Advancing Human Rights in Social Work Education

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2 | Human Rights as the Bedrock of Social Justice: Implications for Advanced Generalist Practice

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This chapter (1) presents select definitions of social justice, with particular attention to reasons that human rights principles ought to serve as its foundation; (2) discusses the meaning of human rights, with emphasis on the importance of the creation of a human rights culture and the human rights triptych; (3) examines implications for advanced generalist practice social work, roughly meta–macro (global), macro (whole population), mezzo (at-risk), micro (clinical), meta–micro (everyday life), and research interventions to fulfill human need, giving examples of integrating human rights within that framework; and (4) concludes with comments on social justice as struggle.

Select Definitions of Social Justice and Rationale for Human Rights as its Bedrock

Social justice, long a fundamental tenet of social work theory and praxis, is according to Barker (2003) "an ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protections, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits" (pp. 404–405). David Gil (2004), recent recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Social Work, stated that

> a more generally accepted definition of social justice... [as] socially-established living conditions and ways of life that are conducive to the fulfillment of everyone's intrinsic needs and to the realization of everyone's innate potential, from the local to global levels. (p. 32; see also Gil, 2013)

An etymological definition of social justice, furthermore, is from the Latin *socius-i*, meaning "friends, allies, partners," and, in another context, "sharing, accompanying, acting together." *Sociare* means "to unite." The word *justice* comes from the Latin *iustus*, meaning "just, equitable, fair, mainly of persons," and in another context "what is fitting, what is right." Building on those etymological roots, *social justice* then "plainly concerns doing right among friends in ways that are equitable, fair and unite us" (Wronka, 2008, p. xx).

Although those definitions are worthwhile, they do not articulate the basic rights and obligations that all members of the human community have; what precisely are the ways of life conducive to the fulfillment of one's innate potential; and what actually is just, equitable, fair, fitting, and right among persons? The social construct of human rights, however, has been emphasized in major social work policy documents only since 2000. Furthermore, in 2008 the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) asserted human rights as a core competency. This elaborates rather concretely and in educated layperson's terms the very important but rather ambiguous term of *social justice*, whose contours are often generally felt intuitively.

Thus, one may have an intuitive sense that homelessness or lack of health care is socially unjust. Certainly, it is unethical or, in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; 1948), "shocks the conscience of humanity" to allow a homeless person to freeze in the cold. For that matter, equally shocking is to submit the healing of a sick child to market forces. These issues are specific violations of international legal mandates to fulfill human needs, as defined by the collective wisdom of the international community vis-à-vis the United Nations. People must change from having intuitive knowledge of this truth to actual awareness and move to overcome the injustice.

This powerful social construct of human rights arose out of the ashes of World War II. Officially coined by the United Nations in 1945, it reflected the failure of domestic sovereignty to stop the abuses of the Third Reich. The United States called the Conference of Evian (1938) to halt Hitler's transgressions, but not wishing to bring attention to other states' atrocities, such as public lynchings in the United States, policies of torture in Africa, and

the Soviet's Gulag, the conference ended in failure (Buergenthal, Shelton, & Stewart, 2002). But after the deaths of an estimated 10 million innocents killed in the Holocaust and an estimated 92 million killed overall in the war with horrendous weapons such as nuclear bombs, the priority of domestic sovereignty was replaced by the idea of human rights, which now obliged all countries to adhere to them. Today no government would dare say that it is against human rights.

Given that ideas move people—as Eleanor Roosevelt, chair of the drafting committee for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), was fond of saying—this idea of human rights can unite us to overcome unfairness. In brief, to say that it is socially just to have health care and shelter does not have the specificity, power, and moral force as simply asserting that health care and adequate shelter are human rights. Stating the latter moves people not only individually, but also collectively and becomes a potent strategy for social change, thereby changing public sentiment. Indeed, Eleanor Roosevelt also wanted a series of human rights documents not in elitist language, but in language that could be readily understood by the educated layperson (Wronka, 1998).

