolescents. This paper examines how these evolving dynamics influence adolescent mental health and psychosocial well-being, particularly within contexts marked by economic strain, displacement, and social change. Guided by Family Systems and Attachment Theories, and grounded in Clinical Social Work practice, the discussion explores how disrupted family cohesion, parental conflict, and inconsistent caregiving contribute to anxiety, identity confusion, and behavioral challenges among teenagers. It further highlights that when co-parenting is supportive and communicative, it can serve as a protective factor enhancing adolescent resilience and stability. Drawing on global and African experiences, the paper underscores the urgent need for integrative psychosocial interventions that address the family as a dynamic system. Clinical social workers are positioned to mediate fractured relationships, promote healthy co-parenting, and design trauma-informed family therapies that restore connection, trust, and emotional security. The paper concludes that strengthening parenting practices within diverse family formations is central to advancing adolescent well-being, social cohesion, and community mental health in a changing world.

Systems, Solidarity, and Sendai: A Curriculum for Disaster-Ready Social Work

Mrs Falon Alo[1]
[1]Monmouth University, , United States

"As climate disruption, conflict, pandemics, displacement, and misinformation interlock, social workers need macro competencies that reach beyond casework to governance, risk communication, and coalition building. This presentation offers a blueprint for a decolonial social work curriculum that prepares graduates to act as conveners across state, civil society, and communities in polycrisis contexts.

Grounded in an integrative review of disaster social work competencies and aligned to mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, we specify a core set of capabilities to respond effectively to polycrisis events. The competencies presented are informed by disaster governance best practices, the Sendai Framework, systems mapping, community resilience design, policy advocacy, media engagement, and transdisciplinary coordination at micro-, meso–, and levels.

Drawing on cases from Aotearoa New Zealand and Pakistan, we illustrate how transferable social work skills, social capital, and welfare coordination translate into effective disaster practice, and what must shift in curricula to foreground readiness, response, and recovery practices. We integrate community-based DRR, gender-responsive practice, and North–South publishing partnerships, proposing writing mentorship circles and open educational resources to bridge epistemic divides.

Attendees will receive: a competency matrix mapped to course modules and field tasks, and sample practicum designs for inter-professional, community-led placements in East Africa and beyond. By situating Nairobi as a hub for co-creation, the session advances a curriculum that is locally rooted, globally networked, and future-facing—turning the urgency of polycrisis into teachable and actionable macro practice for the next generation of social workers."

Enhancing Youth Upward Mobility Through Adaptive Intervention Designs: Insights from the JC YUP! Project

Dr Steven Sek-Yum Ngai[1]
[1]The Chinese University Of Hong Kong, , China

"Significant knowledge gaps exist in the comprehensive assessment of intervention programs aimed at enhancing youth upward mobility in Hong Kong, particularly regarding their effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs of disadvantaged youth. There is insufficient understanding of how to design adaptive interventions that cater to these varying needs at different stages, ultimately achieving intended outcomes while minimizing social costs within Hong Kong's unique socioeconomic context. This presentation outlines a five-year initiative called the "JC YUP! Project," which pilots a systematic model featuring a series of adaptive interventions to improve the social mobility of disadvantaged youth. The project comprises three key interventions: 1) Youth-led Accomplishments (YLA), designed for Secondary 1 students to foster self-discovery and positive identity formation; 2) Slash Experience, aimed at Secondary 2-5 students to provide early workplace exposure and career insights; and 3) Professional Traineeship, targeting Secondary 6 students with access to gateway jobs that offer high-quality onboarding training. Both full and simplified versions of these interventions will be modularized, with the latter designed for lower intensity and cost by leveraging existing resources. An adaptive intervention design will validate the effectiveness of additional support for slower responders. To achieve the vision of the JC YUP! Project, an independent evaluation will assess intended outcomes for youth social mobility and confirm the most cost-effective intervention designs.

This presentation corresponds with Subtheme 3, "Social Work and Social Welfare Across the Lifespan," and targets a critical social issue. By evaluating and validating intervention designs that promote cost-effective enhancements in youth upward mobility, it will offer valuable insights for conference participants, particularly practitioners, researchers, and policymakers concerned with the well-being of disadvantaged youth."

How does digital resilience matter? Examining the association between cyber victimization and psychological problems among children with different left-behind statuses

Dr Kunjie Cui[1]
[1]Southwestern University Of Finance And Economics, , China

"With the increasing prevalence of cyber victimization among children, exploring the protective factors to alleviate its negative psychological impacts has become a critical focus. This study aimed to examine the mediating and moderating role of digital resilience in the relationship between cyber victimization and psychological problems (depression and anxiety) among Chinese children, as well as the moderating effect of left-behind status. A sample of 1,970 middle school students (Grades 7–9) from Henan Province, China, completed questionnaires assessing cyber victimization, digital resilience, depression, anxiety, and left-behind status. Correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and group comparison analysis were conducted using SPSS 26.0, Amos 26.0, and the PROCESS macro v4.0.

The results showed that: (1) Cyber victimization was positively correlated with depression and anxiety, and negatively correlated with digital resilience; digital resilience was negatively correlated with depression and anxiety. (2) Digital resilience played a significant mediating role in the relationship between cyber victimization and depression/anxiety—cyber victimization could reduce digital resilience, thereby increasing the levels of depression and anxiety. (3) Left-behind status moderated the mediating effect of digital resilience, specifically in the paths from digital resilience to depression and digital resilience to anxiety: the negative predictive effect of digital resilience on depression and anxiety was stronger in left-behind children than in non-left-behind children. (4) Digital resilience significantly moderated the relationship between cyber victimization and depression/anxiety in the left-behind group (higher digital resilience buffered the positive impact of cyber victimization on psychological problems), while this moderating effect was not significant in the non-left-behind group.

This study reveals the complex interaction mechanism among cyber victimization, digital resilience, and left-behind status, providing empirical evidence for formulating targeted cyber protection and mental health intervention strategies for children with different left-behind statuses."

Parent councils as governmental technology

Mr Borgar Engtrø[1]
[1]University Of Agder, Department Of Sociology And Social Work, ,
"This article explores how public actors contribute to the governance of parenthood by applying and combining techniques of governance in new ways. The article is based on a municipal initiative – foreldreråd (parent councils) – which is a new model aimed at parents. Parent councils are a relevant case for studying governmental technology because they combine various techniques, operate across institutional boundaries (between private and public), and represent a new and under-researched practice. The model is implemented for parent groups with children in primary school and consists of preparatory meetings, the parent council itself, and a follow-up meeting. The research question is: What spaces for governance are opened by the ways in which techniques and practices in the parent council are assembled?

The empirical material consists of participatory observation of ten parent councils and preparatory meetings, as well as seven semi-structured interviews with coordinators. The analysis shows how techniques such as information gathering, questioning and listening strategies, and the strategic use of action plans can function as governmental technologies. In addition, the article examines how parenthood is shaped through structured meetings and how professional actors influence parents' understanding and actions. It argues that the techniques used in parent councils are not new, but that they are assembled in new ways and applied in different contexts than before. This opens up new spaces for governing parenthood compared to previous practices. Governance may have both productive aspects and costs for those being governed and can be difficult to detect when it appears as dialogue-based and voluntary. The analysis also highlights a gap between how the model is described by professionals and how it is practiced."

Voices from the Global South: Academic Mobility and Internationalization Experiences in Brazilian Social Work (Brazil)

Mrs Adriana Regina Vettorazzi Schmitt[1]
[1]Universidade Federal De Santa Catarina (ufsc), ,

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<p class=""ds-markdown-paragraph"">This ongoing research investigates the international academic mobility experiences of foreign students in the Postgraduate Program in Social Work (PPGSS) at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brazil. Grounded in a critical and decolonial theoretical framework (Quijano, Mignolo, Santos), the study problematizes hegemonic models of internationalization, questioning whether they reproduce Eurocentric asymmetries or pave the way for plural and intercultural epistemologies in Social Work.</p>
<p class=""ds-markdown-paragraph"">The central objective is to analyze the dissonances and consonances between the institutional discourse on internationalization and the academic practices experienced by the subjects. To this end, a qualitative methodological approach is adopted, articulating multiple data collection and analysis techniques. The investigation comprises: (1) extensive bibliographic and documentary research on internationalization policies; (2) semi-structured individual interviews with enrolled international students and graduates of PPGSS/UFSC; and (3) a focus group with international students to collectively explore perceptions and meanings attributed to the mobility experience.</p>
<p class=""ds-markdown-paragraph"">The empirical and documentary data will be analyzed using Discursive Textual Analysis (ATD - Análise Textual Discursiva), aiming to construct interpretative metatexts. Preliminary results indicate the centrality of listening to the \""voices from the Global South\"" to understand the subjective and formative impacts of mobility, the challenges of institutional welcome, and linguistic and cultural barriers. Ultimately, the thesis is expected to contribute subsidies for the construction of more inclusive, horizontal, and socially referenced internationalization policies within Social Work.</p>

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Trauma, sexual abuse, and adapted therapeutic responses for people with developmental disabilities

Ms Ronit Argaman[1]
[1]Msw, Clinical Director, Argaman Institute, , Israel

"People with developmental disabilities are at significantly higher risk of exploitation, neglect, and harm, including sexual abuse, compared to people without disabilities. In addition to direct victimization, research and clinical reports indicate high levels of cumulative negative life experiences and trauma, including the “initial trauma” embedded in navigating a world that is often inaccessible, stigmatizing, or unsafe for individuals with disabilities.

Despite the severity and prevalence of these experiences, there remains a substantial gap in comprehensive data, professional knowledge, and adapted tools for identifying and assessing trauma within this population. Current systems often lack the capacity to provide trauma-sensitive therapeutic care, leaving a disconnect between the high level of risk and the limited availability of responsive, specialized services.

This lecture will address:
The unique characteristics of trauma among people with developmental disabilities
Specific vulnerability factors for sexual abuse and implications for detection
Current challenges in assessment, reporting, and intervention within educational, therapeutic, and residential services
The principles and practical application of trauma-informed care systems in disability services
Recommendations for systemic and individual intervention, including accessible language, tailored methodologies, and adapted clinical tools

The presentation emphasizes the shift from understanding trauma as an isolated event to recognizing it as a structural and environmental reality that demands coordinated emotional, clinical, organizational, and policy-level responses."

Effects of sexual abuse and sexual violence on sexuality and sexual healing

Ms Ronit Argaman[1]
[1]Msw, Clinical Director, Argaman Institute, , Israel

"Sexual abuse is most common, with one in three women and one in six men likely to be sexually abused throughout life. Sexual abuse might cause many broad and lasting ramifications on the victim\'s life - emotional and mental, social, functional and sexual. The effects of sexual abuse on sexuality are extensive and can impair the quality of life. Review of professional literature and clinical experience reveals that victims might develop sexual problems that can persist for years after the assault, such as: impaired body and sexual image, problematic sexual functioning and sexual behavior, sexual avoidance, sexual and sexual relationship dissatisfaction, unsafe sexual behavior.

This lecture will examine a modified treatment model for sexual healing, based on the characteristics of sexual abuse and its consequences. The importance of intervention around sexuality should be emphasized as an integral part of the rehabilitation process."

Achieving the SDGs: Case Studies from Social Workers in Africa

Prof David Androff[1]
[1]Arizona State University, , United States

"This panel uses three comparative country-level case studies from Uganda, Nigeria, and Namibia to examine the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the African context. Much of the SDG literature ignores social workers in favor of “hard” sciences and emphasizes sustainability almost to the exclusion of the social dimension. This panel fills these gaps by demonstrating social development and social work’s role in achieving the SDGs. These case studies present a regional snapshot of social development in action.

Medical Social Work and Church Collaboration in Uganda

This presentation showcases an interprofessional practice collaboration between medical social workers and community church ministries to achieve health and wellbeing in Uganda. Empirical data demonstrates how patients’ physical, mental, social, psychological, and spiritual needs were met. This case study sets a collaborative agenda for sharing critical resources to promote health and wellbeing through a human needs approach.

Social Work in a Settlement House in Nigeria

This presentation details the Umuebu Settlement House in rural Nigeria and its work in advancing the SDGs related to poverty reduction, health and wellbeing, education, clean water and sanitation, and affordable and clean energy. This case study shows how a developmental social work approach was taken through community-based efforts such as youth sports teams. This settlement house recalls the origins of social work practice globally and demonstrates how social workers can participate in co-building social transformation for realizing the SDGs.

Gender Equality in Namibia

This presentation highlights the role of colonization in shaping contemporary gender discrimination and reviews progress toward SDG 5 on issues such as discrimination, violence, trafficking, exploitation, and full participation in government. Significant legislative and social protections for gender equality in Namibia are analyzed and assessed considering specific SDG targets. Strategies for achieving gender equality in Namibia are addressed."

Integrating Authentic Learning Framework in Social Work Education: Experiences of Social Work Students in an Urban South African University

Dr Jennifer Wangari, Hlologelo Malatji[1]
[1]University Of The Witwatersrand, , South Africa, [2]Cuea, , Kenya

Globally, social work education incorporates theory, skills and field instruction components in the curriculum. Field instruction involves placing social work students in government and non-government organizations to develop and practice their social work skills. Since the COVID-19 pivot to emergency remote online learning, many students were left behind, as platforms traditionally used by educators and students to practice social work skills were no longer accessible. As a result, students' enthusiasm, engagement and participation was disrupted. Using the authentic learning framework, a third-year community work course part of the Bachelor of Social Work qualification at urban South African university was redesigned to integrate the principles of authentic learning (e.g. authentic context, authentic assessments and collaboration). The purpose of redesigning the community work course was to foreground students' participation and to foster understanding of course concepts. Qualitative research method was used; two focus group discussions involving eighteen students were conducted to explore the students' experiences of the redesigned course. The findings illustrated the students' appreciation of integrating authentic contexts/communities in the course to explain community work processes (e.g. how to conduct a community profile and needs assessment). In line with the principles of authentic learning, students valued group activities, as they felt that group discussions enhanced their understanding of community work and its processes. However, the students also expressed the use of technology need to be leveraged in the course to support teaching and learning. Students felt that the instructions on how the university\'s learning management system would be used to support or complement the module were vague. The findings have implications for the design and delivery of social work education.

From U.S. Secret War Allies to Deportation: A Full Circle of Forced Migration, Structural Violence, and Transnational Social Work among Hmong Refugees

Dr Pa Nhia Xiong[1]
[1]California State University, Fresno, , United States

"Aligned with the sub-theme Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges, this presentation examines the deportation of Hmong refugees from the United States (US) as a transnational social work issue shaped by political conflict, forced migration, and post-conflict inequality. During the US Secret War in Laos from 1964 to 1975, Hmong communities served as key allies to the US Military, resulting in genocide, forced migration, mass displacement and refugee resettlement in the US. After five decades, the US government is deporting Hmong individuals back to Laos, to a country they were forced to flee and fought against, completing a full circle of forced migration produced by geopolitical intervention and global power asymmetries.

Grounded in Hmong Critical Race Theory (HmongCrit), this study interrogates how racialized refugee status, conditional belonging, and historical erasure operate within global migration systems. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and community-based narratives from families affected by deportation and Hmong community advocates, the findings reveal deepened distrust toward the US government. Participants described feelings of being used, betrayed, abandoned, and traumatized, which echo intergenerational memories of the Secret War and expose the long-term consequences of unresolved political conflict.

From a social work practice perspective, the paper situates Hmong deportation within broader global challenges related to migration, refugee crises, post-conflict intervention, and social emergencies. Deportation is analyzed as a form of structural violence that disrupts families, undermines community stability, and exacerbates social exclusion across borders. Drawing on the Harambee principle of collective responsibility, there is a need for historically informed, community-centered, and transnational social work responses that prioritize advocacy, refugee protection, and policy reform. By linking theory, lived experience, and practice, the analysis underscores the necessity of solidarity and collective action in responding to complex migration challenges affecting the Hmong people."

Burnout-in-the-making: Following Burnout as a Relational Process in Community Social Work

Monika Barbe-Welzel[1]
[1]Université De Montréal, ,

Burnout is widely recognized as a pervasive challenge in social work, including in the community sector, yet it is most often approached as a fixed condition to be diagnosed, measured, in a point in time and managed at the individual level (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; 2022). Such approaches tend to obscure how burnout is actively produced through everyday institutional arrangements, organizational practices, and dominant knowledge frameworks that shape what care is allowed to look like.

This presentation proposes the concept of burnout-in-the-making as a processual understanding of burnout that follows how exhaustion emerges, accumulates, and becomes normalized over time within community-based social work. Drawing on critical social work scholarship and process-oriented social theory (e.g., Casey, 2011; Grenier et al., 2021), burnout is framed not as a personal failure or clinical endpoint, but as a relational and institutional phenomenon embedded in the political economy of care. From this perspective, funding regimes, performance-based accountability, managerial reforms, and professional norms do not merely create stressful conditions; they actively reorganize relationships, values, and temporalities of practice in ways that erode ethical engagement and relational integrity. Attending to burnout as it unfolds makes visible the micro-ruptures, value conflicts, and embodied signs through which workers experience the slow wearing down of care.

This presentation argues that burnout is not only a well-being issue but an epistemic phenomenon that demands methodological rethinking. It calls for research approaches capable of tracing processes rather than outcomes, and for forms of knowledge production that center lived experience and challenge individualizing explanations (Latour, 1987; Hacking, 2007; Law & Mol, 2002). By shifting the analytical lens from diagnostic snapshots to processual inquiry, burnout-in-the-making offers a framework for understanding exhaustion as a collective, historically situated, and transformable condition within social work practice, and across diverse community and organizational contexts globally.

Assessing Providers' Attitudes Towards Adoption of Virtual Reality in Military Mental Health Care using UTAUT and Theoretical Domains Framework

Thomas Mwibanda[1]
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"Summary

The lives of military members involve high-risk activities and experience higher rates of injuries and illnesses compared to the civilian population. An inherent mistrust of mental health care providers exists in this population, and a perception that mental health care is not effective. Studies recommend combining virtual reality (VR) treatments with evidence-based therapies to offer more treatment options. Studies that utilized a theoretical approach to identify barriers and develop interventions for behavior change have been more successful than those that do not. The purpose of this study is to explore providers' attitudes towards adopting VR for mental health care in military settings by comparing the UTAUT and the TDF. The method for the study will entail outlining the key constructs, introducing the UTAUT and TDF frameworks to explain why they are appropriate for understanding the factors influencing VR adoption, and concluding with how the domains of TDF and the constructs of UTAUT would affect providers' attitudes during the adoption process.

Findings

Both models can be valuable tools for gaining insight and for addressing the factors that influence military mental health providers\' perceptions of VR adoption in practice.

Application

The UTAUT is micro-centric, focusing on individual behavior and acceptance of new technologies, emphasizing how individuals approach the decision to use. The TDF is more macro-centric, as a behavioral science-oriented framework that highlights the psychological, social, and environmental factors affecting any health-related behavior, such as decisions for technology adoption. Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words)."

Integrating Human Services in an Unequal Nonprofit Sector: Organizational Capacity, Funding, and Access for Low-Income Families

Dr Baorong Guo[1]
[1]University Of Missouri-st. Louis,, ,

Human service nonprofits operate at the frontlines of inequality, yet they do so within a nonprofit ecosystem marked by growing internal resource stratification. Drawing on longitudinal IRS data (1982–2012), this research documents a widening financial gap between large and small nonprofits, with assets and revenues increasingly concentrated among a small share of organizations. This structural inequality has profound implications for human service delivery, particularly for smaller, community-based organizations that disproportionately serve low-income and marginalized populations but face chronic financial precarity.
This paper argues that integrated social services represent both a necessary response to client-level inequality and a capacity-dependent strategy shaped by nonprofit financial stratification. Using a mixed-methods case study of service integration linking the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), we examine how integration efforts unfold within resource-constrained human service nonprofits. Findings from surveys, interviews, and field observations show that integration can substantially improve access to public benefits for low-income families with young children, particularly by reducing administrative burden and closing eligibility-to-participation gaps. However, the feasibility and sustainability of such integration are uneven: organizations with limited staffing, infrastructure, and flexible funding face significant barriers to adopting and maintaining integrated service models.
By connecting macro-level nonprofit financial inequality with meso-level organizational capacity and micro-level service access, this paper highlights a critical paradox: the organizations most central to equitable service integration are often least equipped to implement it. We conclude that advancing integrated human services requires not only programmatic innovation but also funding and policy reforms that address structural inequalities within the nonprofit sector itself. Implications are discussed for funders, policymakers, and human service leaders seeking to promote equity through integrated service systems without further concentrating organizational power.

692

Advancing environmental justice and sustainability in social work practice: Challenges and opportunities

Nicola Williams[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

Exacerbating climate change and environmental hazards are increasingly impacting the economic, cultural, social, and political landscape in Canada. The multipolar nature of climate risks undergirded by socio-historical drivers of human relationship with the natural environment necessitates a transformation in social work curriculum and praxis. Environmental justice has long been an assumed outcome of the social justice principles that guide social work training and practice. However, accelerated climate change has increased the need to strengthen the capacity of social workers to understand and respond appropriately to climate impacts at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of society. The Incorporating Environmental Justice and Sustainability in Social Work Practice mixed methods study provides a baseline of the ways in which social work students and practitioners understand their roles and are responding to environmental justice and sustainability issues in Canada and determine their support needs for effectively filling these roles. The national study revealed that, while social workers see the impacts of environmental hazards on the populations they work with, the extent of their roles is dependent on the level of practice and the mandates of their organisations. Added to this, gaps in specific training on environmental justice and sustainability limit the ability of some students and practitioners to appropriately assess and respond to issues that may be linked to these issues. The study highlights the importance of incorporating Indigenous knowledges and strengthening transdisciplinary collaborations to advance environmental justice and sustainability in social work practice in Canada.

Spirit of Harambee with strong intergenerational networks in the United States

Maria Gurrola[1]
[1]Csumb, ,

"Migration is a human right that has been part of civilizations as a way of survival. The building of borders has created barriers for people to migrate. Borders have impacted communities across the globe increasing the family separations and decreasing cultural belonging and breaking the spirit of Harambee. In the United States, immigration from Mexico has long shaped California's Central Coast, where agricultural labor, hospitality, and service industries depend on immigrant workers and their families. First- and second-generation Mexican-origin students represent a growing share of the region's youth, yet they remain disproportionately vulnerable to structural barriers that threaten high school completion and access to higher education. Families face systemic inequalities, including underfunded schools, housing instability, and lack of culturally and linguistically competent services. Immigration-related barriers such as mixed-status households, fear of enforcement, and restricted access to financial aid compound these inequities. Furthermore, cultural and generational gaps between schools and immigrant families can create misunderstandings, as many parents have limited formal education in Mexico and lack familiarity with U.S. educational pathways. Despite these challenges, immigrant families bring significant strengths—bilingualism, resilience, collectivism, and strong intergenerational networks—that, if supported, can drive student success and build the spirit of Harambee.

For social workers, this context presents both challenges and opportunities. Practice implications include the need for trauma-informed, culturally responsive interventions that center family strengths, respect language diversity (including Indigenous Mexican languages), and support navigation of the U.S. education system. At the policy level, social workers have a critical role in advocating for equitable access to education and resources for immigrant students. This includes promoting enforcement of sanctuary school policies, expanding funding for bilingual counselors and cultural liaisons, supporting implementation of California's AB 540 and the Dream Act to increase college affordability, and addressing systemic inequities in course access, advanced placement opportunities, and college counseling."

Beyond Prohibition: Cannabis, Intersectionality, and Harm Reduction in Social Work Across the Lifespan

Dr Paulette S. Smith[1]
[1]Morgan State University, ,

This workshop examines cannabis prohibition as an enduring social justice issue and argues for integrating intersectionality, lived experience, and harm reduction into social work practice and education across the lifespan. Individuals who use cannabis are not a monolithic group; intersecting identities, developmental stages, health needs, and histories of criminalization shape their experiences. Yet these realities are frequently marginalized within social welfare policy discussions and professional training.

Centering the lived experiences of cannabis consumers—particularly those from Black and Brown communities disproportionately harmed by prohibition—this workshop highlights the ethical responsibility of social workers to engage individuals, families, and communities in ways that honor context, autonomy, and dignity. Attention is given to how cannabis-related stigma and punitive policy enforcement have affected people differently across the life course, influencing access to health care, social services, education, employment, and community resources.

As the United States moves toward rescheduling cannabis to Schedule III and other countries consider similar regulatory shifts, global drug policy reforms increasingly shape social welfare systems and professional practice norms. Without an intentional focus on intersectionality and lived experience, there is a critical risk that longstanding inequities will persist under new legal frameworks. Through guided reflection and applied discussion, participants will engage with harm reduction principles and intersectional case examples to explore how lived experience can be meaningfully integrated into social work practice and education across the lifespan.

By situating cannabis prohibition within a lifespan and social justice framework, this workshop invites social workers and educators to critically examine how cannabis-related knowledge is integrated into practice and curricula, and to advance harm reduction approaches that promote equity, justice, and well-being.

Single teen mothers' Perspectives on future opportunities: Long-term outcomes of supporting interventions

Ms Généreuse Mukayisenga[1]
[1]University Of Rwanda, ,

Single teen mothers face multiple contemporary social, economic, and psychological stressors that constrain their potential. This study examines their views of longer-term impacts of interventions aimed at bolstering resilience, educational engagement and achievement, parenting and economic circumstances. Based on 16 qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, the results indicate that positive interventions such as counselling, vocational training, material and financial assistance, community care cycles, livelihood skills training and school reintegration programs are pivotal in restoring belief in prospects and the ability to make long-term plans. Single teen mothers felt better about themselves and their families and were more confident that they could raise their kids well. Participants came away with increased confidence, a stronger ability to parent, and higher motivation regarding vocational or educational tracks. However, they are confronted with structural obstacles such as poverty, little social support, and some forms of stigma. It is therefore necessary to provide sufficient empowering interventions to ensure a bright future for them and their children.

From Policy to Practice: Implementing Gender Equality in Combat Roles within the South African Army

Dakalo Goitsilwe[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa

"Despite progressive gender policy frameworks, women serving in combat roles within the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) continue to face gender-related challenges that hinder their equal participation and advancement. These challenges, rooted in institutional culture and policy practice gaps, undermine the implementation of gender equality commitments central to South Africa's constitution. This PhD study aims to investigate how legal, institutional, and experiential factors influence the implementation of gender policies in the SANDF, using an exploratory sequential multi-method design. Grounded in feminist social work theory, policy implementation theory, and systems theory, the study will be carried out in three phases.

Phase 1 will conduct a qualitative analysis of key gender related regulatory frameworks, identifying how gender equality is framed in institutional discourse. Phase 2 will implement a quantitative cross-sectional survey across combat and support personnel to measure perceptions of gender policy effectiveness and institutional barriers. Phase 3 will employ the Delphi method to engage policy specialists. Phase 4 will synthesize findings into a context-responsive, evidence-informed guideline for effective gender policy implementation. The research aims to contribute to the global discourse on gender mainstreaming and sustainable development by aligning with the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality),

The study will be theoretically anchored in social work principles of empowerment, inclusion, and social justice, positioning social work as a transformative agent within gendered institutions. By integrating social workers' human rights-based approach into military policy research, this study reimagines the role of social workers in advancing institutional transformation, gender equity, and sustainable peace in South Africa and globally."

Collaboration project to decolonise mental health social work education

Jill Childs[1]
[1]Private, ,

"<span style=""font-weight: 400"">This presentation illustrates the work of a collaborative project between global north and global south academics and practitioners of mental health social work education <span style=""font-weight: 400"">which lays the groundwork for embedding indigenous approaches into social work education, enhancing the curriculum with evidence-based, decolonized content. Colonialism has left a legacy of trauma for many communities who have had traditions removed. The project will highlight the value of indigenous approaches in social work practice, fostering more inclusive and global social work education. Aligned to the conference subtheme of social work education, research and pedagogy, the presentation draws on <span style=""font-weight: 400"">t<span style=""font-weight: 400"">he case for developing more emphasis on indigenous approaches. It builds on the inherent synergy between sustainability and supporting eco-social indigenous approaches and takes into account the impact of colonization has had on education using a trauma-based approach in pedagogy. A transformative model is evidenced that incorporates the theoretical model to decolonize mental health social work, one that is, sustainable, community focused, relationship based, ecological and \'glocal\'. <span style=""font-weight: 400""> Using the Ubuntu scale to measure outcomes in terms of global collaboration (<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Mutsonziwa, 2020), t<span style=""font-weight: 400"">he presentation will focus on practical strategies of <span style=""font-weight: 400"">how to implement Ubuntu into mental health practice, c<span style=""font-weight: 400"">elebrating indigenous approaches, and exposing curriculums to new transformed ways of thinking about mental health social work.

Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words)."

Students' Political Engagement and Social Justice Preparedness in Contemporary Social Work Education

Dr Melissa Redmond[1]
[1]Carleton University, ,
"<div class=""elementToProof"">Background
<div class=""elementToProof"">Social work's explicit ethical commitment to social justice, requiring focus on the interplay between individuals and their environments, distinguishes it from other related professions. This commitment is embedded in international, national, and provincial ethical guidelines and reinforced through accreditation requirements that mandate education on social justice for diverse marginalized groups. Despite these formal expectations, however, questions remain about how deeply students understand and value the policy and political structures that shapes experiences of social justice as central to their professional preparation and how ready they are for political aspects of practice.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Methods
Here we will present a study that employed a mixed-methods approach involving third-year Bachelor of Social Work students. A survey (n=62) measured students' knowledge of policy and politics, political engagement, and level of commitment to social justice. Semi-structured interviews (n=4) provided further insight into students' perceptions of their readiness to participate in social justice work.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Findings
The findings indicate that students were more likely to participate in low-effort political activities, such as signing petitions, while demonstrating much lower engagement in structured or sustained political efforts. Students expressed confidence in discussing social barriers and inequities but reported limited understanding of formal political structures and low confidence in their ability to develop strategies for political action. Although participants strongly agreed that advocating for individual clients is an essential aspect of social work, they were less likely to view broader, systemic advocacy as central to their future professional roles.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Conclusion
These results reflect broader Canadian and international literature describing tensions within social work education between increasing managerial and clinical priorities and the profession's ethical commitment to social justice. Graduating students who are insufficiently prepared for structural social justice work raises concerns regarding the profession's ability to support service users effectively and to contribute meaningfully to systemic social change. "

The AMANAH Model: Faith-Based Knowledge and the Five Pillars of Care in Decolonising Social Work

Miss Faisa Abdirahman[1]
[1]Independent Researcher, ,

The AMANAH Model is an emerging conceptual framework that positions Islamic epistemology as a critical contributor to global efforts to decolonise social work. Rooted in the principle of a moral trust encompassing responsibility, compassion, justice, and accountability—the model reframes care as a sacred relational duty held between practitioner, family, community, and Creator. By centring spirituality, ethics, and relationality, AMANAH challenges Eurocentric paradigms and expands the theoretical landscape to recognise diverse, culturally grounded ways of knowing The model aligns with a broader constellation of Indigenous and alternative philosophies, including Ubuntu, Ujamaa, Harambee, Sankofa, and Buen Vivir. Each emphasises community wellbeing, interconnectedness, reciprocity, and collective responsibility. Together with AMANAH, these frameworks articulate a global vision of social work grounded in relational accountability, cultural identity, and justice-oriented practice. They offer transformative pathways for reimagining social work beyond individualistic and bureaucratic systems towards approaches that honour community, spirituality, and shared humanity.

Central to the AMANAH Model are the Five Pillars of Care: Values, Reflection, Intention, Relationship, and Accountability. Inspired by the structure of the Islamic Five Pillars, these pillars act as a reflective and ethical scaffold for practice. They support practitioners to connect inner moral grounding, cultural identity, and emotional regulation with external actions, decision-making, and relationships. This integration strengthens practitioner wellbeing and fosters culturally meaningful, ethically anchored practice.

This paper outlines the conceptual development of the AMANAH Model and its intended co-design and co-production process with social workers, carers, and Muslim young people in care. By situating Islamic epistemology alongside other global Indigenous philosophies, the AMANAH Model contributes to reclaiming and reimagining social work as a spiritually informed, culturally congruent, and socially just profession grounded in dignity, community, and collective resilience.

Economic Migration and Labor Trafficking: A Mixed-Methods Study Exploring Intersecting Vulnerabilities among Youth and Young Adults in Malawi and Zambia

David O Okech[1]
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"Youth and young adults (YYAs) worldwide face increasing challenges in accessing decent work. This burden is disproportionately felt by YYAs in African countries where by 2050 there will be nearly 78 million young people on the continent who will be looking for work. YYAs who experience social and economic pressure while also facing challenges securing decent work may be increasingly vulnerable to exploitation.

This mixed-methods study explored the intersections of migration and labor trafficking among YYAs in Zambia and Malawi. Following ethics approval, data were collected in six districts (2 in Malawi and 4 in Zambia). In total, there were 105 qualitative interviews with YYAs, 14 focus groups (8-10 YYAs per group) in target communities, and 3,024 surveys with YYAs who had worked abroad in the 2 years prior to the survey. The mixed-methods analysis involved three steps: 1) domain-based qualitative thematic analysis using NVivo, 2) bivariate analysis using R software, and 3) integration of quantitative and qualitative results.

Key results showed that among surveyed YYAs who had traveled abroad for work, 70% (N=1,099) from Malawi and 41% (N=1925) from Zambia experienced labor trafficking during migration. Exploitative recruitment practices (e.g., lying about nature of job) was the primary indicator for labor trafficking. YYAs who were younger (18-27 years old) and had lower financial resilience (e.g. not being able to access financial services or to raise funds during an emergency) were at increased risk of experiencing labor trafficking during migration. Qualitative analysis revealed intersecting circumstances of economic hardship, community level resource deprivation and family pressure to financially provide led to migration, which often resulted in exploitative situations. The findings from the study highlight key vulnerabilities driving labor trafficking within the context of economic migration and have implications for social workers seeking to engage with YYAs in preventing labor trafficking experiences."

Harambee: Women Leading Together for Transformative Change

Miss Darlene Newman[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States

Harambee: Women Leading Together for Transformative Change celebrates the collective strength, resilience, and vision of women—especially First-Generation professionals—who are reshaping the landscape of higher education. In many institutions, First-Generation women stand at the forefront of student success, equity initiatives, and institutional transformation. Their lived experiences uniquely position them to understand the complexities faced by diverse student populations, particularly those navigating higher education for the first time.

First-Generation women leaders often carry the dual responsibility of trailblazing within their own families and communities while breaking barriers within the academy. Their journeys are marked by persistence, adaptability, and self-advocacy, yet they often navigate unspoken expectations and systemic hurdles. The Harambee spirit—“pulling together”—provides a powerful framework through which these leaders can find community, mentorship, and collective empowerment. By embracing collaboration over competition, they cultivate networks that uplift not only themselves but the next generation of emerging professionals.

Transformative change in higher education requires diverse voices with the courage to reimagine established structures. First-Generation women bring innovative problem-solving, deep cultural competency, and a profound commitment to access and belonging. When supported through intentional leadership development, inclusive policies, and professional pathways, these women thrive—and their impact reverberates across campuses.

This theme calls us to honor their stories, amplify their leadership, and build ecosystems where First-Generation women can lead boldly, authentically, and sustainably. Harambee encourages institutions to invest in collaborative leadership models that recognize the collective power of women working together. As we unite our strengths, we pave the way for equitable, student-centered transformation that aligns with the evolving needs of our communities. Together, we affirm that when First-Generation women lead, higher education moves closer to realizing its fullest promise.

Resilience from below: Interrogating ‘Resilient Communities\' to Floods from an Emic Perspective in Southern Alberta, Canada

Dr Mahed Choudhury[1]
[1]Department Of Environment, Culture And Society/tourism Management, Thompson Rivers University, ,

National and international interventions to strengthen community resilience have often failed to generate desired outcomes largely because such efforts relied on the technical expertise and knowledge of external (non-local) scientific and policy experts who often do not understand local realities (e.g., beliefs, values, and practices), paradoxically making community vulnerable than resilient. It is therefore urgently needed to document ‘resilient communities’ from an emic (insiders’) perspective -- the way resilience is lived and experienced by community members. Resilience “from below” is often invisible to outsiders and undervalued in the current literature. This study will carry out a case study in the Southern Alberta, Canada, which was devasted by floods in 2013, causing loss and damage of billions of dollars. Since then, millions of dollars have been spent to strength community resilience. Following Qualitative Transformative Interpretive Framework (QTIF), this research answers question: what do flood-affected communities think of their resilience after 10 years? What are the communities’ own perspectives on their resilience trajectories? Is community resilience to floods better than it was in 2013? What might still be needed to enhance community resilience? Data collection techniques involved 32 semi-structured interviews, 10 key informant interviews, and 3 transect walks. Findings indicated that community members lived and experienced resilience through social network and relationship. Lessons learned from flood experiences shifted perspective of institutions, that is — from a hazard-based to risk-based assessment and planning. Based on lessons learned local institutions enhanced coping and adaptation strategies through improved early warning, flood zoning, and robust emergency planning. Flood buyouts were largely ignored social and human aspects of risk mitigation, raising equity concerns. This study concludes that greater attention to learning-based approach and meaningful community engagement are needed to foster resilience at the community level.

Port to Port: examining the dispossession of the historic Jamestown community in Ghana

Rose-Lynne Amoah[1]
[1]York University, ,

Jamestown stands as one of Accra’s oldest districts in Ghana. The official establishment is traced to the 17th century when the British built overseas trading ports for goods and enslaved peoples. The location by the coast of the Atlantic made it ideal for British administrators leading to the development of structures such as the James Fort in 1673. Outside the relics of colonial hauntings, the Ga built and maintained a vibrant community in Jamestown. As a fishing community, the people developed a delicate relationship with the ocean and land, creating life, culture, and socioeconomic possibilities. This intimate connection with land and ocean created a Ga ontology and epistemology through rituals, songs and respect for marine life. In 2020 the government of Ghana began the construction of a multi-million-dollar Chinese funded fishing harbor leading to the displacement of many community members; dramatically changing the social-cultural fabric of the historic community. My paper addresses the subtheme Reclaiming and Reimaging Social Work Practice. By exploring the displacement of the community of Jamestown to make space for the fishing harbor, I am engaging with the post-colonial challenges of the once port city. I will be pulling on the Latin American feminist concept of Cuerpo-Territorio (Body-Territory), which explore the interconnectedness of gendered indigenous body and land. Body territory understands Indigenous bodies and land are constant sites of colonial control, extraction and exploitation. I explore how displacement severs ties between the community, land, heritage, histories and traditions. Additionally, I explore the concept of Sankofa as theory to address Ghana’s neocolonial relationship with China. Sankofa is derived from the Akan symbolic ontology summarized as the learning from the past to build a future. Through the examination of Cuerpo-Territorio and Sankofa, social workers and NGOs can examine the cultural and embodied history of the community through decolonial frameworks.

Intersecting identities, diversity, and the right support: Lessons learned from firefighters in Alberta

Dr Mahed Choudhury[1]
[1]Department Of Environment, Culture And Society/tourism Management, Thompson Rivers University, ,

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<p class=""Default""><span lang=""EN-US"">Firefighters face higher rates of mental health struggles than the general population, yet support access remains inconsistent. The hypermasculine culture and systemic barriers often hinder open discussions about mental health in the fire service. Despite increased awareness, gaps persist in culturally competent support for firefighters from diverse backgrounds. This study aims to improve the psychosocial health and resilience of firefighters by strengthening EDI and social supports. This study adopted a two-stage mixed methods research design. In the first stage, an online self-administered survey was conducted using Qualtrics, which resulted in 111 survey responses. Qualitative individual interviews were conducted in the second stage with 14 firefighters. Findings <span class=""normaltextrun""><span lang=""EN-GB"">underscored the complex ways in which intersecting identities, such as gender, employment status, professional role, and cultural background shaped lived experiences of firefighters.<span class=""normaltextrun""><span lang=""EN-GB""> For instance, volunteer firefighters shoulder significant responsibilities and burdens along with career firefighters, yet their access to financial benefits is limited, which in turn constrains their access to formal social supports, particularly when living in rural areas. Gender is a significant explanatory variable in shaping firefighters' experiences, including retention and access to social supports. Participants emphasized the importance of having the "right support", that is — tailoring the services according to firefighters needs. It also involves making the services more culturally relevant, meaning that service that meets the need of firefighters with different racial/ethnic and gender identities. <span lang=""EN-US"">This study concludes that greater workplace diversity, coupled with appropriate support, can foster the psychosocial well-being and resilience of firefighters. </p>

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Electronic Records in the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) in the City of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil

Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]
[1]Cfess/abepss, ,

The use of Electronic Records in the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) in the city of Rio de Janeiro represents a milestone in the modernization of public management in the field of Social Assistance, consolidating a commitment to data-driven administration and the guarantee of rights. The implementation of this tool in 2025 goes beyond the mere digitization of files, functioning as a strategic instrument for dialogue between different levels of basic and specialized social protection, as well as integrating reception and technical assistance.

According to Brazilian scholars Renato Veloso and Vania Morales Sierra, in their discussions on Social Work and Technologies, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are not neutral; they can serve different ideologies or societal projects. Within SUAS, the electronic record functions as support for professional work, enabling data systematization to optimize technical time and improve service quality. Technology should serve the purpose of debureaucratization, transforming “data” into “useful information” for understanding social reality.

From the perspective of Elaine Behring and Ivanete Boschetti, the Social Assistance Policy (SUAS) is an integral part of Brazilian Social Security. Over its 20 years of implementation, SUAS aims to interact with other social policies to address expressions of social issues. In the context of SMAS/Rio de Janeiro, the electronic record represents an ethical and political commitment, implemented under the current management of Secretary Martha Rocha. It ensures continuity of care for users and provides municipal management with reliable data to plan policies based not on improvisation, but on the accurate profile of the population served, thereby strengthening the public and democratic character of SUAS.

A comparative study on social housing in three countries: Australia, Brazil and United States of America

Dr Ndungi Mungai[1], Prof. Nicole Dubus[1]
[1]Charles Sturt University, , Australia

Social housing is provided outside the boundaries of the free market. In this presentation we have compared three countries to see their different approaches. We have used scoping reviews on social housing in the three countries and also our experience living in these countries. We have also held regular discussions to interrogate our findings.

Brazil stands out in having a right to housing and a social policy that intends to promote the right to housing for families residing in urban or rural areas with a monthly income of up to US$1,481. In June 2002, Law No. 11,124 created the National Social Housing System (SNHIS), with the objective of implementing policies and programs that promote access to decent housing for the low-income population.

While the Australian government provides some housing to people in need, the allocation is based on need and not on human rights. There was a boom in public housing after the second war, but in the 1990s the focus shifted to providing rental assistance to people receiving government income support. In the 2020s there is renewed interest in response to an affordability crisis.

In the United States there is no comprehensive national social housing strategy, so historical and current housing policies reveal a fragmented approach that often overlooks the systemic issues contributing to housing insecurity. Factors such as income inequality, rising housing costs, insufficient affordable housing supply, and discriminatory practices in housing markets have exacerbated these issues. Different municipalities have implemented unique strategies ranging from temporary shelters and permanent supportive housing to innovative outreach programs and Housing First initiatives.

In the three countries housing is a challenge for people on low incomes and minoritized groups. The global climate crisis is revealing the weaknesses in each country\'s housing policies. We provide recommendations on future directions.

Transformative Learning in Kenya: Preparing Social Work Students for Practice in a Global Context

Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States

"Preparing social work professionals for ethical and culturally responsive practice requires pedagogical approaches that extend beyond the classroom and into diverse global contexts. This paper presents findings from a qualitative study of a five-week faculty-led study abroad program in Kenya that engaged 13 students, the majority social work majors, in community-based learning with practitioners, educators, and grassroots leaders. Guided by the Cultural Adaptation Process (CAP) model, we analyzed students' reflective narratives to examine how experiential learning shaped their professional growth and civic awareness.

Findings highlight seven interrelated themes: problem-solving in resource-constrained environments, political awareness through engagement with local governance, civic attitudes informed by collectivist values, the search for meaning, collective gratitude, holistic growth, and overcoming challenges. Students reported enhanced confidence in cross-cultural communication, a deeper appreciation for indigenous approaches to resilience and social support, and a stronger commitment to social justice and global citizenship. Significantly, interactions in schools, health institutions, and community forums allowed participants to critically assess Western-centric paradigms of practice while valuing reciprocal learning with Kenyan counterparts.

The study underscores the transformative potential of short-term, non-traditional study abroad experiences in social work education. Such programs prepare students to address complex global challenges—including poverty, inequality, and systemic barriers—by cultivating cultural humility, adaptability, and ethical engagement. The findings also demonstrate the value of structured reflection and critical pedagogy in linking international experiences to professional identity formation.

By situating social work education within contexts of limited resources and vibrant community resilience, this research affirms the importance of diversifying global learning opportunities and fostering sustainable, reciprocal partnerships. It calls for embedding similar experiential models within accredited curricula to prepare graduates for practice in an interconnected, unequal, and rapidly changing world."

Why Do They Stay? Black Women, Toxic Environments, and Schools of Social Work

Dr Lashawnda Fields[1]
[1]University Of Arkansas, , United States

"This study draws on semi-structured interviews with Black women faculty (n=9) and Black women doctoral students (n=11) in social work education conducted via Zoom between 2019 and 2021 as part of two larger research projects. Participants were asked, \""Why do you stay?\"" \'What do you enjoy about your role in social work education?\"" Their responses illuminate both the systemic barriers they encounter and the motivations that sustain their presence in academic spaces—offering critical insights for institutional leaders seeking to improve the recruitment, development, and retention of Black women in the academy.

Black women in social work education continue to face structural racism, gendered inequities, and institutional climates that undermine well-being and professional advancement. Although their contributions to U.S. higher education date back more than a century, research-intensive predominantly white institutions (PWIs) often remain unwelcoming. Participants described ongoing marginalization, heightened scrutiny of their expertise, and environments where their presence felt tolerated rather than valued. These conditions contribute to prolonged tenure trajectories, higher attrition, and limited advancement opportunities.

Despite these challenges, participants identified strong reasons for persisting in the academy. Their commitment to research centering Black women and Black communities, passion for teaching, and desire to expand access to academic spaces for future generations emerged as central motivations. They also emphasized the value of sharpening their scholarly and pedagogical skills, engaging in meaningful professional development, and building affirming relationships. Rejecting narratives of martyrdom, participants viewed their persistence as purposeful—an investment in communal uplift and institutional transformation.

This presentation will offer actionable recommendations for schools of social work striving to create conditions where Black women can thrive. By centering their lived experiences and institutional insights, the session aims to inform strategic planning and advance more inclusive, equitable academic environments."

Reclaiming Social Work Through Embodied Birth-Informed Practice: Restoring Presence, Power, and Connection in Care

Christa Mccrorie[1]
[1]Creative Therapeutic Solutions, Llc, ,

"Social work as a profession has long emphasized cognitive and procedural interventions, often distancing practitioners from the embodied wisdom that underlies authentic connection and healing. This presentation invites participants to reimagine social work through the lens of birth-informed and embodied practice, approaches that center relational presence, sensory awareness, and the body as a source of knowledge and resilience.

Drawing from clinical social work, trauma recovery, and doula practice, this session explores how the physiology and psychology of birth can inform a more grounded, compassionate, and sustainable model of care. Birth offers a living metaphor for social work itself: a process of transition, vulnerability, and transformation that requires trust, rhythm, and collective support. Through the lens of Engaged Buddhism and mindfulness-based social work, participants will examine how principles of breath, consent, co-regulation, and interbeing can restore agency for both practitioner and client.

This approach positions embodiment not as a luxury, but as an ethical foundation of trauma-informed and relational work. In the spirit of Harambee, collective action toward sustainable shared futures, birth-informed practice calls social workers to reconnect with their own bodies and the bodies of those they serve, bridging professional skill with human presence.

Participants will leave with concrete tools for grounding, nervous system regulation, and embodied presence, alongside a renewed framework for integrating birth-informed wisdom into mental health, education, and community settings. This presentation aims to reclaim social work as a living, sensory, and relational practice that sustains both individual and collective wellbeing."

Deinstitutionalization in Slovenia: Restoring Civil Rights and Building Community-Based Care

Mateja Vončina[1]
[1]Researcher, ,

"People with disabilities are often overlooked, and their rights frequently violated, as institutional settings fail to support independent living or comply with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Slovenia, deinstitutionalization has gained strategic and political momentum in recent years, supported and co-financed by the EU. Following two pilot projects transforming institutions into community-based services, the Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future adopted the Strategy for Deinstitutionalization for 10 years (until 2034), demonstrating strong political commitment. To provide organizational support at national and local levels, a national Center for Deinstitutionalization was established at the Social Protection Institute. Although important systemic steps have been made in the last few years toward restoring civil rights in Slovenia, much of the initial momentum relied on European funding. Many stakeholders still perceive deinstitutionalization as a temporary project. However, in a country of two million inhabitants, approximately 23,000 children, adults, and older persons with disabilities still live in institutions. These individuals are waiting for the opportunity to return to their home environments and participate fully in society. With the strategy, Slovenia now faces a historic opportunity for implementing a reform. Moving from planning to implementation must be done strategically. Restoring civil rights for people with disabilities is a long-term process that requires the commitment of society as a whole.

Deinstitutionalization reform in Slovenia has emerged from a combination of factors: the mobilization of the deinstitutionalization movement and advocacy coalitions, political will, and support from the European deinstitutionalization platform. This presentation will examine the current state of reform implementation and the next steps, situating social work within the political and policy frameworks essential for achieving societal change. By exploring the intersection of advocacy, institutional commitment, and legislative action, it demonstrates how social work can translate human rights principles into tangible, sustainable improvements for PwD."

Principles for thinking, being, and doing decoloniality in Social Work

Prof. Shahana Rasool[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa

This paper explores some principles that emerged in a participatory action research process of working towards decoloniality in the social work program with staff and students at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). During the #Rhodesmustfall and #Feesmustfall movements in South Africa, students in South Africa asserted the need for changes and decolonization of various aspects of university systems including what gets taught and how it gets taught. The reproduction of Colonial and Western Imperialist knowledges in education was a key aspect of student protests, besides the call for access to education. As a result of the student movements, many academics advocated for curriculum and educational reform to offset the power dynamics inherent in higher education. To this end, a team of social work academics at the University of Johannesburg decided to embark on a process that would move towards decoloniality in social work education specifically. This paper reflects on some principles that emerged from this process for thinking; being; and doing decolinialty, which are as follows: - Power and oppression; foregrounding Structural issues; Intersectionality- Race, class and gender; Africa as the Centre; Ubuntu; recognition of Indigenous knowledges; Critical conscientization; Voice and Imagination. The principles identified through the participatory action process were considered as important for all academics to infuse in their courses to embed decoloniality throughout the social work curriculum."

Exploring Students’ Experiences of Human Rights Education in Social Work: A Cross-Continental Comparative Study

Dr Corlie Giliomee[1]
[1]University of Pretoria and ASSWA, , South Africa
"<p style=""text-align justify"">Human rights education (HRE) is central to social work education, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and values required to advance human dignity and social justice. While human rights content is included in most social work curricula across Africa, Europe, and Australia, little is known about how students experience and internalize this teaching. This study aimed to explore undergraduate social work students’ perceptions and experiences of human rights education across nine universities on three continents—Africa (South Africa, Burundi, Ghana, Somalia, Nigeria), Europe (Germany, Poland, the Netherlands), and Australia. Using an exploratory qualitative design, the study employed <span style=""font-weight: normal"">Photovoice as a participatory data collection method. Approximately 10–12 students at each institution captured photographs representing their experiences of human rights education, followed by focus group discussions. This approach illuminated how pedagogical methods shape students’ attitudes, beliefs, and readiness to apply human rights principles in practice. Data was analyzed thematically and comparatively to identify shared themes, challenges, and regional variations in human rights education. The research aimed to contribute to the growing discourse on integrating HRE into social work by highlighting students lived experiences rather than focusing solely on curriculum content. Findings inform recommendations for strengthening human rights pedagogy, with implications for both local curriculum development and international collaboration in social work education. Ultimately, the project sought to enhance social work’s human rights foundation, ensuring that future practitioners are equipped to engage critically and compassionately in diverse, rights-based practice contexts. </p>
Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words)."

Gender Equality and Social Development: How far have we come?

Prof. Shahana Rasool[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa

This paper on Gender and Social Development argues that dealing with gender issues in the development arena are complex since it requires challenging deeply rooted structural issues that are entrenched in the psyche of communities, religious doctrine, economic systems and cultural practices. Despite, arguments which suggest that addressing gender equality is imperative for the overall development agenda in terms of economic growth; stability; enhanced productivity; and its cumulative effects on other dimensions of welfare, such as education, health, and family (Wold Bank Group, 2015; World Bank, 2012; Giugale, 2011), progress and commitment to addressing gender inequality has been variable and inconsistent. This paper will interrogate some of the core areas of social development as examples to explore the underlying issues that plague progress in the arena of gender equality. The gender issues that will be interrogated through an engagement with some of the Social Development Goals (SDGs) through engagement with:- poverty, education; care responsibilities; etc. This paper highlights the importance of looking at the intersection of multiple social issues and the significance of dealing with 'gender' in a relational matter. It argues that there is a dire need to move beyond rhetoric pledges to improving gender disparities by committing resources, capacity, and funding to bodies established to address issues of gender equality, because these organisations are experts in raising women's voices and developing appropriate gender sensitive interventions.

Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Through Anti-Colonial Praxis, Collective Care and Black Feminist Leadership

Ms Shantel Thomas[1], Dr Jordanne Edwards[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom
"This workshop invites participants to step into a generative, reflective and action-oriented space. A space rooted in East African philosophy, Harambee is a commitment to pulling together, co-creating solutions and building sustainable futures through shared purpose. Drawing on African, Caribbean and Afro-diasporic epistemologies, this session explores how social work can be reclaimed from colonial legacies and radically reimagined as a profession rooted in justice, community resilience and collective liberation.

The workshop builds on the emerging work of the forthcoming Reimagining Anti-Racist Social Work – Rooted in Care, Resilience and Solidarity Special Issue of the British Journal of Social Work, led by the Anti-Racist Movement (A.R.M.) CIC. This Special Issue represents a necessary and profound shift in the field and directly confronts the deeply embedded colonial, Eurocentric and racialised structures that have long shaped social work practice, policy and pedagogy. Its core themes are Reclaiming Narratives; Social Work as Revolutionary Praxis; Anti-Colonial Frameworks; and Imagining a New World Order, and serve as powerful calls to action for practitioners, scholars, students and community leaders. They demand that the profession moves beyond surface-level reform and instead embraces a transformative, justice-centred and culturally rooted orientation.

This workshop centres lived experience as both knowledge and praxis. It foregrounds Black women's leadership, storytelling and intellectual traditions as essential to reimagining the profession. Through guided reflection, dialogue, and collective inquiry, participants will explore how Indigenous philosophies including Harambee, Ubuntu, Sankofa, Buen Vivir and Ujamaa, offer vital counter-narratives that challenge dominant social work paradigms. These knowledge systems illuminate pathways toward relational, spiritually grounded and community-accountable practice. In this space, participants are invited to dream boldly, speak truthfully and begin to co-create pathways toward a decolonised, anti-racist and spiritually anchored social work practice that serves our communities with justice, courage and care."

The Formation, Function, and Future of the Anti-Racist Movement (ARM): How ARM Reframes Anti-Racism Through Black Women\'s Healing

Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom

"This paper explores the formation, function and future of the Anti-Racist Movement CIC, the national award-winning, Black female-led organisation in UK social work, that is reshaping what anti-racism looks and feels like in practice. Emerging from the accumulated weight of racialised harm, burnout, and institutional fatigue, ARM was founded not simply to challenge systems, but to prioritise the healing, restoration and empowerment of Black women as we recognise that sustainable change begins with the self, not the struggle.

ARM’s origins are rooted in Black feminist traditions of self-recovery and community care, where healing is not a luxury but a strategy of survival. The organisation has evolved into a sanctuary where Black women can exhale, reflect, reconnect with their purpose and rebuild their confidence outside the pressures of performative EDI cultures. Through reflective conferences, healing retreats, writing spaces, and sistah circles, ARM reframes anti-racism as an inward journey and one that centres emotional safety, boundaries, rest, and the reclamation of voice.

Functionally, ARM operates as a holistic ecosystem grounded in relational leadership and non-hierarchical governance. It provides culturally attuned learning spaces, mentorship, and opportunities for collective creativity that confront internalised narratives of inadequacy and restore a sense of power and clarity. Rather than positioning Black women in perpetual combat with institutions, ARM supports them in cultivating self-awareness, self-compassion and strategic agency, which strengthens their capacity to navigate systems without being consumed by them.

Looking forward, the paper positions ARM as a model for a new phase of anti-racist social work that is anchored in healing-centred practice, restorative learning, and community-defined wellbeing. ARM’s vision shifts the conversation from resistance to renewal, from fighting to flourishing. It asserts that the transformation of social work begins with the transformation of those most impacted, and that when Black women heal, the profession has the potential to heal too."

Virtual Art Therapy Group: Promoting Healing and Connection in Digital Spaces

Patrick Panos[1]
[1]Utah Valley University, , United States

"The Virtual Art Therapy Group is a trauma-informed, creative intervention designed to foster emotional expression, resilience, and social connection among participants in an online environment. Rooted in the principles of social work, art therapy and group work, the program provides a safe, inclusive space for individuals experiencing stress, isolation, or trauma to engage in artistic creation and reflective dialogue. Through structured weekly sessions, participants explore themes such as self-identity, hope, loss, and recovery while using accessible art materials. The group integrates expressive arts techniques, including drawing, painting, and mixed media-with mindfulness, journaling, and narrative storytelling to deepen self-awareness and strengthen coping skills.

Emphasis is placed on the collective witnessing that occur even in virtual formats. The group uses secure video platforms to encourage interaction, visual sharing, and feedback in real time, while maintaining confidentiality and emotional safety. Preliminary observations indicate that virtual art therapy effectively reduces symptoms of anxiety and loneliness, increases emotional regulation, and promotes a sense of empowerment and belonging across geographic boundaries.

This model demonstrates that digital technology can extend access to creative mental health care, particularly for refugees, individuals with limited mobility, and those in remote or underserved areas such as rural or remote areas. The Virtual Art Therapy Group highlights how artmaking transcends language barriers and cultural differences, affirming creativity as a universal medium for healing and connection. Examples will be shown along with narratives. The project contributes to the growing body of research supporting the efficacy of online expressive therapies and underscores the need for continued innovation in telehealth and digital art-based interventions.

 "

Networking Amongst New Social Workers for an Interconnected Social Work Movement

Omar Mohamed[1]
[1]Ifsw Europe, , Germany

Globally, the social work profession is navigating rapidly shifting social, political, and environmental landscapes. In response, IFSW Europe has committed to strengthening intergenerational collaboration and supporting emerging practitioners through the establishment of the New Social Workers Network (NSWN)

This conference presentation introduces the Network, its purpose, and its growing role in shaping the future of social work across the region. The NSWN is an investment in early-career social workers to build sustainable structures for sustainability in IFSW. Defined as social work students and practitioners within their first five years of employment, new social workers represent a vital source of innovation, lived experience, and professional renewal. The Network provides an inclusive and accessible space for them to participate in regional activities, develop leadership skills, collaborate with peers across countries, and contribute to IFSW Europe's governance and strategic priorities. This presentation outlines the Network's emerging projects, including the creation of Europe-wide communication channels, the development of a collaborative policy paper on sustaining new talent, and opportunities for new social workers to engage in IFSW Europe events, working groups, and cross-country initiatives. It also highlights the Network's commitment to promoting diversity, strengthening representation, and building an intergenerational ethos that connects new and experienced practitioners. By sharing the early achievements, challenges, and aspirations of the NSWN, this presentation aims to raise awareness, encourage participation, and invite collaboration from across the Global Federation. The session will also discuss how national associations, educators, and experienced social workers can support recruitment and contribute to the Network's growth. Ultimately, the NSWN seeks to ensure that new social workers are not only present but actively shaping the future of social work in Europe, to hopefully build a Network in IFSW Global, building a stronger, more inclusive, and sustainable Federation for generations to come.

Using Global Philosophy and Afrocentric Ideas to Decolonise Social Work Pedagogy: Applying Harambee Principles to Promote Collective Learning and Transformative Practice

Dr Arlene Weekes[1]
[1]University Of Birmingham, , United Kingdom

"Despite progress in some areas, professional social work continues to face embedded racism and stereotypes, which can result in flawed and discriminatory decision-making. The death of George Floyd prompted practitioners and academics to critically reflect on teaching and practice, yet many remained uncertain about effective strategies for anti-racist and decolonised engagement.

This presentation draws on a six-week summer school programme developed by a BA Social Work course director, designed to support students in actively exploring anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice. Guided by Harambee principles of collective action and mutual support, the director invited guest speakers from higher education, law, social work practice, and policy to share diverse philosophical and practical perspectives. Students then identified and presented on someone they believed had enhanced their thinking, and engagement with diverse worldviews and contributing to the decolonising of the curriculum. Experiential techniques encouraged students to construct their own understanding of anti-racist practice, while reflective discussions validated and extended their learning.

The director subsequently wrote a book chapter, Basic Ideas: Theoretical Conceptualisations, which examines how global philosophical traditions from the seven continents inform social work practice. A related journal article further disseminates the learning and insights from the programme, illustrating how engagement with alternative worldviews can influence professional practice.

By combining pedagogical engagement, student reflection, and global philosophical foundations, the session demonstrates how anti-oppressive, decolonised social work practice can be advanced. Participants will see how philosophy provides tools for ethical reasoning, critical reflection, and culturally responsive decision-making, while collective learning and engagement with diverse perspectives foster informed, inclusive, and practice-relevant approaches.

Access to mental health services for migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong from a service delivery system perspective

Sindy Li[1]
[1]University Of Edinburgh, ,

"This paper examines access to mental health services among migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong through a service delivery system perspective, drawing on Royse's 4A framework of Awareness, Availability, Accessibility, and Acceptability. MDWs constitute a marginalized group facing multiple layers of structural disadvantage, including long working hours, employer dependency, and cultural stigma surrounding mental illness. Despite high psychological distress, their engagement with formal support systems remains limited. The study adopts a qualitative case study approach focusing on the NGO CA that provide mental health services, one of the few NGOs providing psychological services for MDWs. Semi-structured interviews with three social service professionals were conducted to explore how organizational practices and systemic constraints shape service access.

Findings indicate that scarce resources and inter-organizational dependency restrict the availability and stability of services, while language and time barriers further limit accessibility. To address low awareness, CA employs outreach activities, peer-network collaboration, and digital communication to engage potential users. However, service providers retain dominant authority in defining needs and decisions, reproducing power asymmetries within the service process. The paper argues that resource scarcity, cultural stigma, and professional dominance jointly constrain MDWs' agency in seeking psychological support. It calls for cross-organizational collaboration, participatory service design, and co-production between workers and professionals to promote more equitable, culturally responsive mental health services."

What factors predict Job Satisfaction in Social Workers? (A Quantitative Study from the UK)

Dr Selwyn Stanley[1]
[1]Canterbury Christ Church University, , United Kingdom

Background:
Social workers function in complex work environments with clients who experience considerable stress, trauma, and distress. This vicarious exposure has the potential to undermine the mental health and well-being of frontline professionals and the increasing turnover of social workers is a matter of concern. Studies from different countries [e.g., Australia and New Zealand (Alston et al., 2021); Canada (Alaggia et al., 2023); China (Jia et al., 2020); India (Stanley & Sebastine, 2023); Norway (Nilsen et al., 2023); USA (Prasad et al., 2021)] suggest high levels of burnout, mental health issues and poor quality of life in social workers. The situation in the UK is much the same. Eight out of ten social workers in the UK suffer from stress at work, with two-thirds saying that their mental health suffers because of their job (Social Workers Union, 2022). Increased workload, staff shortages, having to work beyond contractual hours, and the lack of work-life balance were among the most widespread and deeply felt concerns of social work staff in the post-Covid era (UNISON, 2022).

Methods:
This quantitative cross-sectional study collected data from a sample of 104 respondents through an online survey conducted with social workers in the North-West region of England. Standardised instruments were administered to assess five variables, namely, role conflict, work support, work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, and job satisfaction. The Job Demands–Resources theory provided the conceptual framework for the study.

Findings:
The findings of this study underscore the complex interplay between the variables studied and reveal significant correlations among them. In particular, highly significant negative correlations were seen between role conflict, family-to-work conflict, and job satisfaction. Regression analysis further elicited the first two variables as significant predictors of job satisfaction. The implications of these findings will be further explored in this paper."

Exploring BSW Students' Perceptions of ADEI in a Redesigned Pre-Practicum Course at a Predominantly White Institution

Mr Nicholas Zeimet[1]
[1]Bethel University, , United States

In the context of cultural and political polarization and extremism, schools of social work are challenged with how to teach antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI). Given that around 80% of white evangelical Christians supported the current presidential administration—one issuing executive orders that seem to undermine DEI efforts—understanding how Christian social work students perceive, integrate, or resist ADEI education is especially relevant. This study explores BSW students' perceptions of ADEI in social work education at a Christian PWI that recently redesigned its pre-practicum course sequence to emphasize ADEI through community engaged learning and counter stories. The redesign requires students to be placed in a community context that differs from the student\'s ethnic/racial identity, engages in critical reflective readings, explores concepts related to white supremacy, and develops an advocacy/justice project with a poster presentation on campus to follow. Pre and post data was collected from BSW students (mean age = 19.46, SD=1.08) at a PWI using open-ended written responses. After the course ended, two focus groups were held with students, using qualitative thematic analysis of student responses, the findings emphasize the importance of experiential learning, self-reflection, and strong institutional commitment to ADEI, underscoring the need for ongoing integration into social work curricula. The findings reinforce the need for continued efforts in integrating ADEI into social work education, fostering a commitment to ADEI, and systemic change. These findings highlight the need for social work educators to design curricula that engage students in critical ADEI discussions, promote self-reflection, and support practical application. Educators must provide experiential learning, challenge biases, and prepare students for diverse social contexts, while institutions should extend ADEI efforts beyond coursework to mentorship, field placements, and faculty development to equip future social workers for social justice practice.

Remodelling Child Reformation in Malawi: A Social Development and Ubuntu-Informed Framework for Sustainable Reintegration (PHDBASED))

Mr Felix Tehuti Kakowa[2,3], Raj Yadav[1]
[1]Queensland University Of Technology, , , [2]Midlands State University (zw) And Association Of Social Workers In Malawi , , Malawi, [3]Rajagiri College Of Social Sciences, , Malawi

"In Malawi, children in conflict with the law (CCL) and those in institutional care encounter a system dominated by remedial and custodial approaches. These models, focused on containment and immediate needs, frequently fail to address the root causes of vulnerability, thereby hindering sustainable rehabilitation and perpetuating cycles of disenfranchisement. This study addresses a critical gap: the lack of a culturally-grounded, strengths-based framework to transform Malawi\'s child protection system from a punitive apparatus into an engine for sustainable development.

Employing a pragmatic, mixed-methods design, this research will collect qualitative and quantitative data from key stakeholders, including children in reformatories and childcare institutions (CCIs), reintegrated youth, administrators, and parents. The findings will inform the co-creation of a novel reformatory and reintegration model. This model is theoretically innovated by integrating the Social Development Approach with the Good Lives Model (GLM) and the Ecosystems Perspective.

The proposed framework is designed to be culturally resonant and sustainable. It is deliberately aligned with the Ubuntu philosophy to ensure cultural relevance, and with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The ultimate objective is to provide a viable, evidence-based pathway for deinstitutionalization, positioning Malawi’s child justice and care systems as a proactive force for building human capital, fostering community resilience, and facilitating the successful reintegration of children as valued citizens."

Territorial Resistance a Political-Emotional Dimension in Hydroelectric Projects in Colombia And Chile

Dr Nélida Ramirez[1]
[1]Universidad Católica Del Maule Chile, , Chile

"The purpose of this presentation is to provide an understanding of territorial resistance from the perspective of social work, as an emotional political dimension. The research considers the experience of people affected by the planning or implementation of hydroelectric projects in Colombia and Chile, through experiential narrative inquire. The consequences of hydroelectric projects have emerged in Latin America since the 1990s as a new social issue for the discipline, due to the deteriorating of inequalities generated by the neoliberal development model. From the analysis of the two cases, it is possible indicate that resistance in Latin America to hydropower projects has characteristics such as, resistance is an ancestral heritage of organizational vision, is a collective action in defense of the permanence of peoples in their territories and mobilize efforts in defense of victims of development who demand global solidarity.

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Innovative e-Learning in Social Work: Simulation-Based Learning (SBL) to Translate Social Justice Value into Practice

Dr Eunjung Lee[1]
[1]University Of Toronto, , Canada

"A principle of doing ‘no harm’ is critical in working with client struggling with psychosocial concerns and systemic barriers. Developing a simulation-based learning (SBL) method in social justice education is critical since social work students learn practice skills without posing risk to real clients. Furthermore, incorporating e-Learning environment into SBL is innovative since critically reflecting implicit biases demands a ‘personal’ learning space, where individual learners repeatedly practice their emerging skills without disruptions of others’ judgement thus providing an emotionally, culturally and politically safe educational space to improve professional competence. The e-Learning method works in a self-directed manner, thereby it reduces power imbalances that exist in higher education between learners and educators and among learners with privileged or underprivileged status, promoting epistemic justice in social work education. We collaborated with social work students, instructors and community practitioners and developed case-based learning contents which were transferred into three types of modules: didactic, digital storytelling, and branching in 4 different levels. To maintain learner engagement, case studies included a mixture of written descriptions of the clients, audio and/or video simulations, featuring professional actors and practicing social workers. Currently, 82 graduate social work students completed the e-Learning modules in different levels. During the presentation, we will share details of how we developed different types of modules using the Articulate Storyline 360 platform, which is a cloud-based platform that specializes in creating interactive e-Learning courses; demonstrate selected modules as the outputs; share a pilot study on the participant feedback; and discuss lessons learned through the e-Learning module development and its implications to social work practitioners, educators, and researchers.

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Social Work for a Sustainable Future: Lessons from Global Women Leaders

Dr Roslynn Scott-Adams[1]
[1]National Catholic School Of Social Service At The Catholic University Of America, , United States

The climate crisis is an existential threat to life on Earth, making environmental justice a global issue. Social work's commitment to social justice aligns closely with efforts to advance environmental justice and protect human rights, including access to food, health, and clean water (Gilliam et al., 2023. Gaps in social work education, particularly in macro-level knowledge and global perspectives limit practitioners' ability to engage effectively in this work globally (Kim et al., 2023). Micro and mezzo-level social workers often feel unprepared to respond and engage compared to their macro-level counterparts (Mason et al., 2024), underscoring the need for integrated approaches that empower individuals and strengthen communities.

This presentation explores the leadership of women such as Vandana Shiva, Jane Goodall, Mama Mikoko, and Wangari Maathai, whose work exemplifies strategies for fostering environmental and social justice across cultures. Their practice and education crosses continents, countries, and focus. Each has a commitment to individual engagement, community activation, the health of humans and nature, and broader education and advocacy. Integration across the levels of practice was core to success.

The work of these women exemplifies transformative strategies for sustainable development. We will explore the intersections of grassroots engagement, ecological stewardship, and social advocacy that can create systemic change. By analyzing their contributions, we propose ways to incorporate these skills into social work education, enabling practitioners to address environmental justice locally and globally. Through modeling these approaches, social workers can build cross-cultural relationships and advocate for sustainable, equitable communities.

Building RESILIENT Communities through Inclusive Education in East Africa

Prof Ann Christin E Nilsen[1]
[1]University Of Agder, ,

"The RESILIENT project is a collaboration between Makerere University in Uganda, the Institute of Social Work in Tanzania, The University of Rwanda and the University of Agder in Norway, aimed at buidling capacity in Higher Education Institutions offering degrees in social work. At the heart of the project is an ambition to develop and co-create knowledge that builds on and advances indigenous knowledges, and which harbours a capacity to re-invent social work curricula. The project has three target areas: Child abuse and school retention (Uganda), youth unemployment (Rwanda) and the wellbeing of elderly citizens (Tanzania). At this workshop we will present research developed by PhD scholars affiliated to the project. The presentations will include research that addresses all three target areas.

 "

Shades of Bias: An Intersectional Tool for Revolutionary Praxis

Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom

"The social work profession often declares its commitment to anti-oppressive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, yet the lived realities tell a different story. Circular debates, endless demands for “evidence,” and performative gestures continue to prevent meaningful action. For many practitioners - particularly Black and racially minoritised social workers - this gap between rhetoric and reality shows up as harm: unaddressed bias, unsafe cultures, and systems that refuse to acknowledge their own contradictions.

Shades of Bias emerges directly in this void. Underpinned by the traditions of truth-telling, care and accountability, it offers a structured, compassionate and practical framework designed to interrupt patterns of bias at individual, organisational and systemic levels. Centring the process, the framework supports victims/survivors, witnesses and those for harm, to navigate incidents of bias with psychological safety, emotional literacy and restorative intention - not blame.

While conceived to address racial bias, the framework’s principles are transferable across professions and all forms of marginalisation. provides social workers, educators, leaders and policymakers with a scalable tool to document discrimination, surface systemic patterns, and design ethical responses grounded in social justice rather than performance. This article situates as more than a reflective tool - it is a philosophy, a praxis and a mechanism for cultural transformation. It calls the profession to move beyond abstract commitments and towards accountable action, ensuring that equity does not remain a mission statement, but becomes lived practice. Ultimately, contributes to reimagining what safety, justice and integrity can look like in social work when we allow truth to lead.

Authorship as Leadership: Reconfiguring Social Work Learning Through Black Feminist Writing Praxis

Ms Shantel Thomas[1]
[1]British Association Of Social Workers, , United Kingdom

"This paper presents a case study of a five-day residential writing retreat for Black women, convened in July 2025 in the UK by the founder of the Anti-Racist Movement (ARM). Situated within contemporary debates about transforming social work education, the retreat is framed as both a restorative intervention and an innovative pedagogical model that responds to emerging local, regional, and global challenges in the profession.

Using autoethnography, collective dialogue, reflective notes, and shared artefacts, the study explores writing as a critical learning method, a form of Indigenous and community-rooted inquiry, and a catalyst for epistemic freedom. The retreat functioned as a co-created learning environment where participants i.e social workers, educators, academics, and practitioners, engaged in reflective and relational writing practices that disrupted traditional hierarchies of knowledge production.

Three key findings emerged. First, writing served as healing pedagogy and lifelong learning, enabling participants to process lived experience, reclaim voice, and develop critical self-knowledge essential for effective practice. Second, the retreat operated as a collective learning lab, modelling inter-professional collaboration, peer mentorship, and supported supervision. Through shared authorship, participants developed skills transferable to field education, leadership, and organisational practice. Third, the retreat acted as a structural intervention that challenged the North–South divide in publishing by centring Black women's narratives, validating non-Western research methods, and democratising access to scholarly writing.

Theoretically grounded in Black feminist thought and Critical Race Theory, the retreat is conceptualised as a transformational pedagogical space and one that reconfigures what counts as knowledge, who is positioned as a knower, and how writing can be mobilised as leadership, resistance, and curriculum innovation.

The paper concludes that writing retreats for Black women are not peripheral activities but scalable, practice-informed models for social work education. They offer pathways for reimagining curriculum, embedding co-creation, strengthening professional development, and promoting epistemic justice across the global social work community."

Decolonising the social work curriculum: a scoping review

Dr Patrice Whitehorne-Smith[1]
[1]Flinders University | Flinders University | Flinders University | Australian Catholic University, ,
While there is a growing body of research exploring decolonising practice in social work, for decolonisation practices in social work to take hold it must be rooted in higher education curriculum and pedagogy to be sustainable. Decolonised social work education must be developed by competent and skilled educators who can both model and hone decolonised practice skills in social work students. This is a challenge as there is ambiguity in the definition and scope of decolonisation practice in social work and limited available information on practical strategies and best practices for developing decolonised social work curricula and integrating non-Western pedagogy. Guided by Arksey & O'Malley, this scoping review aims to integrate and synthesise international literature by addressing these questions 1) What does decolonising the social work curriculum mean? and 2) How is the decolonisation of the social work curriculum being undertaken or implemented across higher education institutions? Four databases were searched- JSTOR, Web of Science, ProQuest and Scopus based on specified inclusion and exclusion criteria resulting in 784 identified records for screening. Two independent screeners conducted title and abstract screening, with full text screening currently underway. Data will then be extracted by two independent extractors and synthesised using reflexive thematic analysis with key themes related to mapping definitions and interpretations of decolonising social work curricula, identifying strategies and approaches implemented in higher education, and highlighting gaps in practical guidance within social work curricula. As a way of argument, we suggest that the scoping review will offer social work educators and practitioners' conceptual clarity, inform future curriculum development, educator training, and research directions.

The IPVE Taskforce: Online Experiential Learning for IPV Response

Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]
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"Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words).
<p data-start=""0"" data-end=""961"">Understanding the dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV), the lived experiences of survivors, and the ways system interactions can either support or harm survivors and their families is essential knowledge for emerging professionals. In social work education, this understanding carries particular urgency, as social workers frequently serve as first responders to IPV across diverse practice settings. To strengthen systemic responses, professionals from various disciplines must not only comprehend the complexities of IPV but also value interprofessional collaboration when working with affected individuals, families, and communities (Majhan et al., 2018; Semin et al., 2019). Interprofessional education (IPE) provides a vital platform for social work students to gain skills and insights alongside peers in nursing, counseling, and related fields—systems that play key roles in coordinated responses to IPV (Taylor, Spence Coffey, & Kashner, 2016). </p>
<p data-start=""963"" data-end=""1581"">In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational programs transitioned toward online and asynchronous learning, prompting new approaches to IPE delivery (Sun et al., 2020). The Interpersonal Violence Education (IPVE) Taskforce was created to address this shift through innovative, technology-driven experiential learning activities centered on interpersonal violence. This interdisciplinary Taskforce collaborates with the School of Social Work’s Experiential Learning Committee and the College of Nursing and Health Innovation’s IPE Committee to design and implement engaging online simulations and workshops. </p>
<p data-start=""1583"" data-end=""2124"">These initiatives aim to raise awareness of IPV, cultivate empathy for survivors, enhance bystander intervention efficacy, and strengthen trauma-informed professional skills, ultimately leading to safer outcomes. This workshop will present an overview of the IPVE Taskforce’s development, partnerships, and implementation processes at the University of Texas at Arlington. It will highlight how interdisciplinary collaboration and technology-based experiential learning can equip students to respond more effectively to IPV in professional practice. </p>"

Strengthening Teachers' Role in Child Protection: Social Work's Contribution to Learner 'S Safety in Schools in Packwach, Uganda

Dr Peter Nareeba[1]
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"Schools are not only centers of learning but also places where children spend a significant portion of their developmental years. Without adequate protection systems in place, children in school settings can be vulnerable to various forms of abuse, including sexual harassment, bullying, and other forms of violence among others. Teachers therefore, are strategically positioned to identify, prevent, and respond to these risks. However, most often they lack the training and support needed to do so effectively. This paper explores the critical role of social work in strengthening teachers' capacity in child protection and safeguarding of learners in schools in Pakwach district, Uganda.

In this paper, we share practical experiences of social work interventions in schools, where we've organized targeted training programs for teachers across schools in Pakwach district on child protection. The training covered, case management on child protection, recognizing signs of abuse, managing disclosures of abuse, reporting concerns confidentially, providing necessary support to learners, teachers' legal and ethical responsibilities in handling child protection concerns, referral pathways and legal frameworks in Uganda.

Key outcomes of the intervention were the establishment of a clear, accessible reporting mechanism, ensuring quick action on any child protection issues, formation of learners\' clubs within schools that provide learners with safe spaces to discuss safety and protection issues, raising awareness, peer-to-peer learning , counseling and psychosocial support.

The key recommendations from this intervention include the importance of integrating child protection into school policies and creating clear reporting mechanisms that promote both teacher and learner safety. This paper calls for investment in school social work, through training and supporting teachers as frontline defenders of children\'s rights. Conclusively, social work plays a transformative role in nurturing protective and safe environments for children in schools."

Evaluation of a Sports Program on the Behavior and Interpersonal Relationships of Disadvantaged Adolescents

Fen Ling Chen[1]
[1]Icsw Nea, ,

"This study evaluates the effects of a long-term, corporate-sponsored basketball program on the behavior and interpersonal relationships of disadvantaged adolescents. The participants were 13-15 year-old students from three project-based schools in Taiwan, all from socioeconomically disadvantaged families and residing on campus during weekdays. Each week, professional basketball players or certified coaches hired by the sponsoring corporation conducted basketball training sessions and held interschool friendship games once a semester.

A quasi-experimental design was adopted, comparing an experimental group (program participants) with a control group (nonparticipants) after the intervention. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires measuring negative behaviors, self-efficacy, parent–child interaction, peer relationships, and teacher–student relationships. Analyses were conducted using paired-sample t-tests and the difference-in-differences (DID) approach.

The results showed a statistically significant reduction in negative behaviors among the experimental group, as well as positive trends in parent–child and teacher–student relationships. Approximately 60–70% of participants demonstrated improvement across multiple dimensions. The findings suggest that participation in the basketball program helped the disadvantaged youth reduce negative behaviors, enhance self-efficacy, mitigate harmful interpersonal interactions, improve teacher–student relationships, and strengthen self-awareness."

Role understanding of actors in transnational non-formal youth education – south-north-perspectives (abstract for poster presentation)

Bettina Waldt[1]
[1]School Social Work, Esd/global Learning, Etc., ,
"<p align=""LEFT""><span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">According to the German UNESCO commission, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a ‘driver’ for strategically promoting the achievement of the sustainability goals in a global context (<span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">Koordinierungsstelle BNE 2021). Thereby the 2030 Agenda calls for no one to be left behind (“LNOB”), which applies in particular to those affected by social disadvantage (GIZ 2016). </p>
<p aligns=""LEFT""><span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">The LNOB principle is also a central concern in social work internationally (cf. IFSW 2021). <span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">Nevertheless, young people around the world in particular experience insufficient access to social participation (UNICEF 2021).</p>
<p align=""LEFT""><span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">Considering that non-formal education is part of both, International Social Work (ISW) and ESD, the question arises as to how actors in youth education projects organize their work and on which understanding of participation their work is based. This leads to the following research question: <span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span lang=""en-US"">Which guiding principles can be reconstructed among players from international youth education projects with regard to the promotion of social participation? </p>
<p align=""LEFT""><span style=""font-size: medium""><span style=""color: #000000""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span lang=""en-US"">To work on this research question guideline-based interviews are being carried out and analyzed via the documentary method (Nohl 2017). Current sample: n=7. Selection criteria for projects: Promotion of social participation among under 27-year-olds in international education projects. </p>
<span style=""font-size: medium""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span lang=""en-US"">This reconstruction provides insights into the extent to which certain practical experiences are reflected in the development of a professional habitus and role understandings. The results can be linked back to professionalization discourses<span style=""font-size: medium""><span style=""font-family: Calibri, sans-serif""><span lang=""en-US"">. "

The psychological task of transformative leaders in fostering a \'soft life\' trend in professional learning communities

Dr Merlene Christobelle Esau[1]
[1]University Of The Free State, , South Africa

Professional learning communities (PLCs) aim to raise the teaching profession by enhancing school improvement processes and outcomes. In this way, teacher learning, competency as well as practice could be enhanced as PLCs promote the development of teacher knowledge, skills and beliefs leading to improvements in classroom teaching and learning adding value to student learning outcomes. To improve student learning, transformative leaders (TLs) which focus on finding and solving problems collectively with stakeholders, are needed. To achieve this goal TLS must be role models who can influence their followers with their charisma or extraordinary personal characteristics to be involved in the vision, to inspire followers by motivating them to share the goal, intellectually stimulate their followers to challenge the status quo and to become change agents but also to consider the individual by showing them support, encouragement, mentoring and coaching. Thus TLs should guide, inspire and facilitate stakeholders to make a positive change. The outcome hereof could be the embodiment of a human-centred approach through relational and social engagement as significant others are involved in the change process. Ultimately through participation in PLCs collaboration amongst teachers might increase, classroom teaching could improve, teachers become better as well as an increase in unity and consistency across classrooms. The desktop study as research methodology will adopt a transformational leadership theory that proposes that leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary results by fostering a shared vision, encouraging innovation and building strong relationships.

Global Insights, Local Impact: A Collaborative Cultural Adaptation of Youth Wellbeing Assessments

Yakahiris Norelis Vazquez[1], Dr Wanja Ogongi[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States

"Universities across the world are grappling with rising concerns about student wellbeing and mental health. Across many low- and middle-income countries, student wellbeing assessment tools are either unavailable or culturally misaligned with local realities. This gap not only limits research but also constrains the development of responsive programs and policies. This presentation highlights a collaborative, practice-based project in which a group of U.S. and Kenyan faculty, students, and community partners work together to culturally adapt and pilot a student well-being instrument in a Kenyan college.

The project is grounded in a cross-national, co-learning model that positions students as active contributors rather than observers. Undergraduate and graduate social work students from both countries participate in literature reviews, community consultations, translation workshops, and field-based piloting. In so doing, the collaborative process itself serves as a central outcome of the project. Students report transformative gains in cross-cultural competence, humility, and applied research skills, while community partners emphasize the value of being co-creators of the tools used to assess youth in their own communities. Early findings confirm that Western-developed measures overlook key domains prioritized by Kenyan youth, reinforcing the importance of participatory adaptation driven by local knowledge.

By centering collaborative learning and equitable partnership, this project offers a replicable model for culturally grounded instrument development. The session will illustrate how student involvement, community-led adaptation, and global collaboration can produce more valid, contextually meaningful assessments that strengthen youth services and inform policy in diverse settings."

IMITACION Y CREATIVIDAD

Dr Carmita Leonor Alavarez Santana[2], Dr Jorge Erick Bojorque Pazmiño[1]
[1]Private, , , [2]Laica Eloy Alfaro University of Manabí / Anuatse / Alaeits, , Spain
Esta ponencia presenta un análisis crítico sobre la tensión entre imitación y creatividad en la formación artística universitaria, articulando los aportes de Jean Baudrillard (simulacro/hiperrealidad), J. P. Guilford (pensamiento divergente: fluidez, flexibilidad, originalidad y elaboración) y la teoría del cerebro triuno de Paul MacLean como marco integrador. A partir de un estudio aplicado con enfoque mixto y diseño cuasi-experimental intragrupo con contrabalanceo AB/BA, se evaluó el efecto de la Metodología por Órdenes Cognitivos Triunos (MOCT) en estudiantes de Artes Plásticas (ULEAM) mediante el Test de Guilford, rúbricas de producto y registros cualitativos (observación, bitácoras y entrevistas). Los resultados evidencian mejoras estadísticamente significativas en fluidez, flexibilidad, elaboración y puntaje global, junto con avances en coherencia conceptual e innovación, aunque con un aumento moderado del tiempo de ejecución. Se concluye que la MOCT es una vía eficaz, de bajo costo y transferible para enseñar creatividad de forma sistemática, especialmente relevante en contextos digitales donde la reproducción y la IA reconfiguran la noción de originalidad.

Bringing Policy to Life: Strengthening Social Justice Commitments Through Experiential Classroom Strategies

Dr Melissa Redmond[1]
[1]Carleton University, ,
"<div class=""elementToProof"">Background
<div class=""elementToProof"">Students in Canada, and elsewhere, are facing intensifying demands as they balance full-time studies, paid work, and other obligations, while educators contend with shrinking budgets, larger classes, and limited institutional support. Social work practice contexts shaped by austerity, managerialism, and (soon) entry-to-practice examinations increasingly encourage students to prioritize clinically oriented skills they believe will enhance employability. A resulting educational emphasis on micro-level competencies at the expense of social justice content raises concerns about students' engagement with broader structural issues, reflecting the "social justice dilemma" introduced by Baines and Brown (2025).
<div class=""elementToProof"">Methods
<div class=""elementToProof"">This presentation will discuss an experiential pedagogical intervention we implemented to address this dilemma. Two faculty members and a research assistant redesigned a required third-year social policy course that has historically met student resistance and indifference to integrate group-based, semester-long case studies. Students applied policy theory to practice in each session by analyzing and comparing the experiences of diverse case-study families, with attention to privilege, marginalization, and policy impacts, incorporating low-cost simulation exercises to illustrate how policy design shapes family outcomes.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Findings
<div class=""elementToProof"">The project demonstrated both the potential and limitations of experiential learning in the policy classroom. While students generally recognized the value of linking policy to lived experience, the approach revealed tensions arising from diverse learning needs, constrained institutional resources, and competing student priorities. Groupwork—central to the intervention—provided challenges related to participation equity and highlighted risks for students marginalized within academic settings.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Conclusions
<div class=""elementToProof"">Experiential learning can strengthen social justice–oriented education in social work by making structural issues tangible and practice-relevant. However, its effectiveness depends on institutional support, intentional design, and sensitivity to student intersectional diversity.
<div class=""elementToProof"">Our findings underscore the ongoing importance of policy pedagogy for professional commitments to social justice within a neoliberal context that shapes both education and future practice. "

Initiatives for the Reform of Social Assistance Policies in Taiwan

Dr Pei-Yuen Tsai[1]
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"The Social Assistance Act is an important piece of legislation designed to support low-income populations in Taiwan. It provides various forms of welfare, including living allowances, medical subsidies, emergency assistance, disaster relief, and benefits related to childcare, education, and housing. Nevertheless, significant problems exist in its implementation, resulting in many impoverished individuals being excluded from the social assistance system. To address these issues, several social advocacy groups have called for amendments to the Social Assistance Act.

This study adopts a qualitative research approach and conducts interviews with staff members of social advocacy groups and government officials involved in the administration of social assistance. The research aims to explore the problems and challenges in implementing the Social Assistance Act, as well as stakeholders' perspectives on potential solutions and the debates surrounding these issues. First, the study analyzes the existing problems in the implementation of the Social Assistance Act in Taiwan. Second, it presents the different approaches proposed by government officials and social groups to address these problems. Finally, the study reviews various legislative proposals and summarizes key points of contention regarding amendments to the Social Assistance Act. These include the adoption of "fictitious income," the scope of family maintenance obligations, immigrants' rights to apply for social assistance, the discretionary power of social workers, measures to encourage employment, and strategies to help low-income individuals escape the poverty trap. The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the implementation and development of social assistance policies in Taiwan."

The need for places outside the home where mothers of children with disabilities can relax.

Mrs Miho Maehiro[1]
[1]Musashino University, , Japan

"Despite increasing social services and educational opportunities for children with disabilities (termed \""children with different abilities\""), these children and their families—especially mothers as primary caregivers—face reduced access to learning and recreation compared to peers without disabilities. Nishimura (2011) advocates early parental disengagement from caregiving to foster community inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The ICF framework integrates disability with body functions, structures, activities, participation, and environmental factors, highlighting how individual characteristics interact with environments to create daily challenges. Families of children with disabilities endure heavier, often lifelong burdens extending into adulthood (Tamura et al., 2021).

This study maps existing \""places\"" for these children and families across regions, drawing on questionnaire surveys in four Japanese localities: Matsumoto City (~240,000 residents), Azumino City (~100,000), Tatsuno Town (~20,000) in Nagano Prefecture, and Fujisawa City (~440,000) in Kanagawa Prefecture. It proposes measures to improve such spaces based on survey findings.

The research pursues three objectives: (1) evaluating access to a \""third place\""—a relaxing social space beyond home, school, or workplace for leisure and interaction; (2) assessing the current availability of third places in local communities and regional characteristics; and (3) investigating why dedicated third places are absent, while identifying required spaces and actions for their creation.

Challenges are multifaceted, yet administrative support remains fragmented, burdening working mothers with complex procedures for services, certificates, medical aid, and school enrollment.

Respondents, mostly primary-caregiver mothers, predominantly identified \""home\"" as their main relaxation site, allowing uninterrupted personal activities and freedom from external caregiving demands.

The findings underscore the urgent need for dedicated spaces enabling solitary rest for mothers raising children with disabilities. Future research should define these spaces and strategies for their establishment.

(298 words)"

A Space and Dialogue for Mothers Raising Children with Disabilities to Actively Choose “Happiness”

Mrs Miho Maehiro[1]
[1]Musashino University, , Japan
"<p dir=""auto"">This pilot study explores the creation of safe, dedicated spaces for mothers raising children with disabilities, enabling them to share experiences, articulate subtle emotions, and redefine personal happiness through peer dialogue.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">Objectives: The research aimed to: (1) facilitate expression of nuanced emotional experiences beyond questionnaire limitations; (2) establish empathetic peer-group dialogue in a safe environment; (3) promote self-reflection via others’ narratives; and (4) capture insights from nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, silences, and group atmosphere.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">Methodology: A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was employed using focus group roundtables. Narrative and episode analysis was applied to transcripts. Participants were recruited via word-of-mouth, flyers, and social media, with consent confirmed through a Google Form.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">Roundtable Sessions Two sessions were held:</p>

<ol dir=""auto"">
August 31, Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture (3 mothers of teens/young adults with school refusal, developmental, or intellectual disabilities; ~2.5 hours over lunch).
November 6, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture (3 mothers of adult children with deaf-blindness; ~2.5 hours with shared snacks).

<p dir=""auto"">Key Findings: In Matsumoto, mothers highlighted family conflicts, marital strain, future anxiety, a culture of “apologizing” for their child, limited regional support, and the challenge of “letting go.” In Yokohama, mothers identified happiness in everyday moments: their child’s smile, honest friendships, and personal time. Raising children with disabilities profoundly reshapes values, with happiness found in ordinary experiences. Differences emerged by disability visibility, child age, and regional context, with mothers of older children displaying greater composure.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">Future Directions: Detailed transcript analysis will examine specific anecdotes, relational dynamics, pauses, and expressions to identify universal themes while respecting variations in disability type, region, child age, and maternal life stage.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">This study underscores the transformative potential of dedicated dialogue spaces in supporting mothers’ emotional well-being and agency in pursuing happiness.</p>
<p dir=""auto"">(298 words)</p>"

Making International Social Work Education Accessible to All

Dr Melissa Grady[1]
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Social workers today must be prepared to think and act globally. As such, social work educators need to provide foundational skills and knowledge to future practitioners so that they can be equipped to work across different cultures and international communities. Visiting, exploring, and learning in other countries is the ideal way to gain such knowledge. Yet, not all students have such opportunities, which means that social work educators need to develop innovative pedagogical strategies to provide these kinds of learning experiences for students who encounter barriers to participating in international education. This presentation will describe a project where the aim was to create such an educational experience. The project was designed to transform an in-person international course, facilitated in an European country, into an asynchronous online course that provides students access to an international learning experience, with built-in flexibility to accommodate different delivery models. This presentation will describe the process, starting from creating the in-person course, to the steps taken to capture the course material in preparation for the digital version, to the final course product and supporting materials. This description will also include the utilization of educational consultants throughout the process and how social work educators can maximize the learning opportunities through consultation and collaboration with digital pedagogy and course design experts. In addition, the presentation will discuss lessons learned and some of the challenges and opportunities that emerged from this process. It will conclude with recommendations for other social work educators regarding how to foster future opportunities for international education using creative and collaborative approaches.

Innovating the Social Work Education Curriculum: Preparing Tomorrow's Social Workers to Meet Local and Global Challenges

Dr Beverly Wagner[1]
[1]University Of Maine At Presque Isle, , United States

Preparing students to uphold social justice, address the legacies of colonization, and the multifaceted nature of social problems requires curricular revisions. This calls for an innovative approach to Social Work Education that incorporates international perspectives while emphasising how global concerns are experienced within local cultural, historical, and present contexts. These revisions include the adaption of social work education to respond to both local and global needs.

This presentation is based on recent research that utilized the lens of postcolonial theory, to highlight the historical and present-day contexts of Latinx populations in the Southwest, United States and Indigenous populations in Canada. These populations illustrate the dynamics between systemic inequalities, localised human rights violations, and the historic and present-day context.

Emphasizing the importance of a holistic curricular framework in developing effective social work practitioners, this approach integrates global social work standards with a decolonizing approach to social work education. Recommendations are made for the integration of indigenized and contextualised practical training, global social work standards, and culturally responsive practices. Examples of pedagogical strategies will include reciprocity particularly in practicums and service learning, a cultural humility approach to engagement, assessment, and intervention, and participatory research and evaluation practice methods.

References:
Rosa-Davila, E.Wagner, B. (in press). Adapting social work education to global and local contexts. In Pentaris, P. Walker, J. (Eds.) Routledge International Handbook on Glocal Social Work,

Teleconsultations in Dehospitalization as a Care Strategy: The Experience of Social Work in High-Complexity Healthcare in Brazil

Dr Tatiana Da Fonseca[1]
[1]Cfess/abepss, ,

Teleconsultations were conceived as a care strategy for post-operative patients residing in areas not served by Home Care due to distance or urban violence, which limit access and continuity of care. Remote consultations are integrated with in-person care under the perspective of Dehospitalization, justified by the service's innovation, continuity of care, reduction of territorial inequalities, and decreased travel costs.

Interdisciplinary virtual consultations are conducted on the Teams platform with physiotherapists, nursing staff, and social workers. The teleconsultation team works collaboratively: physiotherapists provide guidance on exercises and complication prevention; nurses monitor pain, risk signs, and post-operative care; and social workers coordinate the social protection network and safeguard social rights. Residents from the institute's Multiprofessional Residency program—including physiotherapists, pharmacists, and nutritionists—also participate in joint consultations.

From the start of remote services in May until September 2025, a total of 153 virtual consultations were conducted, shared among two to three professionals from different disciplines. This experience highlighted the importance of in-service training, technological infrastructure adequacy, and the organization of workflows to ensure effective care.

Teleconsultations consolidate not only as a technological tool but as a strategy aligned with the principles of SUS: universality, comprehensiveness, and equity. By overcoming geographical and social barriers, they reaffirm a commitment to humanized care, interdisciplinarity, and the guarantee of health rights, establishing a sustainable model for long-term public policies.

The debate on remote care in Social Work gains particular relevance under the lens of the profession's Ethical-Political Project (PEP), especially following the accelerated adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The integration of these tools is not merely a technical process but a field of tension between institutional modernization and the fundamental principles of the profession.

Designing Interactive Environments with UI/UX for Children with Asperger's Learning Musical Instruments

Carlos Alberto Ochoa Ortíz[1], Irma Hernández-Baéz[2], Alejandro Morales-Benavides[3], Roberto Contreras[1], Leticia Ortíz[1], Saúl Gonzalez[1], Humberto García[4], Francisco Trejo[5]
[1]Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua , Mexico, [2]Universidad Politécnica del Estado de Morelos, , Mexico, [3]ITAM-Posgrado, Mexico City, Mexico, [4]Universidad Anahuac, , Mexico, [5]ITNM Campus Juárez, , Mexico

Children diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome often experience a unique combination of sensory hypersensitivity, cognitive rigidity, and difficulty adapting to conventional learning environments. These traits can pose challenges in traditional music education, where auditory stimuli, fine-motor coordination, and social interaction play essential roles. This paper presents the design, development, and evaluation of an interactive educational environment specifically tailored for children with Asperger's learning musical instruments. The system integrates neurodiversity-focused UI/UX principles, adaptive feedback, and multimodal interaction to enable musical learning in safe and supportive settings. Results from an eight-week mixed-methods study involving 28 participants show significant improvements in rhythmic accuracy, sustained attention, emotional regulation, and overall engagement. The findings contribute to the growing field of inclusive interaction design and demonstrate how sensory-conscious digital environments can bridge pedagogical gaps for neurodiverse learners.

Extended Reality technology: Digital insights for social work delivery in technology-driven societies

Dr. Dalon Taylor[1]
[1]Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, , Canada

The lived experiences of service users that social work seeks to empower are unfolding within a growing digitized society. However, concerns about ethical, practical and professional concerns along with client confidentiality and privacy issues continue to hamper the cutting-edge use of technology more broadly in the field. While many social work education associations have acknowledged the growing significance of technology in social work, little is being done to prepare future practitioners for digitally integrated practice. In a rapidly developing technology-driven society, social work needs to be more proactive in addressing current concerns around the use of technology prepare future social work practitioners to deliver social work services in a digitized 21 century society.

This workshop engages participants to explore the use of technology in social work practice through Extended Reality (XR) technology which can create immersive experiences for service users. It explores areas of ethical, confidentiality, [data] privacy and professional concerns that limit the use of technology in the profession and possible avenues for bridging these concerns. A key question to guide the discussion is, how can technology be used… “now and in the future for the empowerment and inclusion of social work clients as well as for the creation of social justice,” (Steiner, 2021: 3366)? The goal of the workshop is for participants to develop deeper understanding about the use and benefits of technology in social work, explore reservations and ways to ensure more accountability in technology use that can support social work goals. The workshop concludes with 3 important steps for participants to engage (in teaching, practice, learning or research) to begin to bridge the technology divide in social work in a fast-growing digitized society."

The alternative approach: providing social work services and supervision during the transition from emergency to temporary placement—A case study of a post-earthquake social work service in northwest China

Dr Tian Zhou[1]
[1]Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , China

At midnight on 18th December 2023, a devastating earthquake struck Jishishan County, Gansu Province, in north-west China. The weather was below 20 °c at that time. It ultimately caused 31 deaths. It is a place with complicated ethnic relations and economic underdevelopment. How to provide immediate support for the victims through social work profession is a tough task.

This paper documented the process and key strategies used by social workers from different settings working together to provide crisis intervention and psychosocial support for people in affected areas in the first four months (covering the emergency to temporary placement phase) immediately after the disaster. It challenges the misconception in much of the literature that social work should only intervene during the post-disaster reconstruction or recovery phases. Additionally, it demonstrates a clear pathway for delivering social work services and supervision within limited time, human resources, and budget constraints. The paper offers a unique and alternative perspective on the importance of cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration. Furthermore, it presents a significant case study highlighting the value of supervisors and social workers' on-site experiences and co-creation in multi-ethnic disaster settings.

Social workers in elderly care

Mrs Nina Thorbjørnsen[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, , Norway

"Norway, like most Western countries, is facing challenges due to a demographic trend with many older people compared to younger, able-bodied people. This has created a great demand for health personnel. There is a particular shortage of nurses in elderly care. The Norwegian authorities\' response to this is to advocate for more use of technology so that people can manage on their own for longer. While technology can help many, there are also many who find it demanding. With a growing population of elderly people, there will also be a greater need for care and measures beyond what requires purely medical help.

We want to explore what social workers can contribute to elderly care. We therefore ask the question: How can social workers take a greater role in elderly care? To answer the question, we are conducting a literature study of social workers in elderly care. We will look at which parts of elderly care social workers participate in (for example, whether it is in institutions or in home-based services), what tasks they have, in which countries they are included in elderly care and whether these have common characteristics. In addition, we will look at what the articles say about how social workers\' professional background contributes to the overall care of the elderly. Any challenges will also be identified. The goal of the paper is to develop knowledge that can inform education and authorities to better utilize social workers in care for the elderly."

790

Maternal Mental Health Needs and Resilience in Rural Communities

Dr Jessica Liddell[1]
[1]University Of Montana, , United States

Background: Rural communities often face intensified health disparities, particularly in maternal mental health. Rates of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) in rural areas are more than double those in urban settings. Despite this, limited research has explored the specific needs of rural perinatal individuals or identified effective interventions to support their wellbeing.

Methods: We conducted semi-structured interviews with 32 participants from a rural area of the United States, including individuals with lived experience of PMADs and maternal or mental healthcare providers. Interviews were conducted via Zoom in 2023, and analyzed using MAXQDA software.

Four key themes emerged:
Barriers to Care: Rural perinatal individuals reported limited access to mental health services due to geographic isolation, provider shortages, and lack of anonymity in small communities.
Impacts of Untreated PMADs: Participants described significant negative effects on both parent and infant wellbeing when mental health needs went unaddressed.
Risk Factors: Contributing factors included social isolation, stigma, and insufficient provider training in mental health.
Resilience and Self-Support: Despite barriers, rural individuals demonstrated strong resilience through informal support networks, self-education, and personal coping strategies.
Conclusions: Perinatal individuals in rural areas face complex, intersecting challenges in accessing mental health support, including long travel distances, social stigma, and limited resources. However, they also show remarkable resilience and creativity in addressing these gaps. These findings underscore the need for tailored interventions that reduce stigma, expand access, and build upon the strengths of rural communities. Insights from this study are being used to inform the development of targeted maternal mental health programs for rural populations.

The Influence of the Ubuntu Philosophical Framework in decolonize social work Practice

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The qualitative study is guided by Ubuntu theory to examine how the philosophy of Ubuntu significantly contributes to the ongoing efforts to decolonise social work practice. This approach aims to incorporate indigenous knowledge and cultural values into social work education, research, and intervention strategies, moving away from an exclusive reliance on Western-centred models. Its core principles emphasise interconnectedness, community, and shared humanity, often summarised by the phrase \"I am because we are.\" In the context of decolonising social work, Ubuntu provides a framework for understanding individuals within their social fabric, recognising that well-being is closely linked to community relationships and collective responsibility. One of Ubuntu's primary roles in this context is to challenge the universalist assumption that other social work theories, models, and methodologies are universally applicable while they have continued facing challenges in different contexts. With reference to the traditional Western approaches often prioritise individualism, which can overlook the complex power relations and community dynamics that are vital in non-Western settings. By incorporating Ubuntu, social work can adopt \"contextualised\" methodologies that consider the unique cultural, demographic, geographical, and socio-economic realities of a region. The integration of Ubuntu into social work offers a promising future, including 1) shaping research agendas to be more community-oriented, and 2) influencing how social workers engage with communities and individuals. It emphasises the importance of tactful access to communities, recognising that consent may extend beyond the individual to include family or community leaders in collectivist societies. This respect for communal decision-making can encourage greater participation and ensure that interventions align with community values. Therefore, Ubuntu philosophy is vital for future social work practice Worldwide because it provides a holistic, community-centred, and decolonial framework that addresses contemporary global challenges and promotes human dignity, eco-systems, interconnectedness, cultural diveristy, and collective well-being.

Community Networks and Sustainable Environmental Practices in Narok County, Kenya

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There is no denying the fact that tourism is the largest industry in the world in terms of earnings and employment generation. The visitor choices are based on the distinctiveness of the travel experience, which is greatly affected by environmental degradation in destinations. Tour operators play a critical role in promoting sustainable environmental practices in destinations. The purpose of this study was to evaluate community network's role in promoting sustainable environmental practices in Narok County, Kenya. The study was informed by stakeholder theory, and rational choice theory. The design used was a descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of 176 tour operators, registered by the Tourism Regulatory Authority who are members of the Kenya Association of Tour Operators, who have access to Narok county, and 397 visitors visiting attractions in Narok County. Questionnaires were issued to visitors and tour operator staff to collect primary data. Interview were used to get information from high-ranking officials of tour operators and tourism officials. The Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social science, SPSS software version 20.0. The coefficient of tour operators' sustainable environmental practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on visitor choice behavior (β=.557, P<0.05). The coefficient of communities network in tour operators' environmental practices indicated a positive and statistically significant effect on visitor choice behavior (β=.298, P<0.05). There is a need for joint participation of visitors, tour operators and communities in the development of sustainable tourism embedded in environment conservation.

Reposition of Ujamaa in the Future of Social Work Education and Practice

Mr Meinrad Haule Lembuka[1]
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The qualitative study is guided by the Ubuntu framework in repositioning Ujamaa in the future of social work education and practice. The study focused on decolonising Ujamaa from European socialism to African Ubuntu as it repositioned Ujamaa within the Ubuntu Models reflecting familyhood. It emphasises communal living, shared resources, and participatory development, aligning closely with core social work values such as human dignity, equality, and social justice. This philosophy, deeply rooted in African Ubuntu principles, offers a robust framework for shaping future social work education and practice by promoting a community-centred, holistic, and culturally relevant approach to social development. Contemporary challenges in social work can be addressed by integrating Ujamaa principles through training practitioners to prioritise collective well-being, mobilise community resources, and facilitate participatory development initiatives. This moves beyond individualistic interventions to address systemic issues within a community context relevant in 1) promoting social justice and equality, 2) cultivating self-reliance and empowerment, 3) integrating indigenous knowledge and cultural values, 4) strengthening human relationships and social cohesion, 5) advocating for universal basic needs, encouraging active social participation and democracy, and promoting a non-exploitative society. The global social work agenda requires more indigenisation by developing holistic, integrated interventions, such as Ujamaa, that promote a comprehensive approach to development by considering social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions in addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals and communities, moving beyond individualistic approaches to foster comprehensive well-being. Therefore, centring Ujamaa in future social work education and practice demands actively decolonising Ujamaa from Eurocentric perspectives, decolonising curricula and research practices, and developing locally relevant frameworks that resonate with the experiences and values of African communities. The fact that Ujamaa prioritises the provision of basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and education as fundamental rights.

The Role of Abortion Funds: A Qualitative Study of Rural Abortion Fund Applicants and Global Implications

Dr Jessica Liddell[1]
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Background: Abortion access is a fundamental aspect of reproductive justice, yet it remains deeply unequal, especially in rural areas. In the U.S., shifting legal landscapes have worsened access, with rural, low-income, and marginalized individuals facing the greatest barriers. Abortion funds—community-based organizations providing financial, logistical, and emotional support—have become essential, but little is known about the lived experiences of those they serve. This study focuses on Montana, a rural state with limited abortion access, to examine the socioeconomic, geographic, and emotional challenges faced by abortion fund applicants. Although U.S.-based, the findings carry global significance for similarly restrictive or underserved contexts.
Methods: Using a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in reproductive justice, we analyzed over 730 anonymized applications submitted to Montana's statewide abortion fund from 2013 to 2021. Applications included open-ended narratives describing applicants' needs and circumstances. A six-person research team coded all qualitative data in NVivo, using an iterative thematic analytic approach. Results: Applicants reported major logistical and financial obstacles, including high costs, long-distance travel, lack of local providers, and insurance exclusions. Rurality exacerbated these issues through geographic isolation, harsh weather, and limited transportation. Many described experiencing community stigma, fear of disclosure, and emotional distress—often compounded by intimate partner violence, housing insecurity, or caregiving burdens. Despite these challenges, abortion funds provided critical support, offering both financial aid and compassionate, judgment-free assistance. Applicants frequently expressed gratitude and described the fund as a vital source.
Conclusion: Abortion funds fill crucial gaps in reproductive healthcare, especially in rural and restrictive settings. This study offers one of the first in-depth qualitative looks at abortion fund users, highlighting how grassroots, client-centered support systems can help mitigate systemic barriers—insights with relevance for global reproductive justice movements.

Suicide in Ghana: Examining the Role of Culture, Gender, Attribution, and Stigma

Dr Robin Gearing[1]
[1]University Of Houston, , United States

In LMIC countries, like Ghana, the limited research suggests that suicide is an act that is highly stigmatized. This study explores suicide related stigma in Ghana and contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between individual and societal/community perspectives on suicide that may ultimately inform effective strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and support.

After consenting, Ghanaian adults completed a Qualtrics survey in Dagbani, English, or Twi languages comprised of sociodemographic questions, standardized measures to examine suicidal attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Statistical analysis included a canonical correlation analysis to examine the proportion of variance in stigma scores that could be explained by beliefs about personal responsibility for and causes of suicidal ideation.

With a mean age of 33.19 years, the majority of the sample were male (53.3%), lived in Accra (51.76%), and were unemployed (51.76%). Findings indicate that attributing mental illness to personal weaknesses or environmental stressors amplifies stigma, particularly among male participants. Overall, the analysis found statistically significant explanatory variates explained about 20% of response variance for males and 18% for females.

This study provides a deeper understanding of how individuals' perceptions and beliefs about etiology and personal responsibility related to suicide are associated with stigma in Ghana. Our findings reveal a complex landscape of attitudes towards suicide in Ghana, which aligns with some global trends but also reveals regional characteristics. Perceptions on causes/etiology and personal responsibility of suicidal influence resultant stigma, specifically for males. Thus, addressing mental health/suicide stigma requires a nuanced and multifaceted clinical and policy approaches that acknowledges the roles of sociodemographic factors, gender, cultural beliefs, and attribution regarding the origin of suicidal ideation. These findings support community-based stigma reduction efforts to help develop a comprehensive approach to bring about greater empathy, inclusivity, and support for individuals living with suicide ideation and mental illness.

Rhythms of Relations: Social Workers\' Role for Just, Equitable and Sustainable Socio-Ecological Transformations.

Maria Båld[1]
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"<p data-start=""429"" data-end=""1070"">Despite decades of sustainability efforts, global challenges persist: greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, wealth disparities deepen, biodiversity loss accelerates, and pollution, poverty, and inequality remain widespread. These intertwined crises reveal the limitations of dominant sustainability approaches that prioritize short-term material gains, technical fixes, and fragmented understandings of human–nature relations. In response, relational approaches have gained increasing attention within sustainability research, offering more dynamic and holistic ways of understanding complex, interconnected socio-ecological challenges.</p>
<p data-start=""1072"" data-end=""1593"">Drawing on relational perspectives in sustainability science, this paper moves beyond viewing sustainability as interactions between separate entities and instead emphasizes continually unfolding processes, relationships, and rhythms among humans, non-human nature, and socio-ecological systems. From this viewpoint, disconnection from nature, growing fear of the natural world, and patterns of domination over nature are understood as relational breakdowns shaped by unequal power relations and unjust social structures.</p>
<p data-start=""1595"" data-end=""2220"">Within this relational framework, social workers are uniquely positioned at the centre of sustainability efforts. Their professional mandate, values, and practices are inherently relational and grounded in working across the intersections of individuals, communities, institutions, and socio-ecological systems. Through everyday engagement with lived experiences, social injustices, and power relations, social workers generate critical insights into how sustainability challenges are relationally produced and unevenly distributed. Consequently, transformative change must be rooted in care, reciprocity, and social justice.</p>
<p data-start=""2222"" data-end=""2735"">The paper highlights the crucial role of social workers in addressing sustainability as a relational challenge across three interrelated spheres: values and ethics, systems and structures of change, and practical interventions. By engaging with climate change and sustainability through relational lenses, social workers can contribute to nurturing relationships between people, nature, and communities, and support socio-ecological transformations that are just, equitable, and sustainable for all.</p>"

SOCIAL WORK, CLIMATE JUSTICE, AND SHARED FUTURE: Challenges in Vulnerable Territories of Latin America

Dr Ana Rojas Acosta[1]
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"This article discusses the challenges and opportunities for Social Work in the face of intensifying social inequalities, socio-environmental impacts, and climate crises that disproportionately affect vulnerable territories in Latin America. From a critical and historical perspective, it examines how the profession, originally marked by conservative tendencies, has over the past decades consolidated an ethical-political tradition committed to human rights, social justice, and the construction of fairer, shared futures.

The study engages with recent experiences in Brazil, especially initiatives focused on food security, social protection, and community strengthening in contexts of health and climate emergencies. Notable examples highlight the integration of professional practice, social participation, local knowledge, and social technologies, showing that intervention in vulnerable territories requires interdisciplinary, context-sensitive action attentive to the structural inequalities that shape everyday life.

Within the framework of the theme “United for a Shared Future,” the article argues that innovative responses depend on the integration of professional education, care practices, global sustainable development agendas, and participatory approaches to knowledge production. It concludes that Social Work, by combining rigorous social analysis, collective action, and rights advocacy, has the potential to make a decisive contribution to a shared, socially just, and environmentally sustainable future."

Cross-Cultural Context of Suicide Stigma: Comparison Between Mexican and Mexican American Communities

Dr Robin Gearing[1]
[1]University Of Houston, , United States

Suicide and suicide related stigma are significant public health issues impacting individuals, families, and communities across the globe. Mexico has recently experienced an increase in deaths by suicide, as have Mexican Americans. Despite this, there are still gaps in our understanding of how suicide stigma specifically impacts Latinx of Mexican heritage. While Mexicans and Mexican Americans share many familial, cultural, and religious values, their exposure to different societal norms may shape distinct perceptions of suicidal ideation and mental health. To address these gaps, this study examines suicide-related stigma among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S.

To better understand suicide-related stigma in these communities, we conducted a community-based survey with 248 Mexican Americans in Houston and 203 participants in Mexico City. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multiple regression models were employed to examine three domains of suicide-related stigma: Personal Social Distance, Community Stigma, and Future Potential Stigma.

The average age of participants was 43.6 years in the U.S. and 38.5 in Mexico. In both locations, participants were mostly female (69.8% in the U.S. and 50.7% in Mexico). Our findings found that location predicted the significant difference in stigma. In the Mexico sample, stigma was influenced by education, self-stigma, and openness to seeking professional help. In the U.S. sample, stigma was associated with generational status, acculturation, and familiarity with mental health issues.

These findings underscore the importance of considering sociodemographic factors in understanding suicide-related stigma and highlight the need for culturally tailored interventions to address the unique predictors of stigma in each community. Addressing suicide stigma requires a nuanced and community-specific approach that acknowledges the roles of sociodemographic factors, local beliefs, and knowledge of and exposure to suicide. These findings support the need of specificity in targeting practice and policy community-based suicide stigma reduction efforts within Latinx communities.

Citizen Science in Social Work: Designing a resource guide on active ageing

Ana Belén Cuesta R uiz-Clavijo[1], Mrs Esther Raya Diez[1]
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"Citizen science involves the participation of citizens in scientific research. It opens science up to the general public, not only as recipients of science or subjects of study, but also as generators of knowledge, contributing their observations, knowledge and experiences. Information technologies have expanded the options for developing projects based on Citizen Science. This type of scientific research is present in various scientific fields, from the study of the environment, health, geology and astronomy; however, its role is more limited in the social sciences and practically absent in social work. Nevertheless, we believe that it has significant potential both in the scientific development of social work and in strengthening citizen participation in scientific activities. This paper presents the design of a resource guide on active ageing based on citizen science.

To this end, intuitive software is being developed to facilitate the incorporation of social resource data. A group of citizen scientists (senior citizens, carers, professionals) is participating in the design phase. Their role focuses both on defining the scope of the guide and on testing the software. After the pilot phase, the tool is distributed to different interest groups so that they can participate in sending information about resources. This work is part of the IASEA project (Innovation in Social Care for the Promotion of Active Ageing), led by the University of La Rioja and funded by the Government of La Rioja (Spain)."

A Community Based Initiative to Promote Health and Wellness

Dr Victoria Venable-Edwards[1]
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This presentation will discuss information gleaned from a study that explores the impact of a short-term, community-focused movement and exercise intervention on participants\' overall well-being. The purpose was not only to increase engagement in health-related activities but also to assess the impact of activity on individuals\' emotional, physical, and social well-being. There have been studies that have investigated the effect of movement on mental health outcomes (Mahindru et al, 2023; Pearce et al, 2022), on health-related outcomes (LaCroix et al, 2019), and social ability (Liu et al, 2023). In addition, research indicates that team or group participation in movement activities can increase investment, engagement, and decrease loneliness. It is clear that including a physical activity or movement component when attempting to promote wellness in community-based interventions could lead to amplified positive gains for participants. It is clear that including a physical activity or movement component in traditional mental health treatment protocols could help to amplify positive gains for clients. In addition, these alternative methods may be more palatable to various cultural groups when compared to traditional treatment components (e.g. talk therapy, medication, etc.). This presentation will review findings from data gathered over the past three years from participants in a short-term community-based activity challenge. Preliminary findings suggest that the activity challenge made a positive impact on each aspect of well-being. During this presentation, there will also be discussion of the strategies used to encourage community engagement and share resources, as well as lessons learned from the last three years on the development and implementation of a community-based health-focused initiative.

How Open Access (OA) Textbook Options Can Be Used to Address Financial Barriers in Social Work Education

Dr Victoria Venable-Edwards[1]
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The purpose of this paper presentation is to discuss a study that assesses the usage and effectiveness of a social work open access resource (OA). The focus of the study is aligned with the Goal 4 of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals which is focused on inclusive and equitable quality education (United Nations, 2025). Educational costs, including the price of textbooks, have increased steadily over the years. Social Work can use OA technology to help reduce the cost associated with a college education and remove some of the financial barriers faced by students and institutions (Lindshield and Adhikari, 2013; Wood & Orzech, 2022). Through the use of technology, OA provides greater access to learning materials for a wider array of students with varying income levels. This study involves the usage of a social work OER workbook created in Pressbooks, which is an open-source project that provides new models for book publishing. Over the last three years, both students and non-student users were surveyed to better understand the impact of the OER option. Students who used the book in an undergraduate social work basic skills course were asked to complete an anonymous survey at the end of the semester and reflect on the impact of this type of technology on their educational experience. Non-student users, primarily educators, who accessed the workbook through the Pressbooks website were asked to complete an anonymous survey about their usage of the OER workbook and to gather feedback. Data from this study are still being collected but initial analyses reflect positive impacts on student learning and educators' curriculum choices. More complete preliminary findings relating to this OER's impact on students and educators will be shared during the session.

The vision of social work in the future world

Dr Hassan Mousavi Chelak[1]
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The social changes and transformations in the current world are such that all professions and sciences, including social work, must move in the direction of these developments and have a plan for their future. Because if sciences cannot respond to the needs and problems of the people, they will lose their effectiveness in practice and other disciplines will take their place. Social work will not be an exception to this rule. This situation becomes more important because the development of new technologies and artificial intelligence, etc. have affected many matters, including social affairs, and even challenged the provisions of professional ethics statements. Therefore, in the future, social work needs a fundamental review at the global level to influence people\'s lives, otherwise it will become ineffective in the future. Because the need for social workers will increase in the future due to global developments.
Social work in the future must be family-centered, community-centered, more specialized, based on new technologies and techniques, developing remote services, more flexible, ecosystem-based, evidence-based, more accessible, more effective in social policymaking at the global level, demanding and questioning, more inclusive, more comprehensive, etc. For this reason, social work must outline its future vision in the world.

Culturally Grounded Social Work Interventions for Health Equity among Rural Older Adults in Southwest China

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Health inequity in resource-constrained settings remains a persistent challenge across the Global South. In rural China, rapid population ageing intersects with structural and informational barriers, placing older adults with chronic diseases at heightened risk. Moving beyond the limitations of biomedical and education-only approaches, this study explores how culturally contextualised social work practice can address the “last-mile” gap in health delivery by enhancing health literacy and individual agency.

Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the study implemented a six-month, three-arm randomised controlled trial involving 118 rural older adults with chronic conditions. Participants were assigned to a Social Work Intervention Group (SWIG, n=40), an Educational Resource Group (ERG, n=39), or a Control Group (CG, n=39). Guided by the Health Belief Model yet adapted to clan-based rural social structures, the SWIG received integrated casework and group interventions. Quantitative outcomes were assessed using Generalised Estimating Equations, complemented by Photovoice to elucidate mechanisms of change.

Quantitative analyses showed that SWIG achieved significantly greater improvements in health knowledge and health-related behaviours compared to ERG and CG (partial η^2=.787). While physical health outcomes showed positive trends, qualitative findings revealed the core mechanism: the shift from “passive patients” to “active agents.” The intervention strengthened fragmented support networks and translated abstract medical guidance into community-rooted, practicable strategies—changes that purely informational interventions failed to generate.

This study challenges the effectiveness of top-down information delivery in rural healthcare. It provides empirical evidence that culturally grounded social work interventions can meaningfully enhance health literacy by fostering agency, relational support, and community participation. The model offers a transferable framework for promoting health equity in China and other resource-limited settings undergoing rapid demographic transition.

Photovoice Between the Streets and the Classroom: Co-Creation in Social Work Education

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This paper presents an educational innovation project developed during the 2025/2026 academic year with first-year students of the Degree in Social Work at the University of Valencia, in collaboration with the Sant Joan de Déu Institution. The project promotes ethical and transformative learning through the co-creation of knowledge between social work students and people experiencing homelessness supported by the Sant Joan de Déu Institution in Valencia, Spain. Using participatory Photovoice, the initiative strengthens academic–experiential dialogue and fosters critical awareness and epistemic freedom in social work education.

The pedagogical approach is based on experiential and socially engaged teaching and learning methods. Photovoice is employed as a pedagogical and research tool, combining photography, critical reflection and collective dialogue. The project is implemented through six structured sessions involving mixed groups composed of 60 first-year social work students and people experiencing homelessness supported by a labour insertion service of the Sant Joan de Déu Institution.

Through a horizontal, collaborative process, participants identify and visually represent structural barriers, everyday challenges and proposals to address homelessness in the city, producing photographic narratives rooted in lived experience. The project draws on the capabilities approach, centring on agency, self-determination and participation, while challenging traditional hierarchies between experts and learners.

The final phase is a public exhibition at the Faculty of Social Sciences, serving as a space for social awareness, knowledge transfer and policy advocacy, amplifying voices often marginalised in institutional settings. Evaluation is conducted through students' field diaries, validation focus groups, and reflective assessment by lecturers and service providers.

Preliminary findings show high motivation and engagement, enhanced teamwork, and development of critical, ethical and methodological competences. Overall, the project demonstrates Photovoice's potential to reconfigure the social work curriculum, bridge theory and practice, and train socially committed professionals capable of addressing complex challenges.

Experiencing democracy: attitudes and opinions of young people during the Spanish Transition

Domingo Carbonero Muñoz[1], Mrs Esther Raya Diez[1], Manuel Hernández Pedreño[2], Olga García Luque[2], Salvador Manzanera Román[2], Melchor Gómez Pérez[4]
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"Democracy as a political model must guarantee the social conditions that make the ideas of freedom, equality and solidarity effective. In Spain, the democratic experience has now reached its fiftieth anniversary. Throughout this period, there have been significant economic, political and social changes. At the same time, the generation of young people who came of age during democracy has evolved. This paper presents the results of a research project funded by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), which aimed to analyse the evolution of the socio-political opinions and attitudes of this age cohort. The research took a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, data from the CIS opinion polls were exploited; on the other hand, focus groups were held with people from the cohort analysed to investigate their experience of accessing democracy and their current view of the socio-political situation.

Among the main conclusions, the political and social identity of this age cohort is observed. Likewise, the emergence of new discourses critical of politics in general and the risk of political models based on authoritarianism are noted. On this point, the role of social work in promoting critical awareness and defending social justice is considered relevant."

Social Work and Rural Social Innovation for climate change adaptation: An experience in the peruvian Andes

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One of the effects of climate change is glacial retreat, which poses a danger and exposes vulnerable areas such as water resources and agriculture, on which the livelihoods of people living in high-altitude basins, such as the Cordillera Blanca in Ancash, Peru, South America. Whit the water pollution caused by glacial retreat, which generates acid rock drainage (ARD) in sub-basins fed by glacial lakes in this mountain range, impacting the lives of the rural population. Male and female farmers who use and consume these waters for their survival are seeking different or unthinkable alternatives to obtain quality water for their crops, animals, and human consumption. They are the most affected by water scarcity and water pollution from the DAR, which limits their subsistence and other associated dangers (landslides, mudslides, flash floods, and others) that affect their well-being and livelihoods. Faced with this situation, local responses to climate change and the community\'s capacity to adapt were investigated through different methodologies, in order to understand their need for innovation in the search for solutions to their problems.

In Peru, the concept of innovation has evolved from a purely technological vision toward comprehensive, results-oriented management. For the National Council for Science, Technology and Technological Innovation (Concytec), the concept is approached from the perspective of science and strategy, considering Social Innovation, which involves solutions for problems faced by environmental sustainability. It is a framework that social work professionals must play a fundamental role in operational and management aspects, considering new forms of organization, services, and models that generate public value and strengthen society\'s capacity to act with strategic partnership, we wish to document this experiences to obtain evidence of how social work has evolved from a discipline of \"assistance\" to one of \"risk management and resilience\"— a necessary intervention for achived sustainable development.

Cross-Cultural Collaboration in Doctoral Supervisiory Teams - perspectives from Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Norway

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"This study builds on experiences from the RESILIENT project (2021–2026), which aims to strengthen research and capacity building in higher education in social work. The project is a collaboration between Makerere University (Uganda), the University of Rwanda, the Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and the University of Agder (Norway).

The study explores the experiences of eight doctoral candidates and their supervisors engaged in shared supervision within large-scale international research collaborations. Focusing on academic partnerships, it examines how supervisory teams work together across borders, addressing cultural, institutional, and interpersonal complexities.

These collaborations often span significant geographical distances and involve logistical constraints and cultural differences. Doctoral candidates must manage these challenges while aligning their dissertations with diverse—and sometimes conflicting—feedback from multiple supervisors. A key question guiding the research is: What similarities and differences emerge in supervisory experiences and expectations across these diverse settings?

Data were collected through a qualitative study using a semi-structured questionnaire administered via the digital tool SurveyXact. By analyzing Global South–South and Global North–South supervision practices, the study seeks to identify creative and effective approaches to collaborative doctoral supervision. Through comparative analysis of perspectives from both supervisors and PhD candidates, the research aims to illuminate the nuanced dynamics of cross-cultural supervision and contribute to the development of inclusive, context-sensitive supervisory models.

Ultimately, the study contributes to the literature on international doctoral education by offering insights into the lived experiences of supervisors and candidates engaged in cross-cultural academic collaboration. It aims to identify best practices and highlight areas for improvement, while fostering innovative models of supervision that address the challenges of working across cultures and long distances.

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Relief from statelessness, A case study

Mr Hamed Olamaee[1]
[1]Iran Association Of Social Workers, Ifsw-ap Representitive To The Un, ,

Over fifty years of war and insecurity in Afghanistan, cased millions of Afghans to flee from their country and mainly get settled in the neighbering countries of Iran and Pakistan.

Like many other people who flee their countries, many of Afghans in Iran are lacking valid identity documents. As a result, childrens of these people may remain stateless and unable to prove their citizenship which may result in seriouse issues.

Afghan population in Iran face any social issue that the host community faces including children who loose their caregivers. When an undocumented Afghan child looses her/his caregiver and ends up in a children\'s home, the challenges are a lot more rather than for an Iranian child. Enrollment in school, access to health care service and insurance, ability to travel and in the later stages of leaving care, ability to work are all limited.

This case study is explaining a real case of three undocumented Afghan children who were born in Iran and the process of providing legal documents for them by a social worker and how this changed their lives for ever.

The Impact of Technology-Facilitated Violence on Women\'s Mental Health Outcomes in Zambia

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"Introduction: The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed social interaction but has also created new avenues for violence and abuse, particularly against vulnerable women. Technology-facilitated violence (TFV), such as online harassment, threats, and digital coercion, has emerged as a growing public health concern with serious implications for women's mental health. However, empirical evidence on TFV and mental health outcomes remains limited in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, this study examined the prevalence of TFV and its association with depression and anxiety among women in Zambia.

Methods: This cross-sectional study utilized data from 9,647 women aged 15–49 years who participated in the 2024 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey. Mental health outcomes included depression, measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), and anxiety, measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) scale using developers established cut-off points. Covariates included age, residence type, region, marital status, education, wealth index, self-reported health, religion, and internet use. Cross-tabulations were used to obtain prevalence estimates, and adjusted logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine significant associations between independent and dependent variables using SPSS version 31.0.

Results: Approximately 9.9% of women reported having experienced TFV. The prevalence of anxiety was significantly higher among women who experienced TFV (67.9%) compared to those who did not (47.1%). Similarly, severe depression was more prevalent among women who experienced TFV (66.8%) than those who did not (42.8%). In adjusted models, women who experienced TFV were more likely to have severe depression (AOR=2.97; 95% CI:2.26–3.88; p<.001) and severe anxiety (AOR=2.79; 95% CI: 2.13–3.66; p<.001) compered to those who did not.

Conclusion: Technology-facilitated violence is underrecognized risk factor contributing to increased poor mental health among vulnerable women. These findings underscore the need for trauma-informed, gender-responsive policies and mental health interventions to address digital forms of violence and safeguard women's psychological well-being in an increasingly digital society in Zambia."

I Don't See Colour: Exploring Social Workers\' Racial Awareness, Implicit Bias, and Readiness for Race Talk in Guyana and the Caribbean

Dr Paulette Henry[1], Ms Latoya Beckles[1]
[1]University Of Guyana, ,

Discussions about race are often marked by discomfort, silence, and epistemic tension, challenges that are especially pronounced in ethnically plural, postcolonial societies such as Guyana. Although practitioners routinely confront racialised experiences, implicit bias, and ethnopolitical mistrust, very few empirical studies have examined social workers' racial awareness, implicit bias, perceived readiness for race talk, or the strategies they employ. To address this gap, this constructivist–pragmatist paradigm study investigates how social workers in Guyana construct multiple racial realities and how these constructions inform the operational strategies that they perceive as "working" in real-world encounters. Using a mixed-methods design, the study integrates (1) quantitative measures of racial awareness, attitudes, literacy, perceived preparedness, organisational support, and reported dialogue strategies across agencies, NGOs, schools, and community organisations; and (2) qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups exploring how practitioners construct perspectives on race, negotiate meanings with clients and colleagues, and interpret the emotional, political, and institutional dimensions of difficult conversations. Whereas the quantitative findings illustrate patterns in practitioner beliefs and preparedness that align with pragmatism's emphasis on problem-solving, the qualitative narratives illuminate the lived experiences and professional judgments underpinning practitioner–community engagement. This methodological approach generates a contextually relevant, practice-grounded conceptualisation of racial dialogue in Caribbean social work. Further, the study identifies critical gaps in training and supervision while offering pragmatic recommendations for strengthening racial competence in social work education and organisational practice. Ultimately, this research positions difficult conversations about race as essential competencies for ethical, culturally responsive, and socially just practice in multiethnic societies.

DIGNITY IN THE WORK OF WASTE PICKERS: A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

Mrs Valéria Bastos[1]
[1]Puc-rio, , Brazil
This paper analyzes dignity in the work of waste pickers from a Human Rights perspective. In a context of increasing waste generation, recycling has become a fundamental strategy for environmental preservation, contributing to climate change mitigation, pollution reduction, and the promotion of a circular economy. Within this framework, waste pickers play a central role by ensuring the proper destination of recyclable materials and providing an essential service to society and the environment, despite being frequently rendered invisible and socially undervalued.
The relevance of this study lies in the urgent need to recognize waste pickers as subjects of rights, considering that most of them experience situations of social vulnerability, particularly women, Black individuals, and people living in poverty. The research aims to critically reflect on the social rights and citizenship of waste pickers, relating their work to the foundations of Human Rights and the concept of human dignity.
The methodology is qualitative, based on a bibliographic review of authors who discuss the relationship between work, dignity, and fundamental rights. The analysis suggests that, although the work of waste pickers is vital to environmental sustainability and urban waste management, it still lacks sufficient institutional and legal recognition to ensure access to education, healthcare, decent work, and social inclusion.
Preliminary findings highlight the importance of Brazil’s National Solid Waste Policy (Law No. 12,305/2010) as a legal framework that advances the recognition of waste pickers. Ensuring dignity in their work is therefore not only an environmental or economic concern, but an ethical, social, and political imperative for building a more just and inclusive society.

Writing for an English language international social work education journal

Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom

"<div data-olk-copy-source=""MessageBody"">This session is aimed at early career researchers, PhD students, or practitioner with valuable insights but who feel daunted by the prospect of writing for an international English language journal. Recognising that many promising contributions made by emerging scholars, particularly from the Global South, never reach publication in mainstream international journals, not due to a lack of rigour or innovation, but as the submission process may feel opaque and isolating. We seek, in this 60-minute workshop, to provide a supportive, clear roadmap for submissions by early-stage career academics. We will demystify the journey from developing a strong idea to publishing your paper in journals such as Social Work Education: The International Journal. Moving beyond generic advice, we focus on the specific challenges of writing about social work education, pedagogy, and practice-based research for a global audience. The session will actively guide you through the process to choose the right journal and align your work with its scope; how to structure a compelling manuscript that tells a clear story; and how to navigate peer review constructively, turning feedback into a stronger article. We will use relatable examples and avoid jargon, creating a space for honest questions. You will leave with a concrete idea for you to action plan, and the confidence to submit your work. By equipping early-stage researchers with these foundational publishing skills, this workshop directly supports SWSD 2026’s commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable scholarly community. It aims to ensure that vital new perspectives, from Nairobi and beyond, are heard in the global conversation on social work education. "

The Creation of Socio-Oncology: A Holistic Social Work Practice for People with Cancer

Moureau Yannick[1]
[1]University Of Nîmes, , France

"The IFME (Institute for Training in Educational Professions), based in Nîmes (France), the University of Nîmes and the French Regional Health Agency (ARS) in the French West Indies, will present the creation of the first European degree in socio-oncology.

Socio-oncology represents an innovative action-research model in social work applied to cancer prevention and care, encompassing the entire continuum of care —from early prevention to post-cancer follow-up.

It spans from primary prevention (analyzing socio-environmental factors that trigger cancer) to tertiary prevention (supporting and monitoring individuals affected by cancer through a holistic health approach). This discipline relies on a methodology that combines the production of scientific knowledge with transformative actions implemented in the field.

Structured around the work of Guy-Albert Rufin-Duhamel, a social engineer, socio-oncology is part of a dynamic aimed at transforming professional practices and positioning itself as a new field within oncology, at the intersection of social work and health.

Guy-Albert Rufin-Duhamel developed this approach in response to the specific context of the French West Indies, which experienced a surge in cancer cases following an unprecedented public health scandal. Socio-oncology is defined as an additional competency within social work—particularly social services—whose purpose is to support public policies in the fight against cancer. Its scope of application extends from prevention to post-cancer care, engaging practitioners in a practitioner-researcher role.

Based on a unique partnership between an Antillean social engineer, State services, a training Institute, and a French university, this degree aims to introduce a new approach to social work. Yannick Moureau, Executive Director of IFME and Vice President of the University of Nîmes, will present this new degree.

Artificial Intelligence in Social Work: Promise, Peril, and Professional Integrity

Prof Gary Spolander[1]
[1]Robert Gordon University, , United Kingdom

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly promoted as a solution to systemic challenges in social work, including workforce retention, escalating workloads, and the demand for cost-effective service delivery. Advocates argue that AI-driven tools can streamline administrative tasks and free practitioners to focus on direct intervention. Critics in practice, however, are often dismissed as "technology laggards," accused of resisting innovation and failing to meet the evolving needs of the profession.

While AI offers potential benefits, its integration into social work practice raises profound ethical and professional concerns. Evidence suggests that reliance on algorithmic systems may contribute to de-professionalisation, eroding core relational and critical thinking skills that underpin effective practice. The embedding of AI within organisational structures risks prioritising efficiency metrics over human-centred care, and fostering a culture of techno-feudalism, where control and surveillance dominate service delivery. The implications extend beyond practice into knowledge creation and critical debate. AI-driven systems increasingly shape what counts as valid evidence, privileging quantifiable data over experiential, qualitative, and contextual knowledge. This risks narrowing epistemological diversity, marginalising voices of those with lived experience, and constraining critical discourse within technocratic paradigms. Such dynamics challenge the profession's commitment to reflexivity and democratic participation in shaping policy and practice.

Issues of consent, transparency, and autonomy remain complex when decisions are mediated by opaque algorithms. The metaphor of the panopticon, a system of constant observation, captures the potential for intrusive monitoring of practitioners and those it serves, undermining trust and confidentiality central to social work ethics and risks, increasing divergence in the global profession and promoting colonial perspectives. This presentation argues for global social work bodies to lead debate and provide guidance on the ethical, equitable, and culturally sensitive use of AI. The profession must engage proactively, not as passive adopters or outright resisters, but as critical actors shaping its future.

Culturally informed responses to grief and loss in a fractured world: Implications for school social work in African contexts

Leticia Villarreal Sosa[1]
[1]University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, ,

School Social Workers are in a unique position to respond to systemic forms of grief and loss. Most interventions rarely consider the larger social context or how racialized experiences impact both the types of grief and loss students experience, as well as how schools respond to their grief. The Culturally Informed Response to Grief and Loss Certificate (CIRGL) aims to fill this gap by providing an online, asynchronous professional development program that centers the lived experiences of minoritized youth and asks professionals to critically examine their own biases. This presentation shares the results of the evaluation of the Train the Trainer component of CIRGL. The results affirm CIRGL's core premise that grief and loss cannot be understood, or healed, solely at the individual level, but require culturally informed responses that honor grief as a collective, intersectional, and systemic experience. Results indicate that practitioners describe a significant shift from avoidance to active engagement, reflection, and a compassionate approach to grief. CIRGL expanded their understanding of grief to include losses such as those related to harsh immigration enforcement, racialized violence, and economic instability. Finally, this presentation considers the implications of these findings for application in an African context.

NIA & CUSP: Mentoring Initiatives to Support Social Work Students

Dr Allessia Owens-king[1]
[1]Salisbury University In Usa, ,

The social work profession is rewarding yet demanding. Social workers are trained to put our personal concerns aside and provide our clients with the support and resources they deserve. Practice wisdom tells us, and research supports the position that direct social work practice involves inherent occupational hazards, including secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions. However, there is evidence that social support, like mentoring and professional development activities, can mitigate STS's negative impact on social workers. Given this knowledge, social work educators developed two culturally informed programs that utilize mentoring to support students of color and promote retention. This presentation will explore mentoring as a retention effort and examine the impact of mentoring programs for social work learners of color.

Brief Description of the Mentoring Programs:
The Nia Mentoring Initiative (NIA) is an affinity group that provides a forum for undergraduates to explore the unique college experiences of students of color attending a predominantly white institution.
The Comunidad and Umoja Scholars Program (CUSP) is a fellowship program focused on increasing the number of culturally responsive master-level social work practitioners.

Learning objectives
Examine the impact of both programs, the NIA and CUSP.
Review the recruitment, selection, and pairing processes for NIA and CUSP.
Review the workshop series that allows structured mentor and mentee interaction while promoting social work practice in communities of color.
Outline program strategies (what did and did not work) regarding program delivery.

Recovery through Parallel and Plural Realities: Rethinking Mental Health and Social Work Practice in Nunavik

Prof Dominique Gaulin[1]
[1]Université De Montréal, ,

Nunavik (Québec, Canada), homeland of Inuit (Indigenous people of northern Québec) is currently facing a period marked by complex challenges in mental health and the delivery of culturally appropriate services (Auclair & Sappa, 2012; Fraser et al., 2021; Gaulin, 2025). This is in part due to a diagnostic classification of phenomena related to mental health that is rooted in Western medicine and approaches to care. This presentation explores how Inuit in Nunavik conceptualized what are commonly labeled “psychotic phenomena” in mainstream mental health systems, what we refer to in this article as “medically labelled psychotic phenomena” (MLPP).Drawing on focused ethnographic research and rooted in critical decolonial social work, the study introduces the concept of parallel and plural realities to describe the diverse ways Inuit experience, conceptualize and explain, such phenomena. Understanding this allows us to understand recovery, not as a linear, individual trajectory of symptom reduction, but as a culturally grounded, relational, and collective process rooted in culture, history, spirituality, and community. The findings question the epistemic foundations and consequent treatment approaches which lead to injustices present in the medical approach to MLPP. We invite social workers engaged in mental health care in Nunavik to create spaces for ontological and epistemological uncertainty when confronted with differing beliefs and perceptions. Doing so will allow us to foster the cultural humility so essential to practice including that of trauma-informed care in Indigenous mental health intervention contexts

Building sustainable futures through groupwork: Strengthening collaboration through exploring highlights, challenges, and resources.

Dr Mieko Yoshihama[2], Namoonga.b Chilwalo[1]
[1]University Of Namibia, , Namibia, [2]University Of Michigan, School Of Social Work, , United States
"Meaningful groupwork epitomizes Harambe, though building social connectedness, member and community bonds, human rights and social justice. This workshop provides a rare opportunity to discuss challenges and approaches to mobilize mutual aid, promote goal achievement and community consciousness. The purpose of this workshop is to foster shared engagement to co-create strategies to strengthen groupwork throughout education, practice and research in social work and social development.

We welcome participants across geographic areas, interests, and approaches to explore wide-ranging strategies for advancing groupwork. The presenters will spotlight contemporary issues in groupwork. Along with attendees, we will swap concerns and successes. We aim to build a learning and action community through the workshop, with opportunities for forging enduring connections and collaborations with communities of diverse cultures, identities, experiences and nationalities.

The presenters will use groupwork principles in engaging participants through the session, guided by the following outline:

Welcome and Introductions (Including participants' groupwork highlights);
Group Discussion of Emerging Groupwork Opportunities and Challenges
Spotlighting Examples of Contemporary Groupwork Practice, Education and Research
Building and Sustaining our Connections (Networking, resource sharing, engaging research partners, planning future activities, and methods to build on connections)
5. Closing and Next Steps (Evaluation of session and summary of next steps)
Follow Up with Attendees Wishing to Participate in Further Communication

This workshop's processes focus on engaging participants with distinctive, yet unifying interests in groupwork in social work and social development. It is expected to enhance future practice across diverse environments, expand education and training opportunities, and foster partnerships for research and interventions that positively impact local and international conditions.

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Social work research addressing the problem of NEET youth: Scoping review and implications

Prof Mary Collins[1]
[1]Boston University School Of Social Work, ,

Youth who are disconnected from work and school are recognized as a social problem across the globe. Terms such as “NEET” (not in education, employment or training), “nini,” and “hikikimori” are also used in some countries. Social work frequently engages with these young people but the extent to which social work research has contributed to the knowledge base is not known. The current study conducted a scoping review to examine how social work research has been engaged in addressing problems of NEET youth. The search strategy included a search of five databases: Web of Science, Social Service Abstracts, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Social Science Full Text, and Social Science Premium Collection. Searches included the following string of terms: “NEET” OR “not in education employment or training” OR “opportunity youth” OR “nini” OR “disconnected youth” OR “hikikomori” AND “social work.” Identified articles also needed to be written after 2015, be written in English, and be peer reviewed. In total, 3,161 articles were identified. After two series of screenings for relevance, 86 articles were examined in full text review. Findings determined that research has been conducted in over 30 countries. The 86 articles represented social work in one or more of the following ways: social work author, social work journal, social work content. The reviewed literature is diverse and heterogeneous, addressing structural inequalities, psychosocial challenges, educational and vocational support, and intervention strategies. Studies highlight the importance of coordinated, flexible, and strengths-based approaches, with social work playing a key role in coordinating services to youth. The review identified gaps in cross cultural comparisons, long-term outcomes, and research on underrepresented regions. The results have implications for increasing visibility of social work research in this practice space and identify ways in which social work research is uniquely relevant to this critical social problem.

The Role of Health Social Workers in Safeguarding Health Equity During Emergency Discharge Policies

Dr Efrat Lusky-Weisrose[1]
[1]The Hebrew University Of Jerusalem, , Israel

The presentation is based on an article that examines the role of health social workers (HSWs) in implementing emergency bed-reduction policies in Israel, with a focus on their efforts to safeguard continuity of care and promote health equity during the Israel–Iran war (June 2025). These temporary, war-specific policies, implemented during the 12-day conflict in response to missile attacks, required hospitals to rapidly discharge large numbers of patients to free up beds for potential mass-casualty admissions, creating unprecedented pressures on both hospital and community care systems. Using a qualitative design, we analyzed administrative notes from a real-time telephone survey with 17 heads of hospital social work services, alongside seven follow-up interviews. The analysis yielded two central themes: (1) challenges arising from emergency discharge and bed-reduction policy, including institutional barriers, limited community care options, and patient- and family-related obstacles undermining safe discharge and continuity of care; and (2) HSWs' perception of their role in addressing structural gaps and ensuring equitable transitions of care, reflecting their position as navigators between systemic demands and patients' needs; through bridging fragmented systems, participating in emergency decision-making, and advocating for patients around social determinants of health. Findings show that under emergency discharge conditions, HSWs moved beyond routine coordination to engage in ethical logistics, systemic navigation, and advocacy for vulnerable patients. In doing so, they acted as bureaucratic activists, reshaping institutional practices from within, safeguarding equity, and alleviating pressures on the healthcare system. The discussion outlines practical recommendations for policy and practice, emphasizing the need to position HSWs' leadership at the center of discharge planning during crises.

Stories Without Borders: Sharing Social Work Narratives on a Global Digital Platform

Prof Rafael Angulo[1]
[1]Crystal Arrow Productions, Llc, , United States

Storytelling is one of humanity's most ancient forms of connection, with visual narratives traced to cave drawings over 30,000 years ago. Across time and cultures, storytelling has served as a vessel for wisdom, empathy, and survival. In social work, storytelling is more than a communication tool—it is a vital strategy for meaning-making, justice work, and ethical witnessing.

Storytellers serve as witnesses who utilize character, conflict, and resolution to humanize suffering, challenge existing systems, and inspire social transformation. Whether expressed through oral tradition, photography, documentaries, digital media, or participatory video, stories help us understand the human condition within its social, political, and historical context. Relational storytelling not only centers lived experience but invites collective responsibility. As social work educators and practitioners, we ask: How and why do stories and images create social change—and how can social workers globally harness emerging technologies for the greater good?

This presentation explores the transformative role of narrative and image-making in global social work practice. Drawing on relational theory, visual anthropology, and participatory documentary filmmaking, presenters will share a new digital platform designed to collect and disseminate global stories of social work practice—spanning six continents. This platform provides a creative and ethical space where social workers, students, and communities can share stories grounded in dignity, resistance, belonging, and resilience.

The session will include examples of short-form visual stories, classroom-based assignments, and global collaborations that foster connection across differences. Participants will explore ways to ethically use visual tools for advocacy, client empowerment, and cross-cultural learning. Ultimately, this session affirms that storytelling, when grounded in ethics and relationship, can be an agent of healing, solidarity, and social transformation.

Wellness Cafe Workshops : Meeting the challenges of rising global youth mental ill-health

Prof Anthony Ghaye[1]
[1]Umatter Tanzania, ,

"This strengths-based workshop illustrates how youth-led, wellness cafes can address the alarming global rise in mental ill-health and encourage a realignment and reframing of key social work values and practices. This Tanzanian case study workshop illustrates how acts of kindness and a sense of mattering, can support the flourishing of youth.

Wellness cafes are youth-led with co-facilitation by social workers. They are opportunities for social workers to reshape relationships with youth. They prompt reflection on young people's central role as problem solvers, innovators, collaborators and community change makers. Young people are speaking up more loudly and organising more effectively than earlier generations about deepening global injustices. Despite this the mental wellbeing of youth is declining. Through wellness cafes, social workers with youth build pro-active psycho-social assets that help reframe narratives around mental health, from deficits to strengths and from surviving to thriving.

Despite many initiatives, young people are often superficially included. The co-design of youth mental health interventions often presents research claiming to support youth while excluding their input—leaving it youth-less, as many report adults don't understand their realities and judge their choices. Two intersecting drivers of this stand out: context and power. This workshop provides activities and 2 years of evidence of how social workers with youth, can address this disconnect.

Adultism, alongside colonialism, has entrenched an undermining power imbalance between those with contextual expertise—today's youth in their communities—and those with power over or access to resources. This workshop is an opportunity for a conversation-that-matters that humbly respects youth expertise. The cafes present opportunities to learn from and collaborate with young people, so that we can recognise the influence of power imbalance and embrace local solutions without abdicating our responsibility of care for young people. This requires some realignment and reframing of social work.

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The NANA Model: Developing professional awareness and intercultural understanding in Social Work

Miss Monica Sedahl[1]
[1]Uit - The Arctic University Of Norway, ,

Social workers worldwide are increasingly facing complex intercultural challenges. The NANA model was developed to help them understand themselves, others, and their communities through empathy, reflection, and meaningful actions. The model comprises four interconnected steps: Notice, Appreciate, Needs, and Act, serving as a reflective process to promote intercultural understanding. It focuses on reflection and personal growth, illustrated through \""moments that changed me\"" and reflective questions such as \""Who do I want to be as a social worker?\"" and \""What and who truly matter?\"" The model draws inspiration from Ubuntu – \""I am because we are.\"" Ubuntu influences every step: recognising our shared humanity and the importance of acts of kindness, appreciating others\' strengths and enabling them to feel valued, identifying collective needs, and acting with compassion, moral integrity, solidarity, and dignity. Ubuntu remains both the core and the driving force behind inclusive social engagement. The model\' s concluding message, \""We are not alone,\"" highlights the belief that change occurs through human connections. The NANA model is founded on a strengths- based approach to human flourishing. Notice emphasises paying attention and being present – observing acts of kindness. Appreciate focuses on how recognising strengths and positivity can promote development. Needs address what is necessary to create safety, belonging, and care – both on an individual and collective level. Lastly, Act involves addressing these needs responsibly and holistically. The NANA model emerged from international social work student placements between UiT Norway and Umatter- Tz. It has been actively used for socio- cultural, politico- ethical, and relational exploration. It provides an effective process for fostering intercultural understanding, enabling social workers to work with diverse groups in an inclusive and respectful manner, especially as communities once isolated now become part of a global dialogue, reflecting the increasing interconnectedness of the world."

Social Work Is Not Self-Harm: Making the SAVI Shift for Sustainable Shared Futures

Nadine Boyne[1]
[1]Founder - Social Work Discovery: A Personal Development Academy For Social Workers And Those Who Work In Social Care., ,

Social work is a profession of courage, care, and commitment, yet too often it comes at the cost of practitioners' own wellbeing. Burnout, disconnection, and systemic pressures erode the passion that brings people into the field. If social workers are to contribute to sustainable shared futures, we must first reimagine the profession from within.

This interactive workshop is based on the book. Social Work Is Not Self-Harm: Make the SAVI Shift to Unlock Your Power, Purpose and Joy. The session introduces, The SAVI Shift—a framework that helps practitioners become Self-Aware, Authentic, Valuing, and Intentional in both life and practice. Drawing from Appreciative Inquiry, frontline experience, and leadership, the SAVI Shift provides a five-phase process (Decide, Discover, Dream, Design, Do) that reconnects practitioners to purpose while equipping them with tools to sustain impact.

Participants will also meet Social Work Discovery's Chief Artificial Intelligence Avatar, who will guide part of the session. cAIa demonstrates how technology can be harnessed to support reflection, enhance learning, and expand imagination about the future of practice. Through guided Afrofuturistic visualisation, attendees will imagine social work seven generations ahead, connecting ancestral wisdom, innovation, and collective responsibility.

By blending inner transformation, digital innovation, and global vision, this workshop aligns with SWSD 2026's themes of Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice, Digital Social Work, and Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges. Attendees will leave with strategies to strengthen wellbeing and intentionality, as well as inspiration to co-create a flourishing profession for generations to come. This is more than a workshop; it is an invitation to pull together—harambee—towards a reimagined social work that honours both practitioners and the communities they serve.

Decolonizing and Indigenizing Science: Reconfiguring Doctoral Social Work Curriculum in Africa {Panel Presentation- 45 Minutes]

Mr Venesio Bwambale Bhangyi[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , Hong Kong
"Abstract (Theme 1 & 2)

Scholarly evidence suggests that social work in Africa remains entrapped in colonial continuities which have limited its capacity to address local post-colonial challenges as well as its scientific impact on global social issues. The twofold purpose of this presentation is to examine Africa's position within the social work intellectual space and to put forward actions via social work doctoral education curriculum that lead to Africa's enhanced contribution and impact in social work practice and science in the near future. The colonial continuities that entangle Africa's intellectual position and stifle its contribution to social work science, the factors that could limit the proposed actions, and the implications of these suggested actions are discussed. Drawing from a recently inaugurated social work PhD program in a Ugandan university, the presentation demonstrates how four innovative courses – comparative history and philosophy of social welfare, teaching in social work, theory development and theorizing in social work, and contemporary debates in social work – offer pathways for doctoral graduates to build a social work science that is decolonizing, indigenizing, and innovative – one that should tackle local social challenges and propel the development of alternative philosophies that contribute to global social work science and global practice solutions. The presentation exposes the dynamics through which social work doctoral education in Africa can contribute to global scientific impact, namely embracing transdisciplinary scholarship, immersion into critical reflection on global tendencies, advancing the practice of local theorization, and re-turning into hitherto neglected methods of African empirical interrogatives. It also contributes towards reconfiguring social work education and practice, namely promoting epistemic freedom, innovative teaching and learning in social work, educating the next generations of social change militants, decolonizing and indigenizing social work, and articulation of alternative indigenous philosophies capable of addressing local African and Global challenges."

Legal framework of domestic violence

Mrs Maren Sagvaag Retland[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, , Norway

Theoretically, the concept “violence in intimate relationships” covers different sorts of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, social and economic). Psychological, sexual, social and economic violence is, however, not necessarily recognized as violence by the population, with the risk that people exposed for such violence refrain for seeking help. It is also a possibility that such violence is not recognized as violence by the judiciary. Norway is among the most equal countries in the world and has several measures against violence in intimate relationships. Nevertheless, while the incidents of such violence is high, there are many reviews that do not lead to conviction. In this paper we therefor ask: What is the legal framework / definition for what constitutes domestic violence, in criminal cases and in civil cases in Norway? Does the Norwegian framework (rights) correspond with updated research/knowledge about the impacts of violence? Furthermore, we will examine whether the Norwegian domestic legal framework is consistent with international human rights standards on protection against violence. We will do so by analysing current law and legislative drafting, court decisions and other relevant documents.

Social Work from a Global South Perspective: The Articulation of the CFESS-CRESS Network with Portuguese-Speaking African Countries in the 2023–2026 Triennium

Prof Iara Vanessa Fraga De Santana[1]
[1]Conselho Federal De Serviço Social (cfess), ,

The history that shapes African and Brazilian realities shares centuries of colonial violence, genocide, enslavement, and the plundering of the natural and cultural wealth of Indigenous peoples and populations affected by the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade.

Revisiting the aspects that connect the histories of African and Brazilian peoples becomes an urgent task for Social Work and for researchers and Black and anti-racist activists who strengthen the trenches of the revolutionary struggle against racism, in a direction that is explicitly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist.

From this perspective, we understand the urgency of advancing the internationalist construction of the anti-racist struggle, through necessary dialogue and engagement with African countries, especially Portuguese-speaking ones. In this process, we aim to learn about and support the organization of the Social Work profession in these countries, strengthening ties with professional associations and schools of Social Work within the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), an initiative that the CFESS-CRESS network has actively pursued during this historical period.

During the 2023–2026 triennium, based on the deliberations of the 50th National Meeting of the CFESS-CRESS Network and with the support of ABEPSS, we conducted dialogues that resulted in the publication of the eBook “Social Work in Portuguese-Speaking Countries: Trajectories, Dialogues, and Approaches from a Global South Perspective.” Its central objective is to share the political, organizational, academic, and formative experiences of these African countries.

This book was prefaced by Joachim Mumba, the current president of FITS from Zambia, the first African president in the Federation’s history, who has also been an important ally and interlocutor of CFESS in Brazil. We understand that this is the direction we must continue in the field of international relations—strengthening dialogues and struggles from a Global South perspective, toward the construction of an alternative societal project.

Photovoice as an Ethical Digital Social Work Intervention: Addressing Violence Against Women Through Participatory Digital

Mrs Oluwatoni Modupe Adeleke Olubitan[1]
[1]IFSW, ,
"Abstract

Digital social work, is an emerging field that extends social work practice, research, and advocacy into technology-mediated environments. It integrates an hybrid reality, creating opportunities for participation, empowerment, and networked social support, while raising ethical concerns around consent, power, and digital inclusion. Participatory digital methods, such as photovoice, enable marginalised groups to document and reflect on their experiences, supporting rights-based, inclusive social work practice. The aim of this presentation is to examine how photovoice, drawn from a broader doctoral study, functions as an ethical, participatory digital social work approach for addressing Violence Against Women(VAW), with attention to digital ethics, power, and inclusion. VAW remains a pervasive human rights violation and barrier to sustainable development. This presentation aligns with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), demonstrating how digital social work can support survivor-centred interventions.

The methodology employed for this is qualitative findings derived from a photovoice-based participatory action research study in Kwara State, Nigeria, involving eight survivors of VAW. Participants used mobile photography and facilitated dialogue to document and analyse their lived experiences. Feminist and decolonial frameworks guided the research. Our key findings indicate that; Photovoice promoted reflection, collective meaning-making, and advocacy, while highlighting ethical tensions regarding consent, anonymity, data ownership, digital literacy, and unequal access to technology. In conclusion, the implications of this paper for social work practice hinges on the fact that; Photovoice offers a context-sensitive, ethically grounded model for digital social work. The study underscores the need to strengthen digital competencies, participatory methods, and survivor-centred approaches in social work education, practice, and policy."

The NANA Model: Developing professional awareness and intercultural understanding in Social Work to address global challenges.

Prof Anthony Ghaye[1]
[1]Umatter Tanzania, ,

Social workers worldwide are increasingly encountering complex intercultural challenges. The NANA-model has been developed by social workers to enable them to know themselves, others, and their communities through reflection and meaningful actions. The model consists of four interconnected steps: Notice, Appreciate, Needs, and Act, serving as a reflective process to foster intercultural understanding. It emphasises reflection and personal growth, visualized through "moments that changed me" and reflective questions such as: Who do I want to be as a social worker?and What and who truly matter?

The model is inspired by the African philosophy of Ubuntu, I am because we are. Ubuntu permeates every step: noticing our shared humanity and the importance of acts of kindness, appreciating others\' strengths and enabling them to feel they matter, recognizing collective needs, and acting with compassion, a moral compass, solidarity, and dignity. Ubuntu serves as both the core and the enabler of inclusive social engagement. The model's concluding message, "We are not alone", underscores the belief that change happens in and through human connections.

The NANA-model is rooted in a strengths-based approach to human flourishing. Notice emphasizes attention and presence – observing acts of kindness. Appreciate highlights how valuing strengths and positivity can foster development. Needs focuses on what is required to create safety, belonging, and care – both individually and collectively. Finally, Act involves addressing these needs responsibly and holistically.

The model is an outcome of international social work student placements between UiT Norway, and UMatter-Tz. It has been actively used for socio-cultural, politico-ethical and relational exploration. It is an effective process for achieving intercultural understanding, enabling social workers to engage with diverse groups in an inclusive and dignified manner and appreciate that as the world becomes increasingly interconnected communities that were once isolated are now part of a global conversation.

Medical Social Work Support for the Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers

Dr Peter Nareeba[1]
[1]Mentoring And Empowerment Program For Young Women (memprow), , Uganda
p style="text-align: justify">The postpartum period presents profound physical, emotional and psychological adjustments for mothers, with breastfeeding constituting a critical context in which maternal mental health is negotiated. Guided by Attachment Theory, this study examined the role of medical social work in supporting the mental health of breastfeeding mothers at Kabale Regional Referral Hospital. The objective was to explore how medical social workers identify, address and respond to mental health challenges experienced by breastfeeding mothers in a clinical setting. A qualitative inquiry design was adopted, involving a purposive sample of eight medical social workers with direct experience in maternal and child health services. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically to capture shared meanings and professional practices. Findings revealed that breastfeeding-related stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms were common among mothers, often exacerbated by pain, perceived milk insufficiency, limited social support, and cultural expectations. Medical social workers reported providing psychosocial counselling, mental health screening, referral linkages, and family mediation as key interventions to enhance maternal wellbeing and strengthen mother-infant bonding. The study concludes that medical social work plays a pivotal role in integrating mental health support within breastfeeding care, thereby promoting secure attachment and positive developmental outcomes for infants. It is recommended that health facilities institutionalise routine mental health screening for breastfeeding mothers, strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration and build the capacity of medical social workers through targeted training in perinatal mental health. Such interventions are essential for fostering emotional resilience and holistic maternal–child wellbeing in the postpartum period.</p>

Trauma-informed community work with youth through a terror attack survivor’s narrative and original music to foster resilience and shared meaning

Shai Shmuel Fahima[1]
[1]Independent Social Worker, ,
"Background:
On October 7, 2023, Israel experienced large-scale terror attacks, including the Nova music festival, which involved thousands of young adults. Beyond the individual trauma of participants, these events generated collective trauma affecting adolescents nationwide. This highlighted the need for practical spaces where youth could process emotions, reflect on shared experiences, and build resilience.

Purpose:
This lecture presents a community-based social work approach designed to empower adolescents by providing spaces for emotional expression, collective reflection, and resilience-building. The intervention leverages the testimony and music of a survivor to foster engagement, validation of emotions, and collective meaning-making.

Method:
The lecture is facilitated by Shai Shmuel Fahima, a social worker with experience working with at-risk youth in residential and other youth programs. The intervention is presented in collaboration with Noam Cohen, a 21-year-old survivor of the Nova festival, who created the music and shares his personal story with adolescents.

Participants listen to and reflect on music created by Noam, engaging in dialogue, emotional processing, and group reflection. His lived experience becomes a communal resource that strengthens engagement, validates emotions, and encourages peer connection. Content warnings are provided in advance, and professional staff from the youth settings are present throughout to support participants.

Findings:
Adolescents who participated demonstrated openness, a willingness to express emotions related to the events, and strengthened peer connections. Noam’s presence and musical contribution modeled resilience, hope, and empowerment. Additionally, sharing his story contributes to Noam’s own healing process, providing a reflective and therapeutic space for him as he continues his recovery.

Conclusion :
This community-based, testimony- and creativity-focused approach illustrates how social work practice can support youth affected by collective trauma, promote emotional empowerment, and strengthen communal resilience. The model also highlights the dual benefit of such interventions, contributing to both adolescent empowerment and the ongoing recovery of the survivor whose story is shared."

Social Workers and Advocacy for De-Institutionalization of Children In Kenya

Dr Muraguri Phyllis[1]
[1]The Technical University Of Kenya, , Kenya

"In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the implementation of de-institutionalization (DI) practices is contingent upon several critical elements, such as the presence of a robust family-based alternative care and social protection system, sufficient funding and resources, and the active participation and backing of professionals and other stakeholders. This study assessed the level of involvement of social workers in advocating for care reforms as they could uniquely cement the transition from residential care to community-based support if fully inculcated.

The study was anchored on empowerment and strain theories while, elaborating on the importance of giving power through resources, information, and support to accomplish a task; deinstitutionalization. A mixed method approach was preferred because it allowed both qualitative and quantitative data to be gathered and analyzed concurrently. Professional social workers including policy formulation officers, research officers and deinstitutionalization officers were involved in obtaining information on deinstitutionalization success factors.

Findings indicated that there was to a little extent involvement of social workers in the implementation processes. The study concluded that social workers were moderately involved in advocating for the deinstitutionalization policy thus recommending their increased involvement with adequate government backing. With inculcation of professional social workers who are skilled in handling children welfare matters, the de-institutionalization process would be much more effective as the child sector goes through this critical juncture of care reforms in the country.

This study was meant to benefit many parties in the field of child care starting with children’s homes as well as similarly related institutions in Kenya for implementing effective deinstitutionalization policy."

Whose Best Interests? Minority Parent Perspectives on Child Welfare Decision-Making in Norway

Mrs Maren Sagvaag Retland[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, , Norway

"This paper examines how the best interests of the child are understood and applied in Norwegian child welfare cases, with particular attention to minority parent perspectives. Although central to Norwegian child welfare law and practice, the best-interests principle is not fixed or neutral but shaped by legal frameworks, professional discretion, and dominant societal norms concerning childhood, family life, and parenting.

Drawing on the Norwegian Child Welfare Act (2023) and a rights-based framework informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the paper explores how best-interests assessments are made in practice and how they intersect with ethnicity, migration background, language, religion, and social class. Empirical examples from minority parents illustrate how these assessments are experienced and contested.

The analysis highlights tensions between protection and participation, and between universal child welfare standards and culturally diverse parenting practices. Minority parents' accounts point to heightened scrutiny, reduced trust in welfare institutions, and limited influence over decisions. The paper contributes to international debates on equity, inclusion, and social justice in child welfare."

Boarding School Education in Xizang, China

Siu Ming Kwok[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

"Boarding school education in Xizang (Tibet), China, represents a complex intersection of educational policy, cultural preservation, and socioeconomic development that has generated considerable scholarly and policy debate. The existing literature reflects divergent perspectives: human rights organizations have raised concerns about family separation and the potential erosion of linguistic and cultural identity, while the Chinese government emphasizes educational access, literacy improvement, and the reduction of urban-rural educational disparities in remote, high-altitude regions.

In this presentation, we will first review boarding school education within the North American context, analyzing both the documented benefits—such as leadership development, better preparation for life beyond school, enhanced educational access for remote and Indigenous communities—and the well-documented concerns, including historical trauma associated with residential school systems, cultural discontinuity, and family separation. This comparative lens provides important context for understanding the complexity of boarding education models across different cultural and geographic settings. Moreover, we will explore the broader challenges inherent in delivering equitable, quality education to rural, remote, and economically disadvantaged communities in North America, identifying both successful interventions and barriers. Building on this foundation, we present observations from our visit to Xizang between late October and early November 2025, which encompassed the reality of living in a vast geographical region that is at an average elevation of 4,000 metres above sea level. Importantly, the team will share their observations and interactions with students through visits to various boarding schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as vocational training programs.

Finally, adopting a constructive and solution-oriented approach, we offer recommendations to strengthen universal access to quality education for children and youth, especially girls, in Xizang, while addressing concerns about cultural preservation, family connections, and student well-being. Our presentation seeks to contribute to ongoing policy discussions by grounding recommendations in both comparative best practices and context-specific realities."

883

Harambee as Prevention: Relational Accountability and Collective Approaches to Domestic Violence Prevention

Dr. Patrina Duhaney[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Domestic violence remains a persistent public health issue globally, shaped by structural inequities, gendered power relations, and intergenerational trauma. While many prevention efforts focus on individual behaviour change, there is growing recognition that sustainable prevention requires community-level accountability, collective responsibility, and relational approaches.

Guided by the conference theme Harambee and informed by Africentric scholarship, Ubuntu philosophy, and Critical Race Theory, this presentation examines relational accountability as a public health framework for domestic violence prevention. Drawing on insights from a Public Health Agency of Canada-funded community prevention project, the presentation explores how engaging communities as active agents of prevention can disrupt cycles of violence while strengthening collective care and responsibility.

Using practice-based examples, including work with Black men, families, and community leaders, the session illustrates how relational accountability reframes domestic violence prevention away from surveillance and punishment toward healing, responsibility, and prevention rooted in relationship. Particular attention is given to how systemic racism, colonial legacies, and social exclusion shape both experiences of violence and access to support, and why community-led approaches are critical for equitable prevention.

Participants will be invited to reflect on how relational and collective models of accountability can be adapted across diverse cultural and geopolitical contexts. The presentation contributes to global conversations on domestic violence prevention by offering a public health-oriented framework that aligns violence prevention with social justice, community sovereignty, and sustainable shared futures.

Key Outcomes:
A public health framing of domestic violence prevention grounded in collective responsibility.
Practice-based insights from community-led prevention initiatives.
Tools for integrating relational accountability into DV prevention across settings.

Seeing Things Differently: A Necessary Challenge for the Helping Profession

Dr Gillian Berry[1], Ms. Audrey Enid Benn[1]
[1]The University Of Guyana, , Ghana

This presentation examines the professional, ethical, and epistemological challenges of seeing things differently within the helping professions. It argues that some of the greatest barriers to transformative practice lie not in clients or communities, but in the ways professionals are trained to see, know, and act. Drawing on African-centered perspectives and their synergy with Indigenous worldviews, the presentation interrogates how dominant Western, bureaucratised models of helping shape professional perception through norms of objectivity, risk management, procedural compliance, and individualism.

Field-based insights from Indigenous healers and community practitioners in Botswana, Ghana, and Peru demonstrate that helping is relational, morally grounded, and spiritually accountable. Healing is emergent, contextual, and deeply personal, resisting standardisation, time-limited interventions, and narrowly defined measurable outcomes.

The presentation highlights how colonial legacies, institutional surveillance, and bureaucratic control marginalise African and Indigenous ways of knowing. By foregrounding reflexivity, it invites scholars and practitioners to critically examine how professional identities are formed, constrained, and disciplined. Recommendations include embedding African-centered epistemologies in curricula, expanding ethical frameworks beyond compliance, valuing relational and communal outcomes alongside quantitative metrics, and fostering institutional spaces for humility, flexibility, and moral courage. Seeing differently is presented as both a professional challenge and an ethical imperative for culturally grounded, socially just, and sustainable futures.

From Statute to Practice: Confronting Legal and Implementation Barriers to Race-Conscious Child Welfare Laws

Joan Blakey[1], Traci Laliberte[2]
[1]University Of Minnesota-twin Cities, , United States, [2]Multidiscipinary Institute for Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, ,

Population-specific child welfare legislation is under scrutiny within the broader anti-DEI movement, which seeks to dismantle race-conscious policies in education, employment, and government programs. The Supreme Court's decision in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023) has emboldened opponents who frame these laws as unconstitutional racial preferences. This legal climate places the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPA) at the center of ideological and judicial battles.

ICWA, enacted in 1978, responded to federal and state practices that removed Indigenous children from their families, eroding cultural continuity. It requires "active efforts"—a higher standard than "reasonable efforts"—to prevent removal and prioritize placement within Indigenous communities. MAAFPA, passed in 2024, extends similar protections to African American children, acknowledging the child welfare system's role in destabilizing Black families, particularly under punitive policies such as the War on Drugs. Both laws face ongoing political and legal resistance, framed as violations of the Equal Protection Clause.

Yet even when legally upheld, these laws encounter persistent implementation challenges. Agencies struggle with documentation and accountability, leaving courts unable to assess whether active efforts occurred. Resource and capacity inequities—particularly in rural areas—limit access to services and transportation. Procedural barriers, such as background check delays and interstate placement red tape, stall kinship placements. Engagement challenges persist when agencies make minimal outreach, fail to revisit relatives previously ruled out, or neglect cultural responsiveness. Inconsistent judicial expertise leads to uneven rulings, while post-reunification service gaps leave families unsupported and at risk of reentry.

This session examines both the legal and practical barriers confronting population-specific legislation. It will highlight strategies for implementation, training, and policy to ensure ICWA and MAAFPA achieve their purpose: preventing family separation and racial disproportionality in child welfare.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Comparative Analysis of Social Work Approaches to Supporting Displaced Families in Burundi and the United States

Dr Phyllis Thompson[1]
[1]University Of Tennessee, Knoxville, , United States

This proposal outlines a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) course designed to enhance social work education through experiential learning. The course paired undergraduate social work students from Hope Africa University in Burundi, enrolled in Crisis Counseling, with graduate students from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work taking Foundations of Trauma. Over eight weeks, participants aged 20-30 engaged in a cross-cultural comparative analysis focused on assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies for families affected by man-made and natural disasters. The course aimed to strengthen students' abilities to support families during crises and prepare them for the complexities of social work in a globalized context.
Participants collaborated on projects addressing the unique needs of displaced families, fostering empathy and understanding within the social work field. This collaboration cultivated global perspectives and intercultural competency, equipping students with essential skills to navigate diverse social work practices. Students gained valuable insights into the challenges displaced families face across various cultural and geographical settings. Emphasizing cultural humility, the course encouraged the exchange of best practices, enriching students' understanding of the variability in social work practices worldwide.

This proposal invites attendees to explore the innovative applications of COIL in social work education and discuss its potential for fostering a more interconnected and empathetic practice. We will review the student outcomes from the COIL experience, highlighting the impact of this international collaboration on professional development within the field of social work. By sharing these insights, we aim to inspire further integration of COIL methodologies in social work curricula globally.

Centering Afrocentric Healing Frameworks in Clinical Social Work Practice

Ms Sheryl Thompson[1]
[1]Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (usa), , United States

"Afrocentric worldviews offer enduring frameworks for understanding mental health, healing, and well-being within Black communities. Rooted in relationality, spirituality, collective responsibility, and intergenerational knowledge, these philosophies provide culturally grounded foundations for clinical social work practice. This paper explores how Afrocentric healing principles can guide assessment, engagement, and intervention within contemporary clinical modalities to support holistic and culturally sustaining mental health care.

Drawing on Afrocentric concepts such as Ubuntu (shared humanity), Sankofa (reclaiming ancestral knowledge), Ujamaa (collective responsibility and mutual care), and spiritual interconnectedness, the presentation examines how these frameworks inform therapeutic relationships and meaning-making processes in clinical settings. Afrocentric philosophies are integrated with commonly used clinical approaches, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, narrative therapy, and solution-focused practice, demonstrating how cultural values shape clinical stance, pacing, and intervention strategies.

Through clinical reflections and practice-based examples, the paper highlights how Afrocentric approaches strengthen therapeutic alliance, affirm cultural identity, and support healing from trauma, anxiety, depression, and intergenerational stressors. Attention is given to the role of spirituality, community connection, and collective resilience in promoting emotional regulation, empowerment, and sustained well-being.

Ethical considerations and practitioner reflexivity are addressed, emphasizing the responsibility of clinicians to practice with cultural humility and intentionality when working within Afrocentric frameworks. By centering Afrocentric knowledge systems as foundational to clinical social work, this presentation contributes to advancing culturally sustaining practice models that honor Black lived experiences and support mental health equity across diverse clinical contexts."

Knowledge, attitude and practices contributing to the neglect of the mental health wellbeing of the ageing population Imo State, Nigeria

Mrs Ifeyinwa Austin-Egole[1]
[1]Federal University Of Technology, Owerri, , Nigeria

Mental health is a crucial aspect of the health system that receives limited attention when compared to physical health. Mental health disorders are increasingly becoming prevalent among the growing ageing population in Nigeria, yet the mental health needs of these older adults remain critically neglected. Anchored on the social support models, this study holistically examined the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) contributing to this widespread neglect. The study explored how individual awareness, cultural perceptions, and community-level responses shape mental health outcomes in older adults. A cross-sectional mixed-methods design was employed, drawing data from structured questionnaires administered to older persons, caregivers, and health practitioners, alongside focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative insights were thematically coded to deepen contextual understanding. Findings included low awareness of geriatric mental health needs, limited availability of geriatric mental health services, shortage of trained professionals, prevailing stigmatizing attitudes, and inadequate health-seeking practices, reinforced by cultural beliefs and weak institutional support structures as KAP contributing to the neglect of the mental health wellbeing of the ageing population. This study recommends targeted interventions promoting community-based strategies such as expanding geriatric mental health training, integrating services at the primary care level and integration legal protections for older persons, addressing social determinants through economic support, and dismantling stigma via culturally grounded campaigns. This research therefore bridged knowledge gaps by presenting sustainable strategies that safeguard the dignity, quality of life, psychological resilience and general mental wellbeing of older adults in Nigeria.

Exploring the prevalence, socio-cultural drivers of substance abuse among women in South Africa: Insights from social workers

Miss Dzunisani Euginea Baloyi[1]
[1]University Of Venda, , South Africa

Substance abuse is a growing concern with challenging socio-cultural issues among women in South Africa. This study draws from the social workers\' perspective to explore the prevalence and drivers of substance use among women. Using a qualitative approach, an exploratory design was employed to gather data through in-depth interviews with social workers in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study's findings highlight that domestic violence is often a catalyst, leading women to substances as mechanisms for coping with stress, depression, and adversity. Social workers identified the desire for belonging within the social network, and peer pressure normalizes substance use, especially in social gatherings where drugs and substances are easily available and affordable. Unresolved childhood trauma was also flagged as a critical contributor to the prevalence of substance abuse, establishing emotional vulnerabilities. The study shows how these factors influence substance use trajectories among women. It further recommends culturally responsive interventions that incorporate trauma-informed care and community-based support systems, with social workers playing a crucial role in prevention and rehabilitation efforts. The study was grounded in the universal ethical standards to protect the participants and maintain its integrity.

Not a "one man show" - a qualitative study of the importance of student groups in international field placements.

Ann-Iren Høgalmen[1]
[1]Volda University College, , Norway

Background: Research on learning during international exchange programs highly promote extended learning, but there seems to have been less interest to the student group and its importance for learning and support in unfamiliar, cultural surroundings. The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the perceived benefits from learning as part of a group, and to what extent the group assists individuals in mastering additional challenges during field work in the global south.

Methods: 39 Norwegian social work students at field work in Nairobi and Tanzania was invited to participate either by interviews on site or by a digital questionnaire. The total of 31 students participated. The study design is a thematic analysis to identify meaningful patterns to develop empirical knowledge on the value of group affiliation during international field work.

Findings: The analyse revealed two categories: The first addresses individual need for the group providing safety, community and support. We find it useful to apply Vygotsky`s (1978) concepts of zone of proximal development and scaffolding to discuss peer support within the group to create safe social environments to dare challenge oneself and to undertake functional learning positions. The second category conveys the value of the group as an arena for sharing, reflection and learning. According to Wenger`s “communities of practice” (1998) members develop among themselves their own understanding of practice and shared learning. The category also include findings describing development of new perspectives. Mezirow (1997) transformative learning is based on the fact individuals create meaning through interpretation within social and cultural communities.

Conclusions include that social mechanisms within the groups are bridging community, reflection and learning, and the group aspect should therefore be emphasized during the planning of international field work placements.

Competitive Skill Infusion into Macro Social Work Curriculum

Dr Joyce White[1]
[1]Assistant Professor Of Practice Uta School Of Social Work Macro Specialty, ,

Macro social work curricula must be upgraded to equip students with the in-demand practical skills, experience, and knowledge that organizations and communities need in today's environment. Coursework must include knowledge, skills, and experience acquisition that can be further developed during practicum to enable macro social work graduates to successfully compete in local, regional, national, and international communities. Representative faculty in the macro specialty at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) will share key information about their process to "up-skill" the entire curriculum to prepare graduate students with practical, high-demand knowledge, skills, and experience to effectively address pressing social justice and social development issues and opportunities.

UTA School of Social Work macro-focused faculty have conducted literature reviews, student surveys, faculty and community partner interviews, and are working with the Practicum team to redesign the macro curriculum. The focus is on producing macro-focused graduates equipped to step into diverse organizations and communities and begin to tackle challenges, as well as identify opportunities to create positive outcomes and impact. The presentation will be interactive and fun including group activities.

Participants with a macro focus will be able to:
Identify in-demand knowledge, skills, and experience.
Explain the critical connection between in-course knowledge, skills, and experience acquisition and practicum knowledge, skills, and experience enhancement opportunities.
Create a plan to "up-skill" their macro curriculum.

Reframing HIV Service Delivery: Social Work, Resilience, and Sustainable Development Pathways

Bonita Sharma[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,

Progress toward the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets has advanced global HIV prevention and treatment, yet these gains remain precarious. Continued dependence on donor funding, vertical financing models, and centralized supply chains has embedded structural vulnerabilities making HIV programs highly exposed to global disruptions. For social work, which is grounded in principles of justice, equity, and empowerment, these systemic weaknesses provoke crucial questions about how HIV service delivery can evolve toward resilience and sustainability within the broader framework of sustainable development. This qualitative, theory-informed analysis applies Path Dependency Theory to interrogate how historical funding pathways, institutional lock-ins, and policy choices have structured HIV service delivery. Drawing on secondary data from scholarly sources, UNAIDS and PEPFAR reports, and comparative case studies from Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, and Brazil, the study examines mechanisms of donor dependency while identifying emerging opportunities for resilience.

Findings indicate that although donor aid facilitated the rapid expansion of HIV programming, it entrenched rigid dependencies that undermine adaptability during crises, including pandemics, funding disruptions, and conflict. Case evidence from Malawi and Uganda demonstrates persistent fragility in financing and supply chains, whereas Rwanda's community-based health insurance model illustrates pathways for sustainable domestic financing. Brazil's integrated syndemic model highlights the importance of equity-oriented approaches that situate HIV within broader wellness and justice commitments. Cross-case analysis underscores strategies critical for sustainability, such as community-driven service delivery, investments in workforce stability, and embedding HIV care within universal health systems.

The study argues for a shift beyond numerical benchmarks toward locally owned, resilient responses that advance social protection and health equity. While limitations include reliance on secondary data and selective case comparisons, findings reinforce the strategic role of social work in aligning HIV service delivery with principles of sustainable development and systemic resilience.

Community Building in Crisis: Interventions with Displaced Communities in Temporary Housing Shelters

Prof Hani Nouman[1]
[1]University Of Haifa, , Israel

Emergency displacement is a widespread phenomenon impacting all facets of life and increasing rates of psychological trauma. This article analyses the effects of shared residency among evacuated and fragmented communities, focusing on social and communal disparities in temporary shelters. By adopting theoretical perspectives of community building and social capital, it describes interventions aimed at promoting resilience within newly formed shelter communities.

Data was obtained using a multi-method research, which included four focus groups with 31 social workers and semi-structured interviews with additional 15 social workers. These professionals carried out their duties during the emergency evacuation of residents from two war-fronts in Israel.

This research points to two main challenges. First, a weakened social capital due to forced placement of diverse and fragmented communities into densely populated shelters. Secondly, the challenge of maintaining positive momentum over time within the new shelter community. Alongside these challenges, the research identified three leading intervention principles for building a transition community: establishing an emergency shelter team and developing local leadership, strengthening connections with and within the diverse community to create social cohesion, and activating the community in adapted ways while renewing life routines.

This study contributes to understanding the role of community building in disaster recovery and offers three key recommendations for practice and policy. First, beyond securing safe temporary housing, a vital part of recovery involves community building among displaced residents. Second, while safety during relocation is paramount, our findings indicate that emergency evacuations often lead to the separation of communities across multiple shelters. Therefore, it is essential to form a new shelter community that fosters connections between diverse and fragmented groups. Third, our research emphasizes the importance of building cross-community bridges not only during emergencies but also during routine times to reduce tensions and estrangement in future evacuation to shared living arrangements.

Rethinking "caregiving" in initial and continuing education: through dialogue seminars and communities of practice in Health and Social Services

Mr Jean-Pierre Béland[1]
[1]Université Du Québec À Chicoutimi, ,

"Following the various reforms of the last three decades, within Quebec's health and social services network, individual, collective, organizational, and political dimensions have been tested, highlighting the crucial importance of "care" for health and social service professionals. Faced with the professional and ethical suffering experienced by managers and caregivers in this network, it has become essential to rethink the meaning of practices, based on laws, codes of ethics, intervention protocols, and the values (professional ethos) of "care" (Béland and Carignan, 2024).

This paper presents the results of a multidisciplinary dialogue seminar held at the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi, bringing together approximately twenty professionals (physicians, nurses, social workers, etc.) to address ethical distress in the post-pandemic context. It also presents the results of a semi-structured questionnaire administered to about fifty social workers (human relations officers, specialized educators, social workers, etc.) with at least five years of experience in the healthcare system. The interactive and collaborative pedagogical approach of dialogue (Béland et al., 2013) thus allows for the co-construction of responses adapted to current challenges, integrating the ethical, professional, and organizational values of "care" in both initial and continuing training. The results of the seminar and the questionnaire indicate the need for initial and continuing training for healthcare professionals, encouraging the expression of suffering (discomfort or distress) and the emergence of a co-constructive dialogue on the meaning of "care" for healthcare professionals in the exercise of their professional practice.

This presentation aims to raise participants\' awareness of the components of "caregiving," the ethical and professional challenges encountered in providing care, and to promote the importance of co-constructive dialogue as a pedagogical approach to "caregiving."

Do Digital Tools Empower Social Workers or Exhaust Them?

Mrs Amal Al Salti[1]
[1]Sociology And Social Work Department, Sultan Qaboos University, , United Arab Emirates

"As social work practice undergoes rapid digitization, professionals face mounting pressure to navigate complex technological systems while maintaining their core relational, ethical, and emotional commitments. Digital tools promise efficiency, accessibility, and innovation, yet they also introduce psychological demands that can undermine practitioner well-being and threaten the sustainability of care. This study examines digital fatigue among social workers by integrating the Technostress framework with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, exploring how digital demands such as system overload, constant connectivity, and technology-related uncertainty affect stress, emotional exhaustion, and work outcomes.

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing ordinal logistic regression to assess predictors of digital fatigue and burnout risk among social workers. Data are collected via a structured questionnaire incorporating validated constructs including techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, job demands, autonomy, supervisor and peer support, and personal coping resources. The sample includes practicing social workers from various service sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, providing insights into digital stressors within the regional context. The analysis examines how these factors interact to shape emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and professional efficacy.

By revealing the human and ethical costs of digital transformation, this study provides evidence-based guidance for policy, workforce development, and sustainable digital integration in social work. Findings will inform strategies that ensure technology enhances rather than erodes the psychosocial well-being, motivation, and resilience of social service professionals."

Bridging culture, care, and recovery: Advancing Mental Health Social Work in South Africa

Prof Nontembeko Bila[1]
[1]University Of Pretoria, , South Africa

"This paper presents innovative approaches in mental health social work, grounded in the principles of Harambee, which emphasise collective effort, shared responsibility, and community solidarity in advancing sustainable mental health care. Drawing on insights from the monograph, Social Work in Mental Health and Advancing Recovery-Oriented Approaches in a South African Context, the paper explores evidence-based and culturally responsive interventions that strengthen psychosocial well-being, promote holistic care, and support individuals with disabilities within complex health and community settings. Central to this work is the integration of indigenous knowledge systems and community-based practices, which are mobilised through collective engagement to foster resilience, empowerment, and sustainable recovery pathways. By foregrounding recovery-oriented practice, the paper highlights the pivotal role of social workers in advocating for patient-centred and ethically grounded care, facilitating collaborative partnerships among individuals, families, communities, and healthcare systems. Professional self-care, capacity-building, and education are positioned as shared responsibilities essential to sustaining effective practice and mitigating occupational stress among social workers. Through critical analysis and practical frameworks, the paper demonstrates how scholarly innovation, combined with culturally grounded and collective approaches, enhances mental health outcomes and community well-being. In advancing Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures, this work underscores social work's contribution to building equitable, inclusive, and resilient systems of care in South Africa, illustrating how culturally informed and ethically grounded recovery-oriented practices can transform lives, strengthen social cohesion, and promote holistic health in diverse contexts."

The Social Needs Framework: An Indigenous Framework for Social Work Practice in Africa

Dr Senkosi Moses Balyejjusa[1]
[1]Kyambogo University, , Uganda
"Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words).

Social work practice in Africa has heavily relied on western models. This is because of the colonial legacies of the profession. The aim of this panel presentation is to discuss an indigenous framework (the Social Needs Framework-SNF) that can play the same role (assessment, goal setting, implementation and evaluation) during social work practice. The panelists describe the Social Needs Framework, that is, its four dimensions (social problems, social solutions, social resources and social ends/goals), which are the core areas of social work practice. They demonstrate that SNF is grounded in the African Ubuntu philosophy where the social work clients, including their problems, solutions, resources and ends/goals are not detached from their social environments they live in. It is articulated that SNF enables social work practitioners (since it focuses on social needs) to promote/enhance the wellbeing of their clients since adequate satisfaction of social needs is a prerequisite for clients' wellbeing. This wellbeing is termed as community development when dealing with a community as a client. In the era of sustainable development, SNF promotes sustainable development. This is anchored in its use of a common language (needs language), not only understood by social workers, but also by clients."

An arduous and evolving path towards the welfare state in Africa

Prof Louise Carignan[1], Marie Fall[1]
[1]Université Du Québec À Chicoutimi, ,

"The purpose of this paper is to present the progress that has been made in many African countries in recent decades in the fight against poverty. However, tensions and setbacks mean that none of these developments are linear or irreversible, and progress is not found everywhere and for everyone! We would like to present a synthesis of social policy experiences in 15 African countries, covering five regional sub-groups of the continent: Northern (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), Eastern (Kenya, Somalia), Central (Cameroon), Western (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo) and Southern (Zimbabwe). We propose to present the main dynamics at play, the basic postulates of social policies and their operationalization in various political, economic and social contexts.

This proposal comes from the research project of Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa (GETSPA) of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana which benefits from the support of the Open Society Initiatives of Africa, two scientific conferences, a forum. These meetings allowed to reflect on transformative social policies and their dynamics and their operationalization in various political, economic and social contexts in Africa. Our scientific activities lead us to emphasize that the norms, values and interests that shape social policies evolve over time and that it is essential to pay particular attention to successes at the field level and their capitalization to counter dominant narratives too inclined to evoke the failure of African social policies. We have just published issue n° 279 of the journal « Afrique contemporaine » under the theme « transformative social policies in Africa », Carignan, L., Fall, M., Jacquemot, P., and Ndèye, F.S. (2025). Therefore, we propose to present to you a synthesis of his work in the form of a roundtable with discussion on transformative social policies in Africa.

Beyond the Burden of Change: Shared Accountability in Inclusive and Transformative Social Work Education

Dr Diana Van Dijk[1]
[1]Rotterdam University Of Applied Sciences, , Netherlands
Within social work education, equity-deserving students and lecturers often face a double burden: they experience exclusion while being expected to educate others about it. The Safe & Brave project at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences investigates how this “burden of change” can be redistributed through co-creation and dialogic pedagogy.

Grounded in critical participatory action research (2023–2025), more than sixty students, lecturers, and field professionals jointly explored what diversity-sensitive practice means within the Institute for Social Work Education. Dialogue sessions and interviews revealed that while inclusion is widely endorsed as an institutional ideal, it often translates into individualized responsibility for those most affected by inequality. Students described being positioned as spokespersons or “learning moments” for their peers, while lecturers from marginalized groups lacked organisational recognition and emotional support. This dynamic mirrors wider epistemic hierarchies in which lived experience is valued rhetorically but not structurally.

To counter this, Safe & Brave facilitated mixed dialogue sessions and reflective learning communities where participants examined power, privilege, and professional values together. These settings created space for mutual vulnerability and ethical positioning—acknowledging that discomfort is not failure but a condition for learning. Participants began to articulate what shared accountability for inclusion could look like in their teaching and teamwork. Building on these findings, the project is developing dialogic reflection tools and pedagogical approaches to strengthen collective learning and professional development.

By reframing inclusion as collective ethical labour rather than the personal resilience of a few, Safe & Brave reimagines social work education as a transformative, justice-oriented practice. It demonstrates that co-creation and dialogue can democratise knowledge, disrupt colonial continuities, and prepare social work professionals to act with courage, humility, and solidarity in diverse contexts.

Brazilian Social Work in the Context of Artificial Intelligence Expansion

Miss Marenilse Saturnino[1]
[1]Cress 7ªregião, , Brazil

This paper aims to present reflections on Brazilian social work in the era of artificial intelligence (AI), examining the impacts of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the development of professional roles and competencies in the post-pandemic context, where technological resources have gained greater prominence in all aspects of social relations. ICTs are introduced into production and labor relations under the discourse of facilitating work and freeing workers' time for leisure. However, in the current stage, these tools often increase available work time and enable employer control while contributing to capital accumulation.

The widespread use of tools such as AI has helped maintain inequality both within countries and between central capitalist countries and peripheral nations. Moreover, it fuels far-right ideologies—including fascism, nationalism, racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and religious fundamentalism—by facilitating the spread of information (often false), eroding boundaries, and shaping subjectivities (JURNO, 2021). This process, already underway under neoliberal financial capitalism and the rise of the far right, gained new expressions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Brazilian social work, digital tools—such as personal mobile phones, digital platforms, and computerized systems—are increasingly used to carry out professional tasks, yet there is still limited critical reflection on their effects. Consequently, social work is impacted in both its objective and subjective conditions, raising the need for critical engagement with the implications of AI and ICTs for professional practice, ethics, and social equity.

Brazilian Social Work: Institutional Requests and Professional Demands Post COVID-19 Pandemic

Miss Marenilse Saturnino[1]
[1]Cress 7ªregião, , Brazil

"This paper presents initial reflections forming part of the author's doctoral research, aiming to understand the main challenges and emerging trends for Brazilian social work after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a central focus on the roles and competencies defined by the regulatory law. Recognizing that reality is dialectical and professional attributions are neither fixed nor socially neutral, the study seeks to capture the current meaning of the profession and reflect on future directions.

Partial results are drawn from ongoing studies analyzing institutional requests received by social workers between 2020 and 2024. Data sources include surveys conducted by the Regional Social Work Councils of Southeast Brazil (CRESS 6th, 7th, 9th, and 17th regions), publications from major professional events—Brazilian Congress of Social Workers (CBAS), National Meeting of Social Work Researchers (ENPESS), National and International Social Policy Meeting (ENPS)—and a master's thesis focused on institutional requisitions during the pandemic.

The study aims to identify the main institutional demands placed on social work, professional responses, and trends for the coming years. Preliminary analysis reveals that many institutional requests were incompatible with professional norms, including reactivations of previously obsolete activities under new forms due to the pandemic. Newly identified demands largely relate to remote work, a modality already existing in Brazil but still unfamiliar to most social work professionals (SILVA, 2022), posing challenges for the consolidation of the profession's ethical-political project."

Providing Hope, Support, and Advanced Psychological Treatment Skills to Frontline Mental Health Providers Treating Survivors of Loss and Trauma in Ukraine

Dr Bobbie Legg[1]
[1]Arizona State University, World Orphan Fund, Butterfly Collaborative, ,

"Amid ongoing military conflict, mental health and social service providers in Ukraine face unprecedented emotional demands as they support children and families living with traumatic loss. Social workers in Ukraine are directly experiencing war trauma, grief, as well as secondary trauma, while practicing with limited access to clinical supervision or advanced trauma-informed training's. This presentation shares how capacity-building trauma recovery interventions were and are developed, taught, and applied through collaboration between U.S. trauma specialists and Ukrainian mental health providers. The initiative provides structured clinical training and psychosocial support for Ukrainian professionals serving children who have lost one or both parents during the war.

This presentation shares skills for social workers in teaching emotional containment, interpersonal neurobiology, and self-regulation practices to sustain compassionate, ethical care under extreme stress. Drawing on evidence-based trauma interventions and neurologically informed approaches, this work focuses on (1) enhancing trauma-specific clinical competencies during sustained crisis, (2) mitigating compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma among providers, and (3) promoting long-term recovery, family preservation, and post-traumatic growth among affected children and caregivers. Training modules include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) adapted to life under active military invasion.

This project highlights the vital role of social work in confronting complex global challenges. By fostering international collaboration, it models a sustainable, culturally responsive framework for trauma recovery and professional resilience—providing not only clinical tools but also hope, solidarity, and renewal for those who bear witness to human suffering."

Understanding pathways of resiliency for adolescents living with HIV in Uganda

Bonita Sharma[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,

It is estimated that over thirty-five million people around the world live with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and over 71% live in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite scientific gains in HIV prevention, Uganda is still one of the countries seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. HIV is a highly stigmatized disease with social ridicule and discrimination, leading to depression, trauma, and severe mental health problems. Despite the scientific discoveries and knowledge, we know very little about pathways to resiliency and empowerment adolescents employ to manage the disease. Utilizing resilience theory, the study explored adolescents' lived experiences and the processes of responding to adversity and building resilience after HIV diagnosis among youth ages 18 to 24 living with HIV in Uganda. We used a qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) to collect data using semi-structured interviews with six focus groups and analyze them using grounded theory method. Participants included young men, women, men having sex with men (MSM), sex workers, and perinatally infected young people who receive/d services at a local private and government run clinics. The findings indicate that adolescents living with HIV went through several pathways in their HIV experiences: from denial to despair, suicidal ideation, substance use, and developing resilience which were seldom linear. In this study, we present the framework of resilience to empowerment among youth with HIV and discuss the implications for researchers, healthcare providers, advocates and policymakers to develop interventions to bolster individuals' inherent determination to be better and overcome the social, physical, and health headwinds that stand in the way of those with HIV.

From Divided Worlds to Entangled Lives: Reimagining Social Work\'s Global Gaze

Prof Erika Gubrium[1]
[1]Oslo Metropolitan University, , Norway

This presentation explores and challenges social work’s fragmented gaze on global poverty and inequality, arguing that these are not distant problems of an “elsewhere” but conditions deeply entangled with the historical foundations and contemporary sustainability of welfare states in the Global North. Drawing on decolonial and feminist critiques, it reveals how social work with families is embedded within—and often complicit in—global relations of extraction, racialized hierarchy, and unequfal exchange. Using a strategy of \"spatio-temporal defiance\" and the illustrative cases of Norway and Uganda, the analysis makes these connections visible through two revealing ruptures: the climate crisis, where Northern welfare is subsidized by ecological depletion in the South, and the care crisis, sustained by transnational care chains that extract reproductive labor from Southern households. This diagnosis requires a fundamental reorientation of practice. The presentation proposes a relational global gaze, a form of spatio-temporal defiance that sees families as nodes within historical webs of global interdependence. Ultimately, this shift invites social workers to transform from administrators of a divided world into practitioners of reparative justice and collective resilience.

Supporting policy- and macro-level social work practice

Melissa Wojnaroski[1]
[1]Social Workers In Policy, ,

"Many social workers are struggling to find their footing in the policy and macro spaces, and many schools of social work are struggling with dwindling student enrollment in their macro programs. This presentation will discuss specific steps schools of social work can take to get more students in their policy and macro-level concentration tracks, and set them up for more visible, successful, macro-level, policy oriented careers after graduation.

Macro and policy-level social work careers are less obvious, and less visible than clinical social work opportunities. They require different strategy and creativity to achieve. Macro students need career preparation and support structures that are different from how we support our clinical students.

Theme 4: Social Work and Sustainable Development, sub theme: \""'Employment for social workers-responding to the emerging policy arena as a profession; transforming social policies.\"""

Lifelong Learning and Professionalization in Social Work: International Recognition and Innovative Curricula for Sustainable Development

Prof. Mandy Schulze[1]
[1]Private, ,

Professionalization in social work is closely linked to lifelong learning, continuous professional development, and the advancement of expertise. In Germany, university degrees such as the Bachelor's and Master's form the formal foundation for professional practice. International recognition of these degrees is increasingly important to enhance professional mobility and facilitate the global exchange of knowledge and practice.

Innovative curricula in social work go beyond national frameworks, addressing both regional and global social, ecological, and economic challenges. They integrate theoretical knowledge with practical competencies through co-creative teaching and learning processes, where students, educators, and practice partners collaboratively develop solutions. Mentoring and supervision play a central role in these processes, supporting reflection on professional practice, intercultural competence, and ethical decision-making in international contexts.

Internationalization of curricula contributes to sustainable social work by promoting social justice, inclusive structures, and global responsibility. At the same time, it requires comparative research on curriculum content, learning outcomes, and funding models to ensure the quality, transparency, and comparability of academic programs.

This paper presents the German recognition process for social work degrees and examines challenges in the international comparability of curricula. It highlights the importance of lifelong learning, innovative teaching and learning methods, and internationally oriented mentoring and supervision models for the professionalization of social work. By fostering global visibility and applicability of professional competencies, internationally aligned academic programs make a substantial contribution to sustainable development through social work.

Dissecting the myths and realities of disasters using the April 2022 KwaZulu Natal floods in South Africa

Prof Louis Nyahunda[1]
[1]University Of Venda, , South Africa

This study used the KZN flood of 2022 as a case in exploring whether or not the flood disaster was natural. The study benefited from a scoping review of journals and grey literature. The findings reveal that some scholars framed the KZN flood disaster as natural. The same studies unearthed factors that were not driven by nature in causing the disaster and still labelled the phenomenon a natural disaster. Thus, weak government and institutional response, failure to address climate change-related hazards, unmitigated systematic risks, failure to meet the information needs of at-risk communities, and failure to address socioeconomic vulnerabilities emerged among the key drivers of the disaster. These factors affirm that the disaster was not natural but a product of human acts of commission and omission. The study concludes that the KZN flood, which transitioned into a disaster, was avoidable on many fronts. Therefore, framing it as a natural occurrence signals a lack of pedagogical understanding of the genealogy of disasters. The study recommends a paradigm shift from framing disasters as natural, as this shrugs off human responsibility in averting disasters while riding on the false pretext that they are natural occurrences

939

From Adverse Childhood Experiences to Family Polyvictimization: An ecological transactional model of developmental trajectories of family violence

Prof Edward Ko-Ling Chan[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, ,
<Family violence is a pervasive public health issue that impacts individuals across the lifespan, including children, parents, and grandparents. Manifesting in various forms—such as child abuse, intimate partner violence, and elder mistreatment—family violence often affects multiple members within the same household, a phenomenon known as "family polyvictimization". Despite its prevalence, this interconnected victimization is frequently overlooked or insufficiently addressed in research and practice.

This workshop introduces a new paradigm for understanding family polyvictimization, developed by the authors, which situates adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) within the broader context of family violence. Using an ecological transactional model, we will explore how risk factors at multiple ecological levels interact to shape the developmental trajectories of family violence. By examining the patterns and risk factors associated with family polyvictimization, this session aims to equip social workers, healthcare providers, and policymakers with the knowledge to better identify at-risk families and deliver trauma-informed care to victims.>

Preparing Social Workers for the 2030 Agenda: Embedding the SDGs in Education and Practice

Mr Robert Koglek[1]
[1]Management Centre Innsbruck, , Austria

Embedding the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into social work education through the lens of Green Social Work can equip future practitioners with the skills and values to address interconnected social, environmental, and economic challenges. With less than five years until the 2030 deadline, social work—rooted in human rights, social justice, and inclusive development—has a critical role to play in achieving these goals. Yet, there is limited evidence on how the SDGs are being integrated into social work curricula and how this shapes the competencies of graduates.

The "Social Work and Sustainable Development Project" is a three-year collaborative initiative between the Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the Management Center Innsbruck, Austria. Building on a long-term collaboration, it stands as an example of equitable partnership between an African and a European university. The project examines how social work actors engage with the SDGs most relevant to their contexts, with a particular focus on embedding SDG principles into curricula, fieldwork, and professional training. Guided by Green Social Work theory, the research frames sustainable development as central to professional identity, emphasising ecological justice, interdependence, and systemic change—offering a clear pathway for curriculum integration.

Early findings from surveys, interviews, and policy analysis show strong commitment to SDG values among educators and practitioners, but limited explicit integration of SDG content into teaching and learning. Embedding SDG-related competencies—such as sustainability literacy, cross-sector collaboration, advocacy skills, and systems thinking—can better prepare graduates to address complex global challenges in local contexts.

This presentation will share insights from the joint research process, identify strategies for integrating the SDGs into social work training, and reflect on how cross-continental partnerships can strengthen the profession's capacity to contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

Towards a positive social work supervision model: An autoethnographic meta-analysis

Prof Lambert Engelbrecht[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, , South Africa

The supervision of social workers has evolved in tandem with the profession itself, progressing from charitable oversight to a recognised field of scholarship. Yet, in many parts of the world, social work supervision has not progressed at the same pace as social work intervention and remains a neglected area in international discourse and knowledge dissemination. Consequently, supervision continues to be conceptualised in vague and universal terms, as though every context requires identical administrative, educational, and supportive functions. Global studies indicate that inadequate or harmful supervision directly contributes to many of the challenges faced by social work practitioners. Although leading scholars have advanced numerous supervision models, some of which are widely adopted in practice, many remain problem-oriented, neoliberal in orientation, and shaped by political agendas. Moreover, these models have not demonstrably enhanced supervisee satisfaction, as a global emphasis on deficits continues to prevail. Against this background, this workshop is grounded in an autoethnographic, meta-analytical methodology, employing a systematic synthesis of twenty qualitative studies selected over a twenty-five-year period according to carefully defined inclusion criteria. The analysis is directed towards the construction of a positive social work supervision model aimed at fostering the professional flourishing of social workers. In this workshop, a positive supervision model is proposed that integrates an ‘unboss’ principle, theories of work, professional identity development, cultural dimensions, and specific competencies. The context-specific supervision ecology and the content of supervision functions are situated on a push-pull continuum, underpinned by the foundations of positive psychology and spacious, reflective thinking. This is supported by associated systems, tools, roles, and techniques. Evidence from supervisors across diverse settings indicates that, when this model is implemented through a signature practice framework, which will be demonstrated in the workshop, supervision promotes the flourishing of supervisees and enhances the effectiveness of their interventions.

The Professional Training of the Social Worker: A Look from the Historical Evolution of Ecuador

Dr Carmita Leonor Alavarez Santana[1]
[1]Laica Eloy Alfaro University of Manabí / Anuatse / Alaeits, ,

"This paper analyzes academic tensions that have influenced the development of Social Work in Ecuador. The limited emphasis on the political–ideological dimension has determined that professional intervention needs to be more solidly positioned; in agreement with Martínez and Agüero (2008), politics is the instrument for transforming reality, and ideology ensures that intervention is effective and efficient. The theoretical-methodological approaches that have guided the actions of Ecuadorian professionals have not fully succeeded in ensuring that social analysis and interventions are conducted from a perspective of social complexity, which, according to Bruno (2022), must challenge concepts and dimensions in the face of new realities. Interventions need to be strengthened through a deeper understanding of Ecuadorian social issues.

This has impacted the profession, prompting an analysis of the curriculum, which is very diverse and therefore has a weak influence on social policies, limiting its occupational field. This situation led to the introduction of a new Labor Rights Law through the association of schools (ANUATSE, 2024), as other professions seek to occupy Social Work positions. Authors such as García (2018) emphasize that formal academic training has been crucial for consolidating Social Work as a career aimed at human and social development, yet challenges remain.

There is a need to undertake an epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and ethical renewal in response to emerging social phenomena so that professionals can continue to play an essential role in promoting social justice and community well-being, especially amid social, technological, and political changes. It is important to strengthen the professional profile of social workers through the academic curriculum, grounded particularly in the broad framework enshrined in the Constitution of Ecuador: Buen Vivir or Sumak Kawsay in the ancestral Kichwa language."

This one, yes; that one, no... Structural racism in the adoption process

Ana Lucia Oliveira De Freitas[1]
[1]Pontifical Catholic University Of São Paulo (puc-sp), ,

The research investigates how structural racism influences adoption dynamics in Brazil. It understands racism as a structuring element of Brazilian capitalist society that manifests in institutions and social relations. In the context of adoption, the study analyzes how prospective parents' preferences and institutional procedures perpetuate racial inequalities, invisibilize, and alienate the identities of Black children and adolescents.
Based on a bibliographic study and documentary research conducted in a Child and Youth Court in the city of São Paulo/SP-Brazil, I propose a critical analysis of the selectivity in choosing children and adolescents and the lack of preparation of prospective adoptive parents for adopting Black children. The research revealed four groups of professional reports that illustrate how racism is expressed in Brazil:
"When Less Is More," where social workers do not describe work with prospective parents regarding the desired child/adolescent's color/race.
"Black, but Not Too Black," which shows attempts to discuss racial relations with prospective parents, yet reinforces the myth of racial democracy.
"It Is Not Enough Not to Be Racist," showing greater reflection on racial relations in professional reports, possibly reflecting the recent expansion of this discussion in the profession.
"Father, Take This Cup Away from Me," highlighting the few explicit restrictions regarding Black children.
The results demonstrate institutional racism in the Justice System, the idealization of a white family, its impacts on building family bonds in adoption, and the need to expand debate in Social Work to strengthen antiracist professional practices, safeguard freedom, and preserve the identity of Black children and adolescents placed in interracial adoptive families committed to the ethical-political professional project.

Bridging Policy and Practice: Developing a Multilayer Model of Care for Children with Behavioural Problems in Sri Lanka

Asst. Prof. Jobi Babu[2], T H Rasika Samanmalee[1]
[1]Sri Lanka Association Of Professional Social Workers, , , [2]Marian College Kuttikkanam, Autonomous, , India

Children with behavioural problems face significant challenges in their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, straining families, communities, and service systems. In low- and middle-income countries such as Sri Lanka, health sector alone unable to address these needs, highlighting the necessity for integrated social care and follow up systems. Aligned with contemporary social work priorities, this study adopts a holistic, right-based approach that emphasises strengthening families and communities, safeguarding children and bridging policy and practice through coherent social care frameworks. This study forms part of a mixed-methods research aimed at quantitative component in examining the sociodemographic characteristics of affected children. The qualitative component employed an exploratory design with purposive sampling to capture diverse perspectives. Data was collected through 30 in-depth interviews with parents, 2 focus group discussions with child care field officers from health, education, child welfare, and social services, and 15 key informant interviews with professionals involved in child protection and policy implementation. Thematic analysis was conducted, guided by intersectionality and ethics. Findings highlighted the central role of families and community networks in recognising and managing children’s behavioural problems. Gaps in coordination between health, education, and social care services revealed a clear disconnect between policy intent and service delivery. Poverty, family disputes, attitudinal barriers to early identification, and social vulnerability significantly influenced help-seeking behaviour, access to services, and continuity of care. Limited participation of children, caregivers and family members in decision-making further constrains effective and sustainable interventions at institutional level to community. The findings suggest the need for an integrated, multilayer care model that bridges policy and practice while strengthening existing services across sectors for children with behavioural problems. This study contributes evidence to inform coordinated social care and protection frameworks for children with behavioural problems in Sri Lanka.

Predictors of adolescents' perceptions of feeling unsafe and mental health

Assoc Prof Karla Arenas-Itotia[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, , United States

<Ensuring that young people feel safe in school is not only a matter of individual wellbeing but also a cornerstone of sustainable development. Drawing on data from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (N = 16,968), this study examined predictors of feeling unsafe at school and the associated implications for adolescent mental health. Grounded in Social Support Theory, regression and mediation analyses explored demographic, behavioral, and contextual factors shaping these experiences.

Findings indicate that victimization, particularly bullying and forced sexual encounters, is strongly associated with feelings of unsafety and significantly poorer mental health. Marginalized youth—including non-white, female, and LGBTQ+ adolescents—reported disproportionate risks, underscoring systemic inequities. Substance use, especially marijuana, heightened vulnerability, while school connectedness emerged as the strongest protective factor, buffering against adverse outcomes. Notably, higher levels of parental monitoring correlated with poorer mental health, suggesting the importance of relational quality and autonomy in adolescent development.

These findings have direct implications for sustainable social work practice. Promoting safe and inclusive schools advances multiple Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Interventions grounded in trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches—such as restorative anti-bullying practices, LGBTQ+-affirming supports, and community-school partnerships—can reduce inequities, strengthen resilience, and promote long-term wellbeing.

Limitations include the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and single-item measures for some constructs, which restrict causal interpretation. Future research should employ longitudinal and participatory approaches to capture adolescent voices more fully and guide intervention design. By situating school safety and adolescent mental health within the broader framework of sustainable development, this study highlights the critical role of social work in fostering environments where all young people can thrive equitably, safely, and sustainably.>

Restorative Storytelling: Using Community Learning Empowerment Groups to Co-designing Mental Health Education interventions

Dr Sophie Yohani[1]
[1]University Of Alberta, ,

In this interactive workshop, we will introduce participants to the practice of restorative storytelling as a strength-based, empowerment strategy that facilitates connection, healing, and collective resilience through group-based dialogue. First we will share how this method has been developed through a community-based participatory research project aimed at enhancing mental health equity for immigrants with two partner immigrant-serving organizations in Edmonton, Alberta. Second, we will demonstrate how Community Learning Empowerment Groups (CLEGs) were used to facilitate community dialogue and cultural activities as the foundation for co-designing culturally-safe and relevant mental health education interventions tailored to meet the needs of communities served by our partner organizations. Third, we will draw on our research findings to engage participants in a group-based process to show how restorative storytelling can be used as a group-based mechanism by social workers that integrates cultural knowledge into mental health education programs.

Reframing HIV Service Delivery: Social Work, Resilience, and Sustainable Development Pathways

Eusebius Small[1]
[1]University Of Texas At Arlington, ,

<Progress toward the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets has advanced global HIV prevention and treatment, yet these gains remain precarious. Continued dependence on donor funding, vertical financing models, and centralized supply chains has embedded structural vulnerabilities making HIV programs highly exposed to global disruptions. For social work, which is grounded in principles of justice, equity, and empowerment, these systemic weaknesses provoke crucial questions about how HIV service delivery can evolve toward resilience and sustainability within the broader framework of sustainable development.

This qualitative, theory-informed analysis applies Path Dependency Theory to interrogate how historical funding pathways, institutional lock-ins, and policy choices have structured HIV service delivery. Drawing on secondary data from scholarly sources, UNAIDS and PEPFAR reports, and comparative case studies from Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, and Brazil, the study examines mechanisms of donor dependency while identifying emerging opportunities for resilience.

Findings indicate that although donor aid facilitated the rapid expansion of HIV programming, it entrenched rigid dependencies that undermine adaptability during crises, including pandemics, funding disruptions, and conflict. Case evidence from Malawi and Uganda demonstrates persistent fragility in financing and supply chains, whereas Rwanda's community-based health insurance model illustrates pathways for sustainable domestic financing. Brazil's integrated syndemic model highlights the importance of equity-oriented approaches that situate HIV within broader wellness and justice commitments. Cross-case analysis underscores strategies critical for sustainability, such as community-driven service delivery, investments in workforce stability, and embedding HIV care within universal health systems.

The study argues for a shift beyond numerical benchmarks toward locally owned, resilient responses that advance social protection and health equity. While limitations include reliance on secondary data and selective case comparisons, findings reinforce the strategic role of social work in aligning HIV service delivery with principles of sustainable development and systemic resilience.>

After All, Who Takes Care?

Vanessa Estábele[1]
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The article presents an analysis of the socioeconomic profile of women caregivers of dependent elderly people living in poverty in the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina, Brazil, based on the Continuous PNAD/IBGE, qualitative interviews, and recent public policy indicators. The study is the result of work by the research group Women and Public Policies at the State University of Londrina – Paraná, Brazil, and highlights the historical feminization of care, characterized by social invisibility, inadequate remuneration, and a strong association between gender, race, and social class inequalities.

Most caregivers are women over 50 years old, many already elderly, who take on the responsibility of care alone, even when part of families with partners. There is also a notable prevalence of low educational attainment among a significant portion of participants, limited participation in the formal labor market, dependency on social benefits, economic precariousness, informal work, and weak social security protection.

The results also reveal a worsening of these women's physical and mental health conditions, with high prevalence of cardiovascular diseases, anxiety disorders, depression, and physical strain resulting from work overload. By incorporating intersectionality as an analytical framework, the study demonstrates that Black, poor, and peripheral women are the most affected, accumulating long work hours and having less access to rights, income, and social protection.

The study engages with the international debate on social justice, care systems, and human rights, contributing to global reflections on care policies, social protection, and equity. It underscores the urgency of strengthening the National Care Policy in Brazil and advancing international strategies that recognize, redistribute, and value care work, ensuring dignity both for caregivers and those receiving care, particularly in contexts of structural inequality.

Navigating young fatherhood: experiences and coping strategies of unmarried fathers raising children born out of wedlock

Assoc Prof Frans Koketso Matlakala[1]
[1]North-west University, , South Africa

<Young fatherhood is challenging, especially for young unmarried fathers. With limited research conducted with different cultural groups within South Africa, it has been established that young unmarried fathers face various challenges, such as accessing their children and having conflicts with the child's mother. However, there is a dearth of literature on studies conducted on the Batswana cultural group regarding challenges faced by young unmarried fathers. Thus, this study explores psychological challenges and coping strategies of unmarried fathers raising children born out of wedlock in Zeerust, South Africa.

This study adopted the exploratory design and used face-to-face semi-structured interviews to interview 10 young unmarried fathers raising children born out of wedlock in Zeerust, South Africa. Reflexive thematic data analysis was used to analyse the collected data.

The study found that the experiences of young unmarried fathers include loss of freedom, emotional distress, and unemployment. However, the coping strategies adopted by these young fathers include both positive and negative coping strategies. These coping strategies include seeking financial stability, financial support, alcohol and substance use, avoidance, coping, and distancing from peer conversation.

The study concludes that the experiences of young unmarried fathers are determined by their employment status and financial stability. Therefore, the study recommends that social workers should develop interventions targeted at addressing the challenges of young unmarried fathers raising children born out of wedlock and assist young unmarried fathers to develop positive coping strategies>

Unified Social Assistance System – SUAS: Obstacles and Prospects for Implementation.

Mrs Cristiane Reis dos Santos[1]
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"Abstract:

The objective of this paper is to analyze the obstacles and prospects for the implementation of the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) in small municipalities from a quantitative and bibliographic perspective. The theoretical framework will address the historical trajectory of social assistance after 1988, focusing on the consolidation of this policy and its structuring elements.

The research will adopt an exploratory quantitative approach, using bibliographic and documentary research as the methodological procedure. The analysis will be based on the collection of social indicators, management statistical data, and academic studies that discuss the system's coverage and efficiency nationwide, encompassing various areas of knowledge that address the topic.

The study will adopt the configuration of the federalized execution and management model, which requires compliance with goals and normative standards, generating logistical and financial challenges at the municipal level. It is expected that the data analysis will indicate that the effective implementation of the system is correlated with the municipalities' financing capacity and institutional development index.

Through the documents analyzed, the study intends to show how small municipalities face barriers in budget execution and in maintaining qualified technical teams. It will seek to demonstrate that the dissemination of monitoring data and the evaluation of results are imperative for the real implementation of the policy. However, this process faces limitations due to the historically assistentialist approach, which hinders the transition to technical and professional management.

It is concluded that overcoming the fragmentation of resources and strengthening co-financing are fundamental prospects for SUAS to be consolidated as a guaranteed right. The obstacles identified reveal the need for greater precision in resource allocation to ensure the implementation of a social protection network that is truly efficient and measurable at the municipal level in Brazil.

Empowering Rural Girls through Education, Mentorship, and Cross-Border Partnerships

Ms Inviolata Akoth Olang[1]
[1]Top Girl Cbo, , Kenya
"<p class=""p2""><span class=""s2"">Subtheme 4: Social Work and Sustainable Development
Empowering Rural Girls through Education, Mentorship, and Cross-Border Partnerships</p>
<p class=""p2"">Across rural Kenya, adolescent girls face intersecting structural barriers that limit their access to education, decent work, and meaningful participation in community development. Early marriage, household poverty, limited access to education, and limited access to health information restrict their opportunities. The Top Girl initiative, established in 2021 in Mumias Sub-County, Kakamega County, demonstrates how community-driven, locally owned programmes, strengthened through long-term international partnerships, can transform these realities and advance SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 10. Top Girl supports girls aged 15–24 not only in accessing education but also in excelling and transitioning successfully into adulthood by offering secondary and tertiary scholarships, mentorship, psychosocial support, career coaching, health education and vocational training for alternative learning pathways. It also actively engages parents, community leaders, and local schools, cultivating a supportive environment that promotes girls' safety, con<span class=""s4"">fidence, and educational continuity. Since 2009, the Dutch foundation Kidshare has been a pivotal <span class=""s4"">financial, advisory, and developmental partner. Beyond scholarships, Kidshare invests in staff capacity-building, organisational development, and sustainability frameworks that prioritise local leadership and community ownership. Through this collaboration, Top Girl has supported 81 girls and celebrated 28 graduates, many now engaged in meaningful employment, internships, and community leadership. In 2024, 15 high school graduates transitioned successfully into colleges and universities, resulting in a 100% retention and transition rate. Additionally, 11 students completed their KCSE examinations in 2025 and are set to join higher education institutions in 2026, reinforcing a pipeline of empowered young women. Many graduates return as mentors. This presentation draws on three years of <span class=""s4"">field implementation and participatory evaluation, highlighting the effectiveness of mentorship, community trust, and cross-border collaboration in supporting girls' transitions from education into decent work.</p>"

ASSESSING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER IN RELATION TO HEALTH AND WELBEING. A CASE STUDY OF MUHIMBILI ORTHOPAEDIC INSTITUTE.

Ms Stellah Kihombo[1]
[1]Personal, ,

The purpose of this study is to Assess the roles and responsibilities of clinical social welfare officers in relation to health and wellbeing: A case study of Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI). This study will involve three specific objectives which are as follows, the first one is to investigate the applicability of clinical social welfare in medical settings and how people percive those services and value those services as in relation to Health and wellbeings of the patients as well as to Health service providers (staffs) as whole. Apart from that, the second specific objective is to explore the gap between social welfare services provided by Social welfare officers working at Hospital settings and those who are working at other settings specifically those working at Local Goverment Authorities, since they all provide socia servicers. Lasty, is to evaluate the sustanable methods and systems to which they will help to promote the the provision of super specialized social welfare services at all levels. Qualitative and quantitative as well as descriptive cross section survey will be employed to make an investigtion of the phenomenon. Data will be collected from the respondents through questioneers, indepth intervention, as well as focused group discussion. The findings will reviel how social services provision are being handled by all social welfare officers regardless their current settings and what are the impacts of those services to the wellbeing of the people. Lastly, the findings will evaluate the sustainability of social services provision and practice in relation to Health and welbeing of the Tanzanian people. Those findings will help social work to move one step ahead on promoting social welfare services at all settings. This study suggests that, there is a great need for further research on social services provision systems on promoting Harambee for sustainability shared furture.

Training Social Workers: Developing the Skills of Social Action Actors in Developing Countries

Mr Jovelin Emmanuel[1]
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"We conducted a study commissioned by the French Development Agency (AFD) on social work training programs in low- and middle-income countries. This study aims to answer a fundamental question: How can we develop initial and continuing social work training programs adapted to national contexts, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, in order to strengthen the skills of social action actors? The first major finding is the wide diversity of social work training models worldwide. This diversity is expressed at the institutional level (specialized schools, universities, colleges, joint centers), at the pedagogical level (theoretical training vs. work-study programs, internship duration, types of content), and also at the level of academic and professional recognition (existence or absence of a professional order, accreditation of programs, recognized or unrecognized diplomas). Our presentation will focus on highlighting several structural problems shared by many low- and middle-income countries. In short, it will provide a comprehensive and comparative overview of social work training systems in a variety of national contexts, ranging from countries of the Global North (France, Canada, Germany, etc.) to countries of the Global South (Benin, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Senegal, Ecuador, Chile, etc.). The objective is to analyze the structure of initial and continuing training systems, pedagogical models, types of institutions, trainer qualification levels, accreditation procedures, and contextual factors influencing the organization of social work training. Finally, we will propose recommendations for designing, implementing, and evaluating training projects. Despite these challenges, several countries have implemented innovative systems, co-developed with local stakeholders and supported by international partnerships. We will therefore highlight five particularly instructive experiences. Finally, we will see how these experiences demonstrate that it is possible to structure a relevant training program, provided there is a clear strategic framework.

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Reclaiming Practice in Complex Realities: Regional Innovations in Chinese Paediatric Social Work

Miss Ling Hui Zhang[3], Dr Sui Kan Yip, Assoc Prof Qing Ning Zhang[4], Dr Liying Xu, Hui Quan Chen[6], Dr Suo Deng[1]
[1]Peking University-the Hong Kong Polytechnic University China Social Work Research Centre, , China, [2]Peking University-The Hong Kong Polytechnic University China Social Work Research Centre, , China, [3]Children's Hospital of Fudan University, , China, [4]Lanzhou University, , China, [5]Fujian Medical University, , China, [6]Chengdu University of Information Technology, , China

Children facing terminal illnesses represent a vulnerable population whose right to health and quality of life at the end-of-life is a critical global concern. It is estimated that millions of children require palliative care annually, with the vast majority residing in low- and middle-income countries, highlighting a profound global inequality in healthcare access. The provision of paediatric hospice and palliative care represents a critical yet underdeveloped frontier within China\'s evolving child welfare system and its commitment to fulfilling children\'s rights.

This workshop presents a coordinated "China story" of how social work reclaiming and reimagining its role in supporting children with severe illnesses across diverse regional landscapes. Confronting profound practice challenges, social workers are developing innovative, context-specific responses. The session begins in Central China, where a children's hospital case study examines the emotional expressions of bereaved subjects and analyses medical social workers\' intervention strategies during end-of-life processes. It then moves to the Northwest, detailing services for children with cancer receiving treatment away from home. This presentation highlights practical models for short-term community accommodation, medical assistance, and psychological support, with a critical focus on implementing cultural sensitivity in multi-ethnic regions. The focus shifts to the Southwest, where a practice research project employs discursive psychology to \"unfreeze\" social workers. By reviewing client dialogues, practitioners move from seeking external validation to cultivating professional self-confidence, transforming their approach to complex realities. Finally, the perspective expands to engage the broader \"death system,\" emphasizing collective responsibility, solidarity, and interdisciplinary cooperation to strengthen child palliative care pathways. Collectively, these four regional narratives illustrate a profession becoming more adaptive, reflective, and systemic.

To complete the systemic picture, the workshop\'s final component analyses how national and regional social welfare policies both shape and are shaped by these frontline innovations, exploring the crucial policy-practice dialogue necessary for sustainable and compassionate impact.

Social movements and public policies in Brazil: reflections in the light of the professional training project in Social Work in Brazil

Miss Michelly Ferreira Monteiro Elias[1]
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This text reflects on the role of social movements as subjects of public policies in Brazil and points out elements regarding the relationship between class struggles, social movements, and the fight for citizenship rights, in light of the current professional training project in Social Work in Brazil. To do so, it addresses elements concerning the conception of the professional project in Social Work in Brazil and the construction of the 1996 Curricular Guidelines and situates the role of social movements as subjects of public policies between the years 2003 and 2016 in the country. Through their claims and mobilisation actions, social movements present demands that question the State\'s performance in the realm of public policies. This process involves problematizing the types of policies that the State prioritises and which segments benefit from them; to which public policies the State allocates most of its budget; and to which public policies tend to be undermined or abolished. This reflection demonstrates the role that social movements play as subjects of public policies, indicating that this is one of the axes of analysis that elucidate how the actions of social movements relate to professional training in Social Work. In this sense, understanding this relationship contributes to the profession\'s critical analysis of the formation of expressions of the \""social question\"" in contemporary society and strengthens the profession\'s current ethical-political project.

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The Paradox of Visibility: The Impact of the 2025 G20 Summit on Urban Governance and the Systematic Displacement of People Experiencing Homelessness in Johannesburg, South Africa

Dr Tshidi Lelaka[1]
[1]University Of Witwatersrand, , South Africa

Homelessness is inextricably linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically those targeting poverty, hunger, health, and inequality. However, local urban governance often contradicts these global mandates during high-profile events. Johannesburg's hosting of the 2025 G20 Summit had significant and contested implications for people experiencing homelessness in the inner city. Although the official theme of the Summit emphasized "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability," the lived experiences of many homeless individuals were characterized by displacement, exclusion, and loss. This qualitative study examined the impact of Johannesburg's hosting of the 2025 G20 Summit on people experiencing homelessness, with particular focus on urban governance practices and the systematic removal of homeless individuals from public spaces. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with ten participants, selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. The findings revealed key themes, including displacement and disruption of sleeping arrangements, limited awareness of the G20 Summit, inadequate and disrespectful communication, negative encounters with government authorities, psychological and emotional distress, loss and confiscation of personal belongings, and the lack of alternative support and shelter. Participants also articulated strategies for improving support for homeless populations during international events. The study underscores the need for a rights-based and inclusive approach to urban governance during the hosting of international events. It recommends transparent and advance communication, the avoidance of forced displacement, the provision of temporary shelters and essential services, the protection of personal belongings, and the training of officials to engage with homeless individuals in a respectful and humane manner. Ensuring that international events uphold the dignity, rights, and well-being of people experiencing homelessness is essential for socially just urban development. Furthermore, working through partnerships between governments, communities, and organizations supports partnerships for the Goals and helps create inclusive and sustainable societies.

Effects of Social Isolation on All-Cause Mortality in Older Adults: Do Age and Gender Matter?

Dr Lydia Li[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, School Of Social Work, , United States

" Social isolation is a recognized risk factor for adverse health outcomes, yet the magnitude of its effect on mortality and differences between genders and across age groups remain unclear. We examined whether the association of social isolation and mortality varied by age and gender and compared two established measures of social isolation.

Methods: We analyzed data from the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS), an ongoing nationally representative panel study of Medicare beneficiaries in the United States. Participants (N = 7,026, aged 65+) were followed up for 12 years (2011-2023). We analyzed two NHATS-based social isolation measures (Pohl & Cudjoe) that have been used in several studies. Social isolation was a 3-category variable (socially integrated, somewhat isolated, severely isolated) for both measures. Cox proportional hazards models, adjusted for sociodemographic, health, and health behavior factors, were applied. Interaction terms tested the moderation by age and gender.

Results: During follow-up, 2,457 (35%) participants died. Using Pohl's measure, both somewhat and severely isolated groups had significantly higher mortality risk versus socially integrated individuals, and effects were stronger for men than women. No age interaction was observed. Associations using Cudjoe's measure were weaker and non-significant after adjustment.

Conclusion and Discussion: Social isolation hastens death in older adults, particularly among men, but findings depend on how isolation is measured. Measures emphasizing family and friend contact may better capture mortality-related risk. Routinely screening older patients for social isolation during physician visits and incorporating social prescribing (connecting older adults to community resources) could be a way to prevent premature death among older adults.

Community-based organizations serving older adults should consider developing interventions for those who may be socially isolated, particularly older men.

Lessons Learned: Andragogy for the AI Era, Co-creating Social Work Curriculum with DSW Students

Dr Stephanie Washington[1]
[1]Stephen F. Austin State University, The University Of Texas System, , United States

"The proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both challenges and opportunities that demand Harambee, a collective response from social work education and educators. Preparing future social workers requires personal reflection and reimagining of competency-based curricula to ensure equitable access and promote sustainable, shared futures on a global landscape.

Recognized by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as one of the most significant transformations of social work education and practice, AI has the potential to impact core social work functions including assessment, intervention, advocacy, supervision, and service delivery. Consequently, it is critical that students--who will ultimately lead practice and policy initiatives--develop both digital literacy and fluency needed for ethical, sustainable, and collaborative practice integrating global learning considerations. Since technology integration undoubtedly impacts social workers\' daily interactions, service provision, and efforts toward social, economic, and environmental justice, new practitioners must enter the field prepared to competently evaluate, apply, and respond to emerging technologies and practice integration.

Effective preparation begins with sound andragogy, curriculum design, and development. Applying established, sound frameworks is essential for developing transformative curricula to address emerging global opportunities and challenges in teaching and learning. Andragogical approaches must move beyond merely teaching technology to instead focusing on fostering higher-order thinking and systems level problem-solving needed for sustainable teaching and leadership in the field.

This workshop shares lessons learned and emerging insights from one social work educator\'s experience developing a DSW (andragogy) course focused on technology and AI integration. Participants in this workshop will explore practical, evidence-based strategies for integrating foundational educational theory, digital skills, and developing practice competency and leadership capabilities to enable social work students to be part of the collective conversation on the future of AI in social work."

Pathways of Possibility: Advancing Equity and Shared Futures Through AAS → BSW → MSW Career Ladders

Dr Terrilyn Hickman-Allen[1]
[1]Community College Of Philadelphia, , United States

"Across the globe, behavioral health and human service systems are experiencing critical workforce shortages. At the same time, access to higher education remains inequitable—especially for adult learners, first-generation students, low-income communities, and learners with caregiving responsibilities. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to address both challenges through affordable, practice-based education that leads to workforce entry and continued academic progression.

This session presents an innovative, stackable Career Ladder Model that begins with short-term human services credentials and builds toward an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree, with seamless transfer into Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs. Students enter the workforce after two years, with the option to continue toward advanced degrees and licensure.

The design is grounded in the Community College of Philadelphia's Behavioral Health/Human Services (BHHS) Program which focuses on applying evidence-informed models and ethical standards; developing professional identity through self-awareness, cultural humility, and human service values; strengthening interpersonal and telehealth communication; advocating for underserved populations using both traditional and digital tools; and collecting and analyzing client data ethically. Practicum experiences are embedded throughout the pathway, ensuring that learning transfers directly to practice.

This session directly aligns with the SWSD 2026 themes of Social Work Practice, Education and Pedagogy, Workforce Development, Equity and Social Development, and Digital Transformation of Practice. Participants will engage in an interactive Pipeline Blueprint Activity, mapping how stackable credentials, practicum partnerships, and transfer agreements could be leveraged within their own institutions, agencies, or countries.

This session moves beyond theory—it provides a pathway to sustainable, ethical, and equitable workforce development in human services and social work."

Effectiveness of digital game-based GISCC program on cyberbullying prevention among Chinese adolescents

Dr Qiqi Chen[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, , China

" This study aims to develop and validate an innovative Game-based Intervention for School- and Cyberbullying for Children (GISCC), which combines training on psychosocial and behavioral components with interactive role-play games, in reducing cyberbullying and related risk factors among Chinese adolescents.

Method: The GISCC intervention, delivered via the WeChat platform, consisted of four weekly sessions, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. A randomized trial method was used to evaluate the effectiveness, comprising 105 Chinese adolescents randomly assigned to the experimental (n = 55) and control (n = 50) groups. Sessions were supervised by trained research assistants in after-school settings. The control group received no intervention during the study period but was offered access to the program after study completion. Outcomes measured before and after the intervention included cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, empathy, self-efficacy, violence intention, conflict resolution, and mental health. Analyses included t-tests, ANCOVA, and MANCOVA to assess intervention effects while controlling for baseline scores.

Results: The GISCC intervention significantly reduced cyberbullying behaviors (F = 37.50, p < 0.001), violence intentions (F = 4.95, p < 0.05), and mental health problems (F = 60.28, p < 0.001). It also increased self-efficacy (F = 18.26, p < 0.001) and conflict resolution skills (F = 36.46, p < 0.001), especially with friends. Offline violence intentions decreased, but online intentions remained low and unchanged, likely due to school device restrictions. Empathy scores did not change significantly, possibly reflecting the program’s emphasis on coping strategies rather than explicit empathy training.

Conclusions: The GISCC program demonstrated effectiveness as a digital health intervention for cyberbullying prevention among Chinese adolescents. The interactive, game-based format engaged students, improved their digital safety skills, and reduced risk behaviors and mental health problems associated with cyberbullying. Cultural tailoring and inclusion of family support are important for maximizing impact."

Promoting Transformative Learning: PhotoVoice For Global Social Work Impact

Dr Mieko Yoshihama[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, School Of Social Work, ,

"Transformative learning for critical social work is at risk. Neoliberalization increasingly demands efficiency and measurable outcomes and alters teaching practices, favoring standardization and manualization. With the spread of digital instructions, increased reliance on verbal and written communication privileges students with oral communication and writing skills and deprivileges others. The need for pedagogical approaches to promote critical reflection and dialectical discourse which also honor varied means of engagement and expression are needed more than ever. This workshop discusses social work education using PhotoVoice as an attempt to promote transformative learning.

Originally developed as a participatory action research methodology, PhotoVoice embodies Freirean emancipatory adult education rooted in critical feminist theories. Presenters from four countries, Japan, Portugal, Spain, and the USA, have been teaching social work courses using PhotoVoice on a range of pressing social issues such as environmental justice and social exclusion/inclusion. Students take photographs related to the course themes and engage in small group discussions repeatedly. As facilitators, instructors promote critical, reflexive analyses. Prompted by photographic images, students collectively analyze the nature and scope of the course themes (e.g., social exclusion), explore underlying socio-cultural, political, and historical forces and processes, and formulate strategies for change. New and alternative perspectives may emerge; long-held assumptions may be challenged, confirmed, or invalidated; and multiple viewpoints may be acknowledged. These processes of PhotoVoice embody transformative learning.

The workshop explores the impact of learning with PhotoVoice via analyses of students' photographs and narratives and course feedback. Our collective teaching experiences across diverse sociocultural contexts suggest that learning with PhotoVoice promote students' reflexivity and critical consciousness. In addition to deepening their understanding of the course themes, students also learn about PhotoVoice methodology, which they could (and are encouraged to) apply in their practice such as participatory community assessment and co-design of interventions or community-engaged research.

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Reimagining Poverty Elimination through Relationships: The Family Mentoring Model (FMM) in Pakistan's Remote Mountain Communities

Ms Zahara Khan[1]
[1]Akdn Institution, , Switzerland

"Traditional development programs have struggled to create sustainable impact in the remote mountain areas of Pakistan where communities are isolated by geography, poverty, and systemic inequities. The Family Mentorship Model (FMM) is a community-based social work model that rethinks poverty elimination by combining social mobilization, human relationships and agency, and local ownership. It takes a rights-based approach rooted in the principles of human dignity and self-determination. At its core lies the principle of 'community helping community' whereby mentors, selected from local communities and trained in relational and participatory practice, work with groups of families for two-to-five-years. Jointly, they identify priorities and chalk out 'family development plans'. FMM incorporates a local governance approach comprising community leaders and local experts to resolve operational challenges.

This interactive presentation will share field-based learning and firsthand audiovisual stories from FMM implementation in the remote, climate-affected communities of Pakistan to demonstrate how community-based social work builds dignity, agency and resilience where formal systems cannot reach. The session will offer key insights into how harsh terrain, single-cropping zones, lack of facilities, and climate change present unique challenges to development practitioners working in these areas. Participants will also learn how local mentors have turned isolation into connection and how small, consistent human interactions have generated measurable, lasting change across communities. The session will further highlight ways to adapt the model's components and reflect on how relationship-based, locally-led mentoring can help promote transparency and accountability across families and communities. The session aligns with the conference themes of Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice, Social Work and Sustainable Development, and Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges."

1008

Algorithmic Governance and the Conditions of Professional Judgment——Social Work Practice in the Digital Welfare State

Renxia Zhang[1]
[1]Nanjing Normal University, ,
随着福利体系经历快速的数字化转型，算法工具日益融入到资格审查、风险评估和服务优先排序等治理流程中。尽管这些系统很少取代人类决策者，但它们在构建福利决策的框架、论证和实施方式方面发挥着至关重要的作用。这种转型对社会工作产生了深远的影响，因为社会工作这一职业的根本在于专业判断、伦理考量和人际关系实践。
本文借鉴算法治理的概念和社会工作中的专业判断理论，探讨了数字福利国家中决策权的重构。通过对数字化社会工作实践的实证观察进行概念分析，本文认为算法系统并非消除专业判断，而是重塑其范围、可见性和合法性。算法治理通过预先设定评估标准和决策路径，可能限制社会工作者进行情境化伦理推理的能力，同时又使其对由系统驱动的分类所塑造的结果负责。
本文进一步提出规范性论点，认为在数字化福利背景下，重拾专业判断对于维护社会工作实践的伦理完整性至关重要。文章并非否定数字技术，而是强调专业判断作为一种伦理责任，使社会工作能够应对复杂性、不确定性和生活经验。通过突出判断作为问责制和防止脱离语境的关键所在，本文为数字化社会工作的讨论做出了贡献，并为在算法治理条件下重新构想社会工作实践提供了一个框架。

Exploring the motivations of image-based sexual abuse perpetration: An empirical study in Taiwan

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Digital gender-based violence has become a significant global social issue and is often referred to as a \"digital plague\" in the current digital age. Among its various forms, digital image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) causes lifelong, irreversible harm to victims. It not only results in long-term psychological trauma for individuals but also highlights structural issues of gender inequality and violence.

This study aims to explore the underlying motivations of individuals who engage in IBSA and analyze how these motivations are interwoven, amplified, and reinforced through digital media, ultimately driving violent behavior. Using qualitative research methods, in-depth interviews were conducted with 22 male individuals aged between 20 and 49 in correctional facilities. These individuals had violated laws related to the prevention of child and adolescent sexual exploitation and infringed upon sexual autonomy.

The findings of the study show that the motivations behind IBSA can be divided into four main categories: physiological motivations (such as sexual desire and the need for novelty), power & control (such as revenge and the desire for dominance), social motivations (such as a sense of achievement and enjoyment), and the characteristics of interactive behavior on digital platforms (such as a sense of luck and diffusion of responsibility). Additionally, the study found that these motivations often overlap and mutually reinforce each other.

It is hoped that this research will deepen the public\'s understanding of the motivations behind IBSA and offer recommendations for future efforts in preventing and intervening in digital image-based sexual violence.

Associative Governance and Participation

Miss Gaelle Chamoun[1]
[1]Sociology, ,

"The concept of Harambee “acting together” refers to a collective approach to social change based on solidarity, shared responsibility, and the co-construction of decisions. It resonates with the principles of the mutualist, cooperative, and associative movement, historically organized around the formal equality principle of “one person, one vote.” While this principle remains essential, several studies show that it does not guarantee active and sustainable participation of members, particularly within organizations representing socially marginalized populations (Laville, 2010; Rosanvallon, 2008). The governance of social institutions thus constitutes a central issue for building democratic, inclusive, and participatory societies.

This paper is part of a doctoral research project on associative governance and inclusion, drawing on the experiences and reflections of organizations representing people with disabilities in France. Internationally, schools, medico-social institutions, and associations adopt diverse governance models: centralized state governance, decentralized governance, associative governance, participatory community governance, and multi-stakeholder partnership governance (Maroy, 2006; Chauvière, 2011). The analysis of these models examines the collective capacity of institutions to “do Harambee”, that is, to create decision-making spaces genuinely shared among service users, professionals, and public actors (Carrel, 2013).

The case study of APF France handicap, founded in 1933 illustrates a unique representative and participatory model. The individuals concerned are not merely beneficiaries; they are actors of governance, participating in local, territorial, and national decision-making and embodying the principle of “nothing about us without us” (Ebersold, 2017). Nevertheless, the organization also reveals tensions related to accessibility, the professionalization of activism, and internal power dynamics (Ion, 2005; Gardien, 2015).

Aligned with the conference theme, this paper considers associative governance as a lever for democratic sustainability, where the recognition of experiential knowledge, shared leadership, and effective participation contribute to building inclusive common futures and reinforce the role of political social work in driving social transformation (Bacqué & Biewener, 2013; Sintomer, 2011)."

Social Enterprises as Proxy Spaces for Social Work Values: Consensus and Contradictions in the Pursuit of Sustainable Development

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"The intersection of social enterprise (SE) and social work (SW) is crucial in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. Both fields are committed to advancement of human dignity, social justice, and sustainable development. Simultaneously, they emerge from distinct institutional logics (moral economy of care and market-rationality). Recent studies highlight how these hybrid logics reshape welfare and sustainability paradigms through value pluralism and moral negotiation.

We offer a critical theoretical commentary reimagining SEs as proxy spaces for representation and negotiation of SW values within sustainability agendas. Drawing from recent work on institutional hybridity and social-innovation, we argue that SEs are arenas in which ethics and goals of SW are enacted, translated, and sometimes distorted through hybrid-organizational practices.

First, we identify areas where SW and SE converge. Both have a shared commitment to human development, participation, and sustainable livelihoods, reflecting a moral alignment grounded in relational ethics and human agency.

Second, we interrogate contradictions (commodification of care, depoliticization of sustainability discourse, and epistemic hierarchies) that rupture this alignment. Such tensions echo critiques of managerialism in welfare reform and audit cultures that privilege performance metrics over lived outcomes.

Third, we propose a framework of reflexive and dynamic hybridity based in learning, which enables SEs to establish a SW–inspired proxy function by institutionalizing relational accountability, participatory governance, and epistemic pluralism. This approach underscores the need for adaptive moral governance capable of aligning social-innovation with ecological and social justice imperatives.

Thus, we reframe SEs as contested but generative moral spaces; situated as extensions of SW's ethical imagination within post-welfare and postcolonial contexts. This conceptual reframing aligns with current debates positioning sustainability as an evolving moral architecture rather than a technocratic objective. In conclusion, we suggest SEs should reclaim a proxy role that reinforces SW's moral consciousness at the core of hybrid-organizational practice."

Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap: Utilising COVID-19 Research to Inform Education for Integrated Social Work Responses for Older Persons

Dr Merlene Christobelle Esau[1], Dr Martha Maria Van Straaten[1]
[1]University Of The Free State, , South Africa

"Drawing on empirical research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic (March–September 2020) in South Africa, this paper examines the provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services to older persons, identified as one of the most vulnerable population groups during the crisis, within the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. The findings reveal a significant policy–practice gap: despite the prioritisation of older persons in policy discourse, more than half of participating social workers reported providing no services to this group during the major lockdown phases (Level 5: 57%; Level 4: 55%; Levels 3/2: 53%).

In response to this service deficit and the persistent gaps in knowledge and skills for practice with older adults, a new fourth-year social work module (SWOA4812) was developed and introduced in 2025 in the Department of Social Work at the University of the Free State. The module aims to strengthen students' capacity to deliver developmentally informed and ethically sound services to older persons. It equips students to critically analyse theories of ageing from a developmental perspective, engage with the Older Persons' Act No. 13 of 2006, and understand later-life developmental tasks alongside the physical, sensory, and cognitive challenges associated with ageing. The module culminates in the design of a developmental plan for healthy ageing.

This paper argues that targeted curriculum innovation is a critical strategy for addressing structural service gaps revealed during crises and for advancing inter-generational solidarity through the meaningful participation and inclusion of older persons in social work practice."

Lived Experiences of Professional Frustration among Social Workers in Iran: A Phenomenological Analysis

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[1]Member Of The Board Of Directors Of The Iranian Association Of Social Workers And Phd Student In Social Work, , Iran

This interpretive phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of Iranian social workers regarding professional frustration. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten participants and analyzed using Van Manen's approach. Four interconnected themes emerged: economic, status-related, identity-related, and functional frustration. Findings reveal that professional frustration is a multidimensional and socially embedded phenomenon shaped by structural inequities, identity dissonance, and organization constraints. Distinguishing frustration from burnout, moral distress, and compassion fatigue, the study offers conceptual clarity and practical insights for improving social workers' well-being, motivation, and resilience in challenging welfare contexts.

A Critical Evaluation of Iran's National Suicide Prevention Program: Alignment with WHO's LIVE LIFE and Evidence from Iran

Mr Mehdi Sarvi Hampa[1]
[1]Member Of The Board Of Directors Of The Iranian Association Of Social Workers And Phd Student In Social Work, , Iran

This paper critically assesses Iran's National Suicide Prevention Program (NSPP) in relation to the World Health Organization's LIVE LIFE framework and evidence from 2000–2024. Using qualitative document analysis of 58 policy and research sources coded in NVivo, it applies a four-layer model (structural, relational, psychological, behavioral) illustrated to evaluate alignment and implementation. While the NSPP institutionalizes suicide prevention and expands crisis services, its biomedical centralization, incomplete surveillance, and limited gender or community engagement reduce its impact. Comparative insights from India, Nepal, and Brazil highlight the need for decentralized, multisectoral strategies. Recommendations emphasize interoperable surveillance, regional adaptation, and outcome-based evaluation.

Ethical Responsibility under Algorithmic Decision-Making: Professional Judgment in Digital Social Work

Renxia Zhang[1]
[1]Nanjing Normal University, ,

As algorithmic systems are increasingly integrated into welfare decision-making processes, social work practice is becoming embedded within digitally mediated regimes of assessment, classification, and prioritization. While algorithmic tools are commonly framed as neutral supports for decision-making, their institutionalization raises critical ethical questions about responsibility, accountability, and professional discretion in social work.
Drawing on the concept of algorithmic governance and normative theories of professional ethics in social work, this paper examines how ethical responsibility is redistributed under conditions of algorithmic decision-making. Through a conceptual analysis informed by empirical observations from digitally mediated social work practice, the paper argues that algorithmic systems do not remove ethical responsibility from social workers; rather, they intensify it by constraining the conditions under which professional judgment can be exercised. Social workers remain ethically accountable for decisions and outcomes, even when those outcomes are significantly shaped by system-generated classifications and recommendations.
This paper conceptualizes this tension as a form of ethical responsibility without corresponding decision authority, in which practitioners are expected to uphold professional and ethical standards while operating within pre-structured, system-defined decision pathways. Such conditions risk transforming ethics into procedural compliance rather than reflective moral judgment. In response, the paper argues that reclaiming ethical responsibility requires reasserting professional judgment as an ethical practice rather than a technical deviation. By foregrounding ethics as an active, interpretive responsibility, this study contributes to debates on digital social work and offers a normative framework for understanding ethical practice under algorithmic governance.

Exploring the lived experiences of street homeless persons in selected metropolitan municipalities in South Africa

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The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the structural vulnerabilities of people experiencing street homelessness in South Africa, exposing persistent inequalities that undermine social justice, human dignity, and sustainable development. Despite national and provincial government initiatives aimed at providing temporary shelter and emergency relief, street homelessness continues to rise in metropolitan municipalities. Aligned with the 2026 Global Social Work and Social Development Conference theme, “Harambee – Social Workers Unite for Sustainable Shared Futures,” this study is grounded in social development theory and informed by Ubuntu and human rights–based approaches, which emphasise collective responsibility, social solidarity, and the inherent dignity of all people. Using a qualitative research approach and a descriptive phenomenological design, the study explores the lived experiences of adults experiencing street homelessness in the Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Durban metropolitan municipalities. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques will be used to recruit approximately 30–50 street-homeless adults, together with six key informants comprising social workers, social development practitioners, and government officials. Data will be collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke’s six-phase framework. The anticipated themes include experiences of social exclusion, systemic barriers to accessing social protection and basic services, coping and survival strategies, and aspirations for social reintegration. By centring the voices of people experiencing homelessness, the study underscores the necessity of collaborative, multi-sectoral social work responses that reflect the spirit of Harambee. The findings aim to inform development-oriented social work practice, policy advocacy, and coordinated service delivery, contributing to sustainable, inclusive, and rights-based solutions for addressing urban homelessness and advancing shared futures in South Africa.

Proportion, Barriers and Facilitators of disclosure of sickle cell status to school authorities among Adolescents attending Mulago Hospital sickle cell clinic

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"Proportion, barriers and facilitators of disclosure of sickle cell status to school authorities among adolescents attending Mulago Hospital Sickle Cell Clinic!

Introduction: Disclosure of sickle cell disease (SCD) status among adolescents living with SCD to school authorities is still a challenge and yet SDG 4 encourages equity and inclusiveness for vulnerable groups. In Uganda, there is paucity of data on disclosure of SCD status to school authorities among this population. This study determined the proportion of disclosure, explored barriers and facilitators of sickle cell status disclosure to school authorities among adolescents attending Mulago Hospital Sickle Cell Clinic (MHSCC).

Methods: A mixed methods cross-sectional study at MHSCC. Quantitative data was collected through 355 interviews with adolescents 10-19 years, while qualitative data was collected using 28 IDI (adolescents) 10 kIIs with school authorities. Data was analyzed using SPSS and content thematic approach.

Results: Overall, 41.4% of the adolescents living with SCD had disclosed to their school authorities. Barriers to disclosure included, lack of confidentiality, fear of being stigmatized and sympathized, myths surrounding SCD, fear of losing relationships, failure to recognize benefits of disclosure, desire for a sense of normalcy, adolescence stage, and body appearance. Facilitators were, fear of being engaged in tedious activities, harsh corporal punishments, need to get the right medical treatment, filling medical forms, existence of sickle cell clubs, encouragement from family members, self-awareness, physical body appearance.

Conclusion: Only 4 in 10 adolescents living with SCD had disclosed their SC status. There is need for massive awareness campaigns about SCD, school outreaches, more research on psychosocial support for PLSCD, recruitment of school social workers, designing talking compounds, considering such children and adolescents under special needs education policy."

Multi-level Interventions for Social Isolation Based on the Social Ecological Model ～ A Study Through Japan\'s Community-Based Social Work practice and Social Policy ～

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１． Purpose: In Japan “Hikikomori” is gaining attention as one issue of social isolation. Social isolation arises not from a single factor but from the complex interaction of individual, family, community, and societal level factors. Therefore, the effectiveness of multi-level interventions based on the social ecological model (Bronfenbrenner: 1979) is being noted, rather than single-level interventions (Holt, Robles, Sbarra: 2017).

This study examines how successful cases of “hikikomori” support through community-based social work in Japan contribute as one form of multilevel intervention, linked to social policy.

２． Methods: 1) Establish research hypotheses based on literature review.
2) Select three successful “Hikikomori” support cases and clarify their intervention processes.
3) Examine community-based social work practice linked social policy through comparing the research hypotheses with the case interventions.

３． Results: Three “Hikikomori” cases handled by Tokyo social workers developed growth for individuals and families, along with opportunities for their social life and participation, through a cycle between micro and meso levels.

Furthermore, macro-level factors influenced the outcomes, which is the 2020 revision of the Social Welfare Act and the 2023 Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation. At the exo-level, the three local governments implemented these laws and systematically advanced community social work practices.

４． Discussion: Since “Hikikomori” arose from diverse factors, the cyclical interaction between micro and meso-level practices led to problem resolution. Furthermore, community-based social work was promoted through funding from local government and national social policies. National and local governments supported micro and meso levels through preventive measures against social isolation.

These might be one of the models that prove the effectiveness of multi-layered interventions based on an ecological perspective of social isolation. However, as this study only analyzes three successful cases, further investigation is necessary.

Experiences of Black women of first-generation in the families at Undergraduate courses in Brazil universities at Southeast region.

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"High Education affirmative action policies in Brazil result of social struggles, especially those led by Black Movement and student movement. Among other demands, this struggle involved the implementation of racial and social quotas for access to higher education, that were instituted by the Brazilian government in 2010. In a country marked by economic, racial, and gender inequalities, affirmative actions are part of the struggle for reparation. Affirmative action encompasses both access to and retention in higher education. The quota policy included Black people (both pretos and pardos), Indigenous peoples, Persons with Disabilities, and more recently, quilombola populations, students from public or community schools, and those from poor families (family income per capita/month equal to or less than US$286).
After admission, the Student Assistance Program focuses on ensuring the retention and success of poor and Black students, among others. This study, based on a generational and gender perspective, analyzes the experiences of Black women who were first generation in their family to access HE in federal higher education institutions in Brazil's Southeast region, highlighting how student assistance policies relate to the reproduction or disruption of social inequalities.
We conducted a survey using an online questionnaire (Google Forms), involved 19 Federal Universities, of that 84% institutions responded (totaling 183 Black female students' questionnaires). Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis.
The students have between 18 and 24 years old (56%) and come from poor families (family income between one and two Brazil minimum wages - 40.5%). 73.4% of the students received student assistance (financial aid, food, health, and digital inclusion), while 20.2% do not receive or are unaware of the benefits.
It is concluded that affirmative action policies have been changing the profile of higher education students in Brazil, but they are not sufficient to ensure their retention."

Women, drug use, and loss of child custody: grief deprived of rights

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This article aims to reflect on how literature has addressed the process of losing child custody due to drug use by women.

As social workers and researchers, this fact required a systematic analysis of the social reality to support our professional action, overcoming the phenomenal appearance. Moving from the concrete to the abstract and from this to the thought concrete, the systematization of findings in publications allows us to reflect on the accumulated knowledge and the differences in how the issue is treated in different countries.

This is a systematic literature review. The corpus involved articles published in scientific journals in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, using the descriptors: Women, drug abuse, pregnancy, and child custody loss (in Portuguese, English, and Spanish) in the databases: Redalyc, Scopus, and Google Scholar. We used Covidence for the organization and selection of the research corpus. We selected 38 articles published between 2001 and 2024.

Exclusion criteria were: duplicate texts or those that did not address the issue of custody loss related to drug use.

The results were organized into 3 axes: who are the authors; what they say; and what recommendations were presented.

The publications originated from the American continent – 18 from the United States, 9 from Brazil, and 8 from Canada (92%) (Figure 1). They are mainly female researchers (58%) and the texts were written recently – between 2018-2024. The analyzed articles addressed aspects of treatment, or about the woman, or about the child, or about approach techniques.

The injustice present in the legal system was pointed out by the authors, as well as the importance of reviewing legislation and approaches directed at these women.

Global anti-oppressive archeologists in the decolonial classroom: Engaging with integrative learning experiences (ILEs)

Dr Bibiana Koh[1]
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"Ivan Illich (1971) challenged traditional notions of education by suggesting that learning happens outside the four walls of a traditional classroom. In this presentation, we embrace decolonial practices by reimaging social work education and embracing Freirean cultural generative themes (Rocha, Alonso, Mares-Tamayo, McGovern, 2016). Social work students are invited to be anti-oppressive archeologists to excavate, gather, and use artifacts “as central points of knowledge-building” (Rocha et al., 2016, p. 746) in an integrative learning experience (ILE). In doing so, students curate their own “generative themes” (Rocha et al., 2016, p. 746; Freire, 1970) that inform and drive their call to global anti-oppressive social work practice.

In this presentation, we share examples of students’ integrative learning experiences (ILEs)—both US and EU-based. By inviting students to both self-direct their own ILEs, learners engage outside the classroom to interrogate the histories of oppression that impact those with whom they work. “Generative themes” may evolve out of local or global histories of oppression centered on subjugated social identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. This decolonial work requires students to be critically reflexive (Adjei, 2022). As Macías (2022) argues: “Decoloniality us an epistemological and political project centered on the commitment to unsettle colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing” (p. 339).

Following students’ self-directed ILE experiences, learners share their ILEs and engage with one another in dialogue. Consistent with Illich (1971) and Freire (1970), ILEs have the potential to disrupt banking educationand assist learners in developing a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Takona, 2024). ILEs can be a transformative educational experience that deepens students’ understanding of oppression in their global social work practice."

Lifting while we Climb: Mentor and Mentee

Dr Christa Gilliam[1]
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"<p dir=""ltr"">Communities are facing dangers at the intersections of war, poverty, and climate change. Social work educators and leaders are responsible for mentoring others to engage to confront these complexities. Women, particularly women of color, are increasingly claiming a role as leaders. Leading means mentoring–bringing along the generations. Frameworks for mentoring women for leadership positions will be presented. Ubuntu, a model which centers community, connection, and humanity, values the synergy of the coming together.</p>
<p dir=""ltr"">We will explore the role of women as mentors and leaders as we face the trifecta of crisis with increasing injustice. Voices from silenced communities enrich our ability to impact change. In the process of working toward change social workers are engaged in the parallel process of mentoring others while being mentored. The pathways of mentorship are complex. We anchor analysis and development in feminist (hooks, 2015), womanist (Alexander-Floyd & Simien, 2006), Black feminist (Collins, 2009), borderline (Anzaldúa, 2021), and intersectionality theories (Sloan et al., 2018; Cho et al., 2013).</p>
<p dir=""ltr"">This session will highlight the need for mentoring social workers and community members to engage in advocacy and transformative change, bringing the voices of communities that have been silenced to the center. Knowledge and strategies will be shared about diverse pathways to leading change and mentoring others at the intersections (Starks et al., 2021). Strategies and tools will highlight mentoring and leadership at the intersections.</p>
<p dir=""ltr"">Leadership pathways and the role of mentoring will be explored. Our engagement with these issues will be contextualized within the reality that the crisis of climate change comes with increasing injustice (Nesmith et al. 2021). Woman as leader speaks to the question of what happens at the intersection of race, gender, power, and leadership and serves to inform a more equitable process (Clemens, 2017; Forbes et al., 2021).</p>"

EMPOWERING CHANGE: SOCIAL WORK\'S BLUEPRINT FOR FORGING TRANSFORMATIVE SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

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This conceptual manuscript ignites a paradigm shift, unveiling social work as a radical blueprint for sustainable development. It confronts entrenched inequities in political economy, harnessing social work\'s emancipatory ethos to propel transformative change toward UN SDGs, reimagining resilience amid climate crises and governance failures.

Methodology: Through exploratory synthesis, it weaves interdisciplinary threads—critical theory, participatory justice models, and sustainability frameworks—into a novel conceptual architecture. Non-empirical rigor emerges via dialectical analysis of global case archetypes, forging a scalable blueprint without empirical data constraints.

Outcomes: The blueprint crystallizes social work\'s catalytic roles: equity architects dismantling structural violence, community alchemists igniting grassroots innovation, and policy vanguardists embedding sustainability in governance. It yields a transformative triad—empowerment, resilience, regeneration—for SDG acceleration.

Contribution: Bridging silos, it elevates social work from periphery to vanguard, offering practitioners and policymakers a battle-tested framework for equitable futures.

Implications: Urgently calls for curriculum revolutions, cross-sector alliances, and funding infusions, priming social work to spearhead post-2030 sustainability agendas amid escalating global disruptions.

Limitations: Relies on conceptual abstraction, demanding future empirical validation; overlooks hyper-local cultural variances.

Novelty: Pioneers social work as "sustainability insurgency," fusing political economy critique with actionable blueprints— a first for transformative discourse. The clarion call for sustainable development resonates amid cascading global crises—climate volatility, entrenched inequities, and eroding social fabric cohesion—imperative for radical reimagining of progress where social work stands as the vanguard of human dignity and a blueprint for transformative futures. This manuscript propels social work from reactive advocacy to proactive insurgency, fusing emancipatory praxis with ecological imperatives. Social work addresses social injustices, promotes well-being, and since the 1990s, there has been growing awareness in the social work community of problematic disconnections between social work and environmental issues. It ignites that reconnection, positioning social work as a catalytic force to propel the UN SDGs beyond rhetoric into resilient reality.

Digital Exclusion as Structural Oppression: Empirical Insights for Social Work Practice

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Digital technologies are increasingly central to access to education, employment, health and social services, welfare provision, and civic participation. However, inequalities in access to and use of digital resources contribute to the reproduction and intensification of poverty, generating mutually reinforcing cycles of exclusion. The literature shows that the digital divide is not merely a lack of devices or connectivity, but a systemic inequality intertwined with multiple forms of deprivation (Mubarak et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2024; EAPN, 2024). From this perspective, poverty is understood not only as a material condition, but as a mechanism of structural oppression that constrains agency, participation, and citizenship (Fraser, 1997).

This contribution has a twofold aim: to develop a theoretical framework that situates digital exclusion within debates on poverty, oppression, and social justice, and to integrate it with preliminary insights from an ongoing qualitative study on digital exclusion among people living in poverty and on the role of social work.

The framework highlights the close interconnection between poverty and digital exclusion. Limited resources, infrastructures, and skills restrict access to digital technologies, while exclusion from increasingly digitalised welfare and public services further reduces opportunities and rights. The growing “digital-by-default” approach may generate new forms of vulnerability by shifting responsibility for access and digital competence onto the most disadvantaged individuals. In this context, social work is called to recognise the digital as a socio-political issue and to promote practices and infrastructures that support inclusive digital citizenship.

Empirically, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with 20 people living in poverty and 20 social workers in Italy. Preliminary findings suggest that poverty and digital exclusion operate as interconnected mechanisms of oppression, underscoring the need to move beyond compensatory interventions towards structural strategies aimed at advancing digital justice.

Foundations of Haki and Harambee in Education: Social Work in Student Access and Retention Policies for Student Mothers

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This paper presents reflections regarding the need to address maternity as an analytical category and a social marker of difference. The proposal consists of problematizing the inequalities experienced by women-mothers—in their multiple realities and diversities—in accessing educational trajectories in their careers, both at initial schooling levels and in vocational training, undergraduate, and graduate courses. Stemming from an experience of exclusion, invisibility, and academic inequality encountered during a selection process for a doctoral program in Social Work in Brazil, the theoretical and epistemological inquiry that grounds this work emerged: what is the role of Social Work in student access and retention policies for student mothers? What is the ethical-political commitment of the profession regarding the debate on maternity as an analytical category and a social marker of difference? The theoretical-methodological framework supporting this debate is grounded in the perspective of critical decolonial feminism (González, 2020; Lugones, 2008; Oyěwùmí, 1997), intersected by an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1989; Lugones, 2007; Collins, 2019) of different social realities, and in the foundations of Haki and Harambee (Kenyatta, 1964; Mbiti, 1990; Mazreui; Mazrui, 1995) for the debate on education and student access and retention policies for student mothers. The confluence of Haki is characterized by the right and equity of women-mothers to access and complete their schooling processes, while Harambee serves as a determining driver of collective effort for the formulation of public policies that enable a more just and democratic society.

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BRAZIL\'S UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM: THE CHALLENGES OF DECENTRALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT

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In Brazil, the political and administrative organization is divided into three federal entities (the Union, the States, and the Municipalities), each with its own level of autonomy and powers in relation to political, fiscal, and administrative functions. This sharing of powers between entities is called decentralization. Brazil is the only country with more than 100 million inhabitants that has a public health system [financed by tax money] that is universal [for all] and free for the entire population. With a country made up of 26 states, 1 federal district, and 5,569 municipalities, the principle of decentralization in health policy defines an agreement between entities defining competencies—from planning and financing to policy implementation—with actions to be coordinated and directed in a single direction. Thus, even though, since the implementation of the SUS, legislation has allowed for the existence of a decentralized health model in terms of management, reality has shown an overvaluation of management for some entities, compared to the erasure of others. Therefore, our objective is to reflect on the process of decentralization of the Unified Health System, analyzing how this process has been occurring and situating the place of the state entity. In terms of historical review, the Union continues to concentrate autonomy in the field of decisions and resources, and municipalities constitute a privileged field for the execution of health actions. The state entity, on the other hand, has limited capacity to create and conduct policies in its territory, and its autonomy is weakened. Thus, in the decentralization of health policy, we face permanent challenges arising from the conflictual relations between federal entities, which are reflected in the design of the SUS, especially with regard to the role played by the state entity.

Reclaiming and reimagining social work practice through indigenous communal ethics: Lessons from local community support systems (LCSSs) advancing educational equity in rural northern Ghana

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This paper examines how Local Community Support Systems (LCSSs), which represent informal, community-driven structures of mutual aid embodying the principles of Ubuntu, Harambee, and Afro-communitarian ethics, sustain rural livelihoods and social welfare services such as education in rural Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Traditionally rooted in collective resource mobilization and burden-sharing, these systems continue to serve as essential yet underrecognized mechanisms for addressing social and educational vulnerabilities in rural Ghana.

Drawing on a case study of rural communities in northern Ghana, and using interviews and focus groups with caregivers, teachers, students, community leaders, and diaspora actors, the study highlights how both individual and collective agency—embedded in indigenous Afro-communitarian ethics—enables communities to sustain basic education in contexts where formal state systems remain limited.

These findings challenge dominant development narratives that attribute educational progress primarily to state-led and donor-driven interventions, while overlooking indigenous social welfare logics and community agency. The paper argues that formally recognizing and integrating LCSSs within national education policy frameworks can strengthen not only community resilience, equity, and sustainability, but also advance a Harambee-inspired model of social work and welfare services rooted in collective responsibility and local knowledge systems.

Such integration offers a decolonial and indigenized approach to social work practice and social service provision that centers Africa's enduring traditions of solidarity as a foundation for sustainable transformation in educational provision.

Families as Anchors of Social Resilience: How NGO Practices Reconnect Communities through Empowerment and Care

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"In alignment with the SWSD 2026 theme Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures, this study conceptualizes families as anchors of social resilience and investigates how NGOs in Taiwan reconnect fragmented communities through empowerment and care. Drawing on Family Resilience Theory (Walsh, 2003), Relational Empowerment Theory (Kabeer, 1999), Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), it frames empowerment as a multilevel and relational process that strengthens agency within and across families, communities, and institutional systems.

The research is based on a ten-year action-research program conducted by a Taiwanese NGO working with low-income and crisis-affected families. Through integrated educational support, participatory governance, and financial-capability training, the program sought to build family agency and collective well-being. Quantitative and qualitative findings reveal that 80 percent of participating families improved debt management, 70 percent reduced poverty-risk indicators, and most reported enhanced trust, cooperation, and mutual aid within local networks. These results demonstrate that empowerment embedded in relational and ecological contexts can generate sustainable transformation rather than short-term service outcomes.

The study advances social-work theory by positioning NGOs as mediating actors that restitch the social fabric between state and community. It argues that sustainable social-work transformation requires shifting from “delivering services” to “rebuilding relationships,” thereby operationalizing the Harambee spirit of shared responsibility and solidarity. This model contributes to global social-development discourse by offering a grounded framework for family-centered, community-driven resilience in times of social uncertainty, highlighting how empowerment and care can jointly sustain the collective capacity for change."

Reimagining Social Work Education in Uganda Through Students\' Perspectives on Indigenization

Liberty Vivian Tadria[1], Prof Janestic Twikirize[1]
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The indigenization of social work has gained increasing scholarly attention in Africa, driven by the need to make social work practice more responsive to local realities and social development goals. However, social work education across the continent remains structurally misaligned with local socio-cultural contexts due to Western-informed curricula. Consequently, graduates are often ill-prepared to address community challenges, undermining the profession's effectiveness and legitimacy. Indigenizing social work education is therefore essential to develop curricula that are culturally grounded and contextually relevant. Despite the growing prominence of this discourse, students' voices remain largely absent, reflecting a critical gap in participation and understanding. This study investigates social work students' perspectives on indigenization in Uganda, emphasizing the need for a culturally relevant curriculum that prepares graduates to address local social problems through sustainable interventions. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys from 98 final-year undergraduate students at Makerere University, complemented by qualitative focus group discussions with selected participants. Findings reveal strong student support for indigenization as a means to enhance the profession's relevance, effectiveness, legitimacy, and community acceptance. Western curricular dominance and limited indigenous documentation emerged as key barriers. The study calls for embedding indigenous content across courses, enhancing community engagement, and reforming pedagogy. The study concludes that the student community is ready for a well-integrated and indigenized social work curriculum that prepares them for effective practice in their local contexts. It recommends strengthening systems and mechanisms for evaluating and enhancing indigenization of social work education.

Reconceptualizing the Social Responsibility of Social Work Knowledge in Advancing Social Welfare and Social Protection

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The latest global definition of social work identifies social responsibility as a core principle underpinning the profession's commitment to social welfare and social protection. Within this framework, social work knowledge is understood as inherently normative and action-oriented, carrying explicit responsibilities toward society, policy systems, and populations reliant on social support.

This paper is a conceptual and analytical study that argues that social work professionals and scholars share responsibility for producing, interpreting, and mobilizing knowledge in ways that contribute to equitable, evidence-informed, and inclusive social policies. These responsibilities extend to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, academic communities, students, planners, and practitioners involved in the design and implementation of social support programs.

Key dimensions of social responsibility discussed include the production of applied, reliable, and politically independent knowledge; timely and transparent dissemination of findings; critical analysis and informed critique of social policies; and systematic monitoring of organizations delivering social support services. The paper also highlights the importance of documenting national experiences and lessons learned, generating context-sensitive and indigenous knowledge to strengthen the capacity of social service providers, and maintaining scientific integrity in policy-relevant analysis. Recognizing and institutionalizing the social responsibility of social work knowledge is essential for ensuring that scholarly production meaningfully contributes to social justice, reduces structural inequalities, and strengthens the responsiveness and accountability of social welfare systems.

Finally, the paper positions social work knowledge as a mechanism of social accountability, emphasizing the role of scholars as social watchdogs who amplify beneficiary voices, support scientific and professional associations, and provide fair and continuous reporting to the public and decision-makers. By clarifying these responsibilities, the paper contributes to international debates on the social and ethical obligations of social work knowledge in advancing social justice.

Decreasing bias in reports of child maltreatment

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"Racial and socioeconomic inequities have long plagued child welfare in the United States. Starting with initial referrals, Black and Indigenous children, and children from lower socioeconomic statuses, are overrepresented across child welfare decision-making points. Yet, few interventions have targeted decision-making among professional mandated reporters to increase self-reflection and awareness of structural biases.

This presentation will showcase an innovative interprofessional education module (IPE) that was developed and piloted at a large public university in the United States to increase knowledge of child maltreatment, practices of self-reflection, and recognition of structural biases among professional mandated reporters. Based on prior experience with IPE, the team developed the following components to the online module: 1) interprofessional group discussion and introduction; 2) lecture video and materials on child maltreatment and bias; 3) analyze a case as an interprofessional group with prompts; and 4) complete a debriefing post with the group. To evaluate the module, students were asked to complete a pre-post survey to examine changes after completing the IPE. Students were also invited to participate in a focus group after piloting to explore areas for improvement.

77 students were enrolled in the pilot child maltreatment IPE, including students in social work, education and athletic training. The IPE was integrated into courses that the development team members were teaching and was a required course assignment. Student participants had significant improvements in attitudes toward interprofessional teamwork and knowledge of child maltreatment. In the qualitative data, students reported enhanced critical thinking and self-reflection skills that could be applied in future practice. This submission will take a hands-on approach to go over lessons learned, implications for child welfare practice and education, and provide key tools that agencies, institutions of higher education, and other organizations can use to encourage interprofessional dialogue and practice."

Stigma toward mental health conditions in Ghana

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"Mental health stigma is often associated with symptom progression and delays in treatment seeking. This study field recruited a sample of 507 Ghanaian adults to take part in a survey utilizing a randomized experimental vignette design to learn more about their conceptualizations of mental health symptoms and examine attitudes toward those experiencing those symptoms. Participants were randomly assigned a vignette featuring a person with symptoms of one of five common mental health concerns. They were then asked to indicate if the vignette subject had a “problem” and complete a multidimensional stigma measure. Results indicate that relational and treatability related stigma were inversely related to perceptions of if the vignette subject had a problem, while public and disclosure related stigma were directly associated with problem perception. Thus, stigma reduction efforts may be particularly effective when tailored to target specific stigma domains. Implications for future research and social policy related to community based mental health stigma reduction efforts are explored."

The path towards hope - The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, Personal Hope, and Collective Hope Among Arab and Jewish Students In the Face of Ongoing Emergency Situation

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Background: The turbulent security situation in the Middle East in the recent years significantly challenges, among others, the psychological well-being of the Arab and the Jewish students. While the link between self-efficacy and personal hope is theoretically established, the interplay between collective efficacy and hope - at both personal and collective levels - remains underexplored. This gap is particularly evident regarding students coping with Continuous Traumatic Stress (CTS). This study integrates Hope Theory (Snyder, 2000) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997) to address this theoretical void.

Objectives: The research aims to examine, whether self-efficacy and collective efficacy predict personal and collective hope among students. It innovatively investigates the cross-level relationships between individual (micro) and collective (macro) resources, for the first time. Furthermore, it explores the moderating roles of perceived threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), gender, and nationality (Arabs vs. Jews) within these dynamics.

Methodology: A quantitative study will be conducted with a random sample of approximately 800 Arab and Jewish higher-education students. Data collection utilizes validated self-report questionnaires designed to assess levels of hope and efficacy (both personal and collective), as well as perceived threat and socio-demographic characteristics. Statistical analysis will employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test direct and moderating paths.

Discussion: Theoretically, this study proposes an innovative integrative model synthesizing individual and collective resources under ongoing emergency conditions, based on Hope Theory (Snyder, 2000) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). In applied terms, findings will assist academic institutions in developing evidence-based interventions to cultivate hope and enhance collective coping capabilities during human-induced and natural disasters.

Safeguarding and protecting children and other vulnerable populations

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Children, by virtue of being children become a vulnerable population. Within this vulnerable population falls in layers of further vulnerability. It would not be right to put vulnerability in a hierarchy. Vulnerability depends on several factors. It depends on the services rendered, financial investment, community participation in the state to safeguard and protect children. All these depend on how the state and community perceives and understand issues. For example, issues related to sexual, physical, financial, mental, emotional exploitation of children attract an element of sympathy, making these issues to be treated within the category of being 'very' vulnerable. This is the victim population. However, issues related to Children in Conflict with the Law (CCL), do not attract sympathy. To add to this, media, be it social, visual, print media has colored these children as 'perpetuators' who need harsh punishment based on a few cases which are outliners in the larger spectrum of this issue.

An issue which attracts no sympathy among public, which does not have much research to back it, which gets negative media attention adds on to the vulnerability of the issue and the population within in. CCL is one such vulnerable population of children which is invisible within the larger context of children and these children need help. They need protection, someone to guide them through rough waters. This paper explores the vulnerability these children face socially and through the system and the need for social work intervention in this sector.

Bridging policy and practice: developing legal frameworks and social protection systems for universal and sustainable coverage: The case of youth with SUDs and their caregivers in Zambia.

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Background

Recent research indicates that substance abuse has become a significant global public health challenge, particularly among adolescents and young adults in both developed and developing nations. Increasing rates of alcohol, marijuana, and prescription opioid use among adolescents have intensified these concerns. The growing prevalence of substance use disorders (SUDs) and their debilitating consequences suggest that a rising number of family members are assuming caregiving roles for affected youth. However, little is known about the lived experiences and perspectives of these family caregivers (FCGs). Existing research highlights that the chronic and relapsing nature of SUDs often leads FCGs to undertake prolonged caregiving duties, which may negatively affect their physical, mental, emotional, and psychosocial health. Despite these effects, SUD carers in Zambia have no social protection for their youth grappling with substance-induced psychosocial disabilities. The view of SUDs as a moral failing is still rife and consequently, persons with SUDs are not viewed as having disorders that qualify for social protection benefits.

Methods

This was a qualitative study with 30 family caregivers of youth aged 16-24 that explored their lived experiences and subjective meanings using two in-depth semi-structured interviews, a caregiving timeline, and participant observation.

Findings

The low socioeconomic position of many family caregivers—manifested in work disruptions, financial strain, challenges with transportation, and difficulties purchasing essential medications often unavailable in public hospitals—combined with their inability to afford private rehabilitation and the young person’s inconsistent engagement with public outpatient services, resulted in ongoing responsibility for the youth’s care remaining within the family.

Implications for policy and practice

At both community and national level, key stakeholders—including NGOs, faith-based organisations, civic leaders, mental health professionals, service users, community and family members, and affected youth need to champion the development of targeted legal frameworks and social protection policies and interventions for young people who use substances and their caregivers.

Family separation across displacement, encampment, and post-resettlement: Understanding psychosocial well-being among Bhutanese refugees

Mr Kamal Khatiwada[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Family separation is a widespread global phenomenon, and it is prevalent among refugee populations. Refugees experience family separation during forced displacement, encampment, and resettlement. Family separation is linked to adverse psychosocial outcomes and can exacerbate mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In the early 1990s, over 100,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese Southerners, also known as Lhotshampa, were uprooted from Bhutan. After displacement, they lived in refugee camps in eastern Nepal. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettled the displaced Lhotshampas to eight countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Denmark, and Australia. Through its government-assisted refugee (GAR) program, the Government of Canada resettled more than 6,500 between 2009 and 2015. This presentation will focus on resettled Bhutanese refugees' experiences in Canada to understand: 1) how they construct and make meaning of family separation during displacement, encampment, and resettlement, and 2) how the meaning making process impacts their psychosocial well-being, using the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socioecological theory and meaning making model (Park, 2010). Interpretive phenomenology is used to understand meaning-making processes within the Bhutanese refugees' social, cultural, and historical contexts. Implications for social work practice and research will be discussed.

Period - Measuring Menstrual Stigma and Shame in Rural Ghana

Dr. Sevaughn Banks[1]
[1]California State University, Stanislaus, , United States

"Menstrual Health (MH) is an aspect of overall health and wellbeing, yet schools, communities, and governments neglected it as a priority. Despite its natural biological occurrence, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) remains a significant challenge for millions of girls and women. MHM is access to sanitary products, sanitation facilities, and education to manage menstruation safely and with dignity. This challenge is compounded by limited access to affordable menstrual products, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, insufficient menstrual health education, and pervasive social shame and stigma.

Literature declares stigma and shame are barriers to education and employment. This workshop will present findings from a quantitative study entitled, Period - Measuring Menstrual Stigma and Shame in Rural Ghana. Seventy-two females completed the menstrual stigma and shame (MSSQ) questionnaire, and fifty-eight males completed the menstrual stigma questionnaire (MSQ). Research findings both affirms and challenges established literature. Boys strongly disagree that they say things that cause stigma and shame to menstruators, although a high percentage are embarrassed at the sight of pads and on religious grounds prevented menstruating girls. On the other hand, a high percentage of girls agreed to experiencing societal stigma and shame, as well as the discomfort associated with menstruating without access to proper WASH facilities, these lead to exemption from social gatherings and school.

They are also unable to talk about menstruation publicly because menstruation is deemed as a private issue rather than public. Because girls and women are socialized to keep their periods as private as possible, future research includes duplicating this study in additional schools. Additionally, qualitative research will provide more depth about stigma and shame rationale."

Social Care Responses to People Experiencing Homelessness in the 2024 Valencia Floods

Alba Galán Sanantonio[1]
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On 29 October 2024, severe flooding in Valencia (Spain) caused 229 deaths and extensive material and economic damage. Beyond immediate humanitarian impacts, the disaster exposed structural inequalities, particularly affecting people experiencing homelessness and residential exclusion, highlighting how climate-related disasters intersect with social exclusion and systemic housing inequalities.

This study analyses the response of social care services to people experiencing homelessness after the floods. A qualitative approach was used, combining bibliographic and documentary analysis, including legislation and grey literature from the year following the disaster, with in-depth interviews of three experts in social intervention in the city (social workers and psychologists). The necessary ethical measures were adopted. Interviews were fully transcribed and analysed inductively to generate categories and subcategories.

Results show that the institutional response focused on households whose homes became uninhabitable. Emergency shelters, temporary rehousing, direct financial aid, and subsidised rental schemes were rapidly deployed by regional and municipal administrations, mainly assisting people who had recently lost housing. Third sector organisations played a key role, mobilising emergency accommodation, material support, and social accompaniment. However, no specific measures were designed for people already experiencing homelessness or living in informal housing. Access to assistance required formal proof of residence, excluding people experiencing homelessness, who remained largely invisible within the emergency response. Social services were overwhelmed and mainly reactive, limiting their capacity to address the needs of people in extreme exclusion. The findings confirm that people experiencing homelessness faced double vulnerability: extreme physical exposure and administrative exclusion.

The study highlights the need for social work to adopt an ecosocial and preventive approach, strengthen coordination with the third sector, implement specific emergency protocols for people experiencing homelessness, and ensure flexible access to aid. In an era of accelerating climate change, homelessness must be recognised as a critical risk factor in disaster preparedness and social work intervention.

LAB DH: The Sesc São Paulo Experience in Territorial Articulation and Strengthening Networks in Human Rights

Mrs Sandra Carla Sarde Mirabell[1]
[1]ICSW, , India

The LAB DH – Human Rights Laboratory is a social technology developed by Sesc São Paulo within the scope of the \"Human Rights for All People\" project. It is a training and articulation strategy in Human Rights that integrates individuals, collectives, community leaders, civil society organizations, public and private institutions, social movements, and the social assistance network to strengthen democracy and defend citizenship. Its central objective is to promote formative meetings that integrate education in rights, exchange of experiences, and strengthening of local networks, contributing to intersectoral and territorialized practices in the field of human rights and public policies.

Between 2024 and 2025, the LAB DH consolidated itself as a strategy for territorial capillarity and collective knowledge building. In 2024, 3 Human Rights Labs (LABs DH) were held, involving 11 Sesc São Paulo units in 11 cities in the interior and coastal regions of São Paulo state, expanding the dialogue between different territories and social realities. In 2025, there was a significant expansion, with the implementation of 19 Human Rights Labs, mobilizing 19 Sesc units and reaching 10 cities, including the capital of São Paulo and municipalities in the metropolitan region and the interior, strengthening local and regional networks of action in Human Rights. For 2026, 16 Human Rights Labs are planned, with the participation of 18 units in 12 cities, further expanding the territorial reach and the diversity of contexts involved in the state of São Paulo.

The methodology is based on popular education, the recognition of local knowledge, and collective construction, valuing the territory as a space for promoting rights and confronting social inequalities.

By promoting educational meetings, LAB DH highlights the potential of networking and intersectoral collaboration, and establishes itself as a replicable practice for the contemporary debate on human rights, social mobilization, and collective transformation.

Leveraging National Partnerships to Enhance Child-Centered Data through the Child Research institute and Training in Namibia (CRIT)

Dr J.C. Ndilimeke Nashandi[1]
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Background.

Although Namibia collects routine administrative child-centered data, no system exists to make available and accessible data to assess the efficacy of child protection programs. As a result, the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, partnered to implement the Child Research Initiative and Training (CRIT) referred to as the Institute in the National Development Plan Six (NDP6) of Namibia (2025-2030).

Methods.

Since 2023, Namibia's Permanent Taskforce for Children (PTF) and its Joint Technical Committee (JTC) have overseen CRIT. Housed at UNAM's School of Allied Health Sciences, Department of Psychology and Social Work, CRIT was established following the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) recommendations to strengthen child-focused data systems. The PTF, comprising diverse stakeholders, meets quarterly, while the JTC meets monthly. Technical assistance is provided by the University of Minnesota, with UNICEF supporting government. Together, A 3-day kick-off conference attended by about 67 stakeholders was held with representation of all 14 regions in Namibia. Conference proceedings were transcribed and analyzed for themes to inform initial research and training.

Results.

Ensuring the use of existing child protection data systems and sustainability of CRIT was identified for planning, research, and training. First, the Ministry included CRIT to co-author the first Namibia Child Protection Statistics Report 2014-2023. Second, the Ministry submitted CRIT as a flagship program in the National Development Plan Six (NDP6) of Namibia (2025-2030). Third, UNAM elevated the status of CRIT to a Center for Excellence, to maximize resources. Fourth, CRIT developed a 5-year strategic plan to guide and monitor its activities.

Implications.

This national partnership between government and university has implications for how local and regional coordinating mechanisms may inform policies and programs by leveraging existing programs.

Understanding Return Migration Experiences of Young Men: Social Work Case File Analysis

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Millions of young people from Africa migrate to the Global North with the expectation of accessing improved social and economic opportunities. When these expectations are unmet, some experience return migration, which is often neither voluntary nor a single, clearly defined event. Rather, return migration is a complex and extended process that begins long before departure and continues well after return, particularly for (in)voluntary returnees who navigate lengthy administrative and legal procedures. This study explores the return migration experiences of young men by “hearing” their narratives through social work case files, positioning these records as valuable yet underutilized sources of knowledge. The study contributes to transdisciplinary debates on return migration programmes and sustainable post-return reintegration. Using a manual data extraction template, information from selected social work case files will be thematically analyzed. Ethical approval and established ethical principles guiding secondary data analysis will be strictly observed, and no electronic files or notes will be accessed. Findings highlight that case record reviews offer critical insights into migrants’ journeys, return processes, and resettlement experiences. While migration and return programmes often emphasize migrant-centred approaches, support following return is frequently limited, resulting in perceptions of broken promises and the resurfacing of pre-migration challenges. Consequently, return is experienced as fragile, flexible, and easily reversible. Case files emerge as a crucial resource for understanding the realities of vulnerable populations, examining tertiary prevention strategies, and illuminating the mediating role of social workers between institutional systems and migrant clients. Integrating case file analysis into social work education and migration research can strengthen evidence-based interventions and advance sustainable development goals.

1061

Never forget? Current relevance of historic memory and genocide studies: a Salvadoran case study

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"Forgetting or distorting critical historic memory sets the stage for corruption, allowing for the repetition of oppressive policies and practices. Historic and current Salvadoran grassroots resistance to oppression offers opportunities to learn from these efforts at a time when fascist and authoritarian leadership is on the rise around the globe.

The critical need for genocide studies and historic memory, to remember traumatic wartime history so as not to repeat it, has been painfully evident in Central America, where environmental activists and the journalists who cover their work are persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered in alarming numbers, but it is also becoming increasingly relevant elsewhere around the globe. Community activism in multiple forms is needed to counter the injustices inflicted on community leaders and those who promote social justice and human rights.

Some recorded testimonies of civil war survivors have made it into online collections and educational archives, but many have not, and remain accessible only to immediate community members, despite the original intent to educate a wider international audience. Strategies for optimizing broader accessibility, such as archiving, mapping, translation, captioning, and geotagging will be presented as well as related community macro social work efforts to raise these issues, address unresolved individual and communal trauma, and leverage these efforts and tools to gain wider international audiences and awareness.

Participants will engage with survivor and activist testimonies, both past and current, as well as physical artifacts, recorded testimonies, and multiple online archives that will demonstrate effective ways to learn from the past to bolster efforts to confront current conflicts. Participants will be asked to consider the parallels between the conflicts Experience in Latin America, particular in Central America, and how it compares the struggles elsewhere around the world. The case for reciprocal solidarity will be explored: what it should look like and what it could accomplish."

Transforming Social Work Doctoral Education: A Global, Culturally Relevant Toolkit for Gender Safety and Equity

Ilana Shtivelman[1]
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As educational systems preparing future social work scholars and leaders, doctoral programs must reconcile their stated commitments to gender equity and safety with increasingly constrained political and institutional environments. Often, disconnects remain between formal doctoral curricula and institutional cultures that shape lived experiences of students, particularly those experiencing gender-based harm. Drawing from authors' professional experiences and advocacy within U.S. doctoral education, this b>workshop/b> uses the U.S. as a case study to illuminate how recent political movements, policy shifts, and institutional responses undermine long-standing protections against sexual harassment and gender discrimination in higher education. Social work doctoral programs are at the center of this tension: a field disproportionately comprised of women, who are often further minoritized by various intersecting identities, yet often facing environments marked by silence, avoidance, inaction.

This workshop guides participants through the process of developing context-specific toolkits for strengthening gender equity, safety, and institutional accountability within doctoral education, globally. Grounded in feminist institutionalism (highlighting how gendered power relations shape formal rules and informal norms) we introduce a customizable toolkit model, attending to structural and cultural transformation. Participants will work collaboratively, adapting and expanding tools for use in their respective contexts, focusing on: (1)strategies for integrating bystander/ally training into doctoral and faculty onboarding; (2)mechanisms for recognizing and supporting faculty advancing gender-equity mentoring; (3)approaches to funding and incentivizing external training opportunities; and (4)concrete curricular and cultural practices that embed gender equity and inclusion within doctoral education. These efforts are essential for fostering doctoral programs that embody justice-centered, culturally relevant, ethically grounded learning environments. These actionable toolkits tailored to participants' local needs, policies, and cultural landscapes are one way to strengthen gender-equitable doctoral education. This is vital for student wellbeing--and shapes the integrity and global credibility of social work!

Mental Health Interventions for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence Across Racial Groups: A Systematic Review

Miss Monikornika Kakoty[1]
[1]Louisiana State University, ,

Background: Women experiencing domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) face disproportionately high rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While racial disparities in access to mental health services are well documented, less is known about how mental health interventions differ in their cultural responsiveness across racial groups. Grounded in intersectionality theory, this systematic review examines how culturally oriented mental health interventions for women experiencing domestic violence differ across racial groups, evaluates their effectiveness in improving mental health outcomes, and assesses the methodological quality of existing intervention studies.

Methods: This review followed PRISMA guidelines. Peer-reviewed quantitative and mixed-methods intervention studies published in English between 2010 and 2025 were identified through MEDLINE, Violence and Abuse Abstracts, Google Scholar, and the Cochrane Library. Eligible studies targeted adult women with experiences of domestic violence or IPV, reported at least one mental health outcome (depression, anxiety, or PTSD). Fifteen studies met inclusion criteria. Methodological rigor was assessed using the Methodological Quality Rating Scale (MQRS), and outcome strength was evaluated based on statistical significance and MQRS.

Results: Studies were categorized across four racial groups: Black/African American (n=6), Hispanic/Latina (n=3), immigrant/refugee women (n=3), and White/European women (n=3). Cognitive behavioral interventions showed more consistent and significant improvements among Black or African American and Latina women, particularly for depression and anxiety. In contrast, community and group interventions and integrative or holistic approaches demonstrated mixed and inconsistent effects across racial groups. Depression improved most frequently, followed by anxiety and PTSD. Higher methodological rigor did not consistently predict stronger outcomes.

Implications/Conclusions: Culturally responsive mental health interventions, especially adapted cognitive behavioral approaches, appear effective for women experiencing domestic violence across racial groups. Findings highlight the need for culturally grounded, trauma-informed social work practices and future research that balance methodological rigor with cultural responsiveness."

Social Work and Mental Health

Dr Nélida Ramirez[2], Prof Sabine Bährer-Kohler[1]
[1]Iassw, , , [2]Universidad Católica Del Maule Chile, , Chile
"Professional social work in the context of mental health requires various skills, such as an awareness of mental changes, mental illnesses, and the application of social work in this context. In addition, knowledge of mental diseases, promotion and prevention of mental health, and the influence of determinants in this context are necessary. Poverty has been reduced worldwide, but not in all regions, according to statistical data. Over 831 million people still live below the USD 3.00 per day poverty line. Does poverty cause mental changes, and can mental health lead to increased poverty?

Social work in this context takes place in social relationships, social conditions, political and social structures, legal regulations, training opportunities, working conditions, economic conditions, among other circumstances. Mental health will be addressed as a cornerstone of human well-being, highlighting its link to sustainability. Caring for natural environments improves quality of life by reducing stress, strengthening community life, and promoting balance. Therefore, expertise and specialist knowledge are required to provide early help and support to those affected.

Undoubtedly, self-care is vital to the social worker`s mental health and wellbeing as well as their clients´, thus there arises a need to improve not only social workers´ self-care but also their professional skills to promote and to support their clients´ own self-care while fulfill their personal needs, including to support and maintain their mental health.

What are the self-care specifics and expectations among social workers working with low-income groups and how to improve client’s self-care regardless of their income/in poverty.

One presentation will report on the interrelation of poverty and mental health, and interfaces to international social work, the second presentation will focus on mental health and sustainability, the third presentation will report on self-care and mental health.

Decolonizing Empathy: From Performative Care to Relational Accountability in Social Work

Mrs Kinya Baker[1]
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"Empathy is widely positioned as a foundational value in social work education and practice. Yet when empathy is framed primarily as an individual emotional skill, disconnected from power, history, and accountability, it risks becoming performative, extractive, and insufficient for addressing structural injustice. This workshop critically examines how dominant Western constructions of empathy continue to reproduce colonial continuities within social work practice, education, and research.

Grounded in Indigenous and Global South philosophies including Ubuntu, Harambee, and Sankofa, this interactive workshop introduces a decolonized framework of empathy rooted in relational accountability, collective care, and ethical responsibility. Rather than centering empathy as feeling or understanding alone, the workshop reframes empathy as a practice that demands action, reciprocity, and shared responsibility for harm and repair.

Participants will engage in facilitated dialogue, reflective exercises, and practice-based case scenarios drawn from clinical, community, educational, and policy contexts. The workshop will explore how empathy is taught, assessed, and operationalized in social work, and how these approaches can unintentionally reinforce power imbalances, particularly for Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and practitioners navigating systems shaped by colonial legacies.

Attention will also be given to the emotional and moral labor disproportionately carried by racialized social workers, reframing empathy not as an individual burden or resilience issue, but as a collective and institutional responsibility. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own positionality and to consider how decolonized empathy reshapes ethics, supervision, pedagogy, and organizational culture.

Participants will leave with practical tools and reflective frameworks to integrate decolonized empathy into social work practice and education, supporting more just, sustainable, and relational futures for the profession in line with the conference theme, Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures."

Outcomes of a Global Education Program for U.S Social Work Students and Kenyan Program Partners

Dr Suzen Wysor Nguema[1]
[1]West Chester University, , United States

Global exchanges are heralded as great learning tools that spur innovation and improve cross-cultural communication. This presentation will share the results of a program evaluation to assess the effectiveness of a social work global education program. The workshop will discuss how the seed of an idea grew into a mighty tree of a program that has been held annually in Kenya since 2022. Rooted in the spirit of harambee, the program provides students with opportunities to collaborate with Kenyan social workers and experience firsthand how social services are delivered. The program also supports an exchange of professional knowledge, resources, and skills that benefit the students and the Kenyan communities.

Program evaluation study participants included undergraduate and graduate social work students from a mid-Atlanta public university in the United States and individuals who worked at Kenyan Non-Governmental (NGO) and Community-based Organizations (CBO). Data was gathered via online surveys and virtual semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Findings provided insights into both the successes of the program as well as areas that will benefit from improvements for future collaborations. Discussion will include the importance of maintaining and strengthening an internationally-focused program as a critical component of social work education that serves to increase students' understanding of global human rights.

Conference attendees will learn about how this global education abroad program brought together Kenyan education and social service providers and social work students in a cross-cultural learning experience. Interactive activities will be integrated into the workshop to encourage participants to share their ideas and insights for future programs.

Rooted in Care: Humanizing Approaches for Transformative Learning

Dr Nakeiha Primus[1]
[1]Millersville University, , United States

This co-facilitated and interactive workshop explores how humanizing pedagogy and compassion-centered teaching can shape more inclusive and sustainable futures. Grounded in the liberatory traditions of Freire (1970), hooks (1994), and Ladson-Billings (1995), the session invites educators, practitioners, and social work professionals to reimagine learning as a collaborative act of empathy, dialogue, and transformation.

Drawing from the Multidisciplinary Studies–Educational Studies (MDST) program at Millersville University, facilitators will share experiences of designing relational and interdisciplinary academic ecosystems that affirm student agency and expertise. The MDST model attracts students drawn to the shared values of education and social work because it supports learners through relational mentorship and adaptive design when more rigid academic pathways may be limiting, fostering confidence, belonging, and persistence.

Through storytelling, reflection, and dialogue, participants will examine how compassion functions as both a pedagogical stance and a social justice practice. The workshop will include a short “design school” activity that encourages participants to explore how compassion-centered practice can connect the work of educators and social work practitioners. The activity invites participants to think creatively about how caring relationships, community awareness, and collaborative problem-solving can shape more supportive learning environments. This approach aligns with the SWSD 2026 focus on sustainable social development by encouraging flexible, community-informed ways of responding to the needs of learners and the people who support them. By trying these ideas together, the session highlights how shared commitments to empathy, connection, and responsibility can strengthen both disciplines and contribute to more humanizing educational ecosystems.

1069

Social Work Education and Training in the Outcome-Based Education Framework

Asst. Prof. Jobi Babu[1]
[1]Assistant Professor, School Of Social Work, Marian College Kuttikkanam Autonomous, ,
"Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has become a transformative model in higher education by shifting the emphasis from syllabus completion to measurable competencies and learner-centred outcomes. For Social Work education, this transformation is significant, as the profession requires graduates to demonstrate not only theoretical knowledge but also ethical reasoning, field-based skills, reflective practice, research orientation, and advocacy abilities. This paper explores the integration of OBE within Social Work training, focusing especially on the changes, challenges, and innovations observed in institutions transitioning into outcome-oriented learning structures.

The study analyses how OBE restructures curriculum design, teaching-learning methods, assessment strategies, and field practicum expectations. Evidence from field experiences, curriculum review reports, student reflections, and stakeholder feedback shows that OBE encourages the development of core competencies across domains such as diversity engagement, policy practice, casework, community interventions, communication, and professional accountability. The adoption of technology for learning portfolios, digital tools for field supervision, competency rubrics, interactive pedagogy, and reflective documentation is also highlighted as a strengthening component. The paper discusses strategies attempted by institutions—capacity-building workshops, structured assessment rubrics, curriculum restructuring, student feedback systems, and continuous quality improvement—to address these challenges and improve graduate preparedness.

The paper concludes that OBE enhances clarity in learning expectations, improves practice readiness, and builds learner autonomy, making Social Work graduates more adaptable, responsive, and professionally competent. Strengthening digital integration, stakeholder partnerships, and long-term outcome tracking will ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of OBE in Social Work education."

We Are Not Dust, We Are Dreamers: A Qualitative Study on the Self-Definition of Women Street Vendors in Kigali, Rwanda

Mrs Marie Claire Uwamahoro[1]
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"Street vending is widely practised across the Global South, yet research has largely focused on how external actors define and regulate this activity, often depicting vendors as threats to urban order. Far less is known about how women street vendors themselves understand their work and identities. This qualitative study explores the self-definition of women engaged in street vending in Kigali, Rwanda. Data were generated through five focus group discussions and two individual interviews with current and former women vendors in four public locations across the city. Drawing on theories of self-categorization and intersectionality, the analysis reveals that women construct identities at two levels of abstraction: as mothers responsible for sustaining their families, and as members of a collective group bound by shared challenges, responsibilities, and informal support networks. Their positive group identification coexists with awareness of the illegality of their work, yet they counter stigma through redefinitions of womanhood grounded in resilience, responsibility, and moral purpose. The findings contribute to scholarship on gender, informality, and identity by foregrounding women's agency and the social meanings they assign to their work. Implications for developmental social work include recognising vendors' collective strengths as important resources for empowerment."

Feasibility of training Master Trainers on Mental health for the marginalised women (Karuna Fellows).

Dr Kimneihat Vaiphei[1]
[1]Dept Of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute Of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (nimhans), , India

Introduction: Project Manasvini focuses on reviewing and modifying existing training modules for Karuna Fellows by integrating a mental health component. Karuna Fellows are women aged 18–40 from marginalized communities who undergo a 23-month transformative journey in the Karuna Fellowship, receiving training in digital, health, financial, and mental health skills. The modules are developed to equip karuna fellows with knowledge & skills in managing their Mental Health & Well-being. Eight modules were developed, and master facilitators were trained to deliver them.

Methodology: A needs assessment was conducted through nine online and offline Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Results from these FGDs along with the existing modules and literature guided the development of eight modules. Master facilitators were selected from the Piramal team based on their qualifications and experience. They underwent a three-day onsite training workshop, followed by online handholding and refreshers course for 3 months. The training's effectiveness was evaluated using a pre-post and 3 months post assessment with a 40-item Likert scale questionnaire, covering five questions per module.
Results: The pre-post and 3 months post-test analysis showed a significant improvement in facilitators\' knowledge and skills. The overall mean score increased from 25 to 31 indicating significant (p = .001) learning gains.

Conclusion: The study emphasizes the importance of equipping master facilitators with the necessary skills to support Karuna Fellows effectively during and after the fellowship. Both the feedback from participants and changes in knowledge scores indicate that this intervention was successful in educating participants about mental health concepts.

Workshop on Social Work Interventions in Women's Mental Health: Focus on Internally Displaced and Indigenous Women

Dr Kimneihat Vaiphei[1]
[1]Dept Of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute Of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (nimhans), , India

This workshop aims to enhance participants' understanding and practical skills in addressing women's mental health through effective social work interventions, with a particular focus on internally displaced and indigenous women. Women's mental health is deeply intertwined with social, cultural, and physiological factors, including menstruation, pregnancy, motherhood, and menopause. In contexts of conflict, war, and forced displacement, women are further exposed to trauma, gender-based violence, and loss, which significantly heighten their vulnerability to both common and severe mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The workshop integrates PowerPoint presentations, case discussions, and evidence-based intervention models that highlight successful practices in promoting resilience and recovery among women affected by conflict and marginalization. It explores the principles and skills of gender-sensitive and trauma-informed social work, emphasizing empathy, empowerment, cultural competence, and advocacy. Special attention will be given to indigenous women's mental health, acknowledging traditional healing practices and the impact of colonization, poverty, and social exclusion on their well-being.

Participants will engage in critical reflection on gender-transformative approaches that promote equity and inclusion in mental health and reproductive health interventions for indigenous women. The workshop will also discuss strategies for strengthening psychosocial support systems, community participation, and intersectoral collaboration.

By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with practical tools and culturally responsive frameworks to design and implement holistic, contextually relevant interventions that uphold the dignity, agency, and rights of women, particularly those living in displacement and indigenous settings.

Preparing and Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Humanitarian Action: The Role of Academia and Social Workers as First Responders

Mrs Marion Mwebi[1]
[1]Alliance For Child Protection In Humanitarian Action, , United States

Humanitarian crises pose profound risks to children and families worldwide. In these complex environments, social workers and the wider social service workforce are often among the first responders, delivering essential child protection interventions. Yet many practitioners enter humanitarian contexts without sufficient preparation, specialised competencies, or systemic support. Strengthening their capacity is therefore critical to ensuring safe, ethical, and effective social work practice in emergencies. Best practice in child protection in emergencies also requires strong community-led responses. Local social workers understand how communities support children's well-being and development during adversity and are essential actors in shaping appropriate interventions.

To help address existing gaps, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, in collaboration with the International Association of Schools of Social Work, has launched an initiative to better understand how academic institutions are harnessing social work knowledge for emergency contexts. Recognising the wealth of curricula, pedagogical materials, and research housed within Schools of Social Work—particularly in low- and middle-income countries —the initiative promotes shared learning, strengthens collaboration, and supports better use of existing resources. By inviting Schools of Social Work, Social Work Departments, and academics to contribute training modules, case studies, practice frameworks, and other materials related to child protection in emergencies, the project aims to map current educational approaches and identify both promising practices and critical gaps.

Stronger collaboration between social work academia and humanitarian actors can help build a more prepared and capable workforce. Integrating emergency social work competencies into pre-service education, combined with continuous professional development, equips social workers to better address child protection risks. Ultimately, investing in the preparation and capacity strengthening of humanitarian actors—through exposure to social work knowledge and engagement with local practitioners—is not only a professional imperative but also essential for protecting children and supporting resilient communities in the face of global challenges.

Boundary Reciprocity and the Epistemic Limits of Social Media Traces: Evidence from Italian Practice

Beatrice Marina Cacopardo[1]
[1]Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, ,

"Social media are increasingly embedded in social work's hybrid practice, where online and face-to-face encounters co-produce relationships, information, and decisions across casework and organisational settings. This presentation examines how social workers construct the legitimacy of social media use in everyday practice and which conditions are invoked to justify (or reject) recourse to platforms, with particular attention to trust, procedural fairness, and the quality of professional judgement.

The analysis draws on qualitative material from 29 semi-structured interviews and two vignette-based focus groups with social workers in Italy. Three interrelated dynamics are foregrounded. First, boundary reciprocity emerges as a practical precondition for trust: choices concerning contact requests, privacy settings, and the separation of private and professional identities are treated as relationally consequential and ethically charged, shaping proximity, respect, and the management of power asymmetries in practitioner–service user relationships. Second, practitioners describe social media traces as epistemically fragile—selective, decontextualised, and performative—therefore insufficient for evaluative claims without corroboration and re-contextualisation. In this view, exploratory online searches risk generating premature inferences, amplifying confirmation bias, and reframing support into unilateral surveillance. Third, avoiding opaque "checking" practices is frequently articulated as a proportionate and reflexive stance that safeguards the helping alliance while supporting procedural fairness, particularly in statutory contexts where decisions have high stakes.

In dialogue with international guidance on digital practice, the presentation argues for an institutional architecture for digital social work grounded in necessity and proportionality: channelling activity through organisational identities and infrastructures; ensuring transparency, team supervision, and auditable decision trails; and investing in continuing professional development on platform logics, bias awareness, and boundary management. Overall, the findings suggest that sustainable, accountable digital practice depends less on individual discretion and more on shared organisational safeguards and reflective governance."

Syrian Refugees' Perspectives on Family Reunification and Social Work

Veronika Rosenberger[1]
[1]University Of Tuebingen, ,

Background and Purpose:
Family reunification constitutes a key intersection of human rights, migration law, and social work practice. Recent policy shifts, such as the suspension of family reunification for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, prolong transnational family separation and challenge the principle of the best interests of the child. In this context, social workers in child and youth welfare occupy a pivotal position at the intersection of protection, care, and institutional control. Despite this, empirical research on how refugees themselves experience the reunification process and interpret social work involvement remains limited. This study examines refugees' lived experiences of family reunification and their perceptions of social work. It explores how prolonged separation reshapes intergenerational solidarity, family responsibilities, and transnational role configurations.

Methods:
The study is based on 23 narrative interviews with refugees from Syria living in Germany. Following an open, exploratory approach informed by Reflexive Grounded Theory (Breuer et al., 2019), the analysis focuses on how actors position themselves within institutional frameworks and navigate structural constraints.

Results:
Preliminary findings reveal a complex field of tension within child and youth welfare. Social workers are often perceived as substitute family figures and important sources of trust and emotional support. At the same time, social work practices may contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities through institutionalized categorizations and normative expectations. Legal and organizational structures frequently foster dependencies, in which expectations of "neediness" can restrict young people's agency and self-determination. This generates a conflict between social work's ethical and human rights–based mandate and politically defined administrative logics.

The presentation introduces a preliminary typology capturing how young people navigate external expectations and negotiate agency under conditions of constraint. To promote social justice, the findings highlight the need for more participatory and reflexive approaches that recognize refugees as active subjects rather than passive recipients of support.

Beyond the classroom: The benefits and challenges of implementing a faculty-led, study abroad program in Chennai, India

Dr Katie Lopez[1]
[1]University Of Michigan School Of Social Work, , United States

Content focused on global social work, also known as international social work, has increased in social work education in recent years due to the growing interconnectedness of the world. This presentation will describe how the Madras Christian College Department of Social Work (Aided Stream) and the University of Michigan School of Social Work established a long-term institutional partnership, resulting in numerous collaborations, including faculty and student exchanges, as well as the development of a faculty-led, short-term study abroad (FLSTSA) course in Chennai, India. The presenters will describe the process of designing and implementing this innovative FLSTSA course, which brought together social work students from the Global South and Global North to examine how social justice issues are addressed by social workers in India and the U.S. The course utilized the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare's Grand Challenges for Social Work as an organizing framework. The Grand Challenges for Social Work framework assisted students to compare and contrast two systems of oppression—casteism and racism— as well as efforts in both countries to address violence against women, the health gap, economic inequality, and climate change. Presenters will share best practices for implementing a study abroad course, such as developing strong local partnerships and establishing clear expectations for students and all stakeholders. Additionally, the presentation will discuss potential challenges to this teaching model, including pre-departure logistics and in-country considerations. This presentation will showcase how implementing an FLSTSA course can enhance social work students' engagement in global social work issues and practices.

The presenters are open to either a 10 or a 30-minute presentation. If selected for the 30-minute format, presenters will go into more detail and leave ample time for a question-and-answer period, brainstorming, and discussion with attendees.

Children’s Coping in Disasters: Developments, Challenges, and Future Directions

Tara Powell[1]
[1]University Of Illinois Urbana-champaign, ,

"Over the past two decades, the frequency and severity of disasters, both manmade and climate-related, have more than doubled. Children and youth are among the most vulnerable to the physical and mental health impacts of disasters. This vulnerability is uniquely situated within biological, psychological, and contextual factors, such as limited cognitive capacity due to a child’s developmental stage and reliance on caregivers. A child’s use of coping in a disaster context significantly shapes their recovery, yet coping is inconsistently defined and conceptualized to account for contextual, cultural, and developmental factors.

This presentation will include a scoping review of recently published literature from 2022-2025 on children and youth’s coping in disasters, focusing on disaster type, cultural and social-demographic influences, and the methods used to assess coping. Findings highlight that disasters affect children and youth in diverse ways, shaped by both disaster type and broader contextual factors. Research has grown considerably over the past few years, offering insights into adaptive and maladaptive coping in disaster contexts. However, the field remains constrained by several limitations: a lack of consensus on how coping is conceptualized in children, limited standardized measures specific to disaster contexts, and few culturally adapted tools that capture diverse coping processes across settings. Unification in the understanding of children’s disaster coping can be achieved by addressing gaps in definitions and tools through clearer conceptualization, culturally grounded measures, and longitudinal, multi-systems approaches. Building on recent progress and addressing these gaps will help advance social justice by strengthening supports for children and youth facing increasing global challenges."

Challenging Barriers, Co-Creating Solutions: Rethinking Individualized Education Plan Implementation through Interprofessional Collaboration

Dr Carol Wade[1]
[1]University Of Windsor, , Canada

Article 26 of the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes education as an inalienable human right, obligating all member states to ensure it is available and equally accessible to everyone (UN, 1948). Despite this, in many countries, students with diverse learning needs continue to face marginalization and barriers to education due to factors such as poverty, race, gender, stigma, and disability. In Canada, children with different types of learning disabilities still encounter significant barriers in exercising their rights to education. Inclusive education policy frameworks remain the primary approach provinces and territories use to support students with diverse learning needs. A key element of these frameworks is the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a legal document that outlines a detailed, customized strategy to meet each identified student's unique learning needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017; Roy, 2023). Embedded within the IEP is a psychoeducational assessment that identifies the learner's strengths and areas of need to guide the development of a comprehensive plan. As a policy tool, the IEP also serves as an accountability mechanism for students, caregivers, educators, and allied professionals, including social workers. While the IEP is a commendable approach to inclusive education, significant challenges persist in its policy development, planning, and implementation. Parents often find it difficult to access timely psychoeducational assessments, and institutional priorities frequently take precedence over students\' and families' needs, raising questions about who is represented and whose voices are prioritized in these processes. This presentation draws on Critical Race and Critical Disability theories and adopts a rights-based perspective to analyze the IEP policy framework and its implementation in Ontario. Rooted in collaboration between social work and education, it advocates for a more equitable, inclusive, and contextually responsive approach to IEP practices through interprofessional collaboration and shared decision-making.

Sustained International Collaboration in Clinical Social Work Education: Lessons from Chile and Texas

Ms Tanya Voss[1]
[1]The University Of Texas At Austin School Of Social Work, ,

This presentation examines a long-standing collaboration between the School of Social Work at Universidad Católica de Chile (UC) and the School of Social Work at The University of Texas (UT), initiated in 2011. Leadership and faculty from both schools will present the overall process, exchanges, and outcomes.

The partnership has advanced through three phases, generating significant innovations in clinical social work education and supervision.

Phase I established trust through initial exchanges, including visits by UT leadership and a UC graduate completing a PhD at UT.
Phase II focused on designing and implementing a culturally adapted clinical MSW program. A joint team developed curricula and syllabi, and faculty from both schools co-taught the first three cohorts. UC professors visited UT, and both teams evaluated outcomes and planned future steps.
Phase III extended the collaboration to create a culturally adapted clinical supervision system, addressing the need to strengthen professional pathways for clinical social workers in Chile and Latin America through continuing education.

Two studies assessed these innovations. The first explored student and graduate perceptions of program competencies, finding that most were met while identifying the need to strengthen evaluation of clinical interventions. The second examined training for supervisors and subsequent implementation of supervision practices. Preliminary results indicate strong acceptance of the training, with recommendations to increase training hours and provide structured session plans.

Lessons learned: Sustained collaboration depends on mutual respect, trust, reciprocity, and recognition of shared resources - principles aligned with international social work values.

Benefits: UC graduates have entered UT's PhD program; UT MSW students complete international internships in Chile with UC support; and faculty from both schools engage in joint research, combining expertise and methodologies. Students, staff, and faculty at both universities expand their capacity for partnership, perspective, and global cooperation.

1091

When Students Become Co-Creators: Reimagining Simulation with Students as Partners and Universal Design for Learning

Ms Kealey Dube[1]
[1]Macewan University, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, , Canada

"This case study examines a Students-as-Partners (SaP) approach to enhancing accessibility and inclusion in social work field education through the co-creation of simulation-based learning. The project involved faculty, staff, and two student partners, one who identifies as experiencing disability-related barriers and one with theatre training, working collaboratively to design and deliver realistic practice scenarios. Grounded in the principles of SaP and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the project sought to create a learning environment that is both inclusive and responsive to diverse student needs.

The presentation will highlight the pedagogical value of involving students in the co-design of educational materials, particularly in relation to fostering belonging, strengthening accessibility, and improving learning outcomes for students who experience disability-related or other systemic barriers. This case study offers insights into how inclusive, partnership-based approaches can strengthen field education and better support disabled and other marginalized learners. It also identifies future directions for integrating SaP and UDL within social work curricula, with implications for advancing equity and innovation in simulation-based education internationally."

A Model of Transnational Social Work

Dr Jocelyn Hermoso[1]
[1]San Francisco State University, , United States

Transnational social work recognizes that the social realities of clients, communities, and constituents often cut across national borders. It responds to such realities with a perspective that values cross-border cooperation and coordination. Anti-poverty programs, welfare provision, and social protection programs are often lodged within nation-states. While nation-states are well-positioned to implement such programs, working within a discrete nation-state framework may at times constrain social work's ability to address the precarity experienced by marginalized communities and constituents affected by economic, social, political, and environmental forces that transcend nation-state borders. This is particularly true for humanitarian programs that require nation state citizenship as a precondition to availing these programs. A transnational perspective of social work practice invokes social citizenship (Moosa-Mitha, 2014), as opposed to a conventional notion of citizenship, as basis for upholding the social rights of persons who find themselves living between borders. Informed by social justice principles and anti-oppressive approaches, transnational social work is an area of practice that transcends the parameters of the nation state, recognizes the transnational realities of transmigrants, and engages with communities affected by cross-border experiences.

This presentation showcases a transnational social work model of practice (Hermoso & Brarišić, 2024) detailing its principles, theoretical perspectives, and application. The presentation will demonstrate how this model of practice is applied to programs supporting undocumented immigrants in Fresno, California; to refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants in the U.S. who are forcibly repatriated or deported to third countries due to draconian anti-immigration policies; to mental health programs for immigrants in San Francisco, and to humanitarian assistance programs for refugees, stateless persons, and asylum-seekers in the Philippines. These case studies exemplify how unity, collaboration, and shared responsibility are necessary elements in engaging with and supporting clients, communities, and constituents who live transnational realities.

Suicide Among Youth and Young Adults: Bereaved Parents\' Perspectives on the Systems of Care

Dr Toula Kourgiantakis[1]
[1]Université Laval, ,

"Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian youth aged 15–24, and many who die by suicide have at least one mental health concern. Most youth who die by suicide have unmet needs for care. Parents often describe major challenges accessing services and feeling excluded from their child's treatment. About half of the youth who die by suicide have an emergency department visit in the year before death, and the period after discharge carries heightened risks due to poor continuity of care and limited referrals. This study explored parents' perspectives on the systems of care that interacted with their youth who died by suicide.

Participants were eligible if they were Ontario-based parents or caregivers of a youth under the age of 25 who died by suicide within the past five years. Recruitment was conducted through bereavement centres, and we conducted virtual semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

The sample included 17 participants (n=11 mothers, n=6 fathers). Through our analysis of the parents' experiences and perspectives on the systems of care that engaged with their youth or young adult prior to the suicide, eight significant themes emerged, highlighting critical gaps in these systems, particularly within the mental health care system. These themes included: (1) barriers in accessing services; (2) gaps in continuity and coordination of care; (3) absence of guidelines for assessments, treatment, and safety planning; (4) inconsistent quality of care; (5) inadequate training and education for service providers; (6) insufficient involvement of parents and caregivers; (7) limited psychoeducation for youth and families; and (8) experiences of bullying, racism, and discrimination.

Parents described significant unmet needs and service gaps but also expressed hope for system improvements to support youth in distress."

1094

Youth trajectories and digital behavior across the socioecological environment: Does technology access and use predict opportunity?

Dr Tianca Crocker[1]
[1]UNC Charlotte, Charlotte, United States

Background
Around the world, digital access has become a critical determinant of educational opportunity, labor market participation, and long-term mobility. While global research highlights persistent digital inequalities, far less is known about how intergenerational patterns of information and communication technology (ICT) access shape youth development over time—particularly in families facing economic hardship and living in digitally under-resourced communities. Understanding these dynamics is essential as countries invest in broadband expansion, digital inclusion, and youth opportunity initiatives.

Objective
This study examines how intergenerational ICT access and digital engagement across socioecological environments influence adolescents' academic trajectories and early economic well-being in the United States. The central research question is: How are youths' academic and early economic outcomes shaped by parental ICT access, youth digital engagement, and neighborhood-level digital opportunity?

Methods
Using several waves from a longitudinal birth cohort study—I construct measures of parental ICT access, youth ICT access and digital engagement, academic outcomes (grades, engagement, suspensions, aspirations), and early economic well-being (material hardship, employment, NEET status). I merge geocoded infrastructure data, school characteristics, and neighborhood mobility indicators to broaden our understanding from the socioecological environment. Analytically, I employ multilevel modeling to account for youth nested within neighborhoods and schools, and structural equation modeling to test pathways linking intergenerational ICT access, youth digital practices, academic outcomes, and early economic well-being. Models examine heterogeneity by race, gender, and family structure.

Preliminary Results
Preliminary findings indicate that parental ICT access predicts youth digital engagement, which is associated with academic performance and early economic indicators. Neighborhood digital infrastructure and social networks moderate these relationships.

Conclusion
By conceptualizing digital access as an intergenerational resource embedded within socioecological systems, this study contributes to global conversations on digital inequality and youth mobility. Findings offer insights for international broadband policy, digital equity initiatives, and workforce development programs seeking to promote opportunity across generations.

Reimagining Social Work Education: Leading Together Using an Ubuntu Framework

Prof. Tiffany D. Baffour[2], Dr Bibiana Koh[1]
[1]Salisbury University, , , [2]East Carolina University, , United States

Contemporary social work education faces growing pressures to address widening inequities, dismantle colonial frameworks, and address global challenges that disproportionately affect marginalized communities (cite). However, current pedagogical practices often remain rooted in hierarchical and Eurocentric pedagogy, which do not align with global initiative. For instance, the International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) global social work agenda themes include connectedness, inclusiveness, diversity, transformative change, and solidarity for well-being. The IFSW Global Agenda (2020-2030) states the following:

"Our world is currently grappling with an array of complex crises, including violent conflicts, severe environmental degradation, enduring poverty, and pronounced political disparities. To address these pressing issues and to align with the contemporary challenges and aspirations of social work worldwide, a shift has been made towards adopting an annual theme approach, allowing for more timely and relevant responses."

Drawing on this global agenda, this presentation focuses on IFSW global theme 1: Ubuntu: Strengthening social solidarity and global connectedness. Ubuntu emphasizes (1) shared humanity and collectivism, (2) reciprocity and mutual accountability, (3) compassion and empathy, (4) restorative ethics, (5) co-creation and participatory dialogue, and (6) political action to counter oppression and exclusion (Laloo, 2022; Nell, 2017; Udah et al., 2025).

The presentation will include two US-based case examples as one path forward for global social work educators to build sustainable, community-centered, grassroots partnerships. By introducing a relational, Ubuntu-informed model founded on these principles, we highlight curricular and institutional strategies to reimagine social work education. Our Ubuntu-informed model seeks to equip global social workers with guidance on creating collective spaces for critical dialogue that encourages reflection on students' and educators' positionality. Our innovative model will create opportunities for ethical, bottom-up, Ubuntu-informed collaboration and solidarity with administrators, faculty, and students to reimagine social work education.

The Power of Dialectics: Facilitating Antiracist Education Through Participatory and Dialectic Learning, in Social Work Education

Amber Williams[1]
[1]University Of Michigan Ann Arbor, , United States

"In the year 2020, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare expanded the field's Grand Challenges to include Eliminate Racism. During a time of increasing pressures within the field to respond to racial health disparities and racial violence, the grand challenge served as a call to action to dismantle institutional racism through education, research, policy, and practice, and advance racial equity. To support this agenda, the Council on Social Work Education set accreditation standards that focused on antiracism education in social work classes.

One way that social work education has worked to build students' antiracist knowledge is through participatory and social justice pedagogies that promote dialectical learning through dialogue, discussion, and the use of critical social theories. These pedagogies encourage students to examine systems of power and engage in social change by creating transformative learning experiences that facilitate the critical consciousness and agency to translate learning into action.

This session explores the power of dialectics in strengthening antiracist knowledge in community change work. Using a research-to-practice model, we present a single case study analysis of a social work community change course embedded in an undergraduate minor program. Drawing on the work of legendary community organizers, Grace Lee and Jimmy Boggs, this course provided opportunities to engage with their theories and practices through participatory learning environments and community-based experiences.

In this session, we explore findings from interview data and curricular materials to present an educational process model that identifies the role of dialectics in shaping social work students' antiracist knowledge and their motivation and mindset to engage in community-based action. Our model contributes to research and practice on the role of critical pedagogies in social work that advance racial equity and social justice in the field."

Community-Led Research and Action (CLRA): Advancing Collective Civic Learning as Social Work Education

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Conventional civic education often narrows its focus to transmitting knowledge about political institutions, citizens' rights, and normative civic behaviours. These approaches usually reproduce dominant political discourses, and they frequently fall short in low-income or minoritised neighbourhoods, where informal civic work, mutual aid, youth organising, and non-middle-class forms of political action are central to community life.
Community-Led Research and Action as a transformative pedagogical framework responds to these limitations. Grounded in the principle of, CLRA brings students into collaborative, justice-oriented inquiry with communities, emphasising unity, reciprocity, and social transformation. The framework comprises three interconnected components:
Community-Led Inquiry: Students engage in community-grounded, auto-ethnographic research to identify local issues, strengths, and modes of civic participation. This process centres community voices, validates diverse epistemologies, and recognises everyday civic labour.

Dialogic Exchange: Emerging insights are shared through transnational and intercultural Online Learning Communities, fostering dialogue, empathy, and critical reflexivity. Through these exchanges, participants collectively build new understandings of civic engagement that transcend borders and elevate minoritised perspectives.

Policy Interface: The process culminates in concrete dialogue with policymakers, positioning students as co-constructors of participatory social policy and as advocates for historically under-represented groups.

The presentation is situated within the European Commission–funded project Visionary Roadmaps: Crafting an Inclusive and Participatory European Democracy with Youth and Communities – YOUROPE (project ref. 101178794). YOUROPE empowers young people and their minoritised communities to shape the future of European democracy by creating inclusive decision-making spaces and policies that ensure their voices are heard. While rooted in Europe, the methodology is equally informed by the experiences of the Ghetto Foundation in Nairobi. Youth from Mathare have contributed insights that have reshaped European students' understanding of civic engagement, strengthening the project's commitment to transnational reciprocity. By integrating community knowledge, intercultural dialogue, and policy engagement, CLRA reflects the spirit of Harambee, cultivating solidarity among learners, practitioners, and communities.

Refugee Inclusion and Social Work: Intersectional Inequalities in Education and Employment in Global Comparative Perspective

Ms Ophelia Akonobea Asante, Julia Cholewa[1], Ms Judith Bucher[2], Sharon Akinyi[3]
[1]Hochschule München; Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt | Hochschule München; Technische Universität Dortmund, , Germany, [2]Munich University of Applied Sciences, TU Dortmund University, , Germany, [3]Legacy Community Health , , United States
"There are approximately 37 million refugees worldwide who have been forcibly displaced from their homes (UNHCR, 2025). This panel examines the conditions and processes shaping the inclusion of refugees in host societies, with a particular focus on access to education and employment. Drawing on empirical research from Uganda/Rwanda, Germany, and Ghana, the panel adopts a comparative perspective to analyse how legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, and national integration policies shape refugees' access to key social resources within distinct socio-economic contexts.

Using postcolonial and intersectional theoretical approaches, the contributions highlight how multiple axes of inequality—such as legal status, gender, age, socio-economic position, and migration history—intersect to produce differentiated experiences of inclusion and exclusion. Despite contextual differences, common structural barriers emerge across settings, including language requirements, limited recognition of foreign qualifications, restricted access to formal labour markets, and institutional as well as societal discrimination (ILO, 2024; Jagusch & Farrokhzad, 2024).

The panel also critically interrogates dominant integration narratives by situating refugee inclusion within global power relations and postcolonial continuities that continue to shape national policies, social perceptions, and practices of devaluation and stereotyping (Castro Varela & Dhawan, 2020). Empirical findings show that even where progressive legal frameworks exist, refugees' long-term socio-economic inclusion remains uneven and contingent upon intersecting structural constraints.

By combining diverse methodological approaches, the panel demonstrates how postcolonial and intersectional analyses can make mechanisms of exclusion visible and contribute to more equitable and sustainable inclusion strategies. Particular attention is given to the role of social work as a reflexive and advocacy-oriented profession mediating between policy, institutions, and refugees lived experiences.

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Building Safety, Justice, and Sustainability in a Fragmented Global Context

Prof. Elena Marchetti[1]
[1]Disrupting Violence Beacon, Griffith University, ,

Upholding human rights has become increasingly challenging and often ineffectual in stopping acts of violence through military conflict, gender-based violence or ongoing harm from exploitative labour, environmental damage, discrimination, and digital/technological abuse. The power of human rights as expressed in international law and conventions is being eroded by a multitude of factors such as the rise in nationalistic governments, geo-political economic tensions and the increasing power and reach of multinational enterprises. In this context access to justice and safety for some of the most vulnerable and least powerful in the world is now at a crisis point and is becoming increasingly harder to achieve equitably. Trauma and fear arise from the absence of justice, yet justice is a cornerstone in most liberal democracies globally. Barriers to justice are compounded by disadvantage, vulnerability, high costs, delays, and increasingly, an erosion of public trust and confidence in how justice is administered. These barriers exacerbate occurrences of violence and discrimination, intensifying the effects of trauma and entrenching challenges such as poverty and community cohesion. Increasingly state based responses to these issues are proving to be ineffective in the context of globalisation and the emergence of multinational enterprises. Proactive corporate responsibility in maintaining and complying with human rights obligations is in direct competition with pragmatic risk and compliance management used by multinational enterprises. These tensions have important implications for individuals, communities and civil society organisations wanting to access and achieve safety and justice. Both old and new ways of accessing and achieving safety and justice are emerging through customary, innovative and transformative justice mechanisms and processes. This presentation will explore these issues with a view to ways that disrupt ineffective structural and system responses with mechanisms that better address the current global context.

1106

Steady Within, Connected Between: Mindfulness Through Ukuzinza and Ubuntu

Chenyu Zhao[1]
[1]The University Of Texas At Arlington, Usa, , United States
"Background: South Africa's townships—products of apartheid-era segregation—remain under-resourced, with NGO staff facing heavy workloads and limited funding. Western mindfulness models often center on individual relief and overlook relational and structural healing. Current mental health research advocates for approaches grounded in local epistemologies, such as communal spirituality.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework: Community-based participatory research (CBPR) anchors this project in equitable partnership, engaging community members as co-researchers to ensure knowledge leads to meaningful action. Building on this foundation, the project framework integrates Ukuzinza, a term in isiXhosa and isiZulu meaning steadiness or staying centered, with the philosophy of Ubuntu, "I am because we are." While Ukuzinza embodies the intrapersonal dimension of mindfulness, Ubuntu captures its interpersonal and communal dimension. This framework builds on communal practices such as group prayer and choral singing to shape a culturally grounded intervention.

Purpose: Building on a two-month ethnographic immersion in 2025, the lead researcher will collaborate with Ikamva Labantwana Bethu (ILB) in Crossroads Township to co-design an intervention for about 25 staff members. The purpose is to cultivate a contextually grounded model of mindfulness informed by Ukuzinza and Ubuntu, fostering both individual steadiness and collective well-being among practitioners in under-resourced settings.

Methods: Data collection will include baseline and post-intervention surveys (WHO-5 Well-Being, MSQ-5 Job Satisfaction) and focus groups on local well-being definitions. A co-design workshop will identify activities and develop a facilitator training manual with verbal prompts. Two volunteer staff will be trained as facilitators to deliver isiXhosa sessions during staff meetings, with weekly debriefs for iterative improvements. Data analysis will involve paired t-tests and qualitative analysis of the development process. Ethical approval will be secured, and participants will give informed consent.

Significance: Through ILB staff as co-creators and facilitators, this project embodies Harambee by pulling together for well-being. It offers a decolonial mindfulness model that is adaptable to similar under-resourced contexts."

Collage for Reflection: Visual Creative Pedagogy for Co-Creating Knowledge in Social Work Education

Dr Roma Thomas[1]
[1]University Of Bedfordshire, , United Kingdom

Collage, the art of cutting, pasting, and creating compositions from paper and other materials, provides creative visual tools for piecing together our thoughts and feelings and deepening our powers of reflection. As a visual pedagogy in social work education, collage opens possibilities for individual reflection and for coming together in the spirit of harambee to share and co-create knowledge for social work practice and community.

This interactive workshop explores the use of collage as an innovative pedagogic tool for reflection in social work education. Drawing on themes such as reflective practice, Ubuntu philosophies in social work, and use of self, this workshop invites participants to engage with collage as a creative medium for learning and teaching. Using a variety of paper and other materials, participants will create visual representations as a basis for sharing their reflections on key themes in social work education.

Collage offers ways to express ourselves and expand our thinking more freely than conventional written methods. In social work education, this is valuable as a tool to move beyond formulaic thinking and develop more creative, deeply rooted connections which resonate with social work's social justice values.

Aims:

To enable participants to create visual representations/mood boards that express reflections within their own practice contexts.

To explore collage as an innovative, arts-based pedagogical tool for deepening reflective practice in social work education.

To foster co-creation of knowledge through collaborative discussion in the spirit of harambee, drawing inspiration from participants' collages.

What to bring:

No prior experience is necessary. There will be a brief introduction to collage as a pedagogic technique, but this is chiefly a hands-on creative workshop. Participants can bring magazines, papers, cards, photos, and other paper materials that they are happy to cut up. Paper, glue, scissors, and a stock of magazines/visual materials will be supplied.

Advancing Climate-Smart Food Systems Through Pamoja Collaboration: Integrating Aquaponics, Social Work, and Community Capacity Building

Dr Felicia Tuggle[1]
[1]Auburn Univeristy, , United States

"As climate change intensifies disruptions to global food systems, communities in low-resource face escalating threats to nutrition, livelihoods, and ecological stability. With the world population projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050 and demand for animal protein rising sharply, identifying sustainable, climate-adaptive food production strategies is urgent. Aquaculture and aquaponics offer promising, environmentally efficient solutions directly linked to multiple SDGs and central to the food security and cultural livelihoods of people.

This presentation highlights the Integrated Agriculture for Food Production, Education, Empowerment, and Development (iFEED) project as an emerging model for how social work, education, aquaculture science, and social development practice can collaboratively address food insecurity through community-driven innovation. Grounded in the Swahili concept of “pamoja” meaning together in community. iFEED demonstrates the power of interdisciplinary partnerships to strengthen local capacity and build sustainable systems of food production. Drawing from applied practice in Liberia and Ghana, this presentation showcases how the (iFEED) project is being used to support poverty reduction, hunger mitigation, improved health, equitable education, and decent work. The session will showcase participatory approaches to community capacity-building, funding strategies for development-focused capacity-building, and highlight transformative community outcomes from three years of work. The session will also illustrate how iFEED’s community-centered, partnership-driven model advances the UN SDGs.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

Analyze two ways climate change is reshaping global food security and identify why aquaculture/aquaponics are critical adaptive strategies.
Describe three ways social workers and development practitioners can lead and sustain cross-sector collaborations that build community resilience and transform local food systems.
Explain the role of social work in advancing sustainable development
Identify three recommendations for local–international partnerships (e.g., NGOs, higher education, ministries, and communities) that strengthen climate resilience and food sovereignty
"

Emotional Debt and Organizational Resilience: Survival Mechanisms of Social Work Organizations in China\'s Ethnic Minority Regions

Assoc Prof Meng Cui[1]
[1]Central University Of Finance And Economics(china） | Southwestern University Of Finance And Economic, , China

"This study examines how social work organizations survive in China\'s ethnic minority regions despite extreme resource scarcity and institutional fragility. Based on interviews with 12 organizational leaders in Aba, Ganzi, and Liangshan prefectures (2021-2022), we identify emotional debt as informal institution—a previously under-theorized mechanism enabling organizational persistence.

Through grounded theory analysis, we identify three types of emotional debt functioning as non-material resources: (1) Historical Memory Type, transforming aid legacies (e.g., post-earthquake reconstruction) into intergenerational moral obligations; (2) Identity Transformation Type, converting personal experiences into redemptive narratives; (3) Cultural Embeddedness Type, translating religious-ethnic ethics into family/community support.

These emotional debts substitute for economic incentives, provide alternative legitimacy, and maintain member commitment when formal institutions fail. However, each faces distinct vulnerabilities: intergenerational rupture, individual exhaustion, and modernization erosion respectively.

This research expands organizational resilience theory by theorizing emotion-memory capital as a third resource category, advances informal institution theory by demonstrating positive enabling functions, and emphasizes temporal causality in organizational analysis. While emotional debt enables survival, it may mask structural injustice—healthy social work systems require balancing emotional commitment with institutional guarantees."

1111

Modeling Latent Suicidality Among Thai Adolescents: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

Chenyu Zhao[1]
[1]The University Of Texas At Arlington, Usa, , United States

"Background: Suicide is a leading cause of adolescent death worldwide. In Thailand, studies highlight contributors such as bullying, loneliness, family conflict, and substance use, along with protective peer and parental support. Guided by Joiner's Interpersonal-Psychological Theory, this study modeled suicidality as a latent construct (ideation, planning, attempts) using national data.

Methods: Data came from the 2021 Thailand Global School-Based Student Health Survey of students aged 13–17. After exclusions, 5,200 participants remained. A weighted generalized structural equation model in Stata defined suicidality as a latent variable. Variables included sedentary behavior, bullying, loneliness, sleep disturbance, lack of close friends, and cigarette smoking, plus peer kindness and parental understanding. Sex, age, and hunger frequency were covariates.

Results: Bullying (30.2%), loneliness (18.7%), sleep disturbance (15.7%), having no close friends (5.7%), and cigarette use (10%) were common. Peer kindness (39.8%) and parental understanding (26.3%) were frequently reported. Suicidality loaded strongly on all indicators. Higher sedentary behavior, bullying, loneliness, sleep disturbance, no close friends, and smoking significantly predicted greater suicidality. Peer kindness and parental understanding were protective. Girls showed higher suicidality; older age predicted lower levels. Hunger was not significant.

Conclusion: Psychosocial adversity strongly predicted suicidality, while social support reduced risk."

Harambee in the Context of Ethics, Autonomy, and the Patient's Will to Power

Mr Emmanuel Kinoti[1]
[1]Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology, ,

Abstract: This presentation explores the dual dynamics inherent in the patient–professional relationship, emphasizing the often-overlooked interplay between a patient's intrinsic will to power and the structured, systematized interventions designed by healthcare and rehabilitation professionals. Drawing from both philosophical and ethical perspectives, the paper interrogates how the individual's innate drive toward recovery, their will to power, interacts with, complements, and at times resists professional systems intended to facilitate healing and rehabilitation. Through an observational and reflective approach, the discussion seeks to illuminate the tension between patient autonomy and professional authority, questioning whether existing patient-centered models adequately accommodate the complexity of the patient's internal motivations. By examining this intersection, the presentation argues that the fallibility of even the most refined care systems often lies in their inability to fully account for the human spirit's irreducible agency and its pursuit of self-determination. Ultimately, this contribution serves as a call for humility and ethical mindfulness in practice. It invites professionals to reconsider how autonomy, dignity, and individual agency are preserved, or constrained, within institutionalized care frameworks. In doing so, it reaffirms the moral imperative to design and implement systems that not only inform and empower but also honor the patient's inherent will to recover and be whole.

Impact of Climate Change on Older People's Health and Social Work Response in Rural China

Dr Jie Zhuang[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, ,

"Climate change is a major global challenge that has become increasingly significant due to rapid changes in ecosystems, weather patterns, temperature, and precipitation. Many countries have experienced devastating natural disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the 2005 Mumbai floods, the 2010 storms in the Caribbean and United States, the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Christchurch, New Zealand, and Japan's 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear explosion (UNISDR, 2014). China has also faced numerous natural hazards in recent years, including earthquakes, typhoons, mudslides, and floods. It is widely recognized that climate change exacerbates the suffering of the poor and marginalized, and it particularly affects indigenous communities who rely directly on natural resources and agricultural livelihoods—resources that are gradually diminishing due to climate change. The response of the social work profession to climate change is under-investigated in different social and cultural contexts. Thus, since 2025, we have conducted a research project titled "Climate Change and Social Work Responses in China and the World" by adopting an ethnographic approach.

Our study in rural China reveals that a hidden impact of climate change is its effect on the health of older people. In this paper, we present how climate change subtly influences the health of older adults in rural China, what indigenous wisdom in resisting climate change discovered, and discuss how the social work profession can respond to this specific challenge."

MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN NIGERIA: HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE AND PATIENTS\' ADVOCACY

Mrs Victoria Oluwayemisi Dare[1]
[1]Medical Social Worker University College Hospital Ibadan Oyo State, , Nigeria
"ABSTRACT

Medical social work practice in Nigeria has made significant efforts in addressing critical gaps in holistic healthcare and patient advocacy, especially in situations where patients face socioeconomic and psychological barriers to quality care. Patients experienced psychosocial distress, financial hardship, stigma, and constrained social support that medical treatment alone did not address. Inadequate recognition of medical social workers, staff shortages, and limited policy support reduced the quality of patient-centered care in many Nigerian health settings. This study examined how medical social work practice supported holistic health care and patient advocacy in Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative review design. Searches were conducted on Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and PubMed. The initial search produced 312 articles using keywords related to medical social work, patient advocacy, and health care in Nigeria. After screening titles and abstracts, 94 articles remained. Further assessment based on inclusion criteria resulted in 28 studies selected for review. Inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025, research that focused on medical social work practice, and studies conducted in Nigeria or similar low- and middle-income settings. Exclusion criteria removed opinion papers, studies outside health care settings, and articles without clear methodological details. Findings revealed that medical social workers supported psychosocial assessment, discharge planning, financial counselling, family mediation/therapy, and protection of patient rights. Evidence indicated improved treatment adherence, shorter hospital stays, and better coping among patients who received social work support. The reviewed studies also reported challenges such as role ambiguity, limited funding, and weak institutional support. The study, therefore, concluded that medical social work strengthened holistic health care and patient advocacy in Nigeria. The study, however, recommends stronger policy support, increased employment of trained medical social workers, improved interdisciplinary collaboration, and regular professional training to improve patient outcome"

Tourism, Development, and Environmental Transformation: A Case Study in Southwest China and Its Implications for Green Social Work Practice

Prof Hok Bun Ku[1]
[1]The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, ,

"Tourism is widely adopted by countries as a development strategy to stimulate economic growth, generate employment, attract foreign currency, and finance infrastructure projects, while also supporting cultural preservation and environmental conservation. It also has become important strategy for economic development in China and has created big impacts on the local communities in different regions of China. However, tourism development also creates significant challenges, including environmental degradation (e.g. pollution, resource depletion), socio-cultural impacts (e.g. commodification, local resentment), economic leakage, and the complexities of managing overtourism. The role of social work in addressing these challenges generated by tourism remains underexplored.

Drawing on 18 months of fieldwork in the Fuxian Lake region of Yunnan Province, China, by adopting participant observation in the village and in-depth interviews with local villagers and cadres, this study reveals that tourism development has profoundly transformed the local ecology and environment, disrupting residents' relationships with the non-human world and affecting their livelihoods. This paper will present how tourism-driven development, shaped by state policies at various stages, has altered the local ecological landscape and villagers' mode of living. Based on these findings, we discuss the potential for green social work practice to address these challenges and promote sustainable development in tourism-affected communities."

1121

Integrating Social Development and Social Work: Opportunities and Challenges in Curriculum Design

Assoc Prof Somaya Abdullah[1]
[1]University Of Cape Town, ,

"This presentation examines the integration of social work and social development - in its form as developmental social welfare - using a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program as a case study. Social development as part of social work is a relatively recent development. The presentation reflects on the design of a curriculum to support the alignment of these two disciplines. It discusses its structure and content, as well as its formulation across different dimensions of intervention in social welfare service delivery. Opportunities and challenges in this process are identified, and insights that could guide social work educators in similar initiatives, particularly within indigenous contexts are presented.

Please write here your abstract (maximum 300 words)."

1122

A scan of the social work field practicum in Africa: Towards an Africentric model

Dr Julie Drolet[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

In Africa, social work education and practice are contested scholarly fields due to their colonial legacies. There have been calls to redesign social work education in Africa to incorporate Afrocentric social work approaches that can address Africa's unique challenges. Field practicum, also known as field education, is an integral part of social work education in Africa and equips students with culturally relevant skills to address local issues. Moreover, studies examining the state of social work practicum in Africa are needed to inform Afrocentric social work field practicum pedagogies and research. Through the Transforming Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project, team members facilitated a sequential, cross-sectional mixed-methods research study to address this knowledge gap. Using a Qualtrics survey and Focus group discussions (FGDs), data were collected on various components of social work practicum education, including student-centered learning, field instructor mentorship, practice-based integration, and evaluation. Quantitative data were collected from 41 social work programs at universities across Africa. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions (FGD) with 28 social work education stakeholders in the African region in 2022. Descriptive and thematic analysis techniques were used to identify patterns and meaning in the data. We are interested in sharing the final findings on the current state of social work practicum education in Africa at the 2026 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development conference in Kenya. Our discussions will focus on field practicum models, practicum placement durations, practicum seminars, student support, placement agencies, and student evaluation through an Afrocentric social work practice lens. Recommendations for the future direction of social work practicum education in Africa will be discussed.

Addressing Attention Fragmentation in the Digital Era: An Experiential Learning Model for High-Risk Youth

YouXua Chen[1]
[1]Han-ci Social Welfare Foundation , Taiwan, , Taiwan

"Adolescents from high-risk families increasingly experience persistent academic frustration, while limited caregiving capacity weakens emotional regulation, daily routines, and self-efficacy. Simultaneously, widespread digital media use—particularly late-night screen exposure and rapid switching between short-form content—has intensified attention fragmentation and reduced task endurance. The convergence of long-standing family risks with newly heightened digital disruptions creates a compounded challenge that fosters avoidance, distractibility, and dependence on immediate rewards.

To respond to these overlapping risks, an experiential learning program was implemented for eight consecutive years with more than 800 youth participants. Grounded in Dewey's learning-by-doing philosophy and Bandura's social learning and self-efficacy theories, the model integrates three components: self-care practices, financial capability exercises, and adventure-based cooperative tasks. Through rhythm reconstruction, decision-making with visible consequences, and progressively challenging team activities, the intervention provides repeated mastery experiences that strengthen frustration tolerance, behavioral persistence, and belief in personal capability.

Across multiple cohorts, practitioners observed consistent improvements in learning engagement, attention span, self-efficacy, and willingness to attempt challenging tasks. Yet some gains diminished when youth returned to unstable or highly digitalized home environments, prompting the program's evolution into a phased, multi-setting framework spanning family, school, and community contexts.

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis further showed that each unit of investment generated approximately three units of social value, reflected in strengthened self-regulation, reduced risk of academic disengagement, and improved family functioning. Overall, the model illustrates how experiential, rhythm-based, and self-efficacy–building approaches can meaningfully support high-risk adolescents' learning and daily functioning in the digital era."

ECO-SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN INDIA: DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Chitra Karunakaran Prasanna[1]
[1]Department Of Social Work, Central University Of Tamil Nadu, , India

The significance of integrating ecological discourses into social work education is becoming more prominent with the proliferation of diversified environmental risks in local to global contexts. The objective is to revisit anthropocentric models in social work and promote bio-centric ethics through critical social work education focusing on socio-ecological justice for inclusive development. Though recently social work education has seen an increased green content, the penetration of social work practice into the contemporary environment and development discourses is relatively low in India. This indicates a low level of political ecology knowledge production in social work education which is further reflected in the micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice. In this context, the preliminary objective of the paper is to explore the eco-social work education scenario through a comprehensive review of empirical and conceptual literature available on the theme. The paper also aims to explore the inclusion of ecological social work or related course content and the extent of theory-practice interfaces in the curriculums of the postgraduate (Master of Social Work - MSW) programmes in selected Universities in India. The purpose of the paper is to evolve a eco-social work curriculum framework which will benefit educators and students and ultimately contribute to greening of social work practice. The underlying argument is that interlacing political ecology concepts and practice can bring innovative changes in the traditional psycho-social person-in-environment model in social work and scale it up to a critical model which endorses the natural environment component determining the social, psychological and cultural environment in which individuals, groups and communities survive.

Technology Use Among Older Adults Living with Severe Mental Health Conditions: Accessibility and Impact

Ms Ya-ching Chang[1]
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"Background and Aim: Technology is essential to the lives of older adults and individuals with severe mental health conditions, yet research rarely explores their subjective perspectives on its use. Grounded in the Capability Approach (CA), this study examines how technology use influences their ability to lead a meaningful life.

Methods: Thirty-seven individuals aged 50 and older with schizophrenia spectrum or bipolar disorders were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Among them, twenty-three used community-based services, while fourteen resided in institutional settings. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically.

Results: Findings highlight three key themes: (1) The care model shapes technology accessibility—those in institutions often face restrictions; (2) Technology use fosters capabilities such as emotional support, practical reasoning, and social connections; (3) Limited access to technology constrains life opportunities, leading to loneliness, social exclusion, and increased dependence.

Conclusion: Access to technology is a fundamental right, particularly for those facing systemic barriers. Enhancing technology accessibility can strengthen personal agency, support pursuing personal goals, and contribute to the recovery process for individuals living with severe mental health conditions."

Closing the Gap: Reimagining Mental Health Care in Ghana Post-COVID 19

Dr Festus Moasun[1]
[1]University Of Windsor, ,

Mental health is a critical determinant of national development (Gautam et al., 2024; Votruba et al. 2014; WHO, 2025), yet mental healthcare remains severely underfunded across many countries in the Global South. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this challenge, triggering a surge in mental health cases due to bereavement, social isolation, and prolonged lockdowns. While health systems globally prioritized physical health infrastructure during and after the pandemic, mental health services received minimal attention. In Ghana, significant investments were directed toward disease control and physical health facilities, such as the Ghana Infectious Disease Centre and the nationwide "Agenda 111" hospitals initiative. Conversely, mental healthcare has not witnessed comparable progress despite the enactment of the Mental Health Act (Act 846) in 2012—a landmark policy intended to transform mental health delivery. Persistent resource constraints, inadequate mental health facilities, and shortages of trained professionals, including social workers, have left many individuals reliant on unconventional practices such as spiritual care (Gyimah et al., 2023). This presentation offers a conceptual analysis of the prospects and challenges of mental healthcare in Ghana, highlighting systemic gaps and advocating for the integration of social workers and allied professionals as central actors in mental health service delivery.

Repositioning Social Work in Kenya’s Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Training Institutions: From Marginalization to Professional Recognition

Euphracia Owuor[1]
[1]Nairobi Wome\'s Hospital College, ,

Social work plays a crucial role in advancing social justice, promoting community well-being, and delivering holistic services across health, education, and social protection systems. However, in Kenya, private middle-level TVET colleges offering social work programs are experiencing declining student enrollment, driven by limited public awareness, persistent misconceptions about the profession, and uncertainty around career pathways. Prospective students often associate social work exclusively with NGOs, county governments, and a few healthcare facilities, where employment opportunities are perceived as limited and poorly defined. Lack of strong interprofessional recognition compounds this challenge. The dearth of a fully functioning regulatory framework has further subdued the profession’s reputation. Whereas the Social Work Bill is currently before Parliament to regulate and legislate the profession, social work has yet to achieve a defining milestone that establishes a formal system for registration, licensing, and professional culpability. This gap has negatively impacted public perception, institutional adoption, and the positioning of social work as a viable career choice within the TVET sector. This paper examines the implications of these challenges for social work training and workforce development in Kenya. It explores opportunities presented by the Social Work Bill, the role of TVET institutions in professional advocacy, and the integration of explicit and implicit curricula to strengthen professional identity. The presentation proposes strategic actions for educators, policymakers, professional associations, and training institutions to reposition social work, improve enrollment, and enhance its contribution to national development.

Cultural Contexts of Disability: An Ethnographic Analysis of Bikpakpaam in Ghana

Dr Festus Moasun[1]
[1]University Of Windsor, ,

Disability, conceptualized as the experience of bodily impairment, is deeply embedded within the socio-cultural, political, and economic contexts of everyday life. Environmental conditions significantly shape these experiences: supportive settings foster inclusion, while hostile environments perpetuate stigma, discrimination, and, in extreme cases, violence (Agbaxode, 2025; Naami, 2022). In African societies, cultural traditions and macro-level ideologies often mediate these dynamics (Agbenyega, 2003; Mensah & Horsu, 2025), influencing micro-level familial and community interactions. Misidentifying the structural roots of oppression risks confining interventions to symptomatic issues rather than addressing systemic determinants. This paper presents an ethnographic analysis of the political, social, and cultural structures of the Bikpakpaam (Konkomba) people of Ghana, examining their implications for persons with disabilities. The paper argues for a holistic, culturally responsive approach to social work practice with persons with disabilities that integrates individual, familial, and societal dimensions.

Values-Driven Sustainability Education: How Attitudes Predict Global Citizenship Among UAE Students

Dr Raquel Marta[1]
[1]Department Of Social Wellbeing, Chss, United Arab Emirates University (uaeu), , United Arab Emirates

"<p class=""p1"">Universities worldwide have embraced the UN Sustainable Development Goals, yet questions persist about whether SDG literacy translates into genuine global citizenship. This. study investigates four critical dimensions of sustainability education among UAE university students: (1) the relative importance of SDG knowledge versus attitudes in predicting global citizenship consciousness; (2) how culturally rooted values, particularly Islamic principles, integrate with global citizenship orientations; (3) students\' perceptions of the UAE\'s development role and implications for critical versus uncritical global citizenship; and (4) patterns in SDG prioritization revealing gaps in social-environmental sustainability integration.</p>
<p class=""p1"">Through face-to-face surveys with 48 female undergraduates across eight colleges at UAE University (November 2024-February 2025), we employed multiple regression analysis to test predictors of global citizenship consciousness. Findings challenge conventional pedagogical assumptions: SDG knowledge did not significantly predict global citizenship (β = 0.24, p = 0.17), while attitudes toward sustainable development emerged as a strong predictor (β =<span class=""s1"">270.61, p = 0.009; R^2 = 0.331). Students demonstrated exceptionally high commitment to Islamic values of unity (tawhid), justice (adl), and solidarity (takaful) (M = 4.3-4.4/5.0), suggesting cultural values serve as ethical anchors to global citizenship. </p>
<p class=""p1"">These findings call for revisiting the pedagogical sequence in sustainability education—beginning with values clarification and meaning-making rather than information transmission. </p>
<p class=""p1"">We propose piloting transdisciplinary learning labs and developing culturally grounded global citizenship curricula. This exploratory research establishes groundwork for pilot programs, institutional scaling, and cross-national comparative research in sustainability education. </p>"

Integrating Ecosocial Practice into Clinical Social Work: A Nature-Based Intervention with People Experiencing Homelessness in the Azores

Mr Eduardo Marques[1], Eva Gallén-Granell[2]
[1]Lusiada Research Center On Social Work And Social Intervention (clissis), University Of Azores, Portugal, , Portugal, [2]Institute Of Creativity And Educational Innovations (iucie), Universitat De València, Spain, , Spain

"People experiencing homelessness face elevated rates of psychological distress, trauma exposure, social isolation, and restricted access to mental health support. These factors position this population as a priority group for clinical social work, particularly regarding interventions that promote emotional regulation, wellbeing, and recovery processes. In recent years, nature-based therapeutic approaches have gained attention for their capacity to foster stress reduction, enhance mood, and strengthen social connection. However, research exploring their application within homelessness services remains limited.

This study presents a pilot nature-based intervention conducted in São Miguel (Azores Islands, Portugal) using the Forest Mind methodology, which integrates guided walks in natural environments, mindfulness exercises, sensory grounding, and facilitated group reflection. A mixed-methods design was adopted: emotional states were assessed using the Profile of Mood States (POMS) and the Nature Relatedness Scale (NRS) before and after the intervention; qualitative data were gathered through a focus group with participants and an interview with a support worker.

Findings revealed significant improvements in emotional wellbeing, including reductions in tension, depression, anger, and confusion, together with increased vigor. Qualitative analysis highlighted experiences of calm, emotional relief, renewed motivation, and enhanced group cohesion. Participants reported the therapeutic value of experiencing nature as a supportive and restorative space, contrasting with prior experiences where outdoor environments were associated with survival, surveillance, or exclusion.

These results suggest that nature-based interventions can complement clinical social work practice with people experiencing homelessness, supporting emotional stabilization, relational engagement, and wellbeing. The study contributes to emerging Eco social perspectives in clinical social work, emphasizing the importance of integrating restorative environments into therapeutic and community-based mental health strategies for marginalized populations."

Remembering Why We Chose Social Work: Biographical Work, Professional Identity, and Global Solidarity in the Spirit of Ubuntu and Harambee

Nadja Khan[1]
[1]Social Worker And Chair Of The Works Council Of Caritas München Und Freising, , Germany

"Social work practice worldwide is shaped not only by institutional frameworks and professional knowledge, but also by practitioners' life histories, values, and ethical orientations. In many African contexts, philosophies such as Ubuntu—"I am because we are"—and Harambee—collective effort for the common good—highlight the relational and communal foundations of social action. This workshop explores biographical work as a reflective, non-therapeutic method that aligns with these principles by strengthening professional identity through shared meaning-making.

The facilitator is currently undertaking certified training in biographical work with Lebensmutig e.V. (Germany). Biographical work is an established method in social work, adult education, and community development. Its aim is reflective awareness, professional orientation, and the activation of personal and collective resources.

Through low-threshold, culturally adaptable exercises, participants will be invited to reflect on the question: Why did I become a social worker? Attention will be given to biographical turning points, community influences, social responsibility, and experiences of solidarity that have shaped professional choices. Individual biographies are understood as relational narratives embedded in families, communities, and historical contexts.

By reconnecting with their inner orientation and core values, social workers may experience increased resilience when facing political, social, and emotional challenges in their respective contexts. Sharing biographical perspectives within an international group allows participants to recognize both differences and common ground, fostering global professional solidarity grounded in lived experience.

The workshop combines a concise theoretical introduction with experiential methods and guided reflection. Participants will gain insight into biographical work as a professional tool and leave with practical impulses for integrating reflective, community-oriented biographical approaches into social work practice, education, and supervision."

Advancing SDG 6 Through Social Practice: Protocol for a Global Scoping Review of Social Work Interventions in Water Security

Dr Raquel Marta[1]
[1]Department Of Social Wellbeing, Chss, United Arab Emirates University (uaeu), , United Arab Emirates

"<p class=""p1"">Water insecurity affects over 2.2 billion people globally, with projections indicating 2.4 billion more at risk by 2050. Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation) requires not only infrastructure and technology but also addressing the psychosocial dimensions—including mental health impacts, gender-based violence, and livelihood disruption—that remain underexamined in intervention frameworks. Despite documented associations between water scarcity and depression, anxiety, and stress (particularly among women), social work\'s engagement with water insecurity remains poorly characterized. </p>
<p class=""p1"">This gap is problematic given that SDG 6 achievement requires core social work competencies: addressing inequitable access, supporting vulnerable populations, promoting community participation, and advocating for policy change. This scoping review will provide the first systematic mapping of social work interventions addressing water insecurity globally, examining their nature, extent, characteristics, implementation, and outcomes. </p>
<p class=""p1"">Following Joanna Briggs Institute methodology and PRISMA-ScR guidelines, we will search seven databases (MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, CINAHL, Scopus, Web of Science, GreenFILE) from 2000-present, plus targeted grey literature. Two independent reviewers will screen studies using Population-Concept-Context criteria. Data extraction will employ standardized forms, with analysis using descriptive numerical summaries and qualitative thematic synthesis. Findings will inform evidence-based practice guidelines, curriculum development, and policy integration, strengthening the social practice contribution to SDG 6 targets on universal water access, climate adaptation, and environmental justice—particularly relevant to water-stressed regions like the UAE. Protocol registered: Open Science Framework DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/GKSFZ</p>"

Severe Food Insecurity among the Black Population: An Indicator of Inequity and the Debate in Social Work

Prof. Maria Lucia Teixeira Garcia[1], Francislaine Alves Nogueira de Almeida[1]
[1]Universidade Federal Do Espírito Santo, , Brazil

Theoretical substantiation regarding malnutrition resulting from the denial of access to food is fundamental to a professional practice radically committed to the Social Work Code of Ethics and the anti-racist struggle in Brazil. The denial of the right to food in both quantity and quality does not produce homogeneous impacts; rather, it is shaped by race and skin color, sex and gender, territoriality, and social class. Although global hunger has declined, it remains concentrated in regions on the periphery of capitalism. This study aims to reflect on the discourse within Social Work regarding this issue. A systematic literature review was conducted using the Scopus, Redalyc, SciELO, and PubMed databases, applying the following keywords: (“severe food insecurity”OR “malnutrition”) AND “hunger” AND (“black*” OR “African*” OR “Afro-descendant”), in Portuguese, English, and Spanish. Texts that did not address malnutrition and or severe food insecurity from an ethnic-racial perspective were excluded. Of the 8,235 texts published across 2,626 journals, only 15 were published in 14 Social Work journals(0.5 percent), three in Portuguese and eleven in English. The Portuguese-language texts, authored by Brazilian researchers, focus on the relationship between the social issue and racism or on agri-food systems and public health, and were published between 2015 and 2025. The English-language texts examine malnutrition, food insecurity, and hunger with a focus on India, China, South Africa, and Israel, concentrating on children, older adults, and adult waste pickers, published between 2010 and 2025. While the Portuguese literature articulates severe food insecurity in relation to capitalist dynamics, the English-language texts tend to focus on the phenomenon itself, without linking it to the mode of production. This study argues for the need for greater theoretical density and for struggle toward a world grounded in social justice that guarantees food in sufficient quantity and quality for all people.

Lived Experience and Professional Identity: How Who We Are Shapes How We Practice

Ms Feyisetan Adunbi[1]
[1]University Of Michigan, , United States
"<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">This presentation will examine how lived experience, positionality, and intersectionality shape professional identity and practice in social work. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">Three women of color, two immigrants to the United States and one U.S. born, reflect on how their personal histories, cultural backgrounds, and prior professional roles have informed their respective professional social work experiences. With diverse backgrounds in international development, mental health, and law, they offer a multifaceted conversation on how lived experience informs professional social work practice. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">Grounded in critical reflection, presenters will explore how intersecting identities influence engagement with clients, communities, and systems. Presenters will also discuss varying approaches to clinical practice, teaching, field instruction, and program development. Finally, presenters will reflect on the significant impact their lived experiences have had on their respective practice areas and transformed lives in the process. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">Presenters will highlight the significance of critical self-reflection as an essential component of culturally responsive and anti-oppressive practice. Focus will be placed on how lived experiences influence the navigation of multiple social locations including race, gender, migration, and professional identity. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">Discussion will illustrate how these lived experiences shape our understanding of power, privilege, and marginalization within the profession and the broader sociopolitical context. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""><span style=""font-family: tahoma, sans-serif"">Through narrative reflection, storytelling and dialogue, participants will be invited to engage in critical self-reflection and integrate reflexivity and intersectionality into their professional development and practice. Participants will be invited to engage in discussion related to their individual positionalities and to consider how lived experience can serve as both a source of insight and a catalyst for social justice–oriented practice. </p>
<p dir=""ltr""></p>"

LABOR UNDER A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE REALITY EXPERIENCED BY BLACK BRAZILIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

Mrs Jaqueline Marciano Munier[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo - Puc-sp, ,

The labor of Brazilian social workers a category predominantly composed of Black women is part of the \"new morphology of work,\" characterized by precariousness, the dismantling of rights, and intensified exploitation that fluctuates according to the political landscape. As members of the \"class that lives from labor,\" these professionals sell their labor power and face the same processes of degradation affecting the working class as a whole, including those working within the state apparatus. Professional analysis requires an intersectional approach, recognizing that race, gender, and class define the labor trajectories of these women. In Brazil, the legacies of the slavery period perpetuate the subordination of the Black population, especially Black women, who occupy the most precarious positions. Even social workers with high intellectual qualifications face a lack of recognition and new control mechanisms, such as \"pejotização\" (disguised self employment) and telework. This latter modality, although marketed as flexibility, often camouflages the elimination of rights, invades free time, and intensifies the female double burden (productive and reproductive), while distancing the professional from the service user. Faced with the worsening of the \"social question,\" Social Work is grounded in a critical ethical-political project that combats structural racism, patriarchy, and the criminalization of poverty. The category\'s challenge is to break with conservative and disciplinary practices, fighting for dignified working conditions and the fulfillment of rights for the served population. This practice demands constant theoretical-practical improvement and the strengthening of collective actions to confront the dehumanizing logic of capital and ensure respect for human dignity in all its dimensions. This study, currently in the bibliographic review phase, aims to understand the intersectionalities of race and gender to strengthen the practice and narrative of Black female social workers in the Brazilian context.

Integrating the Implicit Curriculum into TVET Social Work Training for a Strong and Ethical Workforce in Kenya

Euphracia Owuor[1]
[1]Nairobi Wome\'s Hospital College, ,

"The paradigm shift in Kenya’s education system to embrace competency-based education (CBET) necessitates change in social work curriculum development. The current Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum emphasizes on core competencies for social work students with little focus on unwritten learning experiences that determine their demeanor and professional development. The daily interactions between students and lecturers, students from distinct fields, and institutional cultures and practices within the school administration cultivate the often-overlooked implicit curriculum, which outlines how social work students appreciate their professional value, ethical responsibilities, and role within multidisciplinary settings.

Unlike the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum is shaped within institutions and classrooms. We argue that intentionally strengthening the implicit curriculum—through respectful engagement, inclusive learning environments, and upholding interprofessional relationships—is critical to bridging theory and practice. By explicating the implicit curriculum, TVET institutions can play a transformative role in nurturing a strong, stable, and ethically grounded social work workforce

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THE ETHNIC-RACIAL AND GENDER DIMENSION IN THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF BRASILIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

Mrs Jaqueline Marciano Munier[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo - Puc-sp, ,

"This article proposes a reflection on how the intersectionality of race and gender manifested through the objectification of Black female social workers\' bodies in Brazil articulates with the precarization and the new morphologies of labor within the scope of Social Work. Such labor metamorphoses are expressed through temporary contracts, on demand labor, intensification of productivity, and excessive digital mediation. To this end, the analysis is anchored in theoretical frameworks that highlight the persistence of the legacy of slavery, which maintains the Black female body as an object of subalternity and fetish in contemporary social relations. This discussion is imperative for the professional category, considering that the majority of Brazilian social workers are Black women

This reality of oppression directly confronts the principles of the 1993 Code of Ethics, specifically regarding non-discrimination and the uncompromising defense of human rights. Finally, the relevance of collective struggle in defense of these professionals\' rights is highlighted, in opposition to all forms of prejudice. The present study is currently in the literature review phase, aiming to deepen the debate in close alignment with the professional Ethical-Political Project. It seeks to claim the guarantee of dignified and safe working conditions, which are fundamental for social workers to perform their duties free from any forms of oppression and institutional prejudice. The preservation of the professional\'s mental health and psychosocial integrity is understood here as an intrinsic requirement for the quality of professional practice; only within a protective labor environment, which neutralizes the violence resulting from racism and sexism, will it be possible to facilitate an excellent, ethical, and efficient service to the population.

Urban Development Context, Organizational Climate, and Ethical Identification as Predictors of Social Workers' Service Quality: Multilevel Evidence from CSWLS2019

Assoc Prof Nian Liu[1]
[1]Guangzhou University, , China

"Drawing on Person–Organization Fit (P–O Fit) theory, this study uses matched data from the China Social Work Longitudinal Study 2019 (CSWLS2019) to construct a three-level nested sample (city–agency–worker: 39 cities, 424 agencies, 4,445 agency-based social workers) and applies Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) to examine how urban development context, organizational climate, and ethical identification shape social workers' self-rated service quality and its cross-level mechanisms.

Descriptive results indicate a moderately high level of service quality (M = 3.68, SD = 0.491) and a high level of ethical identification (M = 4.46, SD = 0.519). The unconditional model shows meaningful between-unit variation, with Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICCs) of 0.107 at the agency level and 0.017 at the city level, justifying the inclusion of organizational and urban contexts. Net of age, gender, and professional background, ethical identification significantly predicts higher service quality (B = 0.172). At the agency level, board functioning (B = 0.022) and organizational publicity (B = 0.035) exert direct positive effects. At the city level, perceived environmental fairness is positively associated with service quality (B = 0.087), whereas government support shows no significant direct effect (B = 0.137, p = 0.139). Further analyses reveal a full mediation pathway whereby government support enhances ethical identification (βa = 0.356), which in turn improves service quality (βb = 0.174; PRODCLIN 95% CI [0.018, 0.110]). Moreover, environmental fairness strengthens the ethical identification–service quality link (interaction B = 0.185, p = 0.037), suggesting that fairness in the institutional environment amplifies the translation of professional ethics into performance.

From a multilevel nested perspective, the study demonstrates how macro-institutional context and organizational governance shape frontline performance through an "ethical identification–environmental fairness" mechanism, providing empirical evidence for improving government purchasing and evaluation arrangements, strengthening organizational governance, and advancing ethics cultivation."

Prioritizing Decolonizing Frameworks: Ubuntu and Social Work with Refugee Communities

Dr Neil Bilotta[1]
[1]Skidmore College, ,

"Theme 1 of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development is the sub-Saharan African philosophy of ubuntu[1]. Generally, ubuntu emphasizes interdependence, interconnectedness, reconciliation, and relationality [2]. Social work scholarship recommends decolonizing and indigenizing the profession by applying ubuntu to decenter White and Eurocentric theories that undergird social work practice [2]. Yet ubuntu's meaning and applicability to social work remain underdeveloped, as few studies have empirically explored how social workers utilize and apply ubuntu and decolonizing approaches in their practice. As some of the most over researched and vulnerable populations, refugees deserve social work practices and theories tailored to and driven by them. Indeed, social work scholarship advocates for the inclusion of "decolonial" practice with refugee communities by grounding theory and research in local paradigms, including ubuntu, to create inclusive, community-driven, and reciprocal relationships [2]. Rooted in decolonial and anti-oppressive social work theoretical prisms, this presentation explores the initial phases of a qualitative research project (e.g., semi-structured interviews and talking circles) examining how East African social work academics and social workers apply ubuntu in their scholarship and practice with refugees. Preliminary data suggest that social work academics and practitioners find ubuntu "critical" for refugee social work, to enable reciprocal and "Afrocentric" approaches that align with current realities for many persons living with refugee status. This research aligns with the SWSD Conference theme, Harambee, "collective action in building sustainable, inclusive, and equitable futures," as social work moves away from Eurocentric notions of "knowledge production" towards more anti-oppressive and culturally relevant approaches.

[1] Tusasiirwe, S., & Mugumbate, R. (Eds.). (2023). Ubuntu philosophy and decolonising social work fields of practice in Africa. Taylor & Francis.

[2] Mugumbate, R. (2023). Ubuntu-inspired tools and models to decolonise social work practice.

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Educar em Territórios de Desigualdade: Iniciativa Comunitária, Solidariedade Transnacional e Direito à Educação no Estudo de Caso da Westgateh Secondary School em Watamu

Cristiane Libardi[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, ,

"Este artigo apresenta um estudo de caso da Westgateh Secondary School, localizada na comunidade de Watamu, no sul do Quênia. O estudo analisa a trajetória da escola, seus desafios e sua relevância social no contexto do direito à educação em territórios marcados por desigualdades estruturais. A escola foi fundada pelo professor local, o Sr. David, como resposta à carência de acesso ao ensino secundário para jovens da região. Diante da insuficiência da oferta pública e do limitado apoio estatal, o fundador construiu a escola como uma iniciativa educacional de base comunitária, voltada à permanência escolar e à ampliação das oportunidades de vida da juventude local.

Atualmente, a Westgateh Secondary School atende cerca de 300 estudantes e depende majoritariamente de doações provenientes de indivíduos de diferentes países, evidenciando a importância da solidariedade internacional e de redes transnacionais de apoio. Apesar desse suporte, a instituição enfrenta desafios relacionados à sustentabilidade financeira, como a garantia de alimentação diária, a manutenção de dormitórios estudantis, a qualificação da infraestrutura física e a ausência de equipamentos pedagógicos essenciais, como uma biblioteca escolar estruturada. Essas limitações afetam diretamente as condições de ensino e aprendizagem e revelam tensões entre iniciativas comunitárias e a responsabilidade do Estado na efetivação dos direitos sociais.

Apesar das adversidades, o estudo destaca a atuação do diretor da escola como uma liderança comprometida e visionária, cuja prática articula educação, mobilização comunitária e gestão baseada na solidariedade. Embora não se trate de uma intervenção profissional direta do Serviço Social, a experiência da Westgateh Secondary School insere-se no campo de respostas sociais às expressões da questão social que interpelam a profissão. O estudo oferece reflexões para o Serviço Social diante de desafios globais complexos, especialmente no que se refere à insuficiência das políticas públicas, à cooperação internacional e à defesa da educação como dimensão central da justiça social."

Empowering the unemployed youth as a pathway to crime reduction in an informal settlement for a sustainable future.

Dr Jeniffer Birech[1]
[1]University Of Nairobi , Kenya., , Kenya

"Globally, Youth “unemployment is a persistent socio-economic challenge in many urban informal settlements, including Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Kenya. Whilst high unemployment rates among youth have been closely linked to increased crime commission, exacerbating the socio-economic instability of marginalized communities, there is an urgent need to look for sustainable solutions. This study investigated the types of crimes most prevalent among youth, the socio-economic drivers behind these activities and evaluated the extent to which local interventions have been effective. The research was anchored on Strain Theory and Social Disorganization Theory, which explain how socio-economic pressures and weakened community structures influence youth involvement in crime. The study’s population consisted of youth aged 18-35 years residing in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, with a sample size of 219 respondents. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. The data collection methods employed included the use of structured questionnaires as well as the interview guides that targeted the key informants. The findings reveal that younger youth, particularly those aged 18-25, are more involved in petty crimes, while older youth tend to engage in organized criminal activities. Substance abuse, peer pressure, and lack of vocational skills were identified as key socio-economic drivers of crime in the settlement. The study recommends targeted interventions, including the establishment of vocational training centers, educational scholarships, and mental health support services. In addition, enhancing community-based mentorship programs and providing employment opportunities through local infrastructure projects could help mitigate both youth unemployment and crime. In essence, a multisectoral approach is critical in addressing the youth unemployment and crime commission for sustainable futures.

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A Protocol on Group-Based Brief Mindfulness Intervention for Menstrual Distress among Marginalized Women

Ms Margi Shah[1]
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"Menstrual distress is a concern that significantly affects women's physical, emotional, and psychosocial well-being. Marginalized women experience a disproportionate burden due to socioeconomic disadvantage, stigma, lack of access to health services, and period poverty, which restrict their mobility, participation, and overall well-being. Addressing menstrual distress from a psychosocial, gender-sensitive, empowerment-oriented, and welfare-based lens is essential within the broader mandate of social work practice. Emphasis should be on promoting well-being, access, inclusion, and support systems for vulnerable groups, making menstrual distress a significant area requiring intervention. Mindfulness-based interventions have shown effectiveness in reducing stress, pain, and emotional distress; however, evidence on brief, culturally contextualized online interventions for menstrual distress in marginalized communities in India remains limited.

The study aims to examine the effectiveness of a group-based brief mindfulness intervention in reducing menstrual distress among marginalized women. A quasi-experimental design with pre-post, and one-month follow-up assessments will be used. Marginalized women aged 18-30 years enrolled in the Karuna Fellowship across India will be screened using DASS-21, MEDI-Q, and the Menstrual Practices Questionnaire. Online Focus Group Discussions will explore knowledge, attitudes, practices, and lived experiences related to menstrual distress and period poverty. Eligible participants scoring high on the MEDI-Q will be allocated to intervention or control groups through purposive sampling, reflecting participatory and ethical practices in social work research.

The intervention group will receive four weekly online sessions focusing on psychoeducation, mindfulness practices, stress management, and self-compassion, while the control group will receive reading materials after the study. Repeated Measures ANOVA will be used to analyze the changes over time. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SoHvvu6UwXfHXxqVWPeS75Rx3mH6IlmD/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=116719308185518111499&rtpof=true&sd=true

It is expected that participants receiving the mindfulness intervention will show a significant reduction in menstrual distress and reveal the relationship between menstrual distress and period poverty. The study contributes to social work by offering a scalable, cost-effective, culturally relevant psychosocial intervention for menstrual distress."

Professional Purpose, Commitment and Pedagogical Risk-Taking: Career Motivations and Transformative Teaching in South African Social Work Education

Dr Precious Mseba[1]
[1]Missouri State University, ,

Social work education emphasizes social justice, anti-oppressive practice, and critical reflexivity as core professional commitments. These imperatives are meant to undo enduring inequalities rooted in colonialism and apartheid. While South African social work education has widely promoted this transformative pedagogy and the pedagogy of discomfort, scholarship has paid little attention to how educators' own career motivations and sense of professional purpose shape their engagement with such pedagogical approaches. This qualitative study explores the relationship between social work lecturers' intrinsic career motivations and their adoption of transformative teaching practices. Guided by Transformative Learning Theory, the study draws on seven in-depth interviews with social work educators at a South African university and employs thematic analysis to examine educators' motivations, pedagogical approaches, and contextual influences as they pursue transformative pedagogy. The findings reveal that lecturers' engagement with transformative pedagogy is deeply rooted in altruism, social justice commitments, vocational or spiritual callings, intellectual curiosity, and people-centered values shaped by personal and structural factors. These motivations underpin educators' willingness to employ discomfort-based pedagogies aimed at fostering critical reflexivity, ethical awareness, and social justice-oriented practice among students. However, institutional constraints and limited recognition of the emotional and ethical demands of transformative teaching complicate these efforts. The study highlights the importance of aligning institutional and policy support with the transformative aims of social work education.

Navigating the Duty to Report in Canadian Schools: Educators' Experiences Supporting Racialized and Low-Income Students

Dr Sarah Maiter[1]
[1]School Of Social Work, York University, ,

"Teachers play a central role in identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, yet little is known about how educators in Canada—specifically in British Columbia (BC) and Ontario—navigate this responsibility, particularly when working with racialized and low-income students who remain disproportionately represented in child welfare systems. This study explores how educators in both provinces understand and enact their legal duty to report while balancing the relational, ethical, and structural complexities of supporting underrepresented students.

Drawing on Ontario-based research that highlights the pivotal role of school personnel in child maltreatment reporting (Fallon et al., 2022; Joh-Carnella et al., 2020), this study addresses a significant knowledge gap. An estimated 51,894 maltreatment-related investigations in Ontario were initiated through school-based referrals (Joh-Carnella et al., 2020), yet no research has examined the lived experiences of teachers who make these referrals. Building on evidence of the persistent overrepresentation of racialized and Indigenous children in child welfare (Boatswain-Kyte et al., 2020; Sinha et al., 2013), this project is the first to focus specifically on teachers' experiences when reporting racialized and low-income students in BC and Ontario.

Using a qualitative research design, the study conducted 9 virtual interviews with educators across the two provinces, employing snowball sampling to recruit participants. Ethics approval was granted through York University.

Findings reveal three key themes: barriers to referrals, including lack of clarity, fear of repercussions, and insufficient training; discriminatory practices in schools, such as cultural assumptions and negative perceptions of racialized parents; and limited institutional support, leaving teachers underprepared to address suspected maltreatment.

This project contributes evidence-informed strategies to better support educators, strengthen inter-professional collaboration, and reduce inequities experienced by racialized and low-income children within Canadian child welfare and educational systems."

From Cultural Stigma to Collective Healing: A Photovoice Pilot Study Exploring Grief and Bereavement Among Older Chinese Immigrants

Qianyun Wang[1]
[1]Ucla, , United States

"Grief and bereavement are a universal experience but highly related to cultural identities and social norms. This is particularly relevant within Chinese communities, where death is often considered taboo and discussing grief or emotional distress may carry “bad luck” and cultural stigma. Older Chinese immigrants also face unique challenges in grief adjustment due to cultural and linguistic barriers, limited social support, and discrimination in healthcare settings. This pilot study employed Photovoice, a qualitative, participatory strategy, to authentically capture and discuss these experiences through narrative and visual data.

This study addressed the following research questions: 1) What are the lived experiences of grief, bereavement, and adjustment among older Chinese immigrants? and 2) How do older Chinese immigrants use Photovoice to narrate, visualize, and reflect their grief and bereavement and coping experiences?

Five older Chinese immigrants participated in this pilot study. All completed initial in-depth interviews; four out of five participants captured photographs representing their grief experiences and took part in a follow-up photo-elicitation interview (PEI); three participants joined one focus group discussion. Data sources include interviews and the focus group discussion transcripts, participant photographs, demographic and feedback surveys, researcher memos, and field notes. Analysis followed Reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA), emphasizing researcher reflexivity throughout interpretation.

Findings identify key themes: Transnational Grief and Coping, Parental Loss and Intergenerational Transmission, Grief Literacy and Cultural Understandings of Healing, and Visual Capture as Memory and Healing Tools. Participants reported that photography helped them express emotions and stories and responded positively to the idea of future community photographic exhibitions. The pilot study showed participatory approaches can foster collective healing and cultural dialogue around grief and bereavement, promote emotional well-being among older immigrants, and inform culturally responsive, community-based bereavement support to advance health equity for marginalized aging populations."

Impact of Community-based Initiatives on Child Welfare Policies in Orhionmwon Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria.

Dr. Efosa Kingsley Ehigie[1]
[1]Aswen, ,

Child welfare remains a fundamental concern globally, particularly in regions facing vulnerabilities of children. This study examined the impact of community-based initiatives on child welfare policies in Orhionmwon Local Government Area, Edo State. The specific objectives were to investigate the most common types of community-based initiatives (CBIs) influencing child welfare policies in Orhionmwon local government area, assess the ffectiveness of CBIs in enhancing child welfare policies, and identify challenges faced by CBIs in policy engagement and implementation. The study adopted ecological system theory to explain community-based initiative as part of exosystem that interacts with the microsystem to influence child welfare outcomes. A mixed methods research design was adopted; structured questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide were adopted to collect data from 768 respondents and 12 informants, respectively. The instruments were content validated, and reliability was determined using pre-text. Multistage sampling techniques involving stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques were adopted. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and results were presented using percentages and tables. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that awareness creation and grassroots mobilization were the common types of community-based initiatives, community-based initiatives were not effective enough in enhancing child welfare policies, and inadequate formal recognition and cultural resistance were the perceived challenges. The study recommends formal integration of CBIs, adequate funding, and culturally sensitive community engagement.

From Playing Apart to Playing Together: Exploring Home-Visiting Parenting Empowerment and Parent-Child Interaction Quality

Ms Yu-hsin Chen[1]
[1]Child Welfare League Foundation, ,

"Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) encompass various traumatic events that children encounter, including abuse, witnessing violence, parental separation, and family dysfunction, which negatively impact children\'s physical and mental development while increasing caregivers\' parenting stress. In response, Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLF) has promoted the \""Parenting Empowerment Program\"" since 2021, providing home-visiting services to support caregivers in adversity families, enhancing their parenting capacity and parent-child interaction quality.

The program serves infants and toddlers aged 6 to 48 months and their primary caregivers. Grounded in responsive parenting, attachment theory, and strengths-based perspectives, it features three core themes: \""Observation and Response,\"" \""Being Together and Playing Together,\"" and \""Reasonable Boundaries.\"" Trained social workers deliver 6 to 8 home visits, each lasting 60 minutes, utilizing video materials, parent-child play interactions, and immediate feedback to strengthen caregivers\' responsive parenting skills.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, using the PICCOLO scale to assess caregivers\' responsive parenting behaviors. Quantitative results showed that the intervention group\'s responsive parenting capacity improved significantly (t = 3.642, p < .001), with particularly notable effects for families with weaker parenting skills. Qualitative analysis identified five positive impacts: enhanced parental sensitivity to children\'s emotions, development of observation and waiting abilities, enriched verbal responsiveness, increased parenting confidence, and improved parent-child interaction quality.

Moving forward, the program will continue to develop diverse, localized content, strengthen social workers\' professional training, and expand services to general families to foster healthier parent-child relationships."

Critical Moments in Migration: the Psychosocial Wellbeing of International Students Transitioning to Permanent Residency

Jilefack Amin Ngami[1], Prof Jill Hanley[1]
[1]School Of Social Work, Mcgill University, ,

Globally, increasing numbers of international students are on the move. Upon arrival in their countries of destination, however, they too often have to add precarious legal status, precarious work conditions and precarious housing to their already challenging studies. In this study, which involved interviews with 120 international students and 30 key informants, from across Canada we explored the critical moment of transitioning from the status of international student to that of permanent resident. Here, focusing on our data from Quebec, we present how our results reveal that international students suffer from chronic uncertainty and emotional stress due to their dependence on inscrutable immigration procedures. Students described financial pressure and overwork to cope with their high tuition and cost of living, language and cultural barriers. Lack of institutional supports compounds their vulnerability to disrupted academic trajectories and career plans. Together, these factors lead to risk of social isolation and psychosocial distress. We discuss the ways that social workers can engage this often overlooked population, assumed by many to be privileged rather than precarious. Best practices for social support will be proposed and policy implications reviewed. As countries around the world host growing numbers of migrant students, social workers must recognize that student migration holds its own pressures and precarities, calling for considerate intervention and support.

Vicarious trauma in disaster situations: Social workers\' experiences with Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe

Prof Louis Nyahunda[1]
[1]University Of Venda, South Africa, , South Africa

"This study explored the experiences with vicarious trauma for social workers who rendered their services during and in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai, which ravaged
Zimbabwe in 2019. A qualitative research approach was employed within the exploratory design. Ten social workers were purposively selected to share their experiences. Data were analyzed through the Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings revealed that social workers who rendered their services to disaster-stricken communities were reeling from post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disturbances, fear, and changed professional and self-identity. It was established that there have not been any institutional support interventions to reduce post disaster traumatic exposure effects following their cumulative exposure to distressing scenes caused by the cyclone. Talking to friends and work colleagues and seeking spiritual help were used as coping strategies amidst a lack of institutional support. The study recommends the provision of institutional support for social workers who render services in tragic disaster situations.

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Family-Centered Preventive Interventions: Strengthening Child Development and Family Functioning through Early Social Work Engagement

Mrs Chun Yu Yin[1]
[1]Han-ci Social Welfare Foundation, ,

"Grounded in Social Learning Theory, Attachment Theory, Ecological Prevention Model, and Participatory Action Research, this study develops and evaluates a family-centered preventive model addressing behavioral and emotional risks among children from socioeconomically vulnerable families in Taiwan. Implemented by a community-based NGO over five years with 120 families, the model integrates academic support, emotional accompaniment, and collaborative family work to identify and respond to early risks before crisis escalation.

Using a mixed-method design, quantitative findings indicate that 70% of children showed improved learning engagement, 68% enhanced emotional regulation, and 60% of families reported better communication and cohesion. Qualitative analysis identified a three-phase change process—trust formation, behavioral modeling, and family co-learning—that sustained improvements six months post-intervention. These findings highlight the relational mechanisms through which families internalize positive behavioral and emotional patterns.

A micro-level Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis further estimated that every dollar invested generated approximately 3.2 times social value, reflected in improved school attendance, reduced crisis reports, and strengthened family functionality.

The study demonstrates that relationship-based, low-cost, and high-frequency early interventions can yield measurable developmental and social outcomes. It provides evidence-based insights for practitioners and policymakers on integrating early engagement strategies into family and school social work, aligning with SWSD 2026's theme "Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures" by advancing collaborative, preventive, and practice-informed approaches to sustainable well-being."

Reimagining Social Work through Diaspora Wisdom and Global Futures: Practice and Pedagogy

Dr Ashley Cochran[1]
[1]Alabama State University, , United States

"This presentation explores how social work can be radically reimagined by drawing from African and African diasporic traditions of care, collective resilience, and lifelong relational well-being. Anchored in a historical arc—from the roots of communal helping systems to the contemporary profession's global footprint—the session examines the past, present, and future of social work in a world grappling with political unrest, migration, economic inequality, digital divides, and threats to human dignity. Using a strengths-based and culturally responsive lens, the presentation highlights how African worldviews and diaspora-informed practices expand our understanding of what effective social work can be, particularly in rural, low-resource, or historically marginalized communities.

A special emphasis is placed on reimagining social work practice and pedagogy through experiential, community-centered approaches that center dignity, voice, and agency across the lifespan. The presentation also introduces Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) as a model whose core principles—coaching, co-regulation, real-time skill building, and relational strengthening—align closely with longstanding African traditions of intergenerational guidance. By situating PCIT within cultural contexts relevant to African and African diasporic families, this session offers a culturally grounded pathway for strengthening parent-child relationships, reducing behavioral challenges, and promoting family well-being.

Participants will leave with a broadened vision of social work's possibilities, strategies for integrating culturally rooted and evidence-based tools, and a renewed commitment to preparing practitioners and educators who can meet the evolving needs of global communities.

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Empowering Botswana\'s Youth: The Role of Social Work in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Kgomotso Jongman[1]
[1]University Of Botswana, ,

"Botswana is often celebrated as a success story in Africa due to its substantial economic growth and efforts to combat poverty, unemployment, and inequality. However, despite these governmental initiatives, the situation for ordinary citizens remains challenging, with youth unemployment rates reaching nearly 40% (UNDP, 2025). In the pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), youth empowerment emerges as a crucial element, particularly in the context of Botswana. This paper examines the significant impact that social work has in furthering youth development, thereby advancing these global objectives. Social workers in Botswana are strategically positioned to tackle the socio-economic issues affecting the youth, such as unemployment, limited access to education, and health concerns. Through the deployment of community-based strategies and interventions, social workers can enhance inclusivity, equity, and resilience among young people.

This paper conducts a thorough analysis of current programs and policies, showcasing successful social work initiatives that have bolstered youth empowerment in Botswana. The discussion covers areas like access to quality education, youth entrepreneurship, and mental health support to demonstrate how these targeted social work interventions align with specific SDGs, notably Quality Education (SDG 4), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), and Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3)."

Climate Risks and Adaptation: At the intersection of landlessness and building home

Nicola Williams[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

"Adequate housing and land tenure security are twin pillars in climate change adaptation and risk mitigation for households in Jamaica. Approximately 20% of the population are live in informal settlements and 40% of all occupied land in Jamaica lack formal registration of ownership. Informal, insecure tenure, limits access to formal the resources and social amenities and increases the risks posed by climate related hazards.

An exploratory qualitative case-study was conducted to explore how squatter household navigate climate risks given their limited entitlements to formal supports. Four households in located in established informal settlements participated in the study.

The study found that lack of trust in state actors and external stakeholders continues to undermine climate change efforts. However, despite the different topographical hazards impacting the different households, intricate social relationships is a common factor in their efforts to mitigate climate risks through localised self-help practices. Added to this, sensory cues have become critical early warning systems for hazards such as fires, floods and hurricanes.

Furthermore, while household adaptation is driven by their interpretation of climate risks, community-wide adaptation efforts have enhanced the quality of life in these communities, strategically positioning them as viable options for affordable housing for people working and studying in neighbouring towns. This has brought economic benefits to households that aid them in improving climate change adaptation measures.

The insights provided by this study, will inform further exploration of the role of sensory information as a critical component of early warning systems for climate change adaptation for households in communities with limited resources."

Social Work Intervention in the Postpartum Period: Emotional Approach to Mothers of Premature Babies

Lord Alexander Durán Lozano[1]
[1]University Of The Valley - Faculty Of Humanities - School Of Social Work - Student, ,
"<span style=""font-weight: 400"">This experience arises within the framework of the academic practicum for Social Work students in the problematic field of Health, centered on the recognition of emotional distress through narrative resources among mothers of premature babies.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Evidence showed specific circumstances that break away from any social idealization of motherhood, generating a multiplicity of factors that influence family care processes and the emotional distress of mothers who transition from being patients to the primary caregivers of their children.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">In this sense, this experience presents the accompaniment provided by Social Work at a fourth-level health institution in the city of Cali, Colombia, to mothers of premature babies. This took place within the academic practicum under an intervention proposal titled <span style=""font-weight: 400"">The Knowledges in Motherhood<span style=""font-weight: 400""> (Los Saberes De La Maternidad), carried out during the 2024-2025 period.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">Following a diagnostic phase, emotional distress was identified as the object of intervention for professionals working with the women and family caregivers. Thus, the goal was to promote emotional well-being from a multidimensional perspective, considering social, economic, emotional, and symbolic factors.

<span style=""font-weight: 400"">The intervention was characterized by its intercultural approach and the use of narrative resources that encouraged the creation of a book written by the mothers. In this book, they addressed topics such as neonatal grief, emotions, and coping mechanisms during hospitalization. These efforts were facilitated through individual, family, and group guidance processes led by Social Work. This resulted in the construction of a solid support network and significant awareness regarding emotional recognition, the identification of psychosocial risk factors, and the externalization of emotional distress—all of which were symbolized in the book they collectively created."

Community Participatory Trainings for Caregivers of Older Adults in Rural Rwanda

Luz Marilis López[1], Immaculee Nyiransengimana[2], Prof. Katharine R Hobart[3]
[1]Boston University School Of Social Work, , United States, [2]Executive Director, Sazana Ishema Aging Centre, , Rwanda, [3]Co-Founder, Centre for Rural Development, , Rwanda
"Background: Due to intersectional socio-economic factors, life of Rwandan older adults has changed drastically in the past two decades. Modernization, globalization and rapid urbanization have shifted families and kinship roles. Rwandan older adults face unique challenges shaped by the 1994 Genocide which altered family structures and patterns of care. Aging in Rwanda rural areas is further complicated by “high time burden” activities like taking care of crops, getting water, doing laundry by hand, etc...

Caregiving for older adults in Rwanda has become a critical issue. This project illustrates the partnership between the Sazana Ishema Aging Centre (SIAC), based in Gikomero, Rwanda, the Boston University Center for Innovation in Social Work and Health (CISWH), and the community’s identified need for caregiver training.

Methodology: A two-day interactive hands-on caregivers training (N=42) was offered in November 2025, using a social work model adapted to the Rwandan context. It focused on key knowledge and skill building components of caregiving including core mental and physiological aspects of aging, activities of daily living, psychosocial care, assistance with mobility, person-centered care, and caring for the caregiver. A pre/post-test was administered to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

Monthly follow-up sessions are being offered to build networks of care, reduce caregiver burden and promote health, aging with dignity, and social well-being. SIAC older adults participate as leaders and collaborators, and the caregiver training integrates a holistic community-centered approach to learning, filling gaps in aging, caregiving and psychosocial health.

Format & Conclusion: Qualitative narratives of 42 Rwandan caregivers of older persons will be shared in partnership between SIAC and CISWH’s trainers. These include stories of community support, strengths perspectives, identifying gaps, interactive activities and critical analysis with the audience. We will describe the community participatory process, cultural adaptions for the Rwandan context, and social work strategies for psychosocial support."

Evolving Child Welfare in Korea: Safeguarding Vulnerable Children in the Digital Era through ‘Harambee’

Mr Eun Kang Chung[1]
[1]Mdream Korea, Gwangju, , South Korea
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South Korea’s child welfare landscape has undergone a paradigm shift, evolving from a post-war emergency response for orphans to a complex care network for children entering care through \""baby boxes,\"" teenage pregnancies, and severe abuse. Drawing on over 15 years of practitioner expertise as the Director of MDream—a residential home with a legacy dating back to 1928—this presentation examines this critical demographic shift. Today’s children increasingly present with complex psychological challenges, including ADHD, borderline intellectual functioning, and severe trauma stemming from the absence of grounded family upbringings. While the Korean model has successfully transitioned from large institutions to small, family-like group homes supported by specialized teams, including self-reliance support specialists, clinical psychologists, and residential care workers, this presentation argues that the current protective framework remains disconnected from the digital reality they inhabit.
<p data-path-to-node=""10"">To bridge this gap, this session outlines a pilot framework currently in development centered on three experimental pillars. First, \""Shared Digital Guardianship\"" moves us from passive surveillance to active, relationship-based discussions about online safety. Second, \""Stewardship of Digital Identity\"" balances the necessary deletion of institutional records with the preservation of a child’s personal digital memories for care leavers. Finally, we propose an \""AI-Assisted Relational Model.\"" Here, we use personalized learning tools not to automate education, but to generate touchpoints for dialogue. We argue that true digital resilience does not save staff time; rather, it requires significantly <i data-path-to-node=""4"" data-index-in-node=""693"">more</i> intentional human energy to turn digital interactions into opportunities for developmental connection.</p>
<p data-path-to-node=""10"">Embracing the conference spirit of \""Harambee\""—all pull together—this presentation invites global practitioners to critique these strategies and collectively design a digital safety net that protects the next generation’s well-being.</p>

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The Prevalence of Childhood Polyvictimization and Involvement in Suicide Risk Behaviors Among Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in Namibia

Dr Edson Chipalo[1]
[1]University Of Cincinnati, ,

Emotional, physical, and sexual violence, collectively referred to as childhood polyvictimization, affects nearly one billion children and adolescents worldwide and is strongly associated with suicide-related behaviors. In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) experience disproportionately higher levels of violence due to gender inequality, harmful social norms, and structural vulnerabilities. This study examined the prevalence and both independent and interactive associations between childhood polyvictimization and suicide risk behaviors among AGYW in Namibia.

Data were drawn from the 2019 Namibia Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (N= 4,200 AGYW aged 13–24 years). Suicide risk behaviors (i.e., self-harm, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts). Childhood polyvictimization was measured as exposure to emotional, physical, and/or sexual violence (no/yes). Weighted descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to estimate prevalence, and two logistic regression models assessed the association between independent and dependent variables. Interaction terms assessed combined effects of childhood polyvictimization and suicide risk behaviors.

Overall, 18% of AGYW were involved in at least one or more suicide risk behaviors, with 35% reporting a lifetime suicide attempt. Among AGYW involved in suicide risk behaviors, physical violence was most prevalent (56.1%), followed by emotional (32.4%) and sexual violence (24.7%). Notably, 68.1% of polyvictimized AGYW reported at least one suicide risk behavior. Before and after covariate adjustment, emotional violence (OR=4.35; AOR=2.98), physical violence (OR=2.82; AOR=2.98), and sexual violence (OR=3.26; AOR=1.88) were associated with higher odds of suicide risk behaviors. In addition, significant interaction effects were observed for emotional*sexual violence, emotional*physical violence, sexual*physical violence, and emotional*physical*sexual violence with increased risk of suicide risk behaviors.

Childhood polyvictimization substantially increases the risk of suicide behaviors for AGYW. Interventions are needed to strengthen trauma-informed mental health services, child protection systems, and culturally grounded school- and community-based interventions to prevent both violence and suicide risk behaviors among AGYW in Namibia."

Social work and social welfare across the lifespan

Kgomotso Jongman
[1]University Of Botswana, ,

"Social Work and Social Welfare Across the Lifespan examines the trajectory of human growth, exploring how needs, strengths, and struggles evolve from childhood through old age. This work highlights the critical role of social work in providing support, understanding, and empowerment during these various life stages. It underscores the essence of the profession: active listening and assisting individuals, families, and communities in navigating life\'s transitions to achieve balance and hope.

The paper further discusses how contemporary forces—including digital transformation, increased mental health awareness, and shifting family dynamics—necessitate an innovative approach to practice. This new paradigm merges traditional values of compassion and service with practical solutions for today\'s rapidly changing society.

Written from a social worker’s perspective, the study emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, authenticity, and social justice. It posits that sustainable change extends beyond systemic modifications; it is fundamentally driven by compassionate action and the commitment to ensuring dignity, love, and support are afforded to every stage of life."

Rethinking International Social Work: Epistemic, Structural, and Political Tensions

Prof. Abye Tasse[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

"The concept and practice of International Social Work (ISW) emerged during the 20th century; yet, nearly a century later, it remains characterized by conceptual ambiguity and the absence of a coherent, universally accepted definition. Despite this lack of clarity, ISW has expanded significantly across regions, reflected in the proliferation of academic programmes, professional initiatives, and practice frameworks.This growth, however, contrasts sharply with the ongoing lack of shared understanding among scholars and practitioners regarding the foundations, aims, and scope of ISW. Although mainstream ISW proclaims a normative grounding in principles of global social justice, it faces substantial epistemic, structural, political, ethical, and operational challenges. This panel critically examines the multiple and often competing interpretations of ISW. It interrogates the tensions that shape the field: from perspectives that regard ISW as a distinct domain of practice, to critiques that interpret it as a euphemistic extension of Western dominance in global social work narratives, to views that frame it as an aspirational project still in formation. The latter position emphasises that any meaningful form of international engagement must be grounded in robust, locally developed social work theories and practices.

We seek to engage these debates by bringing together diverse perspectives from world regions and epistemic traditions. Rather than striving to produce a singular or definitive definition of ISW, it invites participants to reflect critically on the plurality of meanings that coexist within the field. Exploring the conceptual, political, and ethical contradictions that shape ISW, the discussion aims to open space for imagining more inclusive, pluralistic, and context-responsive pathways for the evolution of international engagement in social work. This session aspires to initiate a global dialogue on what ISW is, what it has become, and what it might meaningfully evolve into when grounded in equitable, diverse, and contextually relevant knowledge systems and practices."

Intersections of ethnic cultural women's climate change adaptation, edible gardening, and sustainable shared futures in Australia

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Climate change is a pressing issue. Climate change effects are directly linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), having consequences on livelihoods (SDGs 1, 2), health and wellbeing (SDG3), and sustainable cities and communities (SDG11). Climate change-induced extreme heat is an intensifying issue in Australia, driving adaptation mechanisms. Women from minority ethnic cultural groups in Australia are more likely than men to experience extreme heat-related wellbeing effects as care givers and with socio-cultural influences, besides their acculturation and integration. Research is scant on ethnic women's extreme heat adaptation and coping mechanisms. Our study aimed to explore the intersections of ethnic cultural urban women's extreme heat experience and their coping mechanisms through home/community gardening activities. We adopted human capabilities theoretical approach (quality of life) and applied hermeneutic phenomenological framework, conducting semi-structured interviews with five women who regularly engaged in home/community edible gardening. Additionally, we used photo voice method to understand their aspirations for 'green climate action' (SDG13). Study results revealed that the women considered edible gardening as healing for their wellbeing, promoted social development, and empowered them to encourage sustainable livelihoods in communities. They used traditional knowledges in growing edible food, created collective community connections, and bolstered their belonging as minority groups. The women's coping mechanisms collectively support 'Harambee – all pull together' for shared futures. Social workers are called upon to promote these mechanisms for tackling climate change through strengthening community-based strategies. They can look to developing innovative interventions for working with low-income families as many ethnic migrant women involved in community/home gardening represent socio-economically disadvantaged groups (e.g. refugees). Sustaining such collective processes will promote inclusive communities, enhancing social wellbeing and social development besides eco-social justice. It will also diversify eco-social professional practice.

“Even in Times of War, We Need to Pay the Rent”: Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence through Job Rehabilitation in Wartime — Tools for Building Individual and Community Resilience

Jennifer Isackov[1]
[1]Women\'s Spirit Ngo, ,

"Women\'s Spirit is a prominent Israeli NGO, recognized for its consultative status with the United Nations and its role as Israel’s representative in international efforts to address gender-based violence. The organization empowers survivors of abuse by advancing economic independence, disrupting the cycle of poverty and violence. Research indicates that 66% of women survivors return to abusive partners due to financial dependence; with economic independence, this risk decreases sharply to close to zero, highlighting the necessity of integrating job rehabilitation with psychosocial therapies.

The Hamas attacks on Israel’s southern border on October 7, 2023, intensified existing trauma and social instability, resulting in mass casualties, abductions (including women and children), and a persistent climate of insecurity. For women survivors of domestic violence, these dual crises led to heightened re-traumatization and economic vulnerability. Many survivors reported an acute resurgence of complex PTSD symptoms, triggered by widespread news of violence and captivity. As one participant expressed, “I survived gang rape, and I constantly imagine what the hostages are going through. I can’t sleep. It feels as if it is happening to me again.”

In response, Women’s Spirit rapidly adapted its services, deploying trauma-responsive, flexible interventions to meet urgent needs. These included launching online resilience workshops, distributing food vouchers and laptops, and embedding mindfulness and grounding exercises within employment programming. This workshop will offer practical tools and interactive strategies for social workers and practitioners, focused on fostering resilience and job readiness during emergencies. By examining the vital intersection of trauma recovery, economic empowerment, and emergency social work, this session highlights how professional interventions can sustain the resilience of individuals and communities facing converging threats to safety and livelihood.

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Economic Violence: Challenges and Interventions at the Individual, Group, and Community Levels

Jennifer Isackov[1]
[1]Women\'s Spirit Ngo, ,

"Women\'s Spirit is a prominent Israeli NGO, recognized for its consultative status with the United Nations and its role as Israel’s representative in international efforts to address gender-based violence. Studies reveal that 66% of survivors return to abusive partners due to financial dependence; with economic independence, this figure drops to nearly zero, illustrating how employment rehabilitation is essential alongside psychosocial support. Women’s Spirit is one of just six organizations worldwide dedicated to the issue of economic violence and the only one in Israel. On November 26, the organization will officially launch the International Day for the Elimination of Economic Abuse at the UN in Geneva.

Economic violence is a pervasive, severely underrecognized form of abuse that restricts women’s autonomy and sustains dependency long after leaving violent relationships. It manifests as control over finances, restricted bank access, concealed financial information, coerced debt, and prohibitions against work—affecting women from all professional and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Women\'s Spirit tackles economic violence through a robust, multifaceted model on the individual, group, and policy levels. Women are accompanied through mentorship, career planning, and financial skills programs, facilitated by a network of professional volunteers. The organization conducts advocacy and educational campaigns that challenge social norms around gender and money and promotes legislative reform in partnership with national and international actors. Community outreach, awareness workshops, and the publication of personal testimonies further widen the circle of social change.

This workshop will explore the dynamics of economic violence, present effective models for fostering financial resilience, and share actionable tools for social workers and practitioners to help women achieve financial control and sustainable recovery, advancing gender equality and social justice.

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Re-imagining Social Work Practice as Social Value Creation

Sug Pyo Kim[1]
[1]Practitioner In General Social Work, ,

"Social workers need to understand both social work practice and a social value(capital) creator. Being a social worker is not just about giving services but also reimagining social work practices. How social value has been created through social work practices in my presentation? Two cases will be presented.

1. Operating a social welfare organization that helps social workers achieve self-realization. Through the social work organization I manage, I provide opportunities for social workers to realize their potential. When hiring social workers, I prioritize women who have experienced career breaks. This is because they possess the ability to perform social work but often struggle to find employment due to breaks in their careers from childbirth. They start as mere social workers, and some of them eventually become team leaders. Ultimately, they take the role of facility manager, This is Self-Realization through social work practice.

2. Creating lifelong jobs without retirement.
My organization serves as a social work organization without a retirement age for some social workers. In a capitalist society, all organizations have a retirement age. This means that individuals are part of an organization for a certain period and eventually kicked out. However, my organization allows employees to continue working past the age of 65. Once a social worker reaches retirement age, they are given the opportunity to run the organization free from under control. However, when the time comes that they can no longer continue their role, they are encouraged to return the facilities to the mother organization. This not only creates a workplace without retirement but also generates social value by giving back the opportunities they received for the benefit of society and future generations.This will be an unique example of Reimagining social work practice.

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Developing and Evaluating an Intensive Teaching Model for Social Work Knowledge and Skills Transfer

Dr Chun-yi Chen[1], Dr Yu-ju Yen[1]
[1]Department Of Social Work, Shih Chien University, , Taiwan

Social casework is a core course in social work education that cultivates essential helping competencies. However, current teaching practices often face challenges such as insufficient knowledge transformation, difficulty in integrating theoretical understanding, and fragmented learning content and schedules. These issues result in a gap between theoretical learning and practical application, limiting students' ability to develop sustained comprehension and reflective practice. To address these challenges, this study adopted the Evidence-Based Practice Decision-Making Framework as its theoretical foundation, integrating Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and an intensive course design to develop an innovative teaching model emphasizing situational awareness, knowledge transformation, and practice application. The model aimed to strengthen students' core professional competence and self-efficacy. Participants were students enrolled in a "Social Casework" course. The teaching strategies included intensive workshops, collaborative learning, standardized client simulations, and supervision from field instructors. Students' learning processes were evaluated through pre- and post-tests, learning worksheets, and reflective journals. The findings indicate that combining PBL with an intensive teaching format effectively enhanced students' situational awareness and practice knowledge transformation. The immersive and continuous nature of the course facilitated integration between theory and practice, resulting in significant improvements in students' knowledge base, assessment skills, intervention techniques, documentation, and teamwork. Moreover, students demonstrated greater learning engagement and helping sensitivity, though they still required additional guidance in theory application and intervention decision-making. Based on these results, the study provides reflections and recommendations for teaching implementation, curriculum design, professional development, and future research.

Keywords: social casework; problem-based learning (PBL); intensive teaching model; practice knowledge transformation; simulation-based teaching

Trauma Treatment and Prevention in Malawi through Multi-Level Collaboration with Local and National Leadership

Dr Bobbie Legg[1]
[1]Arizona State University, World Orphan Fund, Butterfly Collaborative, ,

"Trauma is a public mental health and social-development challenge in Malawi, where child abandonment by parents, extreme poverty, child physical abuse, child sexual abuse, gender-based violence, climate related disasters and child forced marriages can perpetuate cycles of psychological and structural harm. This presentation, Trauma Treatment and Prevention in Malawi through Multi-Level Collaboration with Local and National Leadership, describes an emergent and adaptive nationally coordinated initiative to build trauma-responsive capacity across individual, community, and institutional levels.

The Alliance for Children and Families (ACE) in partnership with the Association of Social Workers in Malawi (ASWIM) is training childcare providers, through families, community based organizations and current child care institutions, in trauma treatment and prevention. This contextualized approach works with traditional village authorities to support understandings of trauma and trauma recovery to integrate evidence-based understandings with attachment-informed caregiving. This includes clinically focused supervision within culturally grounded education and leadership frameworks.

This multi-level model extends from direct practice with caregivers and children to systems-level advocacy with NGOs, local chiefs, and national ministries. The collaboration culminates in Malawi's first national Conference on Mental Health and Trauma Recovery (2025), providing a platform to advance trauma-informed care, policy development, and professional social-work standards.

Quantitative research and neuroscience confirm that untreated trauma fuels intergenerational harm, while trained intervention restores health and social functioning. By aligning trauma recovery with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, this initiative demonstrates how locally led, globally informed collaboration can reduce inequality, strengthen families, and empower communities toward resilience and healing across generations."

Resilience and social support as protective factors for well-being and food security among smallholder farmers in Rwanda

Mr Alexandre Hakizamungu[1]
[1]University Of Gothenburg, , Sweden

"Background: Resilience is a strong predictor of health and wellbeing across populations, but its mediating factors differ. They do not only impact farmers\' material conditions but also their sense of dignity, autonomy, and control over their futures as the right to wellbeing goes beyond economic stability it also implies physical, psychological and good health.

Aim: To examine the association across population\'s socio-demographic characteristics, self-rated health, social support, resilience and wellbeing in a community facing food insecurity.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study performed in the Rutsiro district, in Rwanda. The

study included 766 composed of 46% women and 54% men randomly selected. Data collection was done in accordance with ethical approvals by trained enumerators. Data was entered and analysed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to run descriptive statistics.

Results: Findings revealed that men and women were relatively and equally distributed. However, women were over-represented (53%) in the category of those with no school at all. The self-rated overall health was also skewed to women presenting a disproportion burden of ill-being and functional limitations of women. Social support appeared to come more from family members than friends while self-rated resilience bolded that most of the respondents experienced coping difficulties to recover from life challenges (52-66%) indicating low perceived resilience. 25% on any item of WHO wellbeing scale reinforces the picture of psychological strain and compromised health status.

Conclusion: The study showed the profound interplay of socio-demographic factors, fragile social support networks, diminished resilience and psychological wellbeing. It suggests an initiation or revival of the community-based resilience built on peer support groups and regular mental health screening sessions and to foster stable familial networks for adapted coping strategies during difficult times.

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Learning Together: International Social Work Education Rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals

Nicholas Wallace[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

International social work has become increasingly relevant to contemporary social work practice provided the heightened interdependency between nations and ensuing political, social, economic, and environmental complexities, and the professions' fortitude for addressing global issues in the face of climate change and other environmental issues. Beyond models on how to teach international education, such as decolonial and anti-oppressive approaches, considerations of what to teach should be paramount. The United Nations 2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offers a useful pedological framework that is closely aligned with the values and principles of the social work profession, as both share a common vision of a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world. It can also respond to the increasing need for attending to the social impacts of environmental challenges such as climate change. The SDGs broadly address development issues across the spectrum of the economy, human rights, and the environment, globally to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. As all 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda in 2015 and created their own targets and objectives within the framework, social work educators and students, local practitioners, and academics from diverse countries, including those in the Global South and Global North can work together to understand the various social issues and solutions within and between participating countries. This presentation draws on our experiences as an educator and a learner, within an international field school in India. Our pedagogical model, rooted in the cross-cultural application of the SDGs, promotes inclusion and accessibility, highlights existing inequities, personalizes the learning experience and draws on local knowledge systems to better understand the impact of environmental challenges on community realities. Our goal is to foster an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world in response to pressing social issues including climate change.

Gendered Policing and Domestic Violence Intervention: Mental health and Psychosocial Analysis of Women Police Officers in an Urban Indian Context

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<!--more-->This study examines the psychosocial experiences of women police officers stationed at Women Police Stations in Chennai, specifically focusing on their responses to domestic violence cases. This study used a mixed-method approach with a sequential explanatory design. The sample size was 113 women police who dealt with domestic violence cases for the Quantitative phase and 3 for the qualitative phase. Purposive sampling technique was used for both phases. A questionnaire was used in the quantitative phase as a tool of data collection and an in-depth interview guide was used for the qualitative phase. The research comprehensively investigates operational stressors, emotional encounters, psychosocial challenges, coping strategies, and perceptions of institutional support. Operational stressors, such as staff shortages, strict adherence to formalities, and inadequate equipment, emerge as significant challenges in effectively handling domestic violence cases. The study sheds light on the diverse emotional experiences of these officers, ranging from intensity to strain, providing a nuanced understanding of the complexities they face. Coping mechanisms play a crucial role in officers\' responses, with varying degrees of effectiveness observed in support strategies. Institutional support is identified as a critical factor influencing workplace rules, training preparedness, and the availability of tools. The research recommends targeted interventions to address staffing concerns, streamline procedures, provide necessary resources, and implement support systems tailored to the unique challenges faced by women police officers responding to domestic violence. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in responding to domestic violence cases, ultimately informing policy changes and interventions to create a more supportive and effective work environment for these officers in Chennai and to promote their mental health in the work place.

Constructing a Practice Model: Navigating the Policy–Practice Nexus in Acquired Brain Injury Social Work

Dr. Brooke Kooymans[1]
[1]Rehability Australia, ,

"Background: Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is a major cause of disability globally, with enduring impacts on psychosocial functioning and quality of life. Within this context, the intersection between policy and practice often generates complex challenges for those delivering services. Frontline social workers, positioned at this interface, must navigate competing demands between organisational systems, policy frameworks, and the lived realities of people with ABI. Their ability to mediate these tensions makes them pivotal change agents in achieving effective and person-centred outcomes.

Aim: To examine how front line social workers navigate the policy–practice nexus when addressing the psychosocial needs of people living with ABI within the Australian context.

Method: A cross-sectional qualitative study was conducted across community neurorehabilitation settings in two Australian states. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 24 front line social workers and 12 organisational managers, with equal participation from each state. An inductive thematic analysis was applied to explore participants' experiences and perspectives.

Results: Three key themes emerged: (1) perspectives on the policy–practice nexus, (2) defining psychosocial need within this environment, and (3) the front line social work practice toolbox. Findings revealed that organisational life is deeply shaped by intersecting policy frameworks, legislative demands, and funding priorities. These structures often intensify the ambiguity surrounding psychosocial need and directly influence front line decision-making. A practice model was developed to conceptualise how social workers respond within this context.

Discussion: The resulting model highlights the importance of understanding organisational complexity and its influence on psychosocial practice. It demonstrates how front line social workers draw upon discretionary judgement, relational skills, and adaptive strategies to respond effectively to psychosocial needs.

The study contributes an applied framework that may inform international practice and policy design in neurorehabilitation and social work contexts."

Child-Led Approaches to Research, Child Protection, and Resilience

Ms Clare Ahabwe Bangirana[1]
[1]Makerere University, ,

Global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child underscore the right of children to meaningful participation. Yet, in many resource-constrained settings, children—especially those living on the streets or transitioning out of systems of care—remain excluded from research, policy, and programming decisions that directly affect their lives. Traditional child welfare research often relies on top-down, adult-centred approaches that overlook young people's lived experiences and fail to recognise them as experts in their own realities. Children and Youth Participatory Action Research (CYPAR) challenges these paradigms by positioning children and youth as co-researchers, co-creators, and agents of change. Grounded in young people's lived experiences, CYPAR promotes shared power, ethical reflexivity, and social transformation. Drawing on evidence from the literature (Anyon et al., 2018; Ritterbusch et al., 2020; Doucet et al., 2022) and AfriChild's youth-led CYPAR initiatives in Uganda, the workshop will demonstrate how participatory methodologies can strengthen youth agency, identity capital, social connectedness, and policy influence.

The workshop will showcase insights from two participatory studies:

What Works to Prevent and Respond to Childhood Sexual Violence, implemented with The Remnant Generation using the 3RT (Rescue, Restore, Repurpose, Thrive) model; and

Honour and Mapping for Child Protection, a multi-country CYPAR study led by peer researchers with lived experience of street life.

Through dialogue, experiential learning, and co-creation exercises, participants will explore ethical praxis, methodological flexibility, and practical strategies for embedding CYPAR in research, policy, and programming. The workshop aims to strengthen learning networks and equip participants with actionable approaches to support youth-led, inclusive, and decolonised child protection systems.

Political Action Movements by and for People with Disabilities Around the World

Dr Ellen Schaefer-Salins[1]
[1]Salisbury University, ,

This presentation will explain the impact of political action movements in various countries around the world that help to improve services, acceptance, accessibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

In the 1980s in the United States, there were several protests by people with disabilities asking for better laws and better representation. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 which gave disabled Americans more rights and improved accessibility. In France the Equity and Citizenship Act was passed in 2005 to improve disability rights and is similar to the American ADA. And in Kenya the Persons with Disabilities Act was passed in 2025 which helps to prevent discrimination in employment, health care, and education for people with disabilities. These are just a few examples of the many laws that have been passed to help people with disabilities around the world.

Ableism is the term for the discrimination toward people with disabilities and it refers to the many forms of prejudice and discrimination that exist. This presentation will look at the impact that ableism has on the attitudes and behaviors toward people with disabilities and the structural impacts they face in different parts of the world. Then the presentation will explain the political movements that have led to better services and acceptance. Social workers around the world have advocated for these improved services in the disability community and have advocated for the many political action movements mentioned above and in more countries around the world.

Professionalizing Social Work in Kenya through regulatory framework; Reflections on the Social Work Professionals Act 2026

Dr Muraguri Phyllis[1]
[1]The Technical University Of Kenya, , Kenya
"Phyllis G. Muraguri, Michael Wambui Waweru, Joshua Kivinda Kimilu, Wilkins Ndege Muhingi, Gidraph G. Wairire, Timothy O. Okatta, Noah M.O. Sanganyi, Urbanus Mwinzi Ndolo, Johnson N. Mavole

Social work plays a vital role in addressing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability in Kenya. Despite its importance, the profession has historically operated without a standardized regulatory framework, limiting professional recognition, accountability, and the quality-of-service delivery. The enactment of the Social Work Professionals Act (2026) marks a significant milestone in the professionalization of social work in Kenya. This panel discussion will bring together members of the technical committee involved in the drafting and advancement of the Social Work Professionals Bill 2023 to provide first-hand insights into the complex legal, social, and political processes that shaped the legislation. Presenters will candidly reflect on stakeholder consultations, advocacy efforts, policy negotiations, and the institutional dynamics that influenced the Bill's progression from conception to presidential assent.

The panel discussion shall explore the Act's potential to strengthen ethical practice, define scopes of practice, establish a regulatory council, and enhance capacity-building and career pathways for social work practitioners. Key thematic areas include regulatory frameworks for social work, ethical standards, practitioner capacity development, and lessons drawn from global best practices. By situating the Kenyan experience within a broader African context, the panelists shall illustrate the realities of nurturing transformative social policy through participatory and often contested legislative processes. Participants will engage in a critical dialogue on strategies for implementing the Act, strengthening Kenya's social service systems, and elevating social work as a globally aligned and nationally recognized profession. Policymakers, practitioners, academics, and sector stakeholders are invited to contribute to this timely discussion on the future of social work in Kenya and beyond."

The Nairobi Proposal: Co-Creating Decolonised Curricula and Practice Learning Assessment Criteria

Mrs Abigail M. Joseph-Magwood[3], Dr Phyllis Ngai[4], Dr Wasiq Silan[2], Assoc Prof Henglien Lisa Chen[1]
[1]Department Of Social Work And Social Care, University Of Sussex, , United Kingdom, [2]National Dong Hwa University, , Taiwan, [3]Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, , Germany, [4]University of Montana, , United States
"A critical challenge persists in global social work education, where practice learning and assessment frameworks remain heavily dominated by Western standards. This systemic bias constitutes a form of epistemicide, erasing the diverse ontologies and wisdom of Black, Indigenous, and Global Majority practitioners. While classroom curricula are evolving, practice assessment remains a \""colonial stronghold,\"" often penalising students for non-Western ways of being.

Building on EASSW and IASSW-funded research, this consortium mobilises a global network of critical scholars to address this gap. The team converts the \""World Café\"" format into a Curriculum Design Laboratory, utilising \""Decolonial Concept Cards\"" derived from their collective research to bridge the gap between abstract theory and tangible metrics.

In this interactive 60-minute sprint, participants will work with distinct frameworks drawn from the authors\' areas of expertise, including: Gender Justice & Structural Advocacy (India), Indigenous Autonomy & Gaga (Taiwan), Rights-Based Competence (USA), and Epistemic Inclusion (UK/Global). Participants will:

Translate: Work in small groups to convert these wisdom traditions into concrete Learning Objectives that span both the classroom and the practice learning setting.
Codify: Draft specific Practice Assessment Indicators (defining what a \""Pass\"" looks like). This involves defining how skills like \""Structural Advocacy\"" or \""Deep Listening\"" can be formally accredited, protecting students who resist neoliberal disciplinary systems that constrain Indigenous autonomy.
Validate: Stress-test these new criteria against the reality of institutional coloniality to advance the 2020-2030 Global Agenda for Social Work.

The output will be the \""Nairobi Proposal,\"" a collective bank of learning objectives for enriching core curricula, ideas for advancing the Global Agenda, and assessment criteria for inclusive practice education. We explicitly welcome educators, students, practitioners, and experts by experience to join the consortium in drafting this new transformative global blueprint for action."

“They call the Spirituality of my Ancestors madness” – Embracing spiritually sensitive practice in child protection with African background children and families in Australia.

Hilda Tafadzwa Mugadza[1], Dr Peninah Kansiime[2]
[1]Archaic Consulting Group, Australia | Edith Cowan University | Western Sydney University, , , [2]Edith Cowan University, , Australia

Australia’s population is expanding in diversity, particularly from African, subcontinental Asian, and Pacific Island nations. Many people coming from these lands have a keen awareness of the daily influence and presence of the spiritual realm. When seeking assistance from social work services in the West, service users can be met with resistance and/or ignorance by social work practitioners, who can have the tendency to deploy only a mental health/illness perspective rather than an acknowledgement of the presence and influence of spirituality upon service users’ experiences and daily lives.

Children of African heritage and their families are represented in the child protection system. Families from such backgrounds may have an understanding of the origins, causes and solutions to their problems as being grounded in spiritual/religious perspectives . Social workers in the Australian child protection system, however, can operate from vastly different ontological and epistemological bases, which mould responses and interventions and might further impact children and their families if not approached from a spiritually sensitive practice framework. There is a clear need for social work generally and specifically child protection practice to be more open to and accepting of the ontological and epistemological realities of religious and spiritual experiences of African-Australian children and their families.

Drawing on practice examples from a child protection specialist and social work educators in Sydney, Australia, this chapter seeks to highlight the gap in current social work practice and advocate for a spiritually sensitive practice that incorporates ontological and epistemological differences as forms of diversity competence within practice. These considerations are fundamental to a strengths-based and anti-oppressive approach, without which social workers are at risk of imposing their worldviews upon service users, whose spiritual orientations and experiences with which they are not conversant.

Social Work Support for Unaccompanied Minors in Germany: Empirical Findings and Implications for Inclusive, and Equitable Research

Franziska Anna Seidel[1]
[1]University Of Kassel | Social Work Practicioner | University Of Tübingen, ,

Unaccompanied minors (UMs) are an important target group for social work interventions in Germany. Research highlights UMs' vulnerability due to separation from their families, uncertainty regarding their asylum status, and the high prevalence of psychosocial and mental health problems. At the same time, research is increasingly focusing on the strengths and resilience of UMs.

This raises the following questions: What are the main findings of empirical studies on social work support for UMs in Germany? Which "type" of support has been the subject of empirical research? How do UMs perceive social work support in Germany?

As such, the aim is to present results of a scoping review (PRISMA-ScR guidelines) of empirical research on social work support for UMs in Germany between 2015 and 2024. Various databases (e.g., PsychInfo, Web of Science, WISO, and Google Scholar) were systematically searched using pre-tested keywords. In addition, manual searches were conducted in the gray literature. A total of 1,162 sources were reviewed, 384 articles were assessed for suitability, and 26 were included in the final synthesis.

The majority of the empirical research focuses on integration, educational support, and general assistance provided by child and youth welfare services. However, the review revealed gaps in the literature on UMs\' perspectives and research on topics such as support for family reunification, substance abuse, and gender issues, despite research findings pointing to these stress factors.

Against the backdrop of increasing polarization on migration issues in Germany, the findings are critically discussed and contextualized. It is reflected upon how social work research can influence the social and scientific discourse on this global challenge of unaccompanied child migration. The scoping review stresses the importance of engaging of social work research to provide justice and inclusive social work interventions. As such social work has a responsibility to foster research and advancing practice.

Psychotherapy in Clinical Social Work: The Castanheira Method and the Vital Reconnection Therapy (VRT) in Eco-Social Contexts

Dr Sandra Castanheira[1]
[1]Clinical Social Worker, , Portugal

"<p style=""text-align: left"">Contemporary social and health contexts are increasingly characterised by complex psychosocial suffering, trauma, social disconnection and environmental disruption. Clinical Social Work plays a central role in responding to these challenges through integrative, relational and context-sensitive interventions. This presentation introduces the Castanheira Method and Vital Reconnection Therapy (VRT) as an innovative psychotherapeutic model developed within Clinical Social Work.</p>
<p style=""text-align: left"" data-start=""1028"" data-end=""1605"">The Castanheira Method is grounded in a holistic understanding of the person-in-environment, integrating psychosocial, relational, bodily and environmental dimensions. Vital Reconnection Therapy operationalises this method through a structured clinical intervention focused on restoring connection with the self, significant relationships, community and the surrounding environment. Rather than centring exclusively on symptom reduction, VRT conceptualises reconnection as a core therapeutic pathway towards psychosocial wellbeing, resilience and sustainable life trajectories.</p>
<p style=""text-align: left"" data-start=""1607"" data-end=""2076"">The presentation outlines the conceptual foundations of the model, its core principles and therapeutic structure, and discusses its relevance for diverse contexts marked by adversity, social inequality and collective trauma. Particular attention is given to the ethical and professional positioning of psychotherapy within Clinical Social Work, highlighting its contribution to health and wellbeing in alignment with the theme <em data-start=""2034"" data-end=""2075"">Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures.</p>
<p style=""text-align: left"" data-start=""2078"" data-end=""2329"">By articulating psychotherapy as a legitimate and necessary dimension of Clinical Social Work practice, this contribution seeks to foster international dialogue on culturally responsive, integrative and sustainable models of psychosocial intervention.</p>"

The Social Protection We Have and the One We Want: Notes for Reflecting on Poor Families in the Neoliberal Context, at the Intersection of Race and Gender

Mrs Rosane Cristina Moreira De Souza[1]
[1]Nenhuma- Pucsp, ,

This study is based on concerns that have been systematized at the doctoral level at PUC-SP, focusing on the challenges faced by poor families in the 21st century. The research is situated in a context marked by the structural crisis of capital, the hegemony of the neoliberal state, and the consequent retrenchment of social policies, elements that constitute global obstacles to the realization of human rights.

From the perspective of historical-critical materialism, the research analyzes how class, race, and gender inequalities intersect to deepen the precarization of life. It is evident that families living in the peripheries of São Paulo are the most affected by this process, being predominantly Black and female-headed. This reality shows that social unprotection is not a mere accident but a characteristic of capitalist dynamics that use racism and patriarchy to maintain social stratifications.

The text proposes a necessary reflection on social protection and political practices in times of significant setbacks. It observes a movement of transferring state responsibility to the private sphere—the so-called "familism" or self-responsibilization—where the state fails to guarantee basic well-being, overburdening the family unit, especially in terms of women’s reproductive labor.

The notes presented here discuss the fragility of the rights protection system in the face of the neoliberal project. By highlighting racial and gendered particularities, the study seeks to contribute to academic and political debates aimed at rethinking protection models that go beyond the logic of exclusion. In short, the study denounces the systemic failure of contemporary social policies and emphasizes the urgency of an agenda that ensures human dignity against the voracity of the market.

Harambee for Holistic Wellbeing: Interconnecting Dimensions of Wellness for Sustainable Futures

Margaret Thorwart[1]
[1]Millersville University | Millersville University, ,

"Rooted in the spirit of Harambee, this interactive workshop explores wellness as a shared, sustainable process of growth, resilience, and connection. Drawing on Millersville University's Nine Dimensions of Wellness—social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and multicultural—participants will examine how holistic well being requires collaboration across systems and identities. By emphasizing the intersections among these dimensions, the session highlights how integrated approaches foster belonging, equity, and sustainable health for individuals and communities.

Grounded in health promotion, public health, and social work practice, this workshop addresses three high-risk behavioral domains significantly shaping the student experience: alcohol and other drug use, healthy relationships-safer sex practices, and mental health-suicide prevention. Through case examples, reflection, and interactive activities, participants will explore how early prevention, harm reduction, and connection to care are strengthened when wellness is understood as both individual empowerment and collective responsibility.

Participants will gain practical strategies to implement a multidimensional wellness model within their own institutions and communities, including resource mapping and collaborative programming. The workshop reinforces sustainable wellness cannot be achieved in isolation. Wellness thrives in a culture of Harambee, where shared purpose and mutual care drive transformative change. Aligned with the sub-theme, Clinical Social Work, Health and Well being, this session calls educators, practitioners, and health professionals to redefine wellness as a shared responsibility and a pathway toward more compassionate, resilient campus communities.

By the end of this workshop session, participants will be able to: Explain how the Nine Dimensions of Wellness intersect to promote holistic well being for college students within campus and community settings. Apply principles of Harambee to design wellness initiatives that integrate prevention, harm reduction, and connection to care. Develop collaborative strategies for implementing multidimensional wellness models on college campuses for health promotion, resilience, and community engagement."

From Clinic to Community: The Vital Relevance of Social Workers in Modern Global Health Care

Akudo Amadiegwu[1]
[1]Canterbury Christ Church University, , United Kingdom

"Increasingly, social work has become an indispensable pillar of global healthcare and mental health systems, addressing the complex interplay between physiological conditions and social determinants of health (SDOH). As global health challenges evolve—driven by an aging population, rising mental health crises, and significant health disparities—social workers serve as the critical link between medical treatment and holistic well-being.

The relevance of social work is most prominent in its ability to address the 80% of health outcomes influenced by non-medical factors, such as housing instability, food insecurity, and economic inequality. In hospital and primary care settings, social workers optimize care pathways by facilitating complex discharge planning, coordinating interdisciplinary teams, and providing crisis intervention. Their role has expanded into \""agentic\"" territory, where they not only advocate for patient rights but also navigate intricate insurance and legal systems to ensure equitable access to care.

In the realm of mental health, social workers are now the primary providers of behavioral health services globally, delivering over 85% of such care in certain regions. They are leaders in implementing trauma-informed care and managing emerging issues like \""eco-anxiety\"" and digital burnout. By 2025, the profession has also embraced technological innovations, utilizing telehealth and AI-driven data analytics to reach underserved and rural populations, thereby bridging the widening gap in global mental health access.

Ultimately, the global relevance of social work lies in its unique \""person-in-environment\"" perspective. By advocating for systemic policy changes while providing direct clinical support, social workers fulfill the World Health Organization’s mandate to treat mental health not as a privilege, but as a basic human right. This dual focus on individual resilience and structural reform ensures that healthcare systems remain compassionate, inclusive, and effective in a rapidly changing world."

1230

Risk and resiliency factors amongst social work educators

Assoc Prof Varoshini Nadesan[1]
[1]University Of Johannesburg, , South Africa
"Researchers across Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa embarked on a quantitative study to determine the risk and resilience factors of social work educators in social work training programmes. This study arose from concerns about educator burnout and the exacerbation of inequalities in the education system. Whilst these factors appeared more prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, they continue to strain educators, inhibiting their ability to flourish. Previous studies revealed that the effects of these pressures on staff contribute to work stress and mental health challenges.

The complex demands of academic work, including publication, teaching, and institutional tasks, prevent educators from flourishing in their roles, leading to overall staff dissatisfaction and poor morale. I hereby present the results of a quantitative study conducted at five South African universities, providing a contextual analysis of these inhibiting factors. Each university obtained individual ethical clearances before embarking on the study. The study examined the wellness profiles of 27 social work educators using an online survey that consisted of demographic questions, the General Well-being Schedule (GWBS), the Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the Adult Resilience Scale (ARM-R), and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21).

The gatekeepers at each institution distributed the electronic survey to all prospective participants. The analysis consisted of a descriptive and group comparison analysis of respondents' scale scores across the different scales. This study concluded that age, experience and social support were determining factors in coping with academic challenges and promoting flourishing. The study offers recommendations for measures that higher education institutions can implement to support social work educators."

From Inclusion to Belonging: Peer and Parent Strategies for Building Relationships with Autistic Children

Dr Dalila John[1]
[1]The University Of Alabama, , United States

"Since 2000, autism diagnoses have quadrupled, with approximately 1 in 36 children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (CDC, 2023). As interactions with autistic individuals become increasingly common in schools and communities, limited public understanding continues to contribute to stigma, social exclusion, and missed opportunities for meaningful connection (Broady et al., 2017). Autistic children often experience challenges related to social communication, reciprocity, and friendship development, which may contribute to heightened loneliness, anxiety, and social isolation compared to their typically developing (TD) peers (American Psychiatric Association, 2022; Salazar et al., 2015). These challenges are pronounced during the transition into formal schooling, where social expectations and environments are designed around neurotypical norms.

This presentation will examine the impact of a modified, evidence-based social skills intervention Stay, Play & Talk (SPT) implemented in a community-based setting with school-aged children. Peer-mediated interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting positive social interactions and inclusive peer relationships for autistic children (Hume et al., 2021; Radley & Dart, 2022). However, limited research has explored adaptations of SPT beyond preschool settings, the inclusion of caregiver training, or its use in community contexts.

This pilot study evaluated a modified SPT model that integrated peer involvement and parent-based training to support socialization and relationship building. The nine-week intervention involved 10 families, including five autistic children and their caregivers and five TD peers and their caregivers. Findings suggest improvements in social engagement, peer reciprocity, and caregiver understanding of inclusive social strategies.

This presentation will highlight key findings from the study and identify practical strategies for educators and practitioners seeking to promote inclusive environments and foster meaningful relationships among autistic children, their peers, and families. Implications for social work practice, social work education, and community settings will be discussed."

Understandings of domestic violence

Brita Gjerstad[1]
[1]University Of Stavanger, ,

"Academics and practitioners working on domestic violence operate with a broad definition of violence that includes physical, psychological, social, sexual, and economic threats and actions. We have limited knowledge of whether this definition is shared by people in general. If most people have a narrow understanding of what domestic violence is, there is a risk that they do not recognize experiences as violence, and consequently do not seek help. Knowledge about people's understandings of domestic violence should therefore inform the effort to prevent such violence. In this paper we ask: How do people understand domestic violence? We know that while both men and women are victims of mild physical violence, it is mostly women who are victims of sexual and severe physical violence. We therefore add the question: Do men and women have the same understandings of domestic violence? We answer the questions analyzing data from a national representative survey conducted in Norway 2021, using SPSS. Preliminary analyses indicate that most men and women consider physical and sexual violence as violence, and most men and women also see threats of hurting others as violence. Gender differences appear when it comes to control; more women than men consider social and economic control, control over mobile phone and stalking as violence. Few respondents think of repeated criticism as violence, but women do so more than men. We discuss the findings applying among others Stark's concept of coersive controll.

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The right to life and drug prevention policies: a necessary debate for social work

Prof Fabiola Leal[1]
[1]University Of Espirito Santo - Brazil, , Brazil

"Prevention programs in drug issues have different objectives, including: increasing knowledge about drugs; reducing consumption; delaying the onset of use; reducing abuse; and minimizing the harm caused by use (Cuijpers, 2009).

An analysis of trends in drug use prevention globally reveals a significant evolution in the approaches and strategies adopted, highlighting the importance of integrated interventions and international cooperation. The emphasis on health promotion and harm reduction shows promises in addressing the challenges of drug use (Canoletti; Soares, 2005).

The topic has been explored by different authors around the world over the last five decades (Cuijpers, 2009; Smart; Murray; Arif, 1988; UNODC, 2018; Hayle, 2025). The focus has varied between different groups (children, adolescents, young adults), with different approaches and perspectives on prevention. Any approach requires a system with solid foundations, including: a favorable political and legal framework; scientific research; coordination of the multiple sectors and levels involved (national, subnational and municipal/local); training for policymakers and professionals, as well as ensuring adequate and sustainable human and financial resources in the long term (UNODC, 2018). Each drug use prevention program has its own focus, techniques and limitations (Walid; Jusoh; Omar, 2021).

However, proposals aligned with current policies in the field lack co-creation in their formulation processes. Thus, this article proposes to reflect on the current trends of drug prevention programs, based on a rapid literature review (Grant; Both, 2009) and the importance of this debate for social workers in an anti-prohibitionist perspective focused on harm reduction."

Coalitions for Justice: Social Workers, Social Movements, and Refugee Advocacy in Germany and Greece

Ms Lefkothea Rizopoulou[1]
[1]Fulda University Of Applied Sciences, ,

"Across Europe, a growing securitized climate exposes migrants and refugees to escalating human rights violations. Despite EU concerns, nationalist legislation has intensified anti-migrant sentiment. Germany and Greece -central to implementing EU policies- reflect this political shift, where restrictions on expression, criminalized solidarity, and rising police violence may affect social work (SW) and activism. Yet, social movements (SMs) remain key sources of resistance.

This study draws on 30 semi-structured interviews (November 2024 – June 2025) with front line social workers supporting refugees (average work experience: 9 years) in Germany and Greece. Participants were recruited from SW networks, activist circles, and self-organized migrant and refugee collectives using snowball sampling. Through thematic analysis, the study explores how professional practice connects with SMs for social justice and how these connections influence everyday practice. For most participants, activism preceded their professionalization.

Findings show that SW practice and SMs intersect at micro and macro levels, with practitioners' roles extending beyond service provision. At the micro level, engagement with movements happens to safeguard refugees' rights and needs, promote grassroots empowerment, and build peer solidarity among activists and refugees. At the macro level, practitioners collaborate with activists to co-organize demonstrations, document rights violations, and strengthen collective advocacy and visibility of structural violence through collective action and sharing front line information. These collaborations enhance practitioners' skills, deepen structural analysis and counter professional isolation through solidarity and empowerment. SMs are also identified as unique sources of reflection and knowledge.

Overall, this intersection represents activist forms of SW that challenge depoliticized practice and advance social justice. It represents resistance from within the profession, particularly amid neoliberal migration regimes and institutional withdrawal. The insights hold significance for students and practitioners alike, encouraging them to reimagine and enact the profession's political commitment to human rights."

Empowering the Global Social Work Agenda through the WHO ICF: Celebrating a 25-Year Jubilee for Sustainable Shared Futures

Dr Patricia Saleeby[1]
[1]Bradley University, ,

In 2026, the global social work community celebrates the 25-year silver jubilee of the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). Launched in 2001, the ICF revolutionized health and social care by shifting the focus from medical diagnoses to a holistic, biopsychosocial understanding of human functioning and societal participation.

For a quarter-century, the ICF has provided clinical professionals with a standardized, cross-disciplinary language to assess health and functioning. By categorizing "Environmental and Personal Factors," the framework aligns well with the core social work principle of "person-in-environment." It empowers practitioners to move beyond treating deficits, focusing instead on dismantling structural barriers that impede a person's ability to engage fully in their community—a prerequisite for any "shared future."

As the profession navigates the aftermath of global health crises and the escalating impacts of climate change, the ICF's role in tracking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and universal health coverage has never been more critical. This presentation explores how social workers can utilize the ICF's 2025/2026 updates to foster "Harambee"—pulling together across borders and sectors—to build more resilient, inclusive societies. The ICF is not just a classification tool, but a catalyst for social justice, human rights, and the co-building of a sustainable, harmonious global future.

Advancing Social Work Advocacy for Transgender Rights: Comparative Lessons from Europe and Asia

Kath Khangpiboon[1]
[1]Faculty Of Social Studies, University Of Ostrava, ,

This study examines structural challenges and social work advocacy strategies for transgender populations across Europe and Asia. It aims to identify an effective hybrid praxis that connects grassroots activism with institutional policy change. Drawing on Systems Theory, Empowerment Theory, Intersectionality, and Anti-Oppressive Practice, the study creates a comparative analytical framework. This framework addresses intersecting legal, medical, and economic oppressions affecting transgender communities. The analysis synthesises comparative literature, case studies, and regional policy reports from Denmark, Norway, Spain, and Thailand. It critically assesses legal recognition, healthcare access, cultural visibility, and systemic barriers that impact transgender well-being and rights. Findings show European contexts generally offer structured legal and welfare frameworks. However, medical gatekeeping and institutional barriers remain widespread. In contrast, Asian contexts, particularly Thailand, have high cultural visibility and community-based support but lack broad legal recognition and accessible healthcare. Despite differences in sociopolitical environments, both regions exhibit persistent systemic exclusion. The study highlights the need for integrated social work advocacy strategies at micro, meso, and macro levels. Key implications for practice include coalition-building with transgender-led organisations, promoting informed-consent models in healthcare, providing culturally competent and intersectional interventions, and resisting institutional violence embedded in legal and medical systems. The study concludes that integrating direct intervention and advocacy in Social Work, one that connects community mobilisation and institutional reform, is crucial. This approach is essential for advancing transgender rights and achieving lasting social justice globally.

Reinforcing Social Workers\' Capacities in the Face of Climate Change

Sue-Ann Macdonald[1]
[1]Université De Montréal And Ifsw Representative, ,

"Climate change (CC) is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, representing not only the most pressing contemporary ecological issue but also a major social challenge. Its social, environmental, health, economic, and political effects are complex and directly concern social workers (SWs) in public, community, and humanitarian networks, as they work with the communities most affected by these changes. Yet, they are often ill-equipped to address the magnitude of these issues. This presentation will showcase our Communities of Practice project that sought to shore up social workers\' analytical skills and intervention competencies to mitigate the social and health challenges linked to CC in Québec, Canada. We also aimed to provide a space for sharing practice initiatives and coconstructed knowledge. To achieve this, we implemented a needs assessment and a continuing education program through Communities of Practice (CoPs) tailored to SWs' needs, in order to: (1) increase SWs' knowledge of the interconnections between CC, vulnerability and protective factors, and the health of at-risk populations; (2) define the social and health issues associated with CC; and (3) strengthen knowledge of innovative practices in mitigation, adaptation, and prevention of social and health challenges related to CC. We proposed adopting a holistic perspective by combining the "ecosocial" (ES) conceptual model and the "One Health" (OH) approach, both grounded in transformative learning (TL) and environmental education (EE). We developped a Train-the-trainer model so that our Communities of Practice for social workers could be replicated. The aim of this presentation is to highlight social work practice and education developments in light of the climate crisis."

Disaster Social Work in Germany in Times of Climate Crisis: Transformative Community-Based Approaches and International Learning

Prof Caroline Schmitt[1], Prof. Andrea Schmelz[1]
[1]Coburg University Of Applied Sciences, ,

"The presentation will discuss the methodological framework, research questions, objectives and selected interim findings of the participatory research project 'Transformation Knowledge for Disaster Relief'. While social work in disaster relief has already been researched more extensively in global contexts, this research project in German-speaking countries is doing pioneering work based on the 2021 flood disaster in the Ahr Valley and the Eifel in Rhineland-Palatinate, a western federal state in Germany.

The participatory research approach is based on the thesis that professionals, the local population and communities that have experienced the flood disaster have transformational knowledge that can be used to make places, cities and regions more resilient in dealing with disasters. In a network of practice partners, knowledge perspectives and resources from social services, educational institutions, associations, social and cultural initiatives, and umbrella organisations for disaster prevention are being researched. Through qualitative interviews and discussions, as well as through the use of art-based methods and jointly designed transformation workshops, the project works with its practice partners to examine their experiences and coping strategies in dealing with the disaster.

In particular, the research project focuses on community work, experiences of solidarity and community engagement, as well as cultural education programmes, interpreting these as the interaction of green and popular social work practices. Learning from international approaches, green social work and popular social work build the fundamental framework for conceptualising disaster relief in Germany in an intersectional and inclusive perspective (Dominelli 2024; Lavalette 2019). The The research aims also to develop educational materials for students and for the education of professionals in social work and educational practice, as response to the climate crisis and ecosocial disaster risks.

Dominelli, L. (2024): Social Work Practice during Times of Disaster. London: Routledge.

Lavalette, M. (2019): Popular Social Work. In: The Routledge Handbook of Social Work. London: Routledge, S. 536-548."

From the Colonial Margins to the Centre: Reclaiming Ubuntu through the HARMONY Framework as Sankofa Praxis

Ms Shayla Dube[1]
[1]Phd Student, Unisa, University Of Calgary Instructor, , South Africa

"Situated within Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice, this contribution positions the HARMONY Framework for Healing with Ubuntu as a decolonial and Africentric approach to reclaiming Ubuntu from its colonial marginalisation and reduction to a depoliticised slogan. Rooted in Sankofa praxis, the framework understands re-membering, re-storing, and re-claiming Ubuntu as an intentional return to its ontological, relational, and communal foundations that were dismembered through the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being. Rather than treating Ubuntu as a metaphor or equity, diversity and inclusion, EDI buzzword, the HARMONY Framework restores Ubuntu as a lived, embodied, and action-oriented worldview that informs healing, ethical practice, and social transformation. The acronym HARMONY represents seven interconnected pillars of healing: Heritage and Roots (honouring Indigenous languages, spiritual identity, and land-based belonging); Ancestral Accountability (respecting elders as custodians of knowledge); Restorative Relationships (centring kinship, compassion, and non-carceral justice); Mind–Heart–Body Integration (embracing holistic emotional, spiritual, somatic, and intellectual healing); Ontological Safety (affirming the right to exist fully beyond colonial scripts); Narrative Sovereignty (reclaiming the right to name and narrate one's own story); and Yielding to Collective Wisdom (valuing knowledge from land, elders, and youth). Grounded in Africentric epistemologies, the framework understands the number seven as symbolising balance, spiritual completeness, and relational accountability. Through Sankofa, the HARMONY Framework contributes to the decolonisation and re-indigenisation of social work practice, offering culturally grounded, spiritually attuned, and justice-oriented pathways to healing, empowerment, and community resilience beyond Western individualist paradigms, a decolonial pivot from the individualist, 'I am because you are' to the collectivist, 'We are because we belong.'

Prevention and Protection in Situations of Loss of Parental Care in Colombia: A Care Diamond Perspective

Carolina Giraldo Henao[1]
[1]University Of Barcelona, ,

"Official data on admissions to state child protection programs in Colombia show that sexual violence (35%) and neglect or omission of care (29%) are the main reasons for State intervention (ICBF, 2024). Frequently, the opening of child protection proceedings leads to separation from the family environment and placement in institutional care. While these measures aim to ensure immediate safety, they often exacerbate the negative effects of rights violations on the holistic development and wellbeing of children and adolescents.

Grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and drawing on the Care Diamond framework (Razavi, 2007), this study conceptualizes child protection as a shared responsibility distributed across four interconnected spheres: the State, families, the market, and civil society. The predominance of institutional responses reveals structural imbalances within this care architecture, where preventive, family-strengthening, and community-based care remain underdeveloped. In this context, families—particularly women—are often individually held responsible for structural and gender-based inequalities that at times exceed their capacity to meet care demands, especially when these are compounded by the burdens of paid work within capitalist economic structures.

Despite significant institutional efforts and public investment, persistent social norms, power relations, and everyday practices continue to legitimize violence against children, especially within the private sphere of the home, with increasing extensions into digital and community spaces. These dynamics pose substantial challenges for social work professionals, who often confront the limits of institutional mandates when promoting children’s rights, family preservation, and social justice.

Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed-methods design combining analysis of official quantitative data with critical discourse analysis of policy and institutional documents, alongside qualitative approaches such as narratives, dialogical encounters, and social cartographies. This approach foregrounds the lived experiences and feeling–thinking perspectives of Care Diamond actors, illuminating how care responsibilities are distributed, contested, and experienced within the Colombian child protection system."

Articulating the Unsayable: Digital Peer Dialogue and Brown Girl Subjectivities

Ria Arora[1]
[1]Mcmaster University, ,

"An emerging Brown Girl Movement has taken shape among second-generation women-identifying descendants from the South Asian subcontinent. While the South Asian subcontinent encompasses diverse histories, languages, and sociopolitical contexts that resist racial homogenization, “brown” has increasingly emerged as a shared, politicized identifier in digital spaces. Rather than collapsing difference, this term operates as a relational category through which gendered experiences of intergenerational trauma, cultural constraint, and negotiation are articulated and mobilized online.

There is a growing body of research documenting the complex and layered gendered experiences of brown girls, including restrictions around curfews, career and social mobility, and the development of romantic and sexual identities shaped by historical and contemporary discourses such as honour.

However, much of this work relies on formal interview-based methods, which introduce structural and communicative constraints that can limit the articulation of experiences that are ontological in nature—felt, embodied, and relational, yet not always readily available to language.

This study intervenes methodologically by examining secondary data from Chemali, a community-based program developed by the not-for-profit organization. The South Asian Yard. Chemali utilizes Discord as a technology-mediated platform to support a hybrid model of community-building and peer-mobilized dialogue among second-generation South Asian women.

Using a digital ethnographic methodology, the study combines Foucauldian discourse analysis with multimodal analysis to examine how subjectivities are produced through participants’ everyday social, emotional, and relational challenges, and how these are shaped by broader historical and socio-political discourses. In doing so, the study contributes to digital social work scholarship by positioning peer-mediated digital spaces as critical sites for examining the emergence of subjectivities shaped by gendered constraint through collective dialogue and relational sense-making, while opening a genealogical approach to understanding intergenerational trauma within South Asian communities.

Towards a Gerontological and Feminist Social Work: Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence Against Older Women

Dr Vicenta Rodriguez Martin[1]
[1]Universidad De Castilla La Mancha - España, ,

Gender-based violence against older women remains a structural phenomenon that is widely invisible within protection systems and in professional Social Work practice. This study presents the results of the VIGER-MUMA I project (2025), whose objective was to map violence perpetrated by partners and former partners against women aged 60 and over from an intersectional, gerontological, and feminist perspective. A total of 428 professionals and students from social and socio-health fields participated. They were administered Likert-type scales specifically designed for the study and validated by expert judges.

The results reveal four critical elements. First, a structural detection gap: more than half of the professionals had never identified a case, reflecting training deficits and an adult-centric perspective in intervention. Second, the persistence of mental models and stereotyped beliefs about ageing, intimate relationships, and older masculinity reinforces the normalization of abuse and influences professional decision-making. Third, institutional and territorial barriers emerge, particularly in rural contexts, where isolation, economic dependency, the digital divide, and the absence of age-adapted protocols converge. Finally, a feminist epistemological stance appears as a key factor: those who integrate a gender perspective and the epistemology of situated knowledge demonstrate greater capacity for detection, support, and intersectoral coordination.

The study underscores that gender-based violence constitutes a global challenge for Social Work, requiring the transformation of mental models, the strengthening of specialized training, the design of age-sensitive assessment tools, and the promotion of public policies that integrate ageing as a structural axis of inequality. The active inclusion of older women’s voices and network-based coordination among social, health, and community services are presented as essential pillars for advancing toward more just, accessible, and culturally situated protection systems.

‘Pedagogy of the Enlightened’: Towards Anti-Oppressive Pedagogies in Social Work Profession

Dr. Pradeep Jare[1]
[1]Bphes' Csrd-instititute Of Social Work And Research, Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, India, , India

"Social work as a profession strives for social cohesion and trans formative social development, grounded in the principles of social justice, diversity, and human rights. This commitment is not merely rhetorical; it signifies professional and ethical commitment to address structural issues. The promise of structural change cannot be realised unless social workers identify the dual ignorance — of the oppressor, who remains ignorant of their own role in sustaining hierarchies, and of the oppressed, who often internalise oppression. Despite these, social work education often remains shaped by conventional pedagogues that inadequately engage with structural oppression. Within such a context, emancipation depends on the praxis of enlightened individuals who have transcended the hegemonic ideological formations and structural constraints. The ‘Pedagogy of the Enlightened\' rests on the premises that emancipation emerges from the agency of enlightenment, especially within societies structured by enduring relations of hegemonic power and oppression.

Drawing from the doctoral work, this paper argues that social cohesion and development cannot be achieved without confronting the hegemonic power relations that sustain the domination and oppression in society. Caste based oppression and domination in the Indian context are deeply embedded and internalised in everyday interactions and practices. Such power relations also permeate educational institutions, shaping classroom interactions, pedagogical practices, and epistemic injustice. Drawing on critical, structural, and anti-oppressive social work epistemologies, this paper situates caste as a historically embedded system of structural inequality, offering critical global insights into oppression, domination, and social cohesion and also critiques dominant pedagogical frameworks for producing epistemic injustice. Finally, drawing on the emancipatory pedagogical praxis of anti-caste social reformers and radical activists—particularly from the Global South—who confronted caste-based structural inequalities and cultivated critical consciousness among oppressed communities, this paper advances a pedagogy of the enlightened grounded in emancipatory, anti-oppressive commitments that are foundational to the social work profession."

When Harambee Meets Caste: A Critical Inquiry of Prejudices and Power from Anti-Oppressive Social Work Perspective

Dr. Pradeep Jare[1]
[1]Bphes' Csrd-instititute Of Social Work And Research, Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, India, , India

"Harambee, a Kenyan autochthonal perspective aligns with the social work's promise for social cohesion and collective responsibility. However, in caste-ridden society like India, the promise of social cohesion and collective responsibility is deeply constrained by entrenched system of hierarchy, oppression, and power. This paper critically examines how caste based prejudices undermine the ethos of Harambee within the Indian social work context. Drawing on anti-oppressive social work approach and Ambedkar's praxiology, the paper argues that caste prejudices operates not only in everyday social interactions but also dominates epistemological orientation, pedagogical practices, and formation of professional identities. This further analyses how claims of liberation and collective responsibility within social work education and practice especially in India often concealed caste hegemony and silence subaltern voices.

Heightened caste consciousness within educational spaces often results in the reproduction of caste-based prejudices among both students and faculty. Social work educational institutions are not exempt from these concerns. While social work is ethically committed to liberation and social transformation, it is observe that social work professionals are deeply embedded within broader social contexts marked by caste hierarchies. This raises a fundamental contradiction: how can a profession grounded in the values of social justice, equality, and emancipation reproduce prejudice.

By foregrounding caste as a central category, the paper demonstrates that without confronting caste-based prejudices and power relations, appeals to collective solidarity risk reproducing epistemic violence. The paper concludes by advocating for an explicitly anti-caste, justice-oriented social work praxis that reimagines Harambee as solidarity grounded in equality, dignity, and structural transformation."

Indigenous and Rural Women as Agents of Transformation: Food Resilience, Community Leadership, and Social Work in the Bolivian Amazon

Dr Vicenta Rodriguez Martin[1]
[1]Universidad De Castilla La Mancha - España, ,

This paper presents the progress and results of an International Cooperation project aimed at strengthening family and community food resilience through the empowerment of Indigenous and rural women, centrally integrating the foundations of Social Work. The project is being implemented in San Borja, in the Bolivian Amazon, home to the Tsimané Indigenous population, who live along the banks of the Maniqui River.

The methodological approach is based on Differentiated Spaces and Strategic Dialogue, participatory tools that make it possible to address structural problems through their current dynamics and transformative potential. This methodology fosters changes in participants' behaviors and perceptual frameworks, incorporating an intercultural perspective on food security and gender-based violence from a community-based, rights-centered approach.

From a Social Work perspective, the intervention is grounded in the promotion of the Right to Food, the facilitation of collective processes, mediation between communities and institutions, and the strengthening of women's leadership. The use of discipline-specific techniques—such as contextual analysis, network-based (heterarchical) intervention, and active participation—has enabled the consolidation of protective spaces and the strengthening of local capacities.

The results achieved demonstrate significant progress. Seventy-nine women from four Indigenous and rural communities have strengthened their technical capacities for diversified food production, increasing the availability of nutritious products throughout the year. Twenty women have been trained as community facilitators on the Right to Food, replicating knowledge to ensure collective ownership. Ten women leaders have joined a public policy advocacy group with regional influence.

This experience raises challenges for Social Work in the field of International Cooperation and in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of the post-pandemic period, territorial inequalities, and climate change, reaffirming the profession's commitment to social justice and human rights.

Reclaiming the history of social work in Africa

Dr Linda Kreitzer[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, ,

"While social work education and practice in Africa were shaped by colonialism, westernization, and globalization, there is a gap in the literature on how social work educators and institutions engaged with, resisted, and transformed these influences around social work education and practice. As well, how the social, political, economic, and cultural issues influenced how it was taught and practiced in the past. To fill the gap in knowledge and inquiry of how these influenced curricula, practice and agency, a team of dedicated African social work academics embarked on a document analysis process, through grounded theory, of the Association of Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) conferences, workshops, directories and debates from 1973-1990, to understand further the link between the development of social work in relation to traditional social networks, colonialism, westernization, and modernization. Analysis of over three thousand pages of documents plus three interviews from original members of ASWEA helped us understand how this association worked during that period and its successes and challenges. This workshop will interweave the findings in relation to understanding what the major themes in social work were at the time, how they related to the ideologies of the time, and the role of different actors in oppression and power. Showing how academics resisted this oppression and power will be part of the workshop discussion along with lessons learned for our social work profession in today\'s world. Many of the same issues addressing the profession of social work in Africa then are still issues today. Through harambee (a collective effort), the workshop question will concentrate on: What does it mean to indigenize African social work education and practice today?"

Radical Ethical Social Work: Reclaiming and Reimagining Social Work Practice for Sustainable Shared Futures

Dr Donna Richards[1], Marina Morgenshtern[1]
[1]Trent University, Canada | University Of Johannesburg Za And Vancouver Island University Canada, ,
"This presentation introduces the concept of radical, ethical social work as a socially transformative approach to increasing societal division and polarization and thus to futures that are shared and sustainable. We describe this intersection of the radical and the ethical as one that is highly attuned to power dynamics, systemic injustices, and diverse ways of knowing and being. It is relational, context-specific, compassionate, and grounded in oppositional consciousness and a sense of revolutionary possibility.

By challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and dominant orthodoxies in contemporary social work—and by exposing the inherent tensions and contradictions—we call for greater complexity, nuance, and imagination in social work responses and dialogue. These ideas are explored in our co-edited volume of, Routledge International Handbook of Radical Ethical Social Work Practice, which includes chapters regarding, Theorizing Radical Ethical Social Work, Academic Contexts, and Practical Contexts and is set to be published in May 2026.

As a new political orientation for the profession, radical ethical social work—as demonstrated by the contributors—aims to inspire scholars, educators, practitioners, students, and policy makers to pursue social work that is critical, relevant, transformative, socially just, decolonized, and deeply ethical."

Contribution of Cash Transfer for OVC for Food on Welfare of Children in Kasarani Sub-County,Kenya

Mr Noah Mokaya Omambia Sanganyi[1]
[1]Mount Kenya University, ,

"Cash transfer programme for orphaned and vulnerable children (CT-OVC) in Kenya focused on meeting the daily basic needs of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) as a human rights approach to fighting poverty through social safety. The programme has been evaluated using quantitative methods, but fewer qualitative studies done to assess the effectiveness of the CT-OVC in addressing OVCs welfare. The aim of this study was to assess the effect of Cash Transfer for OVC for food on welfare of children. The study drew from Giddens' structuration theory. Exploratory research design was used, and target population included 252 households in benefiting from CT-OVC. Out of this population, a sample of 155 caregivers was selected for the survey study with 118 responses and 5 children's officers as key informants from the five wards in the Sub-County. Data was collected using an interview schedule for the caregivers and a key informant interview guide for the children's officers. Mixed research approaches used to analyze data. Quantitative data was analzyed using descriptive statistics while content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data, presented in verbatim and discussed along with the quantitative findings. The study found that the programme overwhelmingly contributed to addressing food security concerns within the surveyed households. 96.6% of respondents acknowledged the positive impact of the program, with 94% strategically allocating funds to purchase food. The study highlighted improvements in balanced diets, increased food quantity and meal frequency, and a significant reduction in the burden of food insecurities (59.8%). These findings underscore the program\'s crucial role in enhancing food security and nutritional well-being among the targeted population. The study recommended incorporating nutrition workshops or information sessions in the OVC programs to empower beneficiaries in making informed dietary choices, thereby contributing to long-term improvements in health and well-being."

Poor Families in the Neoliberal Context, at the Intersection of Race and Gender

Mrs Rosane Cristina Moreira De Souza[1]
[1]Nenhuma- Pucsp, ,

The study we present stems from reflections that have been systematized in the doctoral research hosted by PUC-SP. The focus of our research concerns the major challenges faced by poor families in the context of the 21st century, understood as a time of capitalist crisis, neoliberal state policies, and the retrenchment of social policies. These elements form part of the broader global challenges to the advancement, implementation, and guarantee of rights, highlighting racial and gender particularities in these ongoing dynamics.

From what has already been observed, poor families are predominantly from the peripheral regions of the city of São Paulo, with intersecting racial and gender dimensions. We aim to present some systematizations, contributing to a rethinking of social protection, political practices, and challenges in neoliberal times, characterized by significant setbacks in human rights. From a critical materialist perspective, the study discusses how inequalities of class, race, and gender exacerbate vulnerabilities, perpetuating the lack of protection for poor and Black families.

Therefore, the following points are presented as introductory notes, addressing the transfer of state responsibility to the private sphere, highlighting the fragility of social protection and the failures in the system of rights guarantees and social policies.

Navigating survival in rural refugee settlements: A critical ethnography of home-brewed alcohol production and refugee livelihoods in Uganda

Mr Godfrey Makoha[1]
[1]Mcgill University, ,

Uganda hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, with South Sudanese refugees forming the majority. Although Uganda's progressive open-door policy has made it a global model for refugee protection, evidence suggests that protracted displacement and declining humanitarian assistance have intensified livelihood hardships for both refugees and host communities. In the face of limited access to agricultural land, limited formal employment opportunities, and increasing budget cuts, refugees in Bidibidi are often forced to devise survival strategies as a pathway to self-reliance. Amidst these structural constraints, refugees in rural settlement environments are compelled to diversify their income sources and enter the informal economy. Moreover, some studies list home-brewed alcohol production and sale as visible coping strategies and informal livelihood activities in refugee settlements in Uganda. Despite its visibility, alcohol production and sale remain poorly understood beyond the narrow biomedical or public health focus. To gain a nuanced understanding of how home-brewed alcohol production and sale contribute to the livelihoods of refugees and host communities in Bidibidi, this study employed a critical ethnographic approach guided by the sustainable livelihoods framework, political economy theory and indigenous knowledge. A diverse participatory fieldwork, including participant observation, document review, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and capstone focus group discussions, facilitated data collection from local alcohol brewers, consumers, community leaders, policy makers and humanitarian actors. The Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development in Kenya 2026 provides a prime opportunity to present the findings of this doctoral dissertation research project. Experiences and perceptions on how alcohol brewing and sale impact household survival, health, gender dynamics, and socio-cultural relations in Bidibidi will be discussed. I envision that insights from this study are crucial for programming that aims to promote sustainable livelihoods in refugee contexts in Uganda and beyond.

Unaccompanied Migrant Minors: towards an Intersectional and Multidimensional Approach to Assessing Vulnerability and Promoting Social Inclusion

Miss Rocío Vela-jiménez[1]
[1]Departamento de Humanidades y Filosofía. Universidad Loyola Andalucía, ,

"Unaccompanied minors (UCMs) migrating from Africa to Europe, particularly via the Atlantic route, face significant risks that impact their social inclusion process. Despite increasing attention to their protection, a gap persists in ensuring dignified conditions based on human rights throughout their migration process. The assessment of their vulnerability often focuses on unidimensional aspects, such as migration status or lack of family support, without considering the complexity of their situation. This vulnerability must be addressed from a multidimensional and intersectional perspective, considering not only obvious factors like gender and age but also social, economic, cultural, territorial and health dimensions, as these directly impact their inclusion process. An intersectional approach allows us to understand how various identities and contexts, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, the pre-migration, during migration and arrival contexts, or trauma experiences, interact and increase their vulnerability.

Social work plays a key role in identifying and assessing this vulnerability, promoting the integration of UCMs into welfare and protection systems, and developing legal frameworks and public policies that ensure universal and sustainable coverage. However, it is essential to understand the indicators, from an intersectional and multidimensional approach, that enable an adequate assessment of these minor\' vulnerability.

Through a systematic review of the scientific literature following PRISMA guidelines, 30 articles were identified exploring the measurement of the vulnerability of these minors. The review highlights the lack of indicators that comprehensively address the situation of UCMs and inconsistent institutional responses, hindering their adequate protection. It concludes that it is necessary to guarantee the fundamental rights of these minors through an assessment that includes indicators reflecting an intersectional and multidimensional approach, eliminating barriers that perpetuate their exclusion and promoting interventions that ensure their social inclusion and human dignity."

1270

Beyond Role-Plays: Virtual Reality as an Inclusive Space for Social Work Skill Building

Ms Kealey Dube[1]
[1]Macewan University, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, , Canada

"Virtual reality (VR) is emerging as a powerful tool in professional education, yet its application in social work education remains under explored. This presentation shares early findings from an interdisciplinary research project in which computer science faculty and students collaborated with social work faculty to design a VR simulation that enables social work students to practice core interpersonal and interviewing skills in a safe, controlled, and repeatable environment.

The VR simulation features interactive virtual clients and branching conversational pathways, allowing learners to experiment with communication strategies, build confidence, and receive feedback without the pressures associated with live role-plays or real-world practice settings.

Using a mixed-methods approach that includes usability testing, participant observation, surveys, and semi-structured interviews, this study explores how students experience the VR environment and how it influences their skill development.

This presentation will share preliminary data, discuss insights from an interdisciplinary development process, and highlight the potential of VR to expand accessible and inclusive approaches to social work education."

Supporting African Women Entrepreneurs While Contesting Gender Inequality

Dr Maria Emilia Bianco Galindez[1]
[1]Boston University School Of Social Work | University Of Massachusetts Lowell | Boston University School Of Social Work C, ,

"Research indicates that women entrepreneurs contribute meaningfully to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in poverty alleviation, gender equality, and economic growth. However, women entrepreneurs in African countries continue to face multiple obstacles growing their businesses, most of which are still related to oppressive gendered ideologies and policies. While there have been efforts to support women entrepreneurship in the region, more research and actions are needed to understand and dismantle gender inequality at the institutional, interactional, policy, and socio-cultural levels.

The current study was designed as a collaborative effort between E4Impact, the University of Sacro Cuore in Milan, Catholic University in Zimbabwe (CUZ) and Boston University (BU) to investigate the experiences and insights of Zimbabwean women entrepreneurs with the aim of informing policy and program decisions. Data were collected in 2021/2022 through three focus groups with Zimbabwean women residing in Harare and rural and peri-urban areas. Emerging themes highlighted specific barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, including the pressure of juggling domestic and maternal responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits, navigating financial blocks due to lack of collaterals (land was usually owned by men), and challenges entering mentoring and networking spaces which were largely dominated by men. Despite these constraints, women in the study exhibited resilience and strategic capacity to sustain and grow their businesses, and shared ideas on what they would need to reach their full potential.

The study documented women's recommendations, including additional familial and institutional support and increased networking and mentoring opportunities. Further, women expressed a desire for more governmental assistance, access to credit, and flexible regulations. Our presentation will describe these and other findings, and it will open a world café-like discussion with the audience on ideas on how to implement study participants' recommendations to support women entrepreneurship in Africa.

The Intersection of Spirituality, Religiosity, and Health Outcomes in Later Life: A Cross-National Perspective from Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr Josephine Misaro[1]
[1]University Of Nairob, , Kenya

"As global populations age, understanding the factors that foster well-being in later life becomes increasingly vital. In Sub-Saharan Africa, a region characterized by deep spiritual roots, religion may offer unique pathways to positive aging. This research investigates the mechanisms through which religious institutions enhance the social, spiritual, and psychological well-being of older adults. Given the evidence that traditional family support structures are diminishing because of population aging, rapid urbanization, modernization, and low healthy life expectancy, faith-based organizations (FBOs) have become pivotal in promoting the autonomy, dignity, and social inclusion of the older adult population. Drawing on perspectives from social gerontology, we examine how specific interventions, such as pastoral counseling, intergenerational mentorship programs, and faith-based welfare reforms, facilitate active aging, enhance resilience, and foster community engagement. Our analysis incorporates comparative case studies from Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, representing the Eastern, Western, and Southern African regions, respectively. These cases are used to highlight contemporary welfare strategies that integrate the intrinsic cultural values of Ubuntu and filial piety. Despite persistent challenges, including socioeconomic inequalities, disparities in healthcare accessibility, lifestyle factors, and policy disconnections, faith-based initiatives represent a transformative approach to redefining aging as a spiritually enriching and meaningful stage of life. This study concludes by emphasizing that sustainable collaboration between governmental bodies and religious organizations is essential for fostering inclusive and supportive aging communities throughout the sub-Saharan region."

Suicide Stigma in Tajikistan: Attitudes toward Treatability

Shahnaz Savani[1]
[1]University Of Houston Downtown, , United States

Suicide is an urgent global public health issue. In Muslim countries, suicide stigma and a limited understanding of treatment options persists. Despite the strong evidence for treatment efficacy, public confidence in treatment remains low and individuals with suicidality are not expected to recover fully. Research examining beliefs on the treatability of suicidal behavior within Muslim majority or Muslim minority countries is scarce. This study examines attitudes and beliefs toward the treatability of suicide among the general population in Tajikistan. Using an experimental vignette research design, this study explores Tajik people's beliefs regarding the potential of treating individuals contemplating suicide, the capability of mental health professionals to treat those in such distress, and the likelihood for individuals to recover and resume a normal, productive life. Results demonstrate a significant relationship between mental health knowledge and attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help and treatability, and that there is an interaction effect between age and gender of vignette subject on treatability, with older adults being seen as less treatable than adults or adolescents. This is the first study to explore treatment beliefs about suicidality in Tajikistan and has important implications for mental health literacy and targeted interventions in the region.

The Journey from Nothing to Something: The Development and Challenges of TASW Supervisor Certification in Taiwan

Miss Szu-Yu Ou[1]
[1]National Taiwan Normal University, , Taiwan

"In Taiwan, social work supervisors are expected to support those under their supervision and ensure service quality. However, the country lacks clear regulations governing supervision practices. Recognizing the critical role of supervision in advancing professional development and enhancing service outcomes, the Taiwan Association of Social Workers (TASW) has, since 2010, been committed to establishing and implementing the Social Work Supervision Training and Certification System. This system comprises foundational training courses followed by a one-year field supervision practicum. Participants who complete both phases and pass the review conducted by the Education and Training Committee are awarded the TASW Supervisor Certification.

As of 2025, 832 individuals have completed the first-phase training, with 108 advancing to the second-phase practicum. A total of 61 participants have obtained certification. TASW has also continued to provide ongoing education in supervision and established a supervisor talent database to support social welfare organizations and the broader social work community. In 2024, to improve efficiency, TASW launched an online system, officially implemented in 2025.

Despite these efforts, several challenges remain. These include ensuring both the quality and availability of second-phase training, facilitating effective matching between supervisors and trainees, and developing diverse, practice-oriented continuing education programs addressing regional needs. Since the passage of the Social Safety Net Plan in 2018, Taiwan has significantly expanded its workforce of social workers and supervisors. Although TASW introduced the certification system years ago, it has increasingly emphasized building a localized supervision framework.

After 15 years, TASW has begun reviewing the system. First, it analyzed why some applicants completed the first phase but did not proceed to the second. Second, certified supervisors were invited to participate in focus groups to provide feedback and suggestions. These efforts aim to refine the certification system, cultivate more high-quality supervisors, and promote the sustainable development of the social work profession in Taiwan."

Designing Curricula for Financially Competent Practitioners in Kenya's Human Services Sector

Dr Njeri Kagotho[1]
[1]Ohio State University, , United States

Financial capability is a critical competency for human services professionals. In a labor market marked by high unemployment and economic precarity, Kenyan graduates need skills to manage personal finances and promote community financial empowerment. This study examined the status of financial education within human services programs, drawing on perspectives from students and educators in universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions

Data were collected from 402 students enrolled in diploma and degree programs and eight instructors. A mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative strands throughout the research process using a connecting strategy. Patterns from student surveys informed the thematic focus of faculty interviews, ensuring linkages between student-level data and instructor insights.

Student data revealed widespread financial vulnerability, with many struggling to meet basic needs and manage expenses—signaling financial precarity. Despite these challenges, resilience emerged as students demonstrated confidence in overcoming financial obstacles. Faculty observations confirmed this finding, noting students' engagement in micro-enterprises that transformed modest capital into meaningful profit. While some students reported no prior financial education, a significant number had received training at the post-secondary level. Financial content was dispersed across various courses rather than offered as a dedicated unit. TVET programs demonstrated slightly greater integration than universities, particularly in areas of personal finance and emotional development. Although entrepreneurship content was increasingly emphasized, instructors noted that its pedagogical effectiveness depends on integrating complementary instruction including foundational financial concepts, legal and regulatory frameworks, alongside regionally responsive content. Participants advocated for more intentional strategies to embed financial content throughout the curriculum.

Current approaches to financial education in Kenya's human services sector are incidental rather than intentional. To prepare practitioners for economic empowerment roles, curricula must adopt a modular structure that scaffolds financial concepts, and reflects local economic contexts."

RE-IMAGINING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN KENYA: FOUNDATIONS, PRACTICE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Dr Urbanus Ndolo[1]
[1]Tharaka University Of Science And Technology, , Kenya

"The paper is a dynamic reflection on evolvement and future of social work education in Kenya. With an integral focus on curriculum foundations and content, the paper takes a symposium approach to examine the historical and legal development of social work training, including the growth of curriculum programs, key training institutions, and relevant legal frameworks such as the Commission for University Education, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2013 (Revised 2014), the Universities Act, 2012 (Revised 2016), and the Social Work Professionals Bill). It further explores the indigenization and decolonization of social work education and its alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The symposium emphasizes innovative teaching and learning methods, including competency-based education, assessment practices, and the integration of emerging technology (AI) into social work training. It highlights the importance of experiential learning through fieldwork, community and industry engagement, and partnerships shaped by both historical and modern collaborations, such as missionary influences and international linkages.

In conclusion, it explores quality assurance, accreditation, regulation, continuous professional development, and professional standards as fundamental pillars in social work profession. Overall, the symposium aims to promote dialogue, share best practices, and develop actionable recommendations to improve the relevance, quality, and impact of social work education in Kenya.

Social Work Education, Curriculum Development, Indigenization, Decolonization, Experiential Learning, Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Technology Integration"

Women's Farming Practices and Ecological Fragility in Western Kenya: Intersections of Culture, and Food Security

Dr Njeri Kagotho[1]
[1]Ohio State University, , United States

Women farmers in Africa play a vital role in the agricultural sector, contributing significantly to food production and household nutrition. Despite this, they face persistent barriers, including limited land rights, credit access, and information gaps. These constraints undermine sustainability and resilience in fragile ecosystems.

This qualitative study examined the experiences of women farmers in western Kenya using multiple data collection strategies. We conducted in-depth interviews with women engaged in subsistence farming and key informant interviews with community gatekeepers and local government officials. To enrich these narratives, we employed a visual ethnographic approach, using researcher-generated photographs to document ecological features of farming practices across four family farms and one community garden. The integration of interviews, observations, and visual data provided a multi-layered understanding of the intersection between gender, agriculture, and environmental sustainability.

Findings from researcher-generated photographs and interviews reveal three interconnected themes shaping women's farming in ecologically fragile areas. First, data indicates that farming practices are influenced by ecological, cultural, and institutional dynamics, highlighting the complexity of adaptation. Second, narratives emphasize the role of customary norms and intergenerational knowledge in sustainable land use with strategies such as soil conservation visually corroborated. Finally, systemic barriers persist—devolved governance intended to address climate change is constrained by bureaucratic constraints, limiting collaborative responses and slowing adaptation efforts.

Addressing how formal and informal norms shape women's capacity to achieve household food security while practicing environmental stewardship requires a coordinated, multisectoral approach. Current adaptation efforts remain constrained by socio-cultural, political, and fiscal barriers. Although devolution was intended to bring policy closer to communities, its implementation has been slow to meet farmers' needs. Climate-responsive supports must be context-specific, tailored to local geographies and the lived realities of women who shoulder the burden of subsistence agriculture."

Smartphones as a Gateway to Independence and Adaptation: Older Mandarin-Speaking Immigrants' Use of Smartphones for Everyday Living

Dr Christine Walsh[1]
[1]University Of New Brunswick, ,

The growing integration of digital technologies into everyday life has reshaped how older adults engage with their social environments, access information, and navigate health and community services. Yet, limited research has examined these dynamics among older Mandarin-speaking immigrants in Canada—a rapidly expanding demographic facing intersecting challenges of ageing, migration, and linguistic adaptation. Drawing on qualitative data from the national Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants project, this study explores how older Mandarin-speaking immigrants use smartphones in their daily lives and how these technologies contribute to adaptation, independence, and well-being. Data was obtained from 102 participants across seven cities in four provinces in Canada. The data were deductively and inductively coded with NVivo 12 and analysed thematically. Findings reveal four interconnected domains of smartphone use: (1) Access to community resources and healthcare; (2) play and leisure, including digital gaming, music, and online reading; (3) home and community safety, facilitated through surveillance technologies and neighbourhood communication networks; and (4) perceived empowerment, as smartphones supported navigation of unfamiliar environments, enhanced autonomy, and reduced reliance on family members. Despite these benefits, participants reported persistent barriers, including linguistic inaccessibility, inconsistent translation services, and fears of digital dependency. The study highlights the dual role of smartphones as both enablers and limits to social inclusion, underscoring the need for culturally and linguistically responsive digital supports to promote equitable technological participation among older Chinese immigrants in Canada.

Valuing our Worth: Reimagining Social Work Through Ethical Entrepreneurship and Transformative Travel

Dr Suzen Wysor Nguema[1]
[1]Travel To Transform, ,

"<p data-start=""154"" data-end=""905"">Harambee calls social workers to unite in building sustainable, just, and collaborative futures. In the spirit of this collective movement, our proposal introduces Travel to Transform, a reimagined model of social work practice that fuses immersive travel with intentional personal and community growth. As social workers and founders of a for-profit enterprise, we aim to challenge long-standing narratives that restrict social work to underpaid and undervalued labor. Instead, we reclaim our professional worth by designing a business that is ethically grounded, mission-driven, and financially sustainable proving that social work values and profitability are not mutually exclusive.</p>
<p data-start=""907"" data-end=""1628"">Travel to Transform offers curated travel experiences that center reflection, cultural humility, community engagement, and transformative learning. Rooted in core social work principles of self-determination, dignity and worth, cultural responsiveness, and human connection, our model positions travel as a catalyst for deep personal transformation and strengthened global citizenship. By stepping into new environments, participants engage in guided reflection, experiential learning, and facilitated dialogue that expands their understanding of themselves, others, and the world. This approach mirrors foundational social work practices while opening new pathways for professional creativity and entrepreneurial leadership.</p>
<p data-start=""1630"" data-end=""2234"">Our presentation explores how social workers can “pull together” to reclaim agency over their practice by designing innovative, values-aligned business models that generate impact and income. We will discuss our journey in building a for-profit company that honors social justice commitments, prioritizes ethical engagement with global communities, and disrupts the expectation that social workers must sacrifice financial stability to serve others. Ultimately, we aim to inspire practitioners to imagine bold, sustainable futures that embrace both collective responsibility and individual flourishing.</p>
<p data-start=""2236"" data-end=""2435"" data-is-last-node="""" data-is-only-node="""">Travel to Transform demonstrates how reimagined social work practice can unite passion, purpose, and economic empowerment, advancing the Harambee vision of shared responsibility and shared prosperity.</p>"0

Beyond policy gaps and protection failures? Social work response to human mobility in the African context

Prof Tanja Kleibl[1], Prof Janestic Twikirize[2], Uzoma Okoye[3], Ngozi Chukwu[3], Fauzia Jamú[4], Imedy Condelaque[5], Hafiz Jamú[6]
[1]University Of Nigeria, , Nigeria, [2]Makerere University, , Uganda, [3] University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), , Nigeria, [4]University Lúrio, Mozambique (UniLúrio), , Mozambique, [5]Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM), , Mozambique, [6]Association of the Island of Mozambique (AIM), , Mozambique
The dynamic terrain of migration and internal displacement in Africa requires a diversified and context-specific approach, as movements across the continent are driven by political instability, conflict, resource extraction, land dispossession, and the search for economic opportunities. This session examines these interrelated drivers and their implications for social protection. Different forms of mobility, including forced migration, labour migration, and internal displacement create distinct vulnerabilities that necessitate specialised, culturally grounded protection measures. Yet, social protection systems in many African countries continue to struggle in meeting the complex needs of migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly regarding access to programmes, services, and long-term support structures. Strengthening policy frameworks in postcolonial African states remains essential for promoting the dignity, rights, and wellbeing of affected populations. The session underscores the need for participatory and multidisciplinary approaches that integrate perspectives from social work, public policy, community development, and human rights. It will explore the effectiveness of existing social protection mechanisms, identify gaps in current systems, and highlight the urgency of comprehensive policies that recognise the agency, resilience, and socio-political realities of migrants and IDPs. Emphasis will be placed on fostering inclusive host communities and building sustainable, community-driven responses. A central focus of the session is the critical role of social workers, who are uniquely positioned to advocate for migrant and IDP rights, deliver essential psychosocial and material support, and influence policy reforms. By leveraging their roles in research, policy development, and practice, social workers can contribute to interventions that address both immediate humanitarian concerns and long-term developmental needs. Rooted in African development philosophy, community engagement, and participatory practice, social work can significantly strengthen outcomes for displaced populations. Ultimately, enhancing awareness of migrant and IDP experiences is key to shaping more responsive, equitable, and resilient social protection systems across Africa.

Empowering Arab Women Survivors of Violence in Israel: Employment Rehabilitation through Minority Support Models

Lulu Balous[1]
[1]My Work, ,
"Employment Rehabilitation for Arab Women Survivors in Israel

Abstract:
Women\'s Spirit is a leading Israeli NGO with consultative status at the United Nations, dedicated to combating gender-based violence and promoting economic independence among survivors. For Arab women in Israel, the intersection of gender-based violence and minority status presents compounded challenges, including social stigma, limited family support, restricted educational and training opportunities, language barriers, and systemic discrimination within the labor market. Research reveals that 66% of survivors return to abusive relationships due to financial dependency, but with targeted economic empowerment, the chance of returning drops to nearly zero, showcasing the importance of employment-focused interventions.
This presentation examines culturally responsive models of employment rehabilitation developed by Women's Spirit, specifically tailored for Arab women overcoming domestic abuse. Drawing from extensive fieldwork, the session explores how individualized plans that integrate vocational training, mentorship, emotional recovery, and trauma-informed casework help restore self-confidence and foster autonomy. The approach is rooted in collaboration—working with families, employers, local authorities, and welfare agencies—to balance cultural values with progressive empowerment, encouraging workforce reintegration while maintaining community trust.
Conventional employment programs often neglect the multifaceted barriers faced by minority women. In contrast, minority-centered strategies that emphasize legal rights, trust-building, and community partnerships have proven more effective, especially when navigating the unique climate of insecurity and labor market disruptions following the 2023 conflict. The discussion highlights real-life stories and successful interventions, addressing both the socioeconomic impacts of violence and the persistent cultural and structural obstacles that limit Arab women's participation in the workforce.
Attendees will gain practical strategies for culturally competent employment rehabilitation and learn models that advance gender equality and social inclusion. This session urges international professionals and policymakers to adopt frameworks that address the specific needs of minority women, promoting resilience, dignity, and sustainable empowerment."

Stereotypes, Aspirations, and Personal Development among Arab Women in Israel: A Socio-Psychological Perspective

Lulu Balous[1]
[1]My Work, ,
"Title: Stereotypes, Aspirations, and Personal Development among Arab Women in Israel: A Socio-Psychological Perspective

This doctoral research explores how social stereotypes shape the personal aspirations, identity formation, and professional development of Arab women in Israel. Positioned at the intersection of gender, culture, and minority status, Arab women navigate a complex reality in which traditional expectations coexist with rapidly changing educational and economic opportunities. While access to higher education and the labor market has expanded in the past two decades, sociocultural perceptions continue to influence women's self-beliefs, career choices, and pathways to independence.

Drawing from socio-psychological theory, gender studies, and minority research, the study investigates how collective norms, family structures, community expectations, and internalized stereotypes impact women's motivation and self-efficacy. Particular attention is given to the psychological consequences of stereotype threat, the internal conflict between autonomy and social conformity, and the strategies Arab women employ to redefine their roles. Through interviews, surveys, and reflective analysis, the research examines how women interpret barriers not only as external constraints but also as internalized beliefs that restrict their potential.

The dissertation further highlights the role of empowerment models, educational institutions, and community-based programs in challenging limiting narratives and fostering growth. It evaluates how mentorship, creative expression, professional guidance, and supportive networks contribute to empowered identity construction and expanded life aspirations.

This research aims to deepen academic understanding of the relationship between stereotypes and women's developmental trajectories in minority societies. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers, educators, and social workers seeking to promote gender equality and culturally responsive empowerment. By amplifying women's voices and examining their internal and external struggles, the study underscores the importance of dismantling barriers not only in society, but also within consciousness—enabling Arab women to envision and pursue self-defined futures"

Exploring the Use of Simulation-Based Learning to Promote Trauma-Informed Care Approaches for Youth in Therapeutic Campus-Based Care

Dr Angelique Jenney[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Trauma-informed Campus-Based Care (TiCBC) environments provide support and intervention for young people in care with complex needs and require skilled providers. These skills are not taught in classroom settings, but often through on-the-job learning experiences. The onboarding time and resources for each staff is significant and the potential for distressing learning experiences occurring early in a new worker's trajectory can discourage them from remaining in the field long enough to develop competence and mastery for this difficult work. Simulation-based learning (SBL) opportunities offer a range of learning scenarios that can be experienced safely to build knowledge and insight.

This project created both virtual and live simulations as a mechanism to improve access to trauma-informed care skills training and provide opportunities for the development of practice competencies in both student and professional practitioners in TiCBC settings. Three youth case scenarios were designed to help staff recognize and respond to trauma in young clients, maintain safety for themselves and the youth in their care, while increasing reflective and relational practice capacity. Scenarios involve intersectionality where learners are presented with a range of diverse clients to address equity, diversity and inclusion as part of targeted learning. Multiple complex episodes, requiring different levels of competency and complexity (novice, advanced beginner, and competent) were piloted with a diverse group of child and youth care workers (N=90).<span class=""apple-converted-space"">

Preliminary findings from this pilot study will be shared that indicate SBL is a promising avenue for developing reflective and relational practice capacity within trauma-informed care settings for youth.

This presentation will describe the potential for SBL within TiCBC settings to support trauma-informed care approaches with new staff. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with the SBL scenario and discuss experiences and implications for future developments and practical applications in children\'s mental health settings.

“We Turned Pain into a School of Life.” Rwandan Young People as Archivists of Knowledge in Response to Childhood Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

Dr. Serge Nyirinkwaya[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

Intimate partner violence (IPV) remains a major public health and human rights issue worldwide, with serious consequences for both adult survivors and children. In Rwanda, where IPV prevalence remains high, national data focuses on adults, with limited attention to how young people (YP) understand and respond to IPV between their parents or caregivers. Research on childhood experiences of IPV (CEIPV) tends to emphasize psychological harm and trauma over coping responses and agency, often portraying YP as passive witnesses. Even the emerging scholarship that resists this framing is mostly based in Global North contexts. This paper, based on my social work doctoral dissertation challenges these limitations by foregrounding Rwandan youth with CEIPV as storytellers and archivists of knowledge in ways that are important to them. Guided by Ubuntu ontology, an extended epistemology, and African storytelling approaches, the study engaged 13 Rwandan YP (aged 22–25) with lived experiences of CEIPV to understand how they made sense of their experiences. Through a participatory digital archiving methodology, the study explored how they name, story, and historicize their responses, as well as the benefits and limitations of sharing their CEIPV stories. Over three months, participants co-created a multimodal archive utilizing textual, oral, visual, and digital formats. Results show that participants resisted dominant trauma narratives through multistoried and culturally anchored expressions. Their stories drew on embodied memory and local metaphors that honoured both vulnerability and strength. Their contributions highlighted harm, but also survival, care, response-ability, hope for restoring cycles of safety and the generational transmission of skills of resistance, particularly from mothers. This study contributes to social work research, practice and policy informed by youth-centered knowledge systems. It offers a model of collaborative storytelling, story witnessing and story preservation that amplifies YP voices and affirms their role as active agents in shaping more just futures.

Amplifying Rategо Stories and Knowledges: A Co-Research Initiative with Young Mothers in Social Movements in East Africa

Dr. Serge Nyirinkwaya[1]
[1]University Of Calgary, , Canada

"Young mothers can be negatively affected by dominant and degrading cultural narratives; their stories of resistance and activism are often rendered invisible in broader social contexts. Informed by collective narrative practice methodologies, we undertook a counter-storytelling research project to elicit and acknowledge the stories of survival and sustenance of young mothers in social movements responding to sexual and gender-based violence in East Africa. We facilitated storytelling circles, incorporating various story and knowledges collection methods. Our approach involved documenting collective experiences and counter-narratives, exchanging stories between communities, and inviting young mothers to respond to other participants' stories. The telling and retelling of stories of survival and resistance in the face of hardship appeared to be a healing and reinvigorating process which affirmed young mothers' desire to create social change for themselves, their children, and their communities. The ethics of interweaving individual and collective voices, language justice, collaborative editing, and telling stories in participants\' preferred ways involving songs, dances, and artefacts beyond the written word proved to be significant in the process. Enabling the telling and witnessing of personal and collective stories through means beyond written and spoken words proved valuable in eliciting important topics and ethics for collaborative inquiries with activist young mothers.

Reference paper/Recommended Citation:

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Sustainable Careers in Social Work: Perspectives of Social Workers and Social Work Managers

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"Building sustainable careers in social work is a challenge in many countries. In Finland, the social work profession has strengthened in many ways over recent decades. At present, master's degree is a statutory requirement for practicing as a licensed social worker, which reflects the high educational standards of the field. Employment rates are strong, and most licensed social workers secure permanent positions within the public sector. Despite these favourable conditions, sustainability of social work careers remains under pressure. Previous research has identified factors undermining social workers' career sustainability, including heavy caseloads, limited resources, managerial issues, and ethical constrains. Furthermore, recent structural reforms have introduced substantial changes in the organisation and funding of social work.

This study draws on the SOSPOLKU ("Sustainable social work career paths on wellbeing services counties") research project, which applies De Vos et al.'s (2020) process model of sustainable careers to examine social work careers. According to the model, sustainable careers are understood systemically and dynamically as being shaped through the interplay of individual, contextual, and temporal dimensions. In our study, we ask: What meanings do social workers and social work managers give to sustainable career paths of social workers, and how do these perspectives converge or diverge?

The analysis is based on qualitative interviews with social workers (n=31) at different career stages and managers (n=19) across three wellbeing services counties in Finland. The interviewees represented adult social work, child protection, and family social work. Data were collected in 2025 and analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Preliminary findings of the research will be presented and discussed. By comparing the perspectives of social workers and social work managers, this study illuminates the multidimensional nature of career sustainability in social work. These insights contribute to international debates on social service workforce strengthening and sustainability."

Circle of Courage Workshop

Katherine Raynor[1]
[1]Suny New Paltz, ,

This workshop will be a practical application of the principles of the Circle as Courage, an indigenous practice framework for human services and education. This model was created by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steven VanBockern, and is encapsulated in the book Reclaiming Youth at Risk. The framework is a core component of the curriculum of the Concentration in Human Services (CHS) at SUNY New Paltz in the US, where both presenters are the current faculty. It has also been adopted in South Africa as a method for educating child and youth care workers across the country. For many years, the faculty of the CHS have played with this framework, originally intended to focus on working with youth, and expanded its focus to include critical self-reflection, assessment, evaluation, team building, group dynamics, and an educational foundation for a generalist practice in human services and social work. The focus of this particular workshop is group dynamics, but all of the other applications will be discussed. The workshop is highly interactive and uses the wisdom that that participants already have and reframe into the four quadrants of the Circle of Courage, being Mastery, Belonging, Generosity, and Independence. It acknowledges the inherent gifts and challenges of each quadrant and encourages participants to see themselves and others holistically and acknowledge gifts and weaknesses as flip sides of the same coin. While innovative in its applications, this workshop does not try to reinvent the wheel. It focuses on the roots of competence, relationships, care, and autonomy central to this work, and allows participants to take the knowledge and skills they already possess and harness it in a more effective way. Participants will walk away with a deeper understanding of what they contribute, but also what they need to work more cohesively with others.

Suicide in Central Aisa: Examining Suicide Stigma in Tajikistan

Shahnaz Savani[1]
[1]University Of Houston Downtown, , United States

"Mental health stigma is a pervasive issue significantly affecting the life of many individuals experiencing suicidality. Suicide remains highly stigmatized, particularly in Muslim contexts. Stigma has been linked to reduced quality of life (Alonso et al., 2009), diminished functioning (Sirey et al., 2001), lower self-esteem (Hayward et al., 2002), and greater illness severity (Payne, 2004). Suicide stigma is multifaceted and is commonly conceptualized in two broad dimensions: public stigma and personal stigma (Sheehan et al., 2017).

In Tajikistan, suicide stigma is shaped by both religious and legal factors, including the Quran’s prohibition of suicide and laws that frame it as a criminal act. With 97% of the population identifying as Muslim (Karagiannis, 2006), and the Quran explicitly prohibiting suicide (Gearing & Alonzo, 2018), suicidal behavior is met with strong moral and societal condemnation. As a result, suicidal behavior is highly stigmatized, and individuals who engage in such behavior are often condemned and socially ostracized (Savani & Gearing, 2022).

Thus, using an experimental vignette methodology, this study addressed a critical gap in the field by examining suicide stigma, attitudes, and perceptions in Central Asia. In Tajikistan, 350 participants were recruited to complete an electronic survey in English, Tajik or Russian examining their suicide stigma beliefs, mental health knowledge, and etiological perceptions. Results found that participants exhibited moderate levels of stigma across the domains of relational stigma, public stigma and social distance stigma. Findings demonstrate mental health knowledge and exposure to individuals with mental illness or suicidality reduces stigma. Key predictors of stigma included beliefs about the etiology of suicidal behavior. Health awareness programs and anti-stigma initiatives in Central Asia are recommended that incorporate mental health literacy and involvement of religious and community leaders."

1300

Epistemic sovereignty and democratization of knowledge: Indigenous knowledge and its transformative role in social work and research in Germany

Mrs Larissa Nathalie Biehl[2], Dr Monika Pfaller-Rott[2]
[1]Eris, , , [2]Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, , Germany
"In the context of the lack of Western epistemic sovereignty and the urgent need for democratization of indigenous knowledge systems, the challenges and consequences of hegemonic knowledge systems are being intensively discussed within Germany.

Both scientifically and socially, the previously dominant Western forms of knowledge, which function as universal and without alternative, are being criticized because they systematically and deliberately lead to cultural devaluation and the tragic loss of millennia-old traditions. In order to counteract this epistemic injustice, essential reforms are needed to treat indigenous knowledge in Germany, but also in Europe, with recognition and respect, without triggering a “social national procession” through accusations of cultural appropriation. Indigenous knowledge systems differ clearly from Western ones in one respect. Reflexive multidimensional subjectivity as an agent of value transmission and in its function as a method of indigenous research. Subjectivity as a radiant force in harmony with spiritual and natural dimensions, self-determined and conveyed through oral traditions across generations. Within the framework of epistemic freedom, philosophy offers a valuable and meaningful level of reflection, as indigenous knowledge systems are often based on a relational ontology. Through its active and provocative demand to rethink science in a socially beneficial way, it aims to create a macrocosm in which hegemonic and indigenous knowledge systems can merge sustainably only through genuine interest at the macro level.

It is therefore necessary to urgently engage the cognitive level and exercise the separation of powers in order to bring about the long-overdue decolonization of existing scientific practices and to anchor epistemic freedom, and thus social justice, at all levels as a fundamental executive right."

\"Almost like meeting a friend\": Sit Spots as a pathway for nature connection in social work education

Dr Erin Skinner[1]
[1]Flinders University, , Australia

"As universities increasingly recognise their role in preparing ecologically informed social work practitioners, questions remain about how to move students beyond abstract sustainability knowledge towards embodied, relational connection with the more-than-human world. This paper presents an innovative teaching practice embedded within an undergraduate Sustainable Social Work topic in Australia, where students engaged in a regular 'Sit Spot' activity as a pathway to nature connection and professional identity expansion.

Grounded in Heather Boetto's Being-Thinking-Doing model of eco-social work, the Sit Spot acivity was aligned with the Being domain, which emphasises identity as interconnectedness with nature and the influence of personal ontology on practice. Students were instructed to spend ten minutes in a self-selected outdoor place once per fortnight across the 12-week semester, attending to their sensory experience, emotional responses, and emerging insights about their relationship with nature. Students documented their experiences through online discussion forum posts that contributed to their participation grade. These reflections form the qualitative dataset for this study, which will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Within a colonial and urbanised Australian context, many students began the semester expressing distance, discomfort, or instrumental views of the natural environment. While the data are still to be formally analysed, preliminary review of these reflections suggests a gradual movement towards deeper awareness, attunement, and recognition of the self as embedded within ecosystems. Students also demonstrated increasing reflexivity about lifestyle choices, professional responsibilities, and the ethical implications of social work practice amid accelerating environmental degradation.

This presentation explores how participatory learning activities like Sit Spots can function as an experiential pedagogy that supports eco-social learning, challenges dominant Western human-nature separation, and fosters conditions for transformative professional identity development. These findings contribute to conversations on sustainability-focused curriculum innovation and offer practical insights for educators seeking to cultivate ecologically informed practitioners."

Invisible threat of asbestos exposure: Need for social work education and advocacy for preventing health risks in Australian home renovators

Dr Ndungi Mungai[2], Vinathe Sharma-Brymer[1]
[1]Social Work Discipline, School Of Law & Society, University Of The Sunshine Coast, Australia, , Australia, [2]Charles Sturt University, , Australia

Exposure to and use of asbestos products remains a serious health risk for many Australians, despite asbestos ban in 2003. Homes built prior to 1990, often renovated in later years, possibly contain asbestos material. Do-It-Yourself (DIY) home renovators with direct contact to asbestos materials are at risk of developing asbestos diseases such as mesothelioma. Addressing this high-risk health issue requires multi-professional and multidimensional approaches. Using anti-oppressive practice framework, our study aimed to understand the perspectives of people who were exposed to asbestos as DIY home renovators. Our analysis through critical narrative inquiry application revealed several factors associated with asbestos exposure among DIY home renovators in Australia. These include gaps between asbestos-related knowledge and practical use, low awareness levels, attitudes and beliefs regarding exposure, low- income status, and young age of DIY home renovators. Currently, social workers provide psychosocial support to patients diagnosed with mesothelioma in clinical settings. Social workers' role could be furthered to raise and enhance critical awareness of asbestos-related health risks towards the prevention of asbestos exposure and use. This can be achieved through public education, advocacy and campaigns, and to provide interventions in the eco-social practice area. Raising awareness and education on asbestos-risks can be built into services in housing, ageing, family, and healthcare, as well as in services provided to ethnic, refugee and asylum-seeker population groups.

1303

Strengthening Social Work and IFSW through greater inclusion and responsiveness at regional levels - a Symposium coordinated by IFSW Europe.

Dr Ruth Allen[1]
[1]President Ifsw Europe, ,

"This Symposium will start by presenting progress in IFSW Europe's Global-funded project to increase and embed greater inclusion, responsiveness and mutual support amongst associations across our Region. The Symposium will go on to explore common themes and points of collaboration with colleagues from across all Regions.

There are 50 countries in IFSW Europe. They vary in size, demography, geography, political profile, language and GDP. Association memberships range in size from a handful to over 40,000. There are countries with increasing political, social and environmental turbulence, rising authoritarianism, and civil and military conflict. To face these complex global challenges, IFSW regionally and globally needs to respond to members\' duress and difficult working conditions, and break down barriers and enablers to participation and influence in IFSW.

The Europe regional project is based on the understanding that a stronger, more valued IFSW is essential for stronger, more resilient social work practice, policy and activism. To achieve this, we need consistent approaches to supporting and responding to current and prospective members' needs and strengths. We believe it is particularly important to reach out to members who are more marginalised, less active and/or under duress.

The symposium will present work done in Europe and bring together IFSW leaders from all regions to explore common themes around developing IFSW for the future.

We expect this global conversation to transcend the work undertaken in Europe, in particular through exploring IFSW's commitment to decolonised and indigenous perspectives and mutual learning across regions.

The aims of the symposium therefore are to:

Share and test ideas gathered in Europe through presentation and panel discussion with global representatives, and audience participation.
Explore next steps for extending the decolonisation ethos across IFSW
Build relationships and understanding between the IFSW regions on common concerns and opportunities to take forward actions to create a stronger IFSW globally.
"

The Experience of the National Student Assistance Policy at the Federal University of Campina Grande, Brazil

Dr Reginaldo Franca Junior[1]
[1]Federal Universty Of Campina Grande, , Brazil

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the National Student Assistance Policy (PNAES) in Brazil and evaluate its impacts on the Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG) in 2024. It is a quantitative-qualitative and documentary research study supported by the historical-dialectical method. PNAES is a public social policy whose objective is to correct the profound social inequalities in Brazilian federal public higher education, democratize access, and allow for student retention. PNAES established programs for income transfer, housing, food, transportation, pedagogical support, and health services aimed at students in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability. The policy serves 73 Federal Universities and 38 Federal Institutes throughout the country, with a budget of US$281 million and served 400,000 students in 2024. At UFCG (Federal University of Campina Grande), the PNAES (National Student Assistance Program) served 4,137 students, with an investment of US$3.9 million in 2024, enabling student student maintenance support at a university located in a region with profoundly unequal development. At UFCG, the largest student assistance program is the University Restaurant, offering more than 880,000 meals per year, a program that faces significant pressure from the student movement due to high demand and limited budgetary resources. In a country of continental dimensions and extreme inequality, the PNAES requires greater budgetary investment from the federal government and the correction of regional distortions in resource distribution. Although limited by budget constraints, the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES) is responsible for an important process of student access and retention in federal universities, correcting the ethnic-racial, socioeconomic, and gender inequalities that determine the profile of the students served. Despite budgetary difficulties, the PNAES at UFCG promotes an important process of democratizing access and student maintenance support, consolidating its role as a public social policy with a significant impact on public higher education.

The House of Plenty (HOPE) Social Innovation Model (Poster or Short Presentation)

Dr Wanjiku Kaime[1]
[1]Mid Sweden University And House Of Plenty Foundation, , Sweden

"The HOPE Model of Social Innovation is a collaborative community-based approach designed to assess and address the vulnerabilities and needs of marginalised children, youth, their caregivers, and their communities.

The Model seeks to support children and young people in moving from the margins of society by strengthening their access to meaningful participation, protection and opportunities for development. It simultaneously improves the interface between primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to enable and sustain long-term transformation.

The Model integrates (Re)Search and Action within a 7-step process, in which the (Re)Search component plays a central role in the ethical and effective community entry, trust building and contextual analysis. These findings then form the basis for collaboratively developed, implemented, and evaluated actions. Through this dual process, the HOPE Model fosters relational connection, trust-building, and the co-creation of knowledge and action that results in sustainable change for all parties involved.

The Model was developed in Kenya through long-term research, rehabilitation and reintegration with street-connected children from 1996 to 2012. Its iterative, context-specific design allows it to be used across diverse cultural, institutional and socio-economic settings and it has been successfully adapted and applied in Thailand, Uganda, and Sweden."

From Partnership to Practice: Strengthening the Social Service Workforce Across North Pacific Island Nations

Theresa Kreif[1]
[1]University Of Hawaii At Manoa, , United States

Across the geographically vast and culturally diverse North Pacific region, social service systems are at varying stages of development and face persistent challenges shaped by colonial histories, climate vulnerability, limited locally available higher education pathways, and significant outmigration. Sustainable, community-anchored workforce development models are needed to develop/strengthen social service systems and promote equitable futures for Pacific Island communities. This presentation highlights collaborative efforts to reimagine social work education and practice through the Pacific Partnerships & Workforce Development Initiatives (PPWDI). These initiatives are rooted in development of relationships with partners across the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The PPWDI focuses on collaboratively developing and enhancing culturally responsive, accessible pathways to the Bachelor/Master of Social Work degrees; expanding place-based training opportunities; and acknowledging Indigenous knowledge systems and community priorities in workforce preparation. Through Memoranda of Understanding with regional colleges, cohort-based distance education models, collaborative field education structures, and cross-sector partnerships—including health, wellbeing, and education—the PPWDI supports the development of culturally grounded, representative, and retention-focused social service workforces in each nation and jurisdiction.

Using case examples across multiple locations, this presentation demonstrates how Pacific partnerships are shaping approaches to educational priorities, increasing local professional capacity, and defining social work training in ways that align with their cultural and community contexts. Early outcomes include greater access to accredited social work education, strengthened regional field instructor networks, and closer alignment between academic programs and community-identified needs.

Aligned with the SWSD 2026 theme Sustainable Shared Futures, this work offers a model for relationship-centered, culturally anchored workforce development that advances social justice, strengthens social service systems, and supports North Pacific communities in charting their own paths toward well-being, resilience, and self-determined futures.

Alto Loa Municipal Table: A Space for Dialogue and Critical Analysis for Local Development. Experiences and Challenges of Territorial Tables in Municipal and Community Governance

Mr Arturo Bruna Villanueva[1]
[1]Municipalidad De Calama, , Chile

"Since 2003, under Decree 189 (from the National Congress, 2003), the Indigenous Development area was established in the city of Calama, in an Indigenous territory, with the aim of guiding public management to benefit the development of these communities.

This body, led by the Regional Governor of Antofagasta, has fostered spaces for political relationships, investments, and public-community governance at the regional level, benefiting the communities. However, a strong emphasis has been placed on the regional and central government sectors, which has somewhat shifted focus away from the local level.

Responding to the pressing and long-felt need to address the complex and multifaceted problems historically affecting the Alto Loa communities, the Mayor of Calama—acting with urgency and territorial commitment, in direct and strategic collaboration with the Andean Department of the Municipality of Calama—made the decisive and groundbreaking decision to establish an innovative and participatory public-community governance model.

This initiative seeks not only to serve as a coordination mechanism but also to establish a new model of territorial management that promotes active participation, consensual decision-making, and shared responsibility between the municipal administration in office and the inhabitants of the Andean communities.

The strategic objective of this working table is to substantially improve the current conditions of the territory, promoting comprehensive and sustainable development. It is important to highlight that this governance is built on a deep framework of respect and consideration for the local perspectives and worldview of the communities."

Parent-Child Therapy Groups Incorporating Touch Techniques

Riva Erez[1]
[1]Menifa Clinical Center, , Israel

"The sense of touch is the most primal and foundational sense, serving as the primary mediator through which humans experience the surrounding world. In early life, touch is vital for the infant to develop a sense of basic security, experience the self as loved and desired, and perceive the environment as benevolent.

Crucially, early touch shapes self-image and significantly impacts body image, self-worth, the development of self-regulation and control mechanisms, and the capacity to form meaningful emotional and social attachment patterns. Nurturing parental care naturally involves intense physical contact in countless daily routines.

However, complex and adverse life situations can severely disrupt this fundamental bonding process. Factors such as maternal depression, chronic stress, financial hardship, poverty, and exposure to crisis events substantially impair a parent's capacity to allocate time and emotional availability for attuned, quality contact with their child.

Our clinical center provides support to families who have experienced severe and complex life events that have left an enduring mark on both parents and children. These families are often navigating prolonged periods of distress and may find verbal psychotherapy challenging to access or utilize effectively due to practical, psychological, or cultural barriers.

To address these limitations, the center facilitates therapeutic groups throughout the year that utilize diverse physical contact techniques (e.g., Shiatsu, massage, Body Drumming, Reflexology).

These , non-verbal, interventions offer several distinct therapeutic advantages:
Reduced Resistance: Mitigating the suspicion and resistance of parents who arrive with barriers to psychological intervention.
Bond Restoration: Assisting in the re-establishment of the basic attachment pattern between parent and child.
Empowerment and Tool: Providing tools for coping and self-care and fostering the relationship at home.

This workshop will delve deeply into the application of touch techniques within therapeutic groups for parents and children, discussing the profound therapeutic and potential inherent in them as a powerful non-verbal tool."

1311

Healing Circles: Reclaiming African Spiritual Wisdom in Social Work Practice

Ms Keisha Cox[1]
[1]Social Worker, ,

"This workshop invites Black social workers to explore the history, structure, and power of healing circles rooted in ancient African spirituality as a culturally grounded approach to collective healing.

Before colonization and Western psychological frameworks, African societies maintained community wellness through spiritual and communal practices designed to nurture balance, accountability, and harmony. Healing circles were sacred spaces where storytelling, ritual, rhythm, and collective wisdom facilitated emotional release and restored alignment within the individual and the community.

In modern practice, these principles offer transformative tools for social work professionals serving Black communities — helping to reconnect healing work to ancestral knowledge, identity affirmation, and holistic wellness. Participants will: Understand the historical and cultural foundations of African healing traditions and their relevance to social work practice. Examine how ancient principles such as Ubuntu, Ma'at, and Sankofa inform community-centered healing. Explore the structure and purpose of healing circles as a culturally congruent group intervention model. Develop facilitation skills for creating safe, sacred, and restorative spaces for clients and communities. Integrate mindfulness, ritual, and reflection into social work practice through an African-centered lens."

DEVELOPMENT OR SUBORDINATION? CHINA'S EXPANSION IN KENYA AND ITS EFFECTS ON LABOR

Cristiane Libardi[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo, ,

"This article provides a critical analysis of China's growing presence in Kenya, relating it to the complex global challenges that directly impact Social Work practice. Chinese expansion, driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has been reshaping economic, political, and labor dynamics in various African countries. In the Kenyan context, these transformations occur within a setting marked by structural inequality, high informality, technological dependence, and increasing debt—factors that profoundly affect the living conditions of the working class, the central focus of professional intervention.

By examining major Chinese investments in infrastructure, logistics, and energy, it becomes evident that while they generate immediate gains in connectivity and circulation of goods, these processes also reinforce a subordinated position within global value chains, limiting the country's productive and technological autonomy. In dialogue with Ricardo Antunes' conception of the new morphology of labor, we observe a deepening of precarization, occupational fragmentation, and intensification of unprotected labor regimes, which impact populations already vulnerable due to neoliberalism and the region's historical inequalities.

These global dynamics, by directly affecting work conditions, income, social protection, and the reproduction of daily life, become a central object of analysis and action for Social Work. Understanding these processes allows professionals to identify how macroeconomic and geopolitical forces produce manifestations of the social question, expressed in rights violations, labor insecurity, rising poverty, and restrictions on access to public policies.

The study concludes that addressing these challenges requires professional practices and policies grounded in the defense of sovereignty, social justice, and social protection, recognizing that only integrated, critical, and human-rights-centered strategies can transform global changes into real opportunities for emancipatory development."

Influence of Parental Alcoholism on the psychosocial development of children Aged 5 - 13 years in Nambale sub-county, Busia County Kenya

Ms Christine Arbe Halkano[1]
[1]Connect A Child, ,

"This study investigated the influence of parental alcoholism on the psychosocial development of children aged 5-13 years in Nambale Sub-County, Busia County, Kenya. Parental alcoholism poses significant challenges to effective parenting, often leading to neglect, emotional instability, and impaired social and psychological development in children. The research employed a descriptive design to explore the emotional, social, and psychological challenges faced by children of alcoholic parents. Data were collected through structured interviews and questionnaires administered to a sample of children and teachers in the study area. The findings revealed that children of alcoholic parents experienced significant emotional distress, with 42.8 6% exhibiting nervousness or anxiety, 28.57% frequently angry or irritable, and 21.43% often sad or withdrawn. None of the children reported to be generally happy or positive (0%). Socially, these children struggled with building relationships, with 42.86% reporting poor communication skills and 35.71% facing difficulties in making friends. Psychologically, 42.86% of the children had difficulty coping with stress, 35.71% reported low self-esteem, and 21.43% exhibited behavioral issues such as aggression or irritability. The study emphasized the critical need for community-based interventions, including counseling and awareness programs, to mitigate the adverse effects of alcoholism on parenting. The results provided valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and non-governmental organizations in formulating strategies to support children from alcoholic households. By highlighting the multifaceted impact of parental alcoholism, the study aims to enhance understanding and promote actions that foster healthy psychosocial development in affected children."

Measuring the Unseen: Mixed Methods and Bayesian Multilevel Modelling in Survivor-Centered Child Trafficking Research

David O Okech[1]
[1]Center On Human Trafficking Research And Outreach, School Of Social Work, University Of Georgia, ,
"This workshop presents methodological and ethical innovations in social work research on human trafficking, grounded in a mixed methods study of child trafficking in Sierra Leone. We use this case to show how quantitative and qualitative approaches can be integrated to generate evidence for practice, policy and teaching with vulnerable populations.

First, we unpack a sequential mixed methods design that combines a household survey with in depth interviews and focus group discussions involving survivors, caregivers, community leaders and state actors. Participants will work with simplified data extracts to practice linking prevalence estimates, vulnerability profiles and narrative accounts in ways that inform social work interventions and classroom activities.

Second, we highlight statistical innovations for hard-to-reach and small sample populations. We introduce multilevel and Bayesian models that allow researchers to borrow strength across communities, handle missing and sparse data, and produce uncertainty estimates that are honest about what the data can and cannot tell us. We discuss how these models can deepen understanding of how individual, household and community factors interact in trafficking situations, even when sample sizes are limited.

Third, we focus on survivor-centered and trauma informed research practices. We offer concrete examples of building local research teams, sharing decision making power over research tools, protecting participants while asking about violence and exploitation, and feeding findings back to communities in accessible formats. We also discuss simple ways to work as equal partners with local researchers and organizations when designing studies, interpreting findings and writing up results.

Through short presentations, small group exercises and reflective dialogue, participants will leave with practical templates, discussion prompts and ethical checklists to support innovative, locally grounded mixed methods research, teaching and pedagogy on human trafficking and other complex social problems worldwide today."

Reclaiming Dignity in Welfare Systems: Trauma, Power, and Relational Practice Among Temporary Cash Assistance Workers and Consumers

Laurens Van Sluytman[1]
[1]Morgan State University, , United States

"Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) programs are often framed as pathways to economic self-sufficiency; however, they frequently reproduce colonial continuities rooted in surveillance, moral regulation, and control of marginalized populations. This study examines the shared and divergent experiences of TCA recipients and front line workers to reimagine social work practice through a trauma-informed, decolonial, and relational framework.

Using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, data were drawn from 20 semi-structured interviews and five focus groups with TCA recipients (N = 39) and focus groups and surveys with TCA service workers (N = 12) in Baltimore City. Participants were predominantly Black. Recipients were largely young adult women navigating housing instability, childcare precarity, and mental health stressors, while workers represented a seasoned, primarily Black female workforce with extensive professional—and often personal—experience in public assistance systems. AI-assisted qualitative coding, paired with human verification, was used to identify convergent and divergent themes across groups.

Findings reveal parallel experiences of trauma among both recipients and workers. Recipients described institutional humiliation, stigma, chronic fear of benefit loss, and intergenerational survival strategies. Workers reported secondary trauma, moral distress, and burnout, often arising from rigid compliance mandates that conflicted with social work values. Structural barriers—childcare instability, untreated mental health needs, and fragmented systems—were identified by both groups as primary drivers of disengagement.

Grounded in Black Feminist Theory, Ecosystems Theory, and Indigenous philosophies of relationality (e.g., Ubuntu and Sankofa), this study advances dual-focus trauma-informed interventions and policy recommendations emphasizing workforce strengthening, flexible compliance frameworks, and relational case management models, contributing to global efforts to decolonize social services and reclaim dignity in social work practice."

“Foster care is no longer the accepted mode of permanency”: Centering Family Preservation and Reunification for Black Families in Ontario’s Child Welfare System

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[1]Toronto Metropolitan University, , Canada

Black families are disproportionately and disparately represented across the child welfare continuum in Ontario. Black children are more likely to be substantiated for child maltreatment concerns, be removed from their family homes, and stay in out-of-home care (OOHC) longer than children of other racial backgrounds. This qualitative study explores child welfare staff’s (CWS) experiences and decision-making practices when working with Black families. Using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with 79 participants employed by or adjacent to the Ontario child welfare system. Participants described that Black children were at risk of entering care when the harm (or risk of harm) within their family home outweighed the natural harm and trauma of being placed in OOHC. Factors that increased the likelihood of apprehension was workers’ inability to consult with organizational support or find eligible kin/kith, as well as concerns of: family isolation, parent/caregiver’s mental health or substance use, extreme abuse, or parent-child conflict. CWS also emphasized the importance of, and increased focus, on preserving Black families using safety and permanency planning, exploring existing networks (e.g., child’s paternal family), and utilizing ongoing involvement. CWS stressed how family reunification should be at the forefront of decision-making and practice immediately once Black children are placed in OOHC given that they often do not receive adequate support, experience racism, and fare worse; CWS described what supported and hindered family reunification. To ensure that family preservation and reunification is central to child welfare practice with Black families, recommendations for policy and practice include: slowing down practice; considering fathers when there are concerns of family separation; reviewing kin assessments and policies; and safeguarding Black children’s connections with their families, communities, and culture.

Parenting Under Threat: Investigating Black Families Experiences with Ontario\'s Child Protection System

Travonne Edwards[1]
[1]Toronto Metropolitan University, , Canada

"Background: Black families regularly experience unnecessary referrals to child welfare agencies. Many practitioners operate under the mistaken belief that maltreatment reports and investigations are benign experiences for families involved and are made in good faith. However, few studies have challenged this widespread but potentially erroneous belief. Although some efforts have been made to understand the complexities of racial disparities for Black families in Ontario, notable gaps remain with respect to the harms caused by investigations. This research project investigates the following questions: (1) what are the impacts of referrals and investigations on Black families?; (2) how do these encounters shape Black families' perceptions of child welfare and allied institutions?; and (3) how does child welfare support Black families?

Methods: The data of this study was collected as part of the Parenting Under Threat Project (PUT). PUT is a research project done in partnership with a community based agency One Vision One Voice (OVOV). Utilizing interpretive phenomenology, the objective of the PUT study is to investigate how Black families experience child welfare contact and interventions to help OVOV better support Black families. This study analyzes 31 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Black caregivers who encountered the child welfare system in the Greater Toronto Area and one focus group comprised of 9 Black mothers.

Findings: Four major themes were identified: 1) Weaponizing child welfare referrals; 2) The impacts of family court; 3) The harms of investigations on parenting and; 4) Historical and ongoing perceptions of the child welfare system. Many Black families understood the need for a child welfare system but were skeptical of their approaches to supporting Black families given the stigma that shapes how they are viewed. Recommendations for practice, policy, and research are discussed."

1323

Nestled among cultures: Challenges of parenting among newcomer families in Canada

David Flomo[1]
[1]Macewan University, , Canada

"Sub theme No.6: Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges. As Canada adjusts its immigration and integration priorities, the realities of immigrant parenting have become central to both settlement and child-welfare practice. Immigrant families often navigate competing expectations between cultural identity and Canadian child-rearing norms. While parents often adhere to the values and practices of their own cultural backgrounds, their children are increasingly influenced by Canadian values and parenting approaches. Various socio-economic factors like the education of parents, community support, and command over English affect parenting by the newcomer families. Newcomer families in Canada experience a subtle clash between Euro-American and various ethnic parenting styles. The friction with the different parenting styles leads to frustration among the parents and disappointment among the children.

In addition to the stress of having to parent in a new culture when immigrant parents themselves are grieving the loss of their home, culture, and immediate family support. When a misunderstanding arises, the result can be family stress or child welfare involvement. This presentation explores the unique challenges and adaptive parenting patterns among newcomer families in Canada. The presentation is informed by the lived experiences of four newcomer fathers as well as the professional experiences of being social workers. This session connects child welfare, settlement, and policy perspectives to explore how systems can better support immigrant parents, reduce family conflict, and strengthen belonging."

\"Air quality readings, what air quality readings\": Community Narratives on Air Quality Monitoring in a Township South of Johannesburg, South Africa

Assoc Prof Busisiwe Nkala-Dlamini[1]
[1]University Of The Witwatersrand, , South Africa
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In rapidly urbanizing areas, air pollution continues to be one of the most pressing environmental and public health concern. <span id=""output-sentence-box~0"" class=""output-sentence""><span class=""MuiBox-root css-7zrlf9""><span id=""output-sentence~0""><span data-testid=""output-sentence-0""><span id=""output-phrase~0~9"" class=""css-1ko3g0e""><span class=""css-h5d7i9"">Community experiences and expertise are still under represented in research, practice and policy frameworks, despite increased awareness of its negative consequences. Using good participatory practice framework, environmental justice theories, and the sacrifice zone concept as a multifaceted approach to analyzing and addressing air pollution in the affected community, this study investigates community perceptions, lived experiences and collaborative potential in air pollution mitigation. Twenty-one stakeholders, including local residents, educators, NGO employees, informal business owners, and government officials took part in the study using a qualitative approach that utilized purposive sampling. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data, that was analyzed using thematic analysis to extract important insights regarding people\'s perceptions of air quality, pollution sources, health effects, and current community-level solutions. Findings show that residents of the study area are both aware of and are affected by air pollution, but they are rarely recognized as stakeholders in environmental governance. Despite the lack of institutional support, communities have created informal systems of reporting, mobilization, and advocacy that reflect a deep commitment to protecting their environment. In the community where awareness of air inequality exists, the task is to amplify existing civic energy, provide structural support, and embed participatory frameworks, such as the good participatory practice model, in everyday governance. A just, sustainable air quality strategy for Soweto will be one that is not only implemented for the people, but with them, by them, and through them.

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Female Leadership, Solidarity Kitchens, and Tackling Hunger in Favelas: Contributions to Sustainable Development

Dr Nilza Rogéria De Andrade Nunes[1]
[1]Pontificia Universidade Católica Do Rio De Janeiro - Puc-rio, , Brazil

This paper analyzes the role of female leadership in favelas and peripheral communities in addressing hunger and food and nutritional insecurity, with a focus on solidarity kitchens, from an intersectional perspective that connects gender, race, territory, and public policies. Hunger is understood as a structural expression of social issues and as an obstacle to building sustainable and inclusive communities, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 2, 5, and 11.

The study recognizes the historical protagonism of Black women in creating community responses to the contradictions of capitalist development, marked by socio-spatial inequalities, structural racism, and gender inequality. Solidarity and community kitchens are understood as social technologies that combine food security, social sustainability, and community innovation, strengthening fairer local food systems.

The research is conducted in the state of Rio de Janeiro, focusing on the capital and the Baixada Fluminense, areas marked by urban exclusion and food insecurity. The empirical field includes 50 solidarity and community kitchens linked to the State Forum of Solidarity and Community Kitchens. The methodology combines initiative mapping, interviews, discussion circles, and practice systematization, valuing situated knowledge and social participation.

Anchored in Black feminism, decolonial studies, and critical social work scholarship, the project examines how these experiences contribute to sustainable food systems and empower women in popular territories. By highlighting the role of social work in mediating among the state, civil society, and public policies, the study contributes to debates on social policy transformation, sustainable development, and social justice.

Social Work at the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of São Paulo: The Financialization of Brazilian Public Policy and Its Impacts on Social Protection in the City of São Paulo

Mrs Yone Da Cruz Martins De Campos[1]
[1]Pontifícia Universidade Católica De São Paulo - Puc/sp, , Brazil

This article presents the work of social workers from the Psychosocial Technical Advisory Unit (NAT) of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of São Paulo (MPSP) in monitoring and analyzing the implementation of public policies. Their activities include evaluating plans, programs, and projects developed by public administration bodies, civil society organizations, and Rights Councils in strategic areas such as Childhood and Youth, Human Rights, Education, Housing, Urban Development, the Environment, and Climate Emergencies. The work also involves institutional visits to services assisting children and adolescents placed in Institutional Shelter Services (SAICAs), Group Homes, and Family Foster Care Services within the field of Childhood and Youth. In the area of Human Rights, monitoring extends to Long-Term Care Institutions for the Elderly (ILPIs) and Reception Centers serving homeless individuals and families, including older persons, people with disabilities, LGBTQIAPN+ individuals, and women experiencing violence.

Based on this professional experience, the article aims to discuss the financialization of Brazilian public policy and its impacts on social protection in the city of São Paulo. The analysis is grounded in studies on the public fund in Brazil, particularly regarding the regressive structure of the tax system and its consequences for financing social security. Special attention is given to the Public Policy of Social Assistance in São Paulo, which is responsible for managing and delivering services to socially vulnerable populations under the oversight of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Drawing on Salvador (2010), the article understands the public fund as central to the articulation of social policies and to the reproduction of capital. Consequently, fiscal adjustment measures disproportionately affect social spending, especially the social security budget, undermining the quality and scope of services provided to vulnerable populations.

Social Work Practice and Global Challenges - Title: Bridging the Trust Gap in a Globalized World: Integrating Cultural Heritage with the Signs of Safety Framework in Statutory Child Protection

Ms Ophelia Mac-Kwashie[1]
[1]BelongAlways, SOLLENTUNA, Sweden

Abstract: In our increasingly globalized world, social work faces a critical challenge: a widening trust gap between statutory authorities and marginalized communities. This presentation explores how the Signs of Safety (SofS) framework serves as a vital tool for bridging this divide, specifically regarding the implementation of Sweden’s new, proactive Social Services Act within immigrant populations.

Presenters Ophelia Mac-Kwashie and Shilan Khadiri bring a unique dual perspective to the global stage. Ophelia, born in Ghana, and Shilan, a Kurd from Iran, have built a collective 40-year career within the Swedish welfare system. They embody the \"bridge-builder\" role; their cultural heritage provides a profound understanding of the nuances required to engage families with diverse ethnic experiences, while their extensive background in statutory child protection ensures rigorous, rights-based practice. Through their organization BelongAlways, they demonstrate how to navigate complex environments where systemic mistrust often hinders child safety. The presentation outlines concrete methods for:

Auhentic Engagement:Building partnerships with families from non-Nordic backgrounds by acknowledging cultural norms while maintaining an uncompromising focus on the child’s safety.

Risk Mitigation:Utilizing SofS to address high-stakes issues, including youth radicalization into criminal gangs and honor-based violence.

Systemic Change:Sharing lessons from training over 170 Swedish municipalities to shift from a reactive \"investigation\" mindset to a proactive, inclusive \"safety planning\" model.

The presentation concludes with a call to action for global social work:to honor the lived experiences of families without compromising the protection of the child. By combining the statutory rigor of the Global North with the relational wisdom of the Global South, we can create social services that truly \"belong\" to everyone.

Glocal Social Work: Collaborating to Tackle Interconnected Global Challenges

Dr Phyllis Ngai[1]
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Five urgent interconnected contemporary global challenges (sustainable development, climate change, population dislocation and migration, global health, and social justice) call for social workers around the world to step up and help out at the intersection where the local is impacted by the global and vice versa. An unprecedented wave of human displacement reaching more than 123 million, including people who fled their countries of origin because of persecution, armed conflict, or grave human-rights violations, shows no sign of stopping. Meanwhile, the world continues to confront accelerating sustainable-development challenges associated with poverty, discrimination, gender and other inequities, resource scarcity, and unsustainable practices. The COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging pandemic era underscore the urgency of addressing global health challenges, including mitigating inequitable access to treatment opportunities and preventive health care. The rapidly unfolding and generationally disproportionate challenges of climate change further distress the disadvantaged. These urgent challenges confronting humanity spill over onto and into one another in complex and at times unrecognized ways while sharing the urgent call for collective social justice. Social-justice workers increasingly are engaged with transnational challenges that condition human development and well-being in local contexts. The issues affecting the populations that social workers serve are often the consequences of policies and practices taking place in interconnected spheres of action that transcend national boundaries. This presentation will discuss how collaborative and transnational glocal social work can contribute to shifting the world onto a sustainable and resilient path by applying approaches that recognize the close interconnections among five Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships, along with integrated solutions and actions that encompass the social, economic, and political alongside the environmental and the clinical. The role of transnational higher education in equipping the next generation of social workers to address these reinforcing global challenges will be highlighted.

PHDBASED: "Agency in Displacement; Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Agency in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Western Uganda"

Mr Kwikiriza Wilson[1]
[1]MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON UNIVERSITY, Fort Portal City, Uganda

"This study investigates unaccompanied refugee minors (UAMs) agency in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Western Uganda, where thousands of children live without parental care due to conflict and forced displacement from the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite being among the most vulnerable groups, UAMs are often framed solely as dependents in need of protection, obscuring their capacity for resilience and decision-making. This project seeks to clarify how UAMs perceive, negotiate, and express agency in daily life, thereby reframing them not as passive recipients of aid but as active social actors with unique strategies for survival and adaptation. Grounded in Milgram's Agency Theory (MAT) and Child Agency Theory (CAT), guided by an interpretivist paradigm and employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the study will use multiple qualitative methods, including in-depth and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), non-participant observation (NPO), and participatory techniques such as Draw-and-Tell (DaT). By employing these methods, this research will generate nuanced, child-centered data on how agency is expressed across social, cultural, and institutional domains. This methodological rigor ensures both depth and validity in capturing the complexity of UAMs' lived realities.

This study will further expand practice knowledge on working with refugee children by offering insights into culturally mediated forms of agency, coping, and resilience. The evidence generated will guide social workers, humanitarian actors, and NGOs in designing contextually relevant interventions that recognize children not only as vulnerable recipients but also as partners in decision-making processes. In the long term, the research promises to influence both practice and policy by embedding child agency into protection systems, thereby advancing the profession's commitment to social justice, empowerment, and human rights."

Leveraging ICT for Citizen-Centric Social Work: The Case of the Citizen Support Unit, Mauritius

Mr Louis Girty Elenore[1]
[1]Citizen Support Unit. Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius, Port Louis, Mauritius

"The Citizen Support Unit (CSU) of Mauritius represents a pioneering model of digital and community-integrated social work, combining innovative ICT solutions with proactive citizen engagement and frontline social work practice. Established under the Prime Minister's Office, the CSU operates the Citizen Support Portal (CSP), a comprehensive digital platform enabling citizens to submit queries, report concerns, and communicate with government ministries, local authorities, and parastatal organizations 24/7 from anywhere in the world. Beyond the use of the CSP and real-time dashboards, Citizen Support Officers (CSOs) embody the role of social workers, providing support, advocacy, education, and guidance while acting as brokers, resource connectors, mediators, case managers and community workers. This seamless integration of human-centred practice and technology ensures that citizen needs are addressed holistically and efficiently.

leleonore@govmu.org The CSU also incorporates specialized sections, including Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Operations, Communication, and Technical/I.T, which generate detailed reports and analytical insights. These reports support policy review, evidence-based decision-making, and the identification of systemic gaps, thereby enhancing the overall responsiveness, transparency, and effectiveness of social services. Since 2017, the CSU has processed over 350,000 citizen queries for a population of 1.4M, translating these interactions into actionable intelligence that informs preventive interventions and community engagement strategies.

This paper presents the CSU experience, illustrating how the integration of ICT, social work practice, and data-driven reporting creates a collaborative governance model that bridges citizens, social workers, and decision-makers. It exemplifies a new paradigm in social work and social development, where technology amplifies human-centred care, enables targeted interventions, and fosters collective responsibility in line with the Harambee philosophy. Lessons from the CSU offer valuable insights for other small and medium-sized countries seeking to combine digital platforms, social work, and predictive governance to strengthen social systems, empower communities, and promote sustainable shared futures."

Decolonizing Global Social Work Education through Interprofessional Collaboration: A Social Work and Health Outreach Model in Ghana

Dr Renie Rondon-Jackson[1]
[1]California State University Monterey Bay, Monterey, United States

Social work is increasingly called upon to respond to global challenges, including health inequities, colonial legacies, migration, and persistent barriers to care in rural communities (Garrett, 2024; Jones et al., 2025). This presentation highlights a summer 2025 medical outreach initiative in Ghana as a model of interprofessional, field-based, and cross-cultural collaboration.

The initiative brought together U.S.-based social work and allied health professionals, including students, with Ghanaian volunteers, healthcare providers, and community leaders. In partnership, the team co-created community-centered services that elevated Indigenous knowledge systems—locally grounded ways of knowing and caring embedded in Ghanaian cultural traditions, health practices, and community leadership. This approach ensured that services reflected priorities identified by the community itself rather than external agendas.

Guided by the Interprofessional Education (IPE) framework (Board on Global Health et al., 2015; World Health Organization, 2010), the outreach emphasized shared learning, ethical engagement, and culturally responsive care. The program culminated in Ajumako-Enthumbil in Ghana's Central Region, where the final screening reached more than 940 patients, the largest in recent years. Eight other screenings were conducted across multiple regions, offering free medications, vital health assessments, and direct services.

This effort also functioned as a transformative field education experience grounded in decolonization principles. Students of African descent engaged in diasporic reconnection and ancestral exploration. In contrast, students from other backgrounds developed cultural humility and critically examined positionality, privilege, and roles within global systems of aid. Across all backgrounds, participants were challenged to decenter Western frameworks, uplift local knowledge systems, and engage in ethical, sustainable, and community-led practice.

By situating this outreach within pedagogical innovation and curriculum development, this example offers practical insights for educators, mentors, and policymakers seeking to reimagine social work and allied health practicum education as a tool for ethical, decolonized, and interprofessionally grounded global practice.

Social Work Fieldwork Education Pedagogy: A Comparative Study between South Africa and the United Kingdom

Dr Stephen Moyo[2], Dr Ntandoyenkosi Maphosa[1]
[1]University Of Sussex, , United Kingdom, [2]University Of Greater Manchester, , United Kingdom
"Fieldwork education remains the cornerstone of social work training, serving as the critical bridge between theory and practice. Despite its universal importance, approaches to fieldwork pedagogy vary across contexts, influenced by historical, socio-political, and institutional factors. This presentation explores and compares the pedagogical approaches to social work fieldwork education in South Africa and the United Kingdom, with the aim of deepening understanding of how different systems conceptualise, structure, and deliver practice learning for social work students.

The study adopts a qualitative synthesis of existing literature alongside reflective analysis of the researchers' professional experience in both contexts. Drawing on academic publications, policy documents, and field education frameworks, the analysis examines key dimensions of fieldwork pedagogy, including supervision models, student learning outcomes, assessment approaches, and the integration of role plays and simulation exercises. The researchers' experiential insights complement the literature by offering a grounded understanding of contextual realities and institutional practices that shape field education in the two countries.

Findings suggest that while both South Africa and the UK emphasise competency-based practice learning and ethical engagement, significant differences emerge in areas such as the role of communities in student learning, resource constraints, and the degree of collaboration between universities and placement agencies. The comparative perspective highlights opportunities for cross-contextual learning, innovation, and reform in social work education globally.

The presentation concludes by proposing strategies for strengthening fieldwork pedagogy through enhanced supervision training, reflexivity, and partnerships that promote culturally responsive and socially just practice learning."

1349

A Community-Informed Simulation Model for Critical Social Work Education

Dr Alicia Boatswain-kyte[1]
[1]Mcgill Univeristy, Montreal, Canada

Simulation-based learning is widely used in social work education, often relying on standardized cases and trained actors to develop practice competencies. While effective for skill acquisition, these approaches can oversimplify complex realities and marginalize lived experience. This study presents a community-informed simulation model that integrates authentic narratives into the learning process. Implemented in an undergraduate social work course on assessment and critical social work paradigms, the model engaged a community member—"Doc," a man recently released from prison after serving a life sentence—to portray his own experience. Students conducted intake assessments in 15-minute segments, alternating roles as social workers, with structured debriefs between sessions. Doc later joined the classroom to provide feedback. Analysis of student evaluations and an in-depth interview with Doc identified themes of authenticity, relational learning, and ethical considerations. Findings indicate that this approach deepens engagement with critical social work principles, enhances students' ability to navigate complexity, and fosters mutual learning between students and community members. The discussion addresses logistical and ethical dimensions, including preparation, emotional safety, and compensation. This work advances simulation design by moving beyond competency-driven models toward community-based, relational practices that promote critical reflection and social justice in professional education.

Intercultural learning in higher education: experiences of social work students in the Peruvian Amazon

Mr Manuel Tarin Cayuela[1]
[1]Universidad Católica De Valencia, Valencia, Spain

"Students enrolled in the dual degree programme in Social Work and Social Education in the province of Valencia (Spain) have been participating in an international curricular internship programme since 2017. This training takes place in the Peruvian Amazon and consists of a cultural immersion experience in an indigenous community.

This study analyses, using qualitative techniques, twenty logbooks written by students over a four-year period. After studying and coding them, themes, patterns and categories have been identified based on Teun van Dijk\'s discourse model. Subsequently, the contents have been grouped and compared, delving into the underlying meanings of the data derived from the students\' narratives.

The findings and conclusions obtained are supported by the students\' significant experiences. A generalised transformative effect is observed in the students\' perceptions of cultural diversity, ecology, social participation and community development. As students immerse themselves in the indigenous community, they recognise new codes of communication and discover the value of community collaboration. This new methodological perspective suggests a very significant impact on the training process of future professionals in the educational and social fields, improving their commitment to building more inclusive, equitable and ecological societies.

Highlighting a new dimension of the possibilities offered by the internationalisation of higher education, turning immersive curricular practices into a formative element with an impact on the training of future professionals in education and social work, but also on personal, social and cultural transformation"

Post-COVID-19 Social Work Education in South Africa: Bridging Tradition and Innovation

Prof Pius Tanga[1]
[1]University Of Fort Hare, ALICE, South Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed a profound shift in the landscape of higher education globally, compelling social work education in South Africa to confront longstanding structural challenges while embracing innovative pedagogical responses. This paper explores the dynamic interplay between traditional foundations of social work education—grounded in human rights, social justice, and community engagement—and the emergent need for innovation driven by digital transformation, remote learning, and evolving student needs. Drawing on recent literature, policy developments, and case examples from South African institutions, the study critically examines how the pandemic has reshaped teaching methodologies, fieldwork practices, and professional identity formation. It further interrogates the implications of unequal access to digital infrastructure.

Mental Health as an Academic Retention Policy at IFBA: Challenges and Strategies for Reducing Dropout and Repetition

Miss Talita Prada[1]
[1]IFBA, Porto Seguro, Brazil

"The aim is to identify how mental health can be integrated as a policy for academic retention with a view to reducing dropout and repetition within the Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology of Bahia (IFBA) that offer both secondary and higher education. The study brings together data from student support services provided by the authors at IFBA—who work in technical support within the academic affairs office—and sociodemographic data from students for the year 2025.

The academic system recorded the social profile of 90% of the students, of whom 57% reported having experienced anxiety crises. It has become routine to assist students who arrive with crying spells; anguish, discouragement, inadequate sleep and eating habits; tachycardia and breathing difficulties arising from family situations, academic and social pressures—factors that lead to low academic performance and dropout or withdrawal from academic activities. Institutional and family follow-up is required so students may receive treatment through the public or private healthcare system.

Given its importance for student retention, mental health has been included as a program in the National Policy for Student Assistance, with the aim of fostering a culture of care within the academic environment and improving relationships among students, faculty, and administrative staff. In contemporary contexts, working on interventions for retention necessarily involves considering mental health initiatives, since socio-emotional factors contribute to higher rates of dropout and repetition.

In this sense, mental health is understood to be an essential dimension of quality of life and, in the educational context, its promotion is a determining factor for student development. It influences social relationships, academic performance, and contributes to building more humane, welcoming, and inclusive educational spaces—fundamental aspects for students' development and success, as well as for the consolidation of high-quality public education."

Appreciating Sámi (Northern Norway) and Masai (Northern Tanzania) youth experiences of human flourishing: Implications for social work across borders

Siss-Mari Solli[1]
[1]UiT, Alta, Norway

This presentation recognizes the value of indigenous, traditional knowledge's as legitimate and essential forms of experience and expertise, and how these are relevant in promoting more socially relevant and culturally competent social workers. The paper reflects on-going work with two communities; the Sámi people in Northern Norway and the Masai in Northern Tanzania. Arguably they have much in common such as eco-anxieties, challenges to their identities, a sense of powerlessness, marginalization, resilience, and a dedication to communal life. The work is being undertaken by an international team comprising those with Sámi and Masai roots, coupled with perspectives from social workers from both nations.With the full consent of groups of Sámi and Masai youth, social workers from both nations have facilitated conversations with them, to reveal and appreciate youth responses to the question: How do Sámi and Masai youth talk about living a life where they can thrive and flourish? This question is rooted in the field of applied positive psychology. It provides opportunities for youth to say what they wish to have more of in their lives, not less of. What we focus on grows. Here the focus is on knowing and amplifying experiences of thriving and flourishing. Their personal stories raise issues about power, epistemic in/justices and the ethics of knowing. The experiences of some Sámi and Masai youth are that they can be subject to being silenced, feeling ignored or even rendered powerless. The challenge is how to change these narratives. Youth’s stories have been shared amongst them in a process of indigenous youth validation. The outcomes were then presented to a group of social workers in Norway and Tanzania who addressed the catalytic and reflective question namely: What can I learn from these youth stories that may enable me, as a social worker, to practice well

Employment Opportunities for Social Workers in Emerging Arenas in India

Laxmikant Chopkar[1]
[1]Kumbhalkar Evening College of Social Work, Nagpur, Nagpur, India

Social work in India has evolved from charity-based volunteerism into a structured professional discipline responding to the country's rapidly changing socio-economic context. Accelerated urbanization, technological integration, growing mental health concerns, and flagship government initiatives such as Digital India, Swachh Bharat Mission, and the National Health Mission have significantly expanded the scope of social work practice. As of 2025, social workers are increasingly engaged in multidisciplinary and technology-driven environments, creating diverse and emerging employment opportunities.

New career avenues have emerged in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), digital and tele-mental health services, sustainable development, public policy, disaster risk reduction, and social entrepreneurship. Traditional sectors such as healthcare, psychiatric and medical social work, child and women welfare, community development, rural livelihoods, and education continue to generate substantial demand for trained professionals. In addition, international organizations like UNICEF, UNDP, and WHO, along with government bodies such as NITI Aayog, state welfare departments, and urban local bodies, offer specialized roles in planning, research, advocacy, monitoring, and program implementation. The growing emphasis on data-driven governance and evidence-based practice has further strengthened opportunities in evaluation and policy analysis.

Contemporary social workers perform varied roles including counseling, case management, crisis intervention, community mobilization, rehabilitation, and advocacy. This paper, based on secondary data, examines emerging employment opportunities for social workers in India and highlights the profession's expanding relevance. It concludes that social work offers meaningful careers that contribute to social justice, community resilience, and inclusive national development.

Who are the first-generation Black students in higher education in Brazil?

Prof. Maria Lucia Teixeira Garcia[1]
[1]Universidade Federal Do Espírito Santo, Vitória, Brazil

"The group of first-generation students reflects the new student profile in higher education in Brazil – Black, mixed-race, and Indigenous students have become the majority in higher education (52%) following affirmative action policies in higher education (IBGE, 2024).

Survey involving 69 Brazilian federal universities conducted between 2024-2025. A questionnaire with 43 questions covering access to and retention in higher education was applied. Of the 1268 questionnaires answered from 58 of the 69 universities (84%), 661 (58%) identified themselves as Black women of the first generation in their families to access higher education. Ages ranged from 18 to 65 years. Students come from families with low-income (less than 1 minimum wage and a maximum of 2 minimum wages per month) - 82%.

Among barriers to study, the respondents highlighted:

- financial barrier alone or combined with other reasons.

- mental health problems

-pedagogical and learning difficulties

- racism, prejudice and misogyny associated with mental health problems.

- not housing support for students that moved far from the family house.

Students who accessed student financial support referred meals in Universities' restaurant and small student aid, that was not enough to all the demands to study.

As part of the Student Union and the Black movement struggle, there are a gap between access to and remaining in it studying, which makes the completion of undergraduate studies more difficult and requires public investment, institutional strategies, the overcoming of meritocracy, among other issues. There is still much to fight for and advance in guaranteeing this social right."

Research Topic Mining and Evolutionary Analysis of Artificial Intelligence in Social Work Based on the BERTopic Model

Jiangang ZHU[3], Wei Lu[2], Jing YANG[4], Miss Jie Song[1]
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AIM. As the AI wave reshapes social services, social work stands at a crossroads of empowerment and ethical challenge. This study aims to systematically trace the research trajectory within the intersection of artificial intelligence and social work, clarifying key themes and developmental threads to provide reference for future collaborative pathways between social work and artificial intelligence in the digital age.

METHOD. Through a systematic review of 248 articles from the Web of Science Core Collection spanning 2005–2025, this study employed the BERTopic modelling framework within a Python environment to identify and analyse research themes and trends within this field.

RESULT. The analysis identified fourteen key research themes, which consolidate into four core domains: technological ethics, service populations, intelligent decision support, and macro-level governance. Representative themes include intelligent assessment and feedback for persons with disabilities, digital communities and global social networks, and generative AI ethics in social work. The evolution of these themes divides into three phases: an early phase (2005-2013) focusing on foundational tools and specific care; a middle phase (2014-2023) emphasizing AI's auxiliary role in education and service delivery; and a recent phase (2024-2025) marked by thematic diversification and deeper practice integration.

CONCLUSION. Evolutionary analysis reveals a progressive shift in research focus from specific tools and service contexts towards systematic educational empowerment, health care model development, and systemic analysis of family welfare systems. Presently, AI has become pivotal in social work education, clinical prediction, case management, and ethical governance, while simultaneously exposing numerous challenges, including skill development, data bias, and ethical implementation. Future research should concentrate on establishing operational ethical frameworks, enhancing the effectiveness evaluation of AI tools, and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve the responsible integration and sustainable development of artificial intelligence within social work practice.

Obstetric violence, low education, and social vulnerability: the role of Social Work in obstetric care

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Introduction: Obstetric violence remains a violation of human and reproductive rights, marked by dehumanized practices and interventions without consent that reveal structural inequalities of gender, class, and race in healthcare.

Objective: To analyze the incidence of obstetric violence among women with low education levels in a philanthropic maternity hospital and discuss the role of Social Work in the assistance, prevention, and confrontation of these violations.

Method: Qualitative research, basic in nature and descriptive in character, based on the critical-dialectic method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 postpartum women, followed by full transcription and content analysis. Analysis categories included socioeconomic profile, birth experiences, and perceptions of obstetric violence. The research was approved by an Ethics Committee and developed according to current regulations.

Results: The predominant profile identified was women between 18 and 29 years old, self-declared Black or Pardo (mixed-race), with incomplete high school or only elementary education, income up to two minimum wages, and a history of multiple pregnancies. This scenario confirms the relationship between low education and greater vulnerability to abusive and uninformed institutional practices. Situations associated with obstetric violence were reported, such as a lack of communication about procedures, interventions without prior clarification, negligence, and verbal harassment. The need for continuous guidance on rights and the strengthening of support networks was highlighted.

Conclusion: Low education constitutes a relevant element in women's exposure to obstetric violence, primarily due to limitations in access to information and the exercise of autonomy. Social Work demonstrates a central role by acting in the guarantee of rights, mediation with health teams, welcoming pregnant women, and promoting humanized care. The results point to the urgency of intersectoral and educational strategies that consolidate practices aligned with SUS (Unified Health System) public policies and expand the capacity for prevention and confrontation of the reported violations.

Enhancing School's Capacity to Address Community Violence

Dr Alexia Angton[1]
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"Community violence profoundly shapes the educational experiences, safety perceptions, and well-being of students, families, and educators in high-poverty, high-crime communities (Lynch, 2003; Voisin et al., 2016). Schools in these contexts are often expected to respond to the consequences of violence without adequate resources. The community school model, where schools partner with community agencies and allocate resources toward an integrated approach using academic, health, social service, youth development, and community engagement, offers a promising framework for addressing community violence through prevention, intervention, and healing rather than punishment (Oakes, Maier, & Daniel, 2017; Woods-Jaeger et al., 2019).

This study examined the capacity of the community school model to address community violence through coordinated, relational, and equity-centered interventions. Data was collected through focus groups and semi-structured interviews with school personnel—including teachers, administrators, and support staff (n= 11)—and parents of students (n=4) attending a middle school in a high-poverty, high-crime city in the southern United States. Thematic analysis explored how community violence was experienced across the middle school community, the resulting safety concerns and unmet needs, and the effectiveness of the community school model.

Findings indicate that community violence affects student behavior, family engagement, and staff capacity. Participants emphasized school-based social work practices—including trauma-informed care, crisis response, family advocacy, and coordination of services—as central to the community school model’s capacity to mitigate the harms of violence. These findings suggest that community schools hold promise as equity-centered, non-punitive responses to community violence but cannot operate as standalone solutions. Implications underscore the importance of sustained investment, cross-sector collaboration, and policies that position schools as sites of care, collective safety, and community wellbeing rather than surveillance or criminalization."

All Hands Design in Deep Learning Models: Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence and Patient-Centered Approaches to Address Substance Use and Improve Global Health

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"Background:

Deep Learning (DL) is a powerful tool in artificial intelligence to build high performance predictive models using longitudinal electronic health records (EHR) for early disease detection that are superior to traditional machine learning (ML) methods. Its potential to improve and accelerate health care delivery, develop targeted interventions, and enhance wellness in social work, and the behavioral, biomedical sciences has garnered attention from federal agencies and healthcare stakeholders. Our interdisciplinary team has demonstrated that the appropriate use of AI in healthcare will require patient and other stakeholder partners' engagement in design, evaluation, implementation and oversight to transform model development ecology, science communication, and AI-driven health and mental health applications.

Research Overview:

The opioid epidemic is a leading cause of death for young adults in the U.S. and similar rates are well documented globally, including Kenya. It is critical to identify those at highest risk for developing Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in acute care settings such as the ER to improve treatment outcomes. Our work addresses a major gap between current ML model performance on EHR features/data and the strong predictive power of DL methods and a gap in methods and tools for interpreting DL models in clinical social work and behavioral health. Additionally, we utilize the stakeholder-in-the-loop method for technology development, and build trust, prevent model bias, and promote transparency in algorithm development through bidirectional model input between stakeholders and ML developers. Through an experience-based co-design (EBCD) process, stakeholders consider relevant social determinants of health factors that are critical to the patient-centered and stakeholder-driven approaches. Our deep learning model data sources include Cerner Real-World Data (CRWD), a large-scale EHR database merged from HealtheIntent (>89M patients). CRWD is de-identified, mapped and normalized to ensure data interoperability and includes encounters, diagnoses, procedures, patient demographics, medications, laboratory tests and clinical observations.

From ‘Invisible’ to ‘Change-Makers’: Empowering Marginalised Cleaners through Health, Safety, and Dignity in Hong Kong

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In Hong Kong's affluent landscape, approximately 40,000 cleaners—mostly elderly women—remain an **‘invisible’ and marginalised workforce**. The Caritas Labour Friendly Communities (CLFC) Project addresses their profound social alienation and internalised stigma, where many view themselves as ‘disposable tools’. By applying the pillars of **Health, Safety, and Dignity**, the project transcends traditional labour rights to foster a more inclusive and democratic community.

The CLFC project employs a multi-layered intervention strategy. Firstly, it uses **Health as an entry point**, restoring cleaners' agency over their bodies through medical-social collaborations that address chronic occupational strain. Secondly, it utilises **Social Design** to engage professionals, such as architects and engineers, in **co-creating** safe, humanised workspaces, effectively turning refuse collection points into respectful environments. Finally, it restores **Dignity** through ‘community listening’, oral history publications, and art exhibitions that amplify cleaners' lived experiences and reshape social narratives.

This initiative shifts the paradigm from passive welfare to active **citizen empowerment**. By building **Social Capital**—bonding within peer groups, bridging with community stakeholders, and linking with policy-makers—cleaners have transitioned from marginalised workers to **change-makers**. Evaluative data shows that **83.3% of participants feel their voices are heard and respected**, and **79.4% believe collective action can transform their work environments**.

This paper explores how social work can emancipate voices by moving beyond ‘centre-based’ services to outreach that meets workers in their own spaces. It offers a replicable model for **Political Social Work**, demonstrating how grassroots movements can influence social policies—such as heatstroke guidelines and workplace redesign—to build a more equitable society.

To understand this transformation, one might view the project as a prism: it takes the ‘invisible’ light of the cleaners' daily toil and refracts it, revealing a vibrant spectrum of human dignity and collective power that was always there, just waiting to be seen.

1364

Evaluating a Group-Based Pilot Intervention to Enhance Test-Taking Confidence and Reduce Licensure Exam Anxiety Among Black MSW Students

Kyaus Washington

Recent data from the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), highlight racial disparities in clinical licensure exam outcomes. While 85% of white exam takers passed on their first attempt, only 46.2% of Black exam takers did so. These disparities are shaped by intersecting structural and educational inequities, including test anxiety, limited access to culturally responsive preparation, and systemic barriers. For many Black MSW students, licensure is a pathway to economic advancement for themselves and their families, making the stakes especially high. However, few empirically evaluated interventions exist to address licensure-related test anxiety or enhance exam confidence specifically for Black MSW students. This study examined the effectiveness of a culturally responsive, group-based intervention designed to increase test-taking confidence and reduce anxiety among participants. A pretest-posttest design was used with a sample of 14 Black MSW students who had not yet taken the licensure exam. The pilot intervention included two full-day (8-hour) in-person sessions featuring guided Afrocentric self-care practices (e.g., meditation, creative expression), enhancing peer collectivism, and practice with questions from the Connect Social Work Licensing Master's Guide. Test-taking self-efficacy and anxiety were measured using 5-item Likert scales. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted using SPSS to assess pre- and post-intervention changes. At baseline, 40% of participants reported high confidence in their test-taking ability, and only 27% felt equipped to manage test-related anxiety. Post-intervention, 80% of students reported high confidence in their test-taking skills, and 73% reported improved ability to manage test-related anxiety. This study provides preliminary evidence that a brief, Afrocentric self-care-informed group intervention can effectively support Black MSW students' licensure exam readiness by increasing confidence and reducing test-related anxiety. Integrating such interventions into the curriculum may serve as a promising strategy to promote educational equity, enhance student well-being, and address persistent racial disparities in licensure outcomes.

Efficacy of an Interactive Digital Platform in Improving Resilience and Mental Health Outcomes for Children

Dr Dora Tam

"This study assesses the effectiveness of a novel interactive digital platform designed to promote psychological resilience in children aged 5 to 9. The platform delivers targeted interventions through engaging activities that address stress and anxiety management, attentional focus, and emotional regulation.

Children exposed to adverse childhood experiences—including poverty, child welfare involvement, familial violence or dissolution, and war-related trauma—face a significantly elevated risk for developing mental health disorders. This research investigates whether a structured, web-based mental health intervention can mitigate negative psychological outcomes and enhance core domains of wellness in this vulnerable population.

A mixed-methods longitudinal design was employed to measure the platform\'s impact across five key domains: stress and anxiety, focus and attention, social interaction, emotional regulation, and overall mental health. A cohort of 21 children (ages 5-8) utilized the platform over eight weeks. Their parents completed quantitative surveys at three intervals: baseline (T1), 4 weeks (T2), and 8 weeks (T3). Qualitative feedback was additionally collected at a 12-week follow-up (T4).

Results demonstrated statistically significant improvements in children\'s use of coping strategies and overall mental health scores between T1 and T3, with gains in mental health continuing from T2 to T3. Significant improvements were also observed in social interactions across both intervals, while focus and attention exhibited sustained, positive trajectories over time. Qualitative analysis revealed that over half of the parents perceived marked improvements in their children\'s cooperation, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, emotional stability, and anxiety levels.

Despite a limited, non-randomized sample, these preliminary findings indicate that digitally delivered interventions hold significant potential for supporting mental health and building resilience in early childhood. This study highlights the importance of accessible, scalable digital tools as a complementary approach to traditional mental health support for young children."

Reclaiming and Reimagining Sports as Social Work Practice: A Global Platform for Black Girls\' Youth Development

Dr Treisha Hylton

This presentation explores the transformative potential of sports as a powerful form of social work practice, particularly for Black girls. Two funded Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) research projects—\""Riding the Tides: Ethnographic Narratives of Black Girls\' Surfing Journeys in Jamaica\"" and \""Black Girls and Perceptions of Women's Professional Sports: Insights on Participation and Community Development\"". The first study, conducted in Jamaica, used Black feminist ethnography and photo voice to reveal how surfing serves as a vehicle for community building, youth development, and collective agency. The second study, conducted in Toronto, Canada, explored the relationship between Black girls' perceptions of professional sports and their own participation, uncovering crucial insights for community capacity building. Our presentation, led by the Principal Investigator (Assistant Professor Treisha Hylton) and Research Assistant (Asha Edwin), aims to highlight the role of sports in youth development and community building for Black girls while reintroducing the role of sport of social work practice. Affirmed by the findings of these connected studies, drawing from their participatory and arts-based mixed-methods approaches, we assert that Black girls' stories matter, within sports, social work, and our broader world; without these stories, we miss the full scope of what sports can be for Black Girls.
Together, these studies present how the integration of a social work framework embedded within sport can facilitate Black girls\' engagement and agency globally. We highlight how the social work context can be reimagined through the lens of sport, expanding the possibilities for therapeutic space and potential programming. We also draw attention to the ways in which Black/African girls have already been doing this work and hypothesize how we can further increase their participation in sports. We assert that sports have the power to promote Black girls\' empowerment toward sustainable and shared futures."

Contemporary Social Work Thought: Book Presentation on Margarita Rozas Pagaza

Dr Leonel Del Prado

The book Contemporary Thought on Social Work: The Proposal of Margarita Rozas Pagaza (La Hendija Publishers, 2024) emerged from the Open Lecture Series held in 2023 at the Northern Coastal Regional University Center of the University of the Republic (Uruguay). The work brings together reflections and debates produced in virtual meetings with the participation of professors, researchers, and students from various Latin American universities, who addressed the theoretical, political, and methodological contributions of Rozas Pagaza. The publication is organized into three sections. The first, The Problematic Field: Reflections and Debates, includes contributions from Agustina Favero Avico (National University of La Plata) and Stella García (National University of Asunción), who problematize the social contexts in which the discipline is situated. The second section, "Rozas Pagaza's Perspective in Contemporary Social Work Debates," brings together the work of Camila Véliz Bustamante (Alberto Hurtado University), Mariángeles Calvo (National University of La Plata), and Víctor Yáñez (Autonomous University of Chile), situating her proposal within critical frameworks and contemporary debates. The third section, "Contributions to the Training, Research, and Development of Latin American Social Work," includes reflections by Paula Danel (National University of La Plata) and Silvia Rivero (University of the Republic), highlighting Rozas Pagaza's central role in the construction of Latin American professional knowledge. The volume concludes with a dialogue with Rozas Pagaza herself and an essential bibliography that traces her intellectual trajectory. Taken together, the book constitutes a collective platform for disseminating and updating the legacy of one of the most influential figures in contemporary social work in Latin America, contributing to critical training, situated research, and social transformation.

Lessons Learned: Expanding International Social Work Practice through Social Work Education Collaborations

Dr Melissa Grady

"Social work (SW) is increasingly shaped by global interdependence, migration, climate change, and widening inequities. SW education must innovate and reconfigure curricula to equip students with the skills and perspectives needed to respond to emerging local, regional, and global challenges. International collaborations in SW education offer a powerful pathway for building such capacity, yet opportunities for graduate students to engage meaningfully in these collaborations remain limited. In response, during the summer of 2023, our university initiated an inaugural course in Rome Italy, in which SW SW students from three countries (Czech Republic, Italy, and United States) participated in a course focused on International Responses to Social Issues. In 2024 we continued the course adding in a collaboration with Korea, and in 2025 with India and Peru. Through this experience, students and faculty members had multiple opportunities for identifying how to meet global challenges through an innovative learning experience. This course presented a unique opportunity for all to truly engage in an international experience, as they lived, socialized, and learned together during the course. In this presentation, we will provide lessons learned for how other universities might create partnerships aimed at developing a similar experience for their students to increase their exposure to cross-cultural and global learning opportunities. Such collaborations serve to strengthen our profession, both within our own countries and internationally, as we help future SWers early in their careers to think and respond globally to the social challenges that they will face in the future. By sharing this case study, we aim to provide practical guidance for other universities seeking to expand international collaborations in SW education. Such initiatives not only enrich student learning but also strengthen the profession globally—preparing future social workers to respond creatively and collaboratively to the social challenges of our time."

Using Children's Drawings to Assess Impacts of a Culturally-Tailored Trauma Intervention in Zimbabwe

Dr Colleen Fisher

Background: Children's drawings offer an innovative strategy to gain insights into children's lived experience (Fabris et al., 2023), reveal changes in knowledge or feelings (Kaplun, 2019), and support youth who have experienced trauma (Green & Denov, 2019). However, researchers interested in collecting data via children's drawings, especially in cross-cultural contexts, face unique methodological challenges (Mayaba & Wood, 2015), and there is little guidance in the social work research literature. This presentation will outline one successful approach for data collection using children's drawings and share findings and implementation insights using a recently-concluded mixed method study as a case example.

Methods: A mixed-method randomized controlled trial was conducted to evaluate outcomes of a school-based biopsychosocial workshop (Singing to the Lions; Brakarsh et al., 2022) for trauma-affected Zimbabwean youth ages 13-17. In the qualitative phase, a sub-sample of intervention participants (n=51) were asked to draw a picture of themselves and the people/things that help them "sing to their lions" (i.e., conquer their fears). Facilitators asked children to (a) name each object they'd drawn, (b) describe how it helped them, and (c) title their drawing. Facilitators recorded verbatim responses in Shona which were translated then analyzed by a bilingual team to identify participant-identified program impacts.

Results: Analysis yielded seven themes: (1) Future hope & aspirations; (2) Confidence & courage; (3) Children's vulnerability; (4) Youth-tailored strategies; (5) External support systems; (6) Freedom from fear; and (7) Empowerment. Presenters will share visuals of children's drawings and corresponding annotations to illustrate each theme.

Conclusions: Drawings offered a child-centered counterbalance to the RCT's quantitative assessment, illuminating how the intervention enhanced resilience from children's own perspectives. More broadly, the study highlights the challenges and benefits of using children's drawings as a data collection strategy to assess intervention impact in global social work research.

1371

Building Resilience among Trauma-Affected Zimbabwean Youth in Low-Resource Settings: Results from a Mixed-Method Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial

Dr Colleen Fisher

Background: Children in low-resource contexts are particularly vulnerable to trauma from adverse childhood events including abuse, famine, community violence, and political conflict. Interventions to mitigate trauma's effects on children—especially those emerging from the Global South with cross-cultural application—remain urgently needed.Singing to the Lions (STL; Brakarsh et al., 2022), a biopsychosocial workshop for trauma-affected youth, was created in Zimbabwe and subsequently translated into 12 different languages with widespread use reported around the globe. Yet, despite its potential in highly diverse contexts, STL had not been empirically tested. Thus, this mixed-method cluster RCT evaluated the effectiveness of Singing to the Lions for building resilience among vulnerable Zimbabwean youth.

Methods: In Phase 1, adolescents 11-18 (n=1,342) were randomized by school to the immediate intervention or waitlist control arm. Demographics and trauma symptoms were assessed at baseline; intervention outcomes (self-esteem, self-efficacy, hope, self-calming, social support) were assessed at baseline, post-test, and 3-month follow-up. Phase 2, examined intervention effects qualitatively through caregiver interviews and analysis of youths' drawings.

Results: Compared to the waitlist control group, youth who received STL demonstrated significantly greater increases in all five target outcomes from pre-test to post-test. These differences were sustained at the three-month follow-up assessment for all outcomes except hope. Analyses revealed no significant differences in intervention impact based on gender, age, geographic location, or trauma symptoms. Qualitative data supported these findings and offered additional insights into intervention impact and change processes for youth.

Conclusions: Singing to the Lions offers a promising short-term intervention for trauma-affected and other vulnerable youth in Zimbabwe with little access to mental health supports and services. Results underscore STL's broad global appeal, highlighting its potential utility as a culturally-tailored approach to build resilience among diverse youth in low-resource contexts around the globe."

Innovating Curricula Reform: Centering Community and the “Cultural Eye” in Social Work Education using an Organizational Change Approach

Dr Shelley L Craig

"Background: Social work relies on culturally relevant practice, yet developing and assessing these competencies within curricula is challenging. There is a growing need for culturally and community-grounded approaches to support practice competence to address the emerging needs of clients. Current research processes for curricular reform often yield isolated and out-of-date practices, thereby limiting their effectiveness. This study utilized a ‘top-down, bottom-up’ change management methodology to identify community practice demands for core competencies in mental health and health (MHH), develop a competency framework, and evaluate student competency acquisition in the MSW MHH specialization curriculum. Methods: A mixed-methods explanatory design was employed, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods through Kotter’s (1995) eight-step framework for effective change management. We conducted focus groups and interviews with 67 community social workers and 21 faculty members to develop a case for curriculum change and establish current practice competencies through consensus. Following the implementation of the new curriculum, we distributed a survey to graduating students (N = 109) to assess the impact of the change effort on their competence. Results: The findings indicate that community practice needs are evolving faster than the curricula, underscoring the importance of community input in curriculum development. Improvements in MHH practice, such as integrating cultural knowledge and crisis care, were incorporated into the curriculum. Following implementation, student evaluations revealed significant improvements in competencies, including a deeper understanding of sociocultural factors and an enhanced ability to deliver interventions that address the social determinants of health. Conclusion: As competencies evolve in response to sociopolitical changes, community needs, and governing discourses, social work curricula should engage in community-engaged, systematic studies for continuous improvement. Collaborating with regional social workers in organizational change can enhance social work education. We will outline our organizational change process and present the community-engaged competence framework guiding our MHH curriculum. "

Addressing the Suicidality of Sexual and Gender Diverse Youth through Digital Delivery of Affirmative Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Dr Shelley L Craig

"Background: Suicide is a major global health crisis disproportionally affecting sexual and gender diverse youth (SGDY). Minority stressors, political rhetoric, hopelessness, depression, previous attempts, cognitive factors, adverse childhood experiences and family rejection heighten SGDY suicidality risks. These complex risks, as well as persistent challenges in accessing competent clinical care, suggest that social work interventions, such as affirmative cognitive behavioral therapy (AFFIRM), which validates identities and strengthens hopefulness, have promise. Drawing on the interpersonal theory of suicide, this study aimed to identify the longitudinal impact of virtual AFFIRM participation on SGDY suicidality. Methods: Following ethical approval, a clinical trial enrolled SGDY into the evidence-based AFFIRM group intervention. Participants' (N=786) ranged from 14–29 years old at baseline (M = 22.12, SD = 4.60) with a range of racialized identities. Gender (Transgender 31%, Woman 28%, Non-Binary 26%, Male 19%, Queer 10%, Two-Spirit 2%) and sexual orientation (Gay 28%, Queer 25%, Pansexual 17%, Bisexual 16%, Lesbian 11%, Straight 7%, Ace 4%). The synchronous virtual groups clustered participants by developmental stage. SGDY completed the DSM-5 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure at multiple time points (pre-test, post-test, six months, and one year) to evaluate changes in suicidal ideation and attempts. Bayesian logistic mixed-effects models were utilized. Results: Compared with baseline (i.e., pre-test), the likelihood of not reporting a suicide attempt was nearly five times higher at the six-month follow-up (OR = 5.31, 95% CI: 2.46, 12.07) and nearly 10 times higher at the one-year follow-up (OR = 29.96, 95% CI: 9.78, 106.23) after AFFIRM completion. Suicide ideation decreased, but was not statistically significant. Conclusion: The results of this study provide important insight into the effects of affirmative CBT on the suicidality of SGDY. Social work clinical applications, including those delivered virtually, and key mechanisms of change in affirmative CBT (e.g., hope and coping), will be described."

Reimaging Social Work education using Afrofuturist Epistemological Approach: Centering Black Women's Leadership

Dr Christa Gilliam

"This presentation advances Afrofuturism as an epistemological framework for transforming how knowledge is valued and produced in social work education. Afrofuturism is not just a cultural, artistic, and intellectual movement; it is also a theoretical approach that merges Black identity, history, and culture with social movements, literature, science fiction, and African diasporic traditions. As a theoretical model, Afrofuturism reconnects historical memory with future possibility, and cultivates liberatory, community-based pathways for healing and structural change. Through qualitative case analysis, we demonstrate the intersecting oppressions Black women have encountered in leadership and advocacy roles. We focus on the Black Women's Club Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries alongside current movements for racial and social justice. In these contexts, Black women navigated barriers to reclaim their narratives and epistemologies. Synthesizing these cases, this research highlights the foundational intellectual and activist traditions of Black women within the development of social work, which are often overlooked. By reclaiming Black women's knowledge production as foundational to social work education, we center intellectual, political, and community-based leadership traditions. The cross-case synthesis highlights how these traditions influence contemporary movements for racial and social justice. Drawing from case study synthesis and the Sankofa principles (learning from the past to inform the future), this presentation demonstrates how Afrofuturism can decolonize and reimagine social work curriculum, research, and practice. It presents specific strategies, including: Challenging colonial, Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies and addressing implicit bias through Afrofuturist ethics.

Focus on collective care, community-led inquiry, and narrative sovereignty.

Using Afrofuturist storytelling in qualitative research to document lived experience.

Using qualitative research to articulate the lived experiences of Black women into visionary policy narratives that disrupt dominant paradigms and transforms legislative change for an equitable future."

Assisting new immigrants in Raanana, israel

Ms Dorit Keefe

"Ra\'anana, located in centeral Israel, is characterized by a diverse population that includes a significant proportion of new immigrants; approximately 20% of its residents are first-generation newcomers. This population often encounters structural barries to integration, including limited Hebrew proficiency, insufficient familiarity with local sociocultural norms, and restricted access to stable employment or professional network. These factors collectively hinder their ability to participate fully in social and economic life. Securing sustainable employment- one of the most immediate needs of new immigrans- is frequently compromised by these challenges, resulting in extended periods of underemployment or unemployment. In response to these needs, the municipal employment center- managed by a community social worker- developed targeted programs for new immigrants, in addition to serving a wide range of populations. Employment Workshop for New immigrants- This program is intended for immigrants who possess basic Hebrew proficiency. The program was developed through collaboration and resources- pooling between municiple and govermental partners. It comprises ten weekly sessions that integrate employment- related Henrew vocabulary with practical knowledge pertaining to job rearching in Israel. The workshop introduces participants of Israeli labor market, including CV preparation, job- search strategies, interview practices, and workplace expectations. upon completion, participants receive three individual counseling sessions with an employment facilitator. To date, five workshop rounds have been implemented, with approximentaly 70% of participants securing employment within two to four months after completing the workshop.

Volunteer Employment Mentorship Program- for immigrants who lack Hebrew proficiency altogerher, the Employment Center established a multilingual mentorship model. volunteers accompany immigrants througout the job-search process, providing linquistic mediation, cultural interpretation and practical support in navigating interactions with employers and employment institutions. This individualized guidnce not onle enhances access to employment opportunities but also offers emotional reassurance and reduces the sense of isolation often experiences during the early stages of resettlement.

1379

Verification of the Role of Hospital Social Workers in Supporting Terminally Ill Cancer Patients Living Alone.

Mr Taro Baba

"Introduction
In recent years, the number of single-person households has been increasing across all age groups in Japan, and this trend is expected to continue. Meanwhile, research on the support provided by medical social workers (SWs) for cancer patients living alone remains limited. This study focuses on cancer patients—cancer being the leading cause of death in Japan—and examines the role of hospital SWs in supporting the end-of-life period of cancer patients living alone. Methods The study targeted cancer patients living alone who were supported by SWs at the Medical Social Services Office of Juntendo University Nerima Hospital between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2024. For each case, information regarding the patient's course after discharge or transfer was retrospectively collected based on the involvement of the SW.

Results A total of four cases met the criteria. In all cases, SWs were able to develop plans from the early stages of intervention that emphasized continuous support, anticipate and respond to clinical deterioration, and collaborate with community-based welfare agencies in the patient's residential area. As a result, the patients were supported in maintaining their preferred home-based care setting for as long as possible until the end of life. Conclusions
Appropriate involvement of SWs in the care of terminally ill cancer patients living alone can help support the care environment they desire, enabling them to spend the final stage of their life according to their wishes."

Religion as a representation of mental illness in Montreal\'s Afro-Caribbean community: Implications for social work practice.

Syndie David

"This presentation stems from doctoral research exploring the experiences of mental health treatment in Montreal\'s Afro-Caribbean community (n=8). The research included first- and second-generation participants (age 25-54) and used a narrative approach to explore the different social representations of mental illness in the community and how these social representations influenced help-seeking behavior and treatment. Four social representations of mental illness came out of those narratives, and religion was the one that was touched on by each participant.

The theme of religion is significant in the mental health discourse for people of Afro-Caribbean descent in Montreal, because the biomedical model remains the dominant perspective in mental health treatment in Western cultures and continues to impact recovery for Black community members living with mental health issues. Additionally, the Quebec government is continuing to implement policies that push for secularism in the state; unfortunately, such policies depict religion and religious interventions as problematic, further marginalizing racialized communities. Such policies impact not only social discourse around religion but also influences social work education and subsequent interventions on the matter. Although this research also acknowledges that we must remain critical of religious institutions, as it is not always a source of wellness for Afro-Caribbean communities, it seeks to highlight that religion is much more than an institution in Black communities; it also plays an integral part as community support and social networking resource. Consequently, social workers who are engaging with Black community members and who are truly dedicated to centering Black voices, should create collaborative partnerships with religious institutions and their leaders; and must also consider including religious interventions in their mental health treatment plan, when this aligns with the person’s identity to ensure a holistic treatment plan-despite what is being reinforced by social policies."

1381

Young Carers: inspiring action and change through the Commonwealth YC Charter

Dr David Jones

"The Commonwealth Charter for Young Carers evolved from a 20-year project, launched in Nairobi, focusing on the needs and potential of these young people across the Commonwealth, who are providing daily support to family members with disabilities, poor mental health, drug and alcohol problems or other difficulties, often at the expense of their own health, education and future lives. The session will include input from young people and social workers.

The project has given voice to young carers; a video of young people from 11 countries speaking about their challenges has been an output from the project and will be shown. The Charter sets out 10 basic requirements to support young carers which will be explored. The event will enable participation of delegates and discussion of the common and differing needs of young carers and ways to support them in different socioeconomic conditions. It will affirm the potential of these highly skilled young people whilst acknowledging their need for consistent support. Contributions in person, in video and online will create a global perspective on the needs of young carers and ways to support them.

The event could be presented in a 30-minute format with discussion or a more interactive workshop of 60 minutes. The contribution of young people will be a crucial component, whatever the format."

Social Work and Indigenous Peoples: Moving Toward Sustainable Shared Futures; A facilitated discussion with the IFSW Indigenous Commission

Mr Rutikanga Charles

"Worldwide, there are an estimated 5,000 Indigenous groups comprising approximately 300 million people living in more than 70 countries across five continents. Since time immemorial, Indigenous communities have relied on Indigenous and traditional approaches to address social and economic challenges. During colonization, many of these approaches were undermined and labelled as primitive or barbaric, despite their continued effectiveness, particularly where colonial systems failed to adequately serve all communities. As a result, some communities continued to practice their traditional methods covertly due to fear of stigmatization. Recognizing that Indigenous Peoples have maintained inherent strengths but are often excluded from dominant majority groups, rendered invisible in many societies, and, in some contexts, experience conditions akin to exile within their own homelands, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) established the Indigenous Commission in 2021, highlighting the need for social work advocacy. The IFSW further acknowledges the importance of Indigenous approaches in addressing social problems and recommends contextualized social work practice that integrates community values, norms, and Indigenous Knowledge systems. Accordingly, there is a need to develop hybrid approaches that combine social work frameworks with Indigenous approaches. This also calls for a review of social work curricula to embed Indigenous perspectives within education and practice. In this presentation, members of the IFSW Indigenous Commission will describe the structure and work of the Commission and lead an interactive discussion guided by the following questions: How do you understand Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous approaches in social work?

Which Indigenous approaches in your context should be prioritized, and why?

How can Indigenous approaches be effectively incorporated into social work education and practice?

Home visits with families and pregnant women with children aged 0 to 36 months conducted by non-professional outreach workers in the Cuna Más Program in Per

Mrs Fabiola Cortez-Monroy Muñoz

"The purpose of this presentation is to share the results of a research project exploring the intervention carried out by non-professional outreach workers (facilitators) in the Family Support Service of the Cuna Más Program in Peru. This intervention addresses healthy care and parenting practices through home visits in 1,337 districts of Peru to pregnant women and caregivers of children between 0 and 36 months. This is a case study of the Cuna Más Program, and its approach is qualitative-interpretive. Data collection involved document analysis, semi-structured interviews with program managers at the national and local levels, focus groups with program outreach workers, and field observation of four facilitator-led family support experiences in rural areas. Content analysis was used as the methodology for data analysis. The sample was purposive and consisted of facilitators (visiting agents) and professionals responsible for program management who had experience and knowledge of the program at both the national and local levels. The study\'s results describe key elements used in home visits that are essential for achieving positive outcomes, not only from an expert perspective but also from the perceptions of the visiting agents and decision-makers themselves. These findings offer a perspective on Latin American early childhood intervention experiences, providing a valuable contribution for public policy managers, visiting agents, and researchers whose work focuses on early childhood care, support, and development.

Enhancing Participation of Children in Schools: A Social Worker's Perspective

Miss Karleen May Reodique

This abstract outlines a research paper that aims to develop a social work model to enhance children\'s participation in school governance. The study acknowledges the importance of children\'s involvement in decision-making processes, citing its positive impact on their cognitive and social development, value formation, and overall well-being. The research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on the student government of a public elementary school in an urban setting. Data was collected through document review, focus group discussions with five (5) student government members, and interviews with key informants including the student government advisor, two (2) officers from the General Parents and Teachers Association (GPTA), and the school head of the public elementary school. Findings suggest that there is a lack of representation of students in school governance and there are several limitations in the involvement of the student government in school activities. Following these, the author proposes a social work model in ensuring a meaningful representation of pupils in school governance. The model illustrates the theory of change in response to child participation issues, and proposes various social work interventions including organizing and mobilization of stakeholders, capacity-building, and advocacy to enhance children participation in school.

Using Ecomaps and Stories to Understand the Social Convoys of Older African Refugees in Calgary

Dr Prince Chiagozie Ekoh

Social networks play a vital role in ensuring the well-being, social integration and survival of older adults, particularly during periods of crisis and forced displacement such as refugeeism. For older Africans, these networks have historically been sustained by the protective ethos of Ubuntu, which prioritises collective care, reciprocity, and interdependence. However, little is known about how these social networks are transformed when older African refugees are compelled to migrate to Western contexts such as Canada, where individualistic norms often prevail. This study draws on storytelling and ecomapping techniques with 11 older African refugees residing in Calgary to examine the structure, meaning, and dynamics of their social networks. Case-based analysis was used to interpret the ecomaps. The ecomaps reveal that, while family remains the central and most valued social network, in the context of forced migration, familial ties are now dispersed across multiple global locations. Consequently, digital technologies emerged as crucial tools for maintaining transnational connections and preserving a sense of belonging. Other less significant social networks included friends, neighbours, and faith-based organisations. Additionally, the participants reported persistent challenges in cultivating new local support systems in Calgary, citing language barriers, cultural dissonance, and the absence of familiar communal structures that denied older African refugees the sense of Ubuntu. The resilience and the vulnerabilities of older African refugees, as illustrated through ecomaps, underscore the need for culturally attuned, community-driven interventions that strengthen social integration while respecting traditional values of care and connectedness.

Creating a Sustainable PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development: A Collaborative University-to-University Partnership

Prof. Alice Butterfield

The first-ever Master in Social Work program in Ethiopia began in 2002. The first-ever PhD in Social Work and Social Development started in 2004 by selecting 8 of the first 40 MSW graduates for doctoral education. The program started without money, without
books, without staff, and without Ethiopian faculty. How did this happen? How did the MSW and PhD programs become completely sustainable without international collaboration? The Social Work Education in Ethiopia Partnership (Project SWEEP) is a partnership between Addis Ababa University (AAU) and the University of Illinois Chicago. Now 25 years from our first cross-cultural exchange, AAU has successfully trained over 44 doctorate holders in Social Work and Social Development who have started and teach social work in over 12 public and five private universities in Ethiopia. Our workshop outlines the planning and implementation of the PhD Program, including the role of international faculty, collaboration with local NGOs and international organizations such as Books For Africa, curriculum development focusing on social work methods, including action research and knowledge building. The innovative process and implementation of doctoral education in Ethiopia may be applicable to the development and sustainability of graduate education in developing countries. Some results include:

- Near Zero brain drain effect, as all but two or three PhD graduates from AAU are so far working in Ethiopia.
- Expansion of local research, as all student dissertation projects focus on Ethiopia with international collaboration in student advisement and academic publications.
- The contribution of knowledge from Africa to the rest (against the traditional saying from the West to the rest).
- Complete academic leadership by homegrown faculty members.
- Experiential based learning of faculty members due to their direct engagement in curriculum design, teaching, field practicum supervision, research, and community practices.
- A smooth transition from internationalization to the localization of social work.

1391

A Change in Plans: Reimagining Curriculum and Practicum through Collaboration and Accessibility

Ms Rhonda Dinovo

In the spirit of Harambe—coming together for sustainable shared futures—this workshop explores how Master of Social Work (MSW) programs can innovate and reconfigure curricula and field practice education to support part-time students. Representing more than one-third of MSW enrollments, part-time students often balance employment, caregiving, and community responsibilities alongside their studies. Traditional program models, with rigid course sequences and intensive practicum schedules, can unintentionally marginalize these learners, limiting accessibility, engagement, and academic success.Drawing from both literature and institutional experience, presenters will share a co-creative process through which curriculum and field education were redesigned to meet students where they are. Innovations included reducing weekly field hours, extending practicum timelines, and developing flexible, employment-based field placements that honor students' lived contexts. These efforts have enhanced retention, academic standing, and engagement while promoting equity and sustainability within the learning environment. Participants will engage in an interactive exercise to identify and analyze structures in their own programs that may act as barriers to accessibility and inclusion. Together, they will explore context-sensitive approaches to curriculum design, field supervision, and mentorship that reflect the values of collaboration, community partnership, and shared responsibility. The workshop emphasizes inter-professional collaboration, democratizing knowledge, and the co-creation of learning spaces that reflect diverse global and local realities.
By foregrounding student voices and valuing innovative pedagogies, this session invites educators to reimagine social work education as a collective endeavor. Participants will leave equipped with practical strategies to create flexible, inclusive, and contextually relevant MSW programs that embody Harambe—advancing equity, sustainability, and shared success for the next generation of social workers.

Practising Digital Social Work at Community Level: Intergenerational Mediation and Digital Rights in Later Life

Prof. Andrés Arias Astray

Abstract
The rapid digitalisation of welfare systems, public services, and everyday social interactions is reshaping social work practice while simultaneously deepening existing social inequalities. Older adults are among the groups most affected by digital exclusion, facing barriers to accessing rights, services, and social participation in increasingly digitalised environments. This presentation systematizes the work done under the Labs 65+, a community-based digital social work initiative developed in Madrid (Spain) to address digital exclusion among older adults through participatory, relational, and territorially situated forms of digital accompaniment.
Labs 65+ are conceived as open and collaborative spaces where digital skills development is embedded within community relationships, mutual support, and intergenerational exchange. Methodologically, the experience is grounded in Community Social Work and participatory action research, combining direct intervention with reflective learning processes. The initiative is part of the national research project ADOPTIC65+, which explores the role of warm experts—informal, empathetic, and proximate digital mediators—in processes of technology use, adoption, and appropriation by older adults. The Labs are coordinated by social work professionals in training, positioning them simultaneously as practitioners, learners, and reflective digital mediators.
In this presentation we analyse the implementation of the Labs in two socio-demographically contrasting urban districts, highlighting how a shared organisational model of digital social work adapts to local contexts through decentralisation and community embeddedness. Qualitative findings indicate improvements in everyday digital competences, increased autonomy and self-efficacy, and the strengthening of intergenerational and community support networks. Importantly, digital technologies operate not as an end in themselves, but as a means to enhance social connectedness and access to rights.
The findings contribute to debates on digital social work by demonstrating the relevance of relational, community-based, and non-technocentric approaches to digital inclusion. The paper argues for an expanded understanding of digital social work in which social workers act as warm experts, facilitating not only technical learning but also relational care, empowerment, and the exercise of digital citizenship.

Ethical Dilemmas in the use of Digital Social Work in INDIA

Dr Aarti Jagannathan

INTRODUCTION:
Digital Mental Health (DMH) has transformed mental healthcare delivery through telecommunication technologies, providing accessible counselling, specialist consultations, and psychosocial support. The COVID19 pandemic catalysed significant developments in India's digital mental health infrastructure, with the Telemedicine Practice Guidelines (2020) and NIMHANS Telepsychiatric Social Work Guidelines (2020) establishing the foundational ethical and practice frameworks that shaped contemporary digital mental health delivery. India's National Mental Health Programme (Tele-MANAS) now bridges a treatment gap exceeding 70% by extending services to remote and underserved populations. However, this digital transformation presents evolving ethical challenges requiring critical examination by social work professionals.
AIM:
This study examines the ethical landscape of digital mental health practice, identifying core ethical principles, analyzing unique challenges facing psychiatric social workers, and proposing frameworks for ethical governance in digital mental health delivery.
METHOD: A comprehensive review of literature, ethical guidelines, and regulatory frameworks was conducted. Analysis focused on informed consent, privacy compliance with the IT Act (2000) and Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023), Indian Telemedicine Practice Guidelines (2020) and Telepsychiatry Operational Guidelines (2020), cybersecurity protocols, clinical competence, cultural competence,

professional boundaries, and ethical AI integration, drawing on IFSW, IASW, NASW, and NIMHANS guidelines.
FINDINGS:
Five critical ethical challenges: (1) data vulnerability threatening confidentiality;(2) regulatory ambiguity around digital practice standards; (3) informed consent complexity from digital literacy disparities; (4) algorithmic bias deepening care access inequities; and(5) quality assurance concerns with unvalidated tools. Despite challenges, digital interventions enhance care continuity, patient adherence, and crisis response when ethical safeguards are implemented.
CONCLUSION:
Ethical governance is fundamental to sustainable digital mental health delivery. Psychiatric social workers must maintain rigorous adherence to professional ethics while applying equivalent clinical standards as in person care. The profession must prioritize comprehensive digital practice frameworks, continuous professional development, institutional oversight, and client-centered approaches maintaining human connection. Social workers are uniquely positioned to ensure technological innovation serves social justice, human dignity, and professional integrity in mental healthcare's digital transformation.

Psychosocial Impact of Smoking and Alcohol Use among Generation Z Adolescents and Young Adults: A Healthcare Professionals' Perspective

Dr Sadananda Reddy

Background: Smoking and alcohol use among Generation Z adolescents and young adults (15–25 years) represent significant and evolving public health concerns. Early substance exposure is associated with adverse psychosocial and mental health outcomes.
Aim: To explore the psychosocial impact of smoking and alcohol use among Generation Z from the perspective of healthcare professionals.
Method: A qualitative exploratory design was adopted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 healthcare professionals, including psychologists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, and psychiatric social workers. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring psychosocial patterns and generational influences.
Results: Five major themes emerged: normalization of substance use within peer culture; heightened academic and performance stress; maladaptive coping strategies; family communication gaps and reduced supervision; and co-occurring anxiety and depressive symptoms. Social media exposure and changing lifestyle norms were identified as contributing factors to early initiation and continued use.
Conclusion: Smoking and alcohol use among Generation Z reflect complex psychosocial and generational dynamics. Preventive strategies, family-based interventions, and integrated youth mental health programs are essential to address these emerging challenges.

Social Work Education, Pedagogy, and Research: Reframing Anti-Racism in a Changing Professional Global Landscape

Dean Dexter R. Voisin

Social work education and research are grounded in commitments to dignity, equity, and social justice, as reflected in the ethical framework of the National Association of Social Workers. Yet the profession operates within shifting sociopolitical contexts that challenge how race, racism, and anti-racism are taught, researched, and practiced. This abstract examines how contemporary debates about diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are reshaping social work pedagogy and research priorities, with implications for professional identity, epistemology, and methodological innovation. Despite growing public discourse suggesting society is increasingly "race neutral," empirical evidence continues to demonstrate persistent racial disparities across education, health, housing, and economic opportunity. The global racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd intensified attention to these inequities while also generating ideological tensions within academia and professional training programs. Social work education, and research guided by common global standards, now more explicitly integrates anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks, though consensus about their scope and implementation remains uneven.

This presentation argues that addressing racism in social work education and research requires confronting epistemic injustice—specifically, the privileging of dominant knowledge systems over experiential, community-based, and critical theoretical perspectives. Drawing on traditions of critical scholarship, including insights associated with W. E. B. Du Bois, the discussion highlights how pedagogy and research design can better center marginalized voices while maintaining scientific rigor.

Implications for global social work education and research include rethinking curriculum design, expanding methodological pluralism, strengthening critical reflexivity among scholars, and preparing practitioners to navigate politicized environments without compromising ethical commitments. Ultimately, advancing anti-racist pedagogy and research is not an optional specialization but a core professional responsibility essential to preparing future social workers to address structural inequities effectively.

Workforce Diversity and Quality of Care in Care Homes: A Scoping Review of Professional Perspectives

Lola Casal-Sanchez

In high-income economies, the long-term care workforce serves as the primary instrument for delivering Quality of Care (QoC). While research frequently examines resident and family experiences, the professional perspective remains a critical deficit in current policy discourse. This study maps the existing literature to understand how care professionals perceive the implications of workforce diversity on the delivery of QoC within care home settings.
Following JBI methodology and PRISMA-ScR, this scoping review (2002–2022) searched five databases (MEDLINE, CINAHL, Scopus, SocIndex, Business Source Complete) across high-income economies to analyze how demographic and functional workforce diversity impacts Quality of Care (QoC). Synthesis indicates diversity is a structural permanency shaping care through interlinked domains. Organizationally, diversity affects team composition and time allocation, necessitating specialized management to address discrimination-related conflicts. Such environments influence professional relationships, where communication barriers and trust issues hinder cooperation, though mutual learning emerges when cultural practices align with local ethical norms. These dynamics directly shape caring relationships, often challenged by linguistic barriers and resident-to-staff discrimination. Crucially, the evidence base reflects a critical oversight; while social care professionals provide essential relational components of QoC, literature focuses almost exclusively on clinical nursing, neglecting the perspectives of social workers, psychologists, and social educators.

Community-Informed Mental Health Curriculum Reform in Somalia

Mr Kato Francis, Abdulwahab M. Salad[2], Ayann Abdiker[3], Mariam M. Osman[2], Mohamed Ibrahim[1]
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Mental health education in fragile contexts often relies on standardized training models that do not sufficiently reflect local service realities or plural systems of care. This study examines how stakeholder engagement can inform the reform of pre-service and in-service mental health curricula in Somalia. Data were drawn from six key informant interviews and six focus group discussions with practitioners, educators, policymakers, and community leaders. Thematic analysis explored experiences of service delivery, workforce preparedness, referral practices, and community expectations.

Findings indicate that mental health workers operate within complex care environments where traditional healing practices, biomedical services, limited infrastructure, and social stigma intersect. Participants emphasized the need for training that prepares practitioners to navigate plural systems of care, engage respectfully with community actors, and respond to structural constraints. Five competency domains emerged to guide curriculum reform: community and systems orientation, core knowledge and attitudes, clinical and psychosocial skills, communication, and leadership development.

The study suggests that community-informed curriculum reform can strengthen workforce readiness by aligning training with everyday practice environments. The findings offer an empirically grounded framework for designing context-responsive mental health education in fragile and pluralistic settings.

Keywords: mental health, Somalia, curriculum reform, workforce development, plural systems, qualitative research

Co-constructing the evaluation of social services with vulnerable people

Marco Lupoli[1]

This doctoral project examines how evaluation in social and welfare services can be co-constructed with professionals, organisational leadership, and people using services, in ways that are ethically grounded, participatory, and attentive to power relations. The research is conducted as an industrial PhD within the Co.Co.So. (Co-Construction in the Field of Social Welfare) doctoral network, funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of the European Union, and carried out in partnership with the Fondation de l'Armée du Salut.The project is embedded within a large social welfare organisation in France and academically hosted by Université Paris Nanterre. Positioned at the intersection of research, practice, and policy, it explores how evaluation frameworks influence participation, decision-making processes, and the recognition of diverse forms of knowledge within institutional settings. At this stage, the research is in its initial and preparatory phase. Empirical data collection is scheduled to begin in June 2026.

Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed and participatory approach, combining contextual analysis, questionnaire, and collective inquiry methods such as workshops and relational approaches informed by systems thinking. People with lived experience are involved as paid co-researchers at key moments of the project, contributing to research design, sense-making, and knowledge production. The research places strong emphasis on ethical conditions for participation, accessibility, power asymmetries, and the long-term sustainability of engagement. The project seeks to develop a contextual understanding of existing participatory evaluation practices and to co-design complementary evaluation tools grounded in relational and experiential knowledge. More broadly, it contributes to international debates on participatory evaluation, epistemic justice, and democratic knowledge production in social welfare systems, while critically examining the opportunities and constraints of conducting embedded research within institutional environments.

Sustainable Social Work Practice and Public-Private Partnerships for Climate Crisis Disasters

Mr Tatsuya Okamoto

① Systematically addressing disasters caused by the climate crisis.
The role of social work during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic world. Social work interventions from peacetime through disaster onset, livelihood support and reconstruction, and social crises.
Empowerment and community resilience. Strengthening the social welfare workforce amid population decline and an aging society with fewer children.
② Strengthening families and communities. Protecting and safeguarding children and other vulnerable people.
Intergenerational solidarity: Promoting the participation of youth and older adults.
Bridging policy and practice: Proposing legal frameworks and social protection systems for universal and sustainable coverage. Frameworks and strategies for social care and support.
③ Empowering Citizens. Models of Social Welfare in Democratic Societies.
Social Work Responses to the Role of AI, IT, and Communication.

○Keywords
Disaster, Social Work, Empowerment and Community Resilience, Bridging Policy and Practice: Proposals for Legal Frameworks and Social Protection Systems for Universal and Sustainable Coverage
○Theme (Select One)
Social Work Practice Facing Complex Global Challenges

Bridging Borders: Advancing Social Work Practice Through Global Collaboration and Shared Challenges

Dr Isiah Marshall Jr
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For decades, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has provided professional leadership and guidance to social work practitioners in the United States. While grounded in U.S. social work and social welfare practice, NASW recognizes that many of today's most pressing social challenges are cross-national in nature, requiring global awareness, collaboration, and advocacy.

As one of NASW's National Committees, the International Committee plays a critical role in interpreting NASW policies and Delegate Assembly priorities to guide the development and implementation of initiatives in international social work education and practice. The Committee also advocates for the protection of human rights within a global context and promotes international engagement as a means of strengthening social work practice and professional identity worldwide.

This presentation will examine the history, accomplishments, and future directions of the NASW International Committee. Key topics include shared social work challenges across international landscapes, examples of joint advocacy successes, and the strategic use of digital platforms to expand access to training and global learning opportunities. The presentation will also explore emerging opportunities to collaboratively build competencies for effective international social work practice. Attendees will gain insight into how global engagement enriches social work practice, fosters professional solidarity, and enhances the profession's capacity to respond to complex social issues across borders.

- Keywords:
- International Social Work
- Cross-National Social Issues
- Global Social Work Practice
- Human Rights Advocacy
- Professional Collaboration
- Social Work Education
- Digital Learning Platforms
- Global Competency Development

6. Social Work Practice in the Face of Complex Global Challenges

Morales-Benavides, Alejandro 781

A

A Case, Robert 614
Abdiker, Ayann 1401
Abdirahman, Faisa 703
Abdullah, Somaya 572, 1121
Acosta, Ana Rojas 799
Adam Paul, Patteti 223
Adeleke Olubitan, Oluwatoni Modupe 863
Adunbi, Feyisetan 1140
Aharimpisya, Dianah 618
Ainembabazi, Doreen 651
Akinyi, Sharon 1104
Al Salti, Amal 906
Alamuri, Suryanarayana 1025
Alavarez Santana, Carmita Leonor 756, 942
Ali-Saleh Darawshy, Neveen 376
Allassad Alhuzail, Nuzha 105, 106
Allen, Ruth 1303
Alo, Falon 656
Alves, Alan 608, 609
Amadiegwu, Akudo 112, 113, 1229
Amin Ngami, Jilefack 1170
Amoah, Rose-Lynne 708
Ananias, Janet 381
Androff, David 681
Angton, Alexia 1360
Angulo, Rafael 846
Anthony, Becky 642
Aquiline Manda, Catherine 517
Arbe Halkano, Christine 1313
Arenas-Itotia, Karla 714, 747, 948
Argaman, Ronit 670, 671
Arora, Ria 1249
Aruldoss, Vinnarasan 88
Asamoah, Edward 439
Asante, Ophelia Akonobea 1104
Aschaber, Theresa 348
Astray, Andrés Arias 1395
Aubakirova, Ayagoz 630, 631
Austin-Egole, Ifeyinwa 891

B

Baba, Taro 1379
Babatunde, Akeem 273
Babu, Jobi 946, 1069
Bährer-Kohler, Sabine 1065
Baker, Kinya 1066
Båld, Maria 798
Bila, Khetani Solly 617
Bila, Nontembeko 908
Bilotta, Neil 265, 1154
Bimenyimana, Pierre Celestin 29
Birech, Jeniffer 1156
Birkenmaier, Julie 385

Baldonado, Nicole 441
Balous, Lulu 1286, 1287
Baloyi, Dzunisani Euginea 894
Balyejjusa, Senkosi Moses 230, 909
Bangirana, Clare Ahabwe 1215
Banks, Sevaughn 391, 1051
Barbe-Welzel, Monika 687
Barile, Jennifer 43
Bastos, Valéria 446, 448, 821
Bauer, Susanne Iris 16
Beckles, Latoya 820
Béland, Jean-Pierre 905
Bell, Jody 133
Benn, Audrey Enid 884
Berghoef, Michael 1061
Berry, Gillian 884
Bhangyi, Venesio Bwambale 408, 856
Bhardwaj, Radha 42
Bianco Galindez, Maria Emilia 563, 1271
Biehl, Larissa Nathalie 1300
Blakey, Joan 50, 886
Blit Cohen, Edith 124
Boatswain-kyte, Alicia 184, 1349
Bojorque Pazmiño, Jorge Erick 756
Bokore, Nimo 267, 270
Bolaji, Wuraola 87
Bollinger, James 338
Bottoman-Mdlankomo, Andiswa Pamella 610
Boyne, Nadine 851
Bragin, Martha Schwartz 354
Bromfield, Nicole 539
Brown, Mary-Ellen 118
Bruna Villanueva, Arturo 1309
Bucher, Judith 1104
Burger, Tys 599
Bürger, Jana Katharina 262
Butterfield, Alice 1390
Buzard, Allison 554
Buzohera, Noelle 202, 204

C

Cacopardo, Beatrice Marina 1026, 1079
Camejo, Soledad 403
Campanini, Annamaria 491
Campos, Daniela Cristina Augusto 433, 451
Campos Eurico, Marcia 181
Carbajal, Jose 383
Carignan, Louise 910
Carlsson Stylianides, Kristina 390
Chida, Ignatius 620
Childs, Jill 95, 699
Chilwalo, Namoonga.b 836
Chipalo, Edson 819, 1195
Cholewa, Julia 1104
Chopkar, Laxmikant 1354
Choudhury, Mahed 706, 711
Chowdhury, Rasnat 1318

Casal-Sanchez, Lola 1400
Casas, Alejandro 244
Castanheira, Sandra 1222
Cedeno Avila, Saibeth 372
Chamoun, Gaelle 1010
Chan, Edward Ko-Ling 939
Chang, Ya-ching 1127
Channer, Christina 410
Charles, Rutikanga 1382
Cheecharoen, Chinchai 560
Chen, Chun-yi 1207
Chen, Fen Ling 749
Chen, Henglien Lisa 1218
Chen, Hui Quan 590, 967
Chen, Qiqi 1002
Chen, Timothy Ka-Kit 615, 619
Chen, YouXua 1124
Chen, Yu-hsin 1169
Cheung, Mei-chun 649
Chowdhury, Sima 341
Chukwu, Ngozi 135, 1285
Chung, Eun Kang 1194
Chung, Yoon Jung 472
Cláudia Garcia, Cláudia 521, 523
Cochran, Ashley 1183
Collins, Mary 838
Cometa-Lamberte, Hazel 633
Condelaque, Imedy 1285
Contreras, Roberto 781
Cortez-Monroy Muñoz, Fabiola 1385
Cox, Keisha 1311
Craig, Shelley L 1372, 1373
Crocker, Tianca 1094
Cross-Denny, Bronwyn 570
Cui, Kunjie 659
Cui, Meng 1110
Curto De Jesus, Sâmia Maria 1020
Cuthbertson, Kate 156

D

D Souza, Ida 65
D. Baffour, Tiffany 1095
Da Cruz Martins De Campos, Yone 212, 1334
Da Cruz Ribeiro Oliveira, Warlen 1359
Da Fonseca, Tatiana 556, 712, 776
Da Silva, Cristiane 217
Dare, Victoria Oluwayemisi 1118
DaSilva-Glasgow, Dianna 467
Davey, Jill 111
David, Syndie 1380
Davis, Rebecca 637
Deka, Johanna 546
Del Prado, Leonel 140, 1368
Deloach, Roenia 607
Deng, Suo 967
Dežman Burazer, Iris 163
Dhurve, Naresh 638
Di Matteo, Claudia 152
Diago, Niccoh 61
Dias Fernandes, Yara 1027
Dinara, Yessimova 630
Dinovo, Rhonda 1391

De Andrade Nunes, Nilza Rogéria 415, 1326
De Carlo, Gian-Luca 426
De Freitas, Ana Lucia Oliveira 945
De Oliveira, Priscila Beralda Moreira 433
De Paiva, Ariane 303, 310
De Santana, Iara Vanessa Fraga 862
De Souza, Rosane Cristina Moreira 1223, 1262

d

da Silva Campanharo, Lara 1029
de Almeida, Francislaine Alves Nogueira 1139

E

Edwards, Jordanne 723
Edwards, Katie 207
Edwards, Travonne 1320
Ehigie, Efosa Kingsley 1167
Ekoh, Prince Chiagozie 589, 1389
Elenore, Louis Girty 1339
Elkins, Lana 644
Emmanuel, Jovelin 966
Engelbrecht, Lambert 941
Engtrø, Borgar 664
Erez, Riva 1310
Esau, Merlene Christobelle 752, 1012
Estábele, Vanessa 953
Estreet, Anthony 71

F

Fall, Marie 910
Farmer, Antoinette 283
Fasoyinu, Odunayo Irene 374
Ferreira Monteiro Elias, Michelly 968
Fields, Lashawnda 465, 715
Fisher, Colleen 1370, 1371
Fleischlin, Priska 125
Flomo, David 1323
Fox, Mim 406
Fraga - Trejo, Jessica Lee 243
Franca Junior, Reginaldo 414, 1305
Francis, Kato 1401
Francis, Mary 13
Frank, Dionne 176, 459
Frank, Miri 511
Friesen, Lea Joy 353
Fuentes, Heidi 636
Fulkar, Sanjay 473

G

Gallén-Granell, Eva 811, 1136
García, Humberto 781
Garrison, Brianne 196
Gitau, Mary 360
Gjerstad, Brita 1232
Goitsilwe, Dakalo 698

Gaulin, Dominique 835
Gearing, Robin 797, 800
Ghanem, Christian 552
Ghaye, Anthony 847, 867
Gilad, Gil 355
Giliomee, Corlie 82, 650, 720
Gilliam, Christa 596, 1024, 1375
Gitau, Jacinta 349
Gonzalez, Saúl 781
Gonzalez Suitt, Karla 220, 289
Grady, Melissa 769, 1369
Granosik, Mariusz 1098
Gubrium, Erika 924
Guo, Baorong 690
Gurrola, Maria 694

H

Hakizamungu, Alexandre 1209
Halley, Coya 316
Hanley, Jill 532, 1170
Hansel, Tonya 228
Haule Lembuka, Meinrad 792, 794
Henao, Carolina Giraldo 1248
Henriksen, Carina 63
Henry, Paulette 820
Hermoso, Jocelyn 453, 1092
Hernández-Baéz, Irma 781
Hickman-Allen, Terrilyn 996
Hill, Cath 429
Hiltz, Barbara 34
Hobart, Katharine R 1193
Høgalmen, Ann-Iren 143, 895
Holappa, Johanna 1295
Hölscher, Dorothee 82
Huang, Chao-Kai 513
Huang, Jin 502
Huang, Victoria 179
Huang, Ying-hao 573, 576
Huerta Ramirez, Nancy 378
Hylton, Treisha 1367

I

Ibrahim, Mohamed 1401
Ilesanmi, Itunu 196
Isackov, Jennifer 1202, 1203
Itaye, Tsogololathu Angel 613
Iyer, Saraswati Raju 643

J

Jackson, Lace 276
Jagannathan, Aarti 1396
Jamú, Hafiz 595
Jamú , Fauzia 1285
Jamú , Hafiz 1285
Jare, Pradeep 1251, 1253
Jefferson, Patricia 361
Jenney, Angelique 294, 1290
John, Dalila 1231
Jones, April 77, 79
Jones, Crystal 594
Jones, David 326, 1381
Jongman, Kgomotso 1185, 1196
Jordaan, Leanne 650
Joseph-Magwood, Abigail M. 1218
Jubran, Rana 1042

Jeter, Sandra 38

K

Kabembo, Ireen Manase 1049
Kadiyan, Lakshya 1011
Kafuko, Agatha 282, 309, 321
Kagotho, Njeri 1280, 1282
Kaime, Wanjiku 432, 1306
Kakanda-Sinkala, Namakau 639, 641
Kakoty, Monikornika 1063
Kalinganire, Charles 347
Kamiyama, Hiromi 1019
Kannothu Thazha 226, 227
Kuni, Nandu
Kansiime, Peninah 1219
Karandikar, Sharvari 373
Kariveliparambil, Ashifa 117
Karki, Dilip 420, 423
Karunakaran Prasanna, Chitra 312, 1125
Keefe, Dorit 1377
Khalema, Ernest Nene 290
Khamis, Rukiah Mwinyi 815
Khan, Nadja 1137
Khan, Zahara 1006
Khangpiboon, Kath 1238
Khatiwada, Kamal 1050
Khosa, Priscalia 384
Khumalo, Gift 162, 527
Kihombo, Stellah 960
Kim, Sug Pyo 1205
Kimathi, Eric 500
Kinoti, Emmanuel 1113
Kizhakkekara Vannadil, Preetha 329, 330
Kleibl, Tanja 1285
Koglek, Robert 487, 940
Koh, Bibiana 333, 1022, 1095
Kondrashov, Oleksandr 445, 449
Kooymans, Brooke 1214
Kourgiantakis, Toula 1093
Kreif, Theresa 1307
Kreitzer, Linda 1256
Krishnan-Mackie, Laura 331
Ku, Hok Bun 1119
Kuhn, Hans 7
Kumar, Praveen 358
Kunz, Christian 526
Kusari, Kaltrina 395
Kwok, Siu Ming 297, 881

L

Laliberte, Traci 50, 375, 886
Lamin, Sylvester 8, 14
Langhoop, Gesa 245
Leal, Fabiola 484, 1233
Lee, Eunjung 472, 736
Legg, Bobbie 920, 1208
Leibowitz, George 1361
Lelaka, Tshidi 974
Lenz, Trish 634
Lev-el, Niva 537
Levy, Efrat 78
Li, Sindy 731
Libardi, Cristiane 1155, 1312
Liddell, Jessica 790, 795
Lightfoot, Elizabeth 146, 392
Lissitsa, Sabina 562
Liu, Nian 1150
Lopez, Katie 1083
López, Luz Marilis 1193
Loval-Lederer, Daphna 421
Lozano, Alexander Durán 1191
Lu, Wei 1358

Lewis, Edith 195, 213
Lewis, Laura 15
Li, Lydia 987
Li, Quancai 628

M

Mabeyo, Zena Mnasi 83
Macdonald, Sue-Ann 464, 1241
Mac-Kwashie, Ophelia 1335
Madhu Babu, Kadimi 612
Maehiro, Miho 763, 766
Maiter, Sarah 1161
Makoha, Godfrey 1265
Malatji, Hlologelo 683
Maleku, Arati 345, 626
Maphosa, Ntandoyenkosi 597, 1342
Marchetti, Elena 1105
Marciano Munier, Jaqueline 1144, 1149
Maretto Lang, Aline Elisa 268
Marmor, Amitai 652
Marques, Eduardo 1136
Marshall Jr, Isiah 1446
Marta, Raquel 1134, 1138
Mary, A.Viyakula 603
Masuka, Tawanda 69
Mathbor, Golam 72
Matlakala, Frans Koketso 954
Matsea, Thabisa 480
Matsuo, Kana 74, 434
Maurer, Katherine 177
Mbaza, Mandisa 198
Mccrorie, Christa 716
Menacho Agama, Jenny luz 814
Meneses, Angelito 128
Mirabell, Sandra Carla Sarde 1053
Misaro, Josephine 627, 1272
Misje, Turid 256
Miyazaki, Osamu 340
Moasun, Festus 1129, 1131
Moe, Ole Johan 205
Mohamed, Omar 727
Morgenshtern, Marina 1259
Morris, Lindsay 599
Motta-ochoa, Rossio 477
Mousavi Chelak, Hassan 807, 1038
Moyo, Otrude Nontobeko 2, 3
Moyo, Stephen 1342
Mseba, Precious 1160
Mugadza, Hilda Tafadzwa 1219
Muhingi, Wilkins 30, 120
Mukasa, Elizabeth 564
Mukayisenga, Généreuse 697
Mukundan, Asha 1043
Muleya, Emmi 1017
Mungai, Ndungi 713, 1200, 1302
Muñoz, Domingo Carbonero 813
Mushunje, Mildred 85
Musiimenta, Charity 320
Mutapa, Osborn 229
Mutavi, Teresia 122
Mutisya, Mary 301
Mwebi, Marion 1078

Mengo, Cecilia 531, 533
Mfoafo-M'carthy, Magnus 292, 306
Mills, Abigail 374
Mwenyango, Hadijah 265
Mwibanda, Thomas 688
Mzinyane, Bongane 56

N

Nabors, Noni 599
Nabuyoga, Winnie 1018
Nadesan, Varoshini 1230
Nan, Fang 238
Nareeba, Peter 748, 868
Nashandi, J.C. Ndilimeke 1059
Nathschläger, Johannes 90
Ndegwa, Grace Wanjiku 793
Ndolo, Urbanus 109, 110, 1281
Nennstiel, Karin-Ulrike 436
Neringa, Dainaravičiūtė 114
Netzer, Dror 495, 519
Newman, Darlene 705
Ngai, Phyllis 1218, 1336
Ngai, Steven Sek-Yum 6, 658
Ngololo, Elizabeth Ndeukumwa 381
Ngubane, Nokuthula 33, 388
Nicholas, David 290
Nilsen, Ann Christin E 743
Nkala-Dlamini, Busisiwe 1325
Nkrumah, Rodney Buadi 1032
Noboa, Alejandro 99
Nouman, Hani 298, 904
Nuss, Felix Manuel 369
Nyahunda, Louis 937, 1175
Nyiransengimana, Immaculee 1193
Nyirinkwaya, Serge 1293, 1294

O

Ochoa Ortíz, Carlos Alberto 781
Ogongi, Wanja 372, 754
Ogunmola, Oluwapelumi Iyanuoluwa 654
Okamoto, Tatsuya 1424
Okatta, Timothy 478
Okech, David O 704, 1315
Okoye, Uzoma 131, 1285
Oladipo, Olabisi Eniola 419
Olamaee, Hamed 817
Olang, Inviolata Akoth 958
Onginjo, Paul O 550
Onyango, Belinda Taka 564
Opobo, Timothy 44, 45
Orme, Julie M 250
Ortegal, Leonardo 172
Ortíz, Leticia 781
Osman, Mariam M. 1401
Ou, Szu-Yu 1277
Owens-king, Allessia 834
Owuor, Euphracia 1130, 1148

Omondi, Stephen Mbinga 94

P

Palty Katzir, Carmit 635
Panagiotopoulos, Christos 387
Pandey, Rashmi 23
Panos, Patrick 726
Pappadis, Monique 73
Parker, Janet 362
Pathare, Suresh 235, 246
Pedreño, Manuel Hernández 813
Penney, Patrice 159
Pentaris, Panagiotis 605
Pereira, Carol 269
Pereira Salgado, Marcos Guilherme 305, 443
Pérez, Melchor Gómez 813
Petričušić, Antonija 397
Pfaller-Rott, Monika 1300
Phyllis, Muraguri 878, 1217
Pickens, Keisha 164
Pires Rocha, Andrea 172
Powell, Tara 1084
Prada, Talita 1020, 1352
Pretorius, Luce 393, 394
Primbetova, Sholpan 631
Primus, Nakeiha 1068

R

Ramalingam, Jai Prakash 197
Ramirez, Nélida 735, 1065
Ranta-Tyrkkö, Satu 540, 545
Rasool, Shahana 719, 721
Raya Diez, Esther 802, 813
Raynor, Katherine 1296
Redcliffe, Joanne 362
Reddy, Sadananda 1397
Redmond, Melissa 701, 759
Reis dos Santos, Cristiane 957
Reodique, Karleen May 559, 1386
Retland, Maren Sagvaag 861, 880
Revheim, Cecilie 815
Richards, Donna 1259
Rizopoulou, Lefkothea 1235
Roberts, Louise 66, 253
Roberts, Sharyn 222
Rocco, Beatriz 581
Rodriguez Martin, Vicenta 1250, 1255
Rogers, Justin 20
Román, Salvador Manzanera 813
Rondon-Jackson, Renie 1341
Rosenberger, Veronika 1082
Ross, Brendan 364

S

Salad, Abdulwahab M. 1401
Saleeby, Patricia 1236
Salman, Ella 57
Salmon, Hugh 358
Shmuel Fahima, Shai 872
Shtivelman, Ilana 1062
Sibbie, Pauliina 528
Silan, Wasiq 1218

Samanmalee, T H Rasika 946
Sambola, S. Siaka 148
Samson, Melih 515
Sanantonio, Alba Galán 1052
Sanganyi, Noah Mokaya Omambia 1260
Sarvi Hampa, Mehdi 1013, 1014
Saturnino, Marenilse 912, 919
Savani, Shahnaz 588, 1276, 1298
Schaefer-Salins, Ellen 1216
Schmelz, Andrea 1242
Schmitt, Adriana Regina Vettorazzi 666
Schmitt, Caroline 1242
Schneider, Sharon 444
Schulze, Mandy 929
Scott-Adams, Roslynn 737
Sedahl, Monica 849
Seidel, Franziska Anna 1221
Semwal, Aman 431
Shah, Margi 1158
Shalodi, Mahdi 234
Shapira, Bracha 173, 174
Sharley, Vicky 381
Sharma, Bonita 902, 923
Sharma-Brymer, Vinathe 1200, 1302
Simiyu, Violet 655
Singla, Pamela 155
Sjåfjell, Linda 475
Skinner, Erin 1301
Sloan, Lacey 364
Small, Eusebius 951
Smith, Belinda D. 596
Smith, Paulette S. 695
Sneh, Ronnie-Lee 215
Sobantu, Mziwandile 200
Solli, Siss-Mari 1353
Song, Jie 1358
Soundari, M.Hilaria 169, 603
Souza, Najila 191
Speirs, Caroline 287
Speyer, Elaine 253
Spitzer, Helmut 47
Spolander, Gary 365, 826, 830
Stankus, Rachel 277
Stanley, Selwyn 732
Straub, Sabrina 142
Suárez, Mariano 116
Subrayen, Roshanthni 368

T

Tadria, Liberty Vivian 1037
Tam, Dora 574, 1366
Tanga, Pius 1351
Tarin Cayuela, Manuel 1350
Tasse, Abye 1198
Taylor, Dalon 784
Tehuti Kakowa, Felix 442, 734
Teixeira Garcia, Maria Lucia 1021, 1029, 1139, 1355
Thorbjørnsen, Nina 788
Thorwart, Margaret 1228
Tian, Kun 810
Tokoro, Megumi 101
Tomaszewski, Evelyn 464
Tome, Ashely Ropafadzo 538
Trejo, Francisco 781
Triana Reyes, Hilda Antonia 167, 168

Terhorst, Carolien 566
Thomas, Roma 1107
Thomas, Shantel 723, 725, 744, 745
Thompson, Phyllis 887
Thompson, Sheryl 601, 890
Thomson-Sweeny, Johanne 632
Tsai, I Hsuan 295
Tsai, Pei-Yuen 761
Tsoi, Sin Man 1362
Tuggle, Felicia 374, 1108
Tusasiirwe, Sharlotte 434
Twikirize, Janestic 127, 1037, 1285

U

Ugbana, Augustina 522, 1060
Uwamahoro, Marie Claire 1071
Uwihangana, Consolée 525

u

uiz-Clavijo, Ana Belén Cuesta R 802

V

Vaiphei, Kimneihat 1074, 1075
Van Dijk, Diana 911
Van Sluytman, Laurens 1316
Van Straaten, Martha Maria 1012
Vanne-Lindström, Tia 452
Varughese, Ipe 117
Vazquez, Yakahiris Norelis 754
Vela-jiménez, Rocío 1266
Venable-Edwards, Victoria 803, 805
Vezzoli, Federica 1026
Villarreal Sosa, Leticia 833
Vital, Assaf 652
Voisin, Dexter R. 1399
Vončina, Mateja 717
Voss, Tanya 624, 1089
Voth Schrag, Rachel 542, 544

W

Wade, Carol 1086
Wagner, Beverly 771
Wairire, Gidraph G. 221
Waldt, Bettina 751
Walke, Keshav 151, 407
Wallace, Nicholas 1210
Walsh, Christine 395, 1283
Wang, Pei-ling 1009
Wang, Qianyun 1163
Wangari, Jennifer 683
Washburn, Micki 1040, 1041
Washington, Kyaus 1364
Washington, Stephanie 993
Weekes, Arlene 730
Weiss, Jessica 577
White, Joyce 898
Whitehorne-Smith, Patrice 746
Williams, Amber 585, 1097
Williams, Nicola 692, 1190
Williamson-Ashe, Sandra 350
Wilson, Kwikiriza 1337
Wojnaroski, Melissa 925
Wu, Haorui 153, 154
Wysor Nguema, Suzen 1067, 1284

X

Xiong, Pa Nhia 216, 686
Xu, Liying 967

Y

Yadav, Raj 734
Yang, Chenxi 646, 648
YANG, Jing 1358
Yannick, Moureau 827
Yen, Yu-ju 1207
Yin, Chun Yu 1034, 1179
Yip, Sui Kan 967
Yohani, Sophie 949
Yokoyama, Akiko 560
Yoshihama, Mieko 836, 1005

Z

Zajacova, Melanie 232, 336
Zeimet, Nicholas 733
Zelenev, Sergei 493
Zhang, Ling Hui 967
Zhang, Qing Ning 967
Zhang, Renxia 1008, 1015
Zhao, Chenyu 1106, 1111
Zhou, Tian 785
ZHU, Jiangang 1358
Zhuang, Jie 810, 1114
Zulla, Rosslynn 337