A Bondei proverb asserts that sticks in a bundle are unbreakable. If united, human rights activists, or defenders, could overcome oppression to create a socially just world, to create, as Martin Luther King stated, the Beloved Community. Let us also not forget that Dr. King stated "It is necessary for us to realize that we have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights... [as] clearly defined by the mandates of a humanitarian concern" (Human Rights Movement, 2013, p.2). Another luminary, Malcolm X, urged oppressed peoples of the world to see struggles as human rights rather than civil rights issues and to "use the United Nations' avenues, its Human Rights Commission... [as] more of a chance of getting meaningful results... and the moral support of the world" (Sterling Entertainment Group, 1992).

The words of Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon on World Social Justice Day, February 20, also reinforced the importance of human rights: "Equal opportunity, solidarity and *respect for human rights,*

these are essential to unlocking the full productive potential of nations and peoples" (Ban, 2011; emphasis added). Navanethem Pillay (2011), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, furthermore, stated:

> Social justice means life determined by human rights and equality. This is spelt out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for a life free from want and fear. And there are many U.N. conventions where states have undertaken obligations to ensure that all their policies and actions deliver on social justice and to respect the equality of all people. (p. 1)

Finally, let us not forget that the late Pope John Paul II said that the principles of the Universal Declaration ought to be lived in letter and in spirit (Catholics for the Common Good, 2013).

Human rights is the bedrock of social justice. Its role in social work theory and praxis is demonstrated by social work's recent pronouncements, compelling global historical antecedents, and statements by noted social justice and human rights leaders in the United States and United Nations. The Second Decade for World Human Rights Education (2004–2015) emphasizes integrating human rights into postsecondary, graduate, and professional education. Thus, it is a major challenge for the social work profession to effectively harness this idea to fulfill human need, promote well-being, and ultimately eradicate individual and social pathology.

Toward the Creation of a Human Rights Culture

This final analysis focuses on the creation of a human rights culture, which can be described as a "lived awareness of human rights in one's mind and heart, and dragged into our everyday lives" (Creating a Human Rights Culture, 2013, p. 2). To be sure, such a pithy statement is not that far removed from Eleanor Roosevelt's rather famous quote:

> Where after all do universal human rights begin?... in small places close to home... the neighborhood he [or she] lives in... the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places

where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world. (Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2014, p. 1)

Certainly, the profession of social work can play a substantive role in the formation of such a culture. The International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) stated that "from its inception social work has been a human rights profession" (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1994, p. 3). Although it is important to know one's rights, such cognitive awareness alone will not suffice. They must be known in a heartfelt way with passion and on an experiential, lived level, to borrow a phrase from phenomenology.

Perhaps the best way to comprehend the true meaning of human rights is to understand what René Cassin, often referred to as the father of human rights, called the Human Rights Triptych. The center panel is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the authoritative definition of human rights standards; the right panel is the documents following it, such as guiding principles, declarations, and conventions; and the left panel consists of implementation measures, generally institutional machinery, such as monitoring mechanisms, special rapporteurs, world conferences, and the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council.

The Center Panel of the Human Rights Triptych: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In brief, the General Assembly, although initially reluctant, endorsed the UDHR (United Nations, 1948) with no dissent on December 10, 1948. The UDHR is a compromise among various historical epochs and philosophical and spiritual systems. Increasingly referred to as *customary international law*, the UDHR consists of five crucial notions. The first is human dignity (Article 1); the second is nondiscrimination (Article 2); both notions reflect essential strands of some of the world's major religions such as the Judaic–Christian–Islamic tradition, Hinduism, and Buddhism. These religions also

mirror social work's emphasis on spirituality and respect for cultural diversity. Thus, the only criterion to have one's dignity and rights is one's humanity, not one's gender, national or social origin, language, circumstances of birth, or other status. The third notion is civil and political rights (Articles 3–21), such as freedoms of speech, the press, peaceful assembly, and expression, largely mirroring the Age of Enlightenment and the U.S. Bill of Rights. They are also referred to as first generation or negative rights because they emphasize government's role not to intrude in people's lives. The fourth notion is that of economic, social, and cultural rights (Articles 22–27), such as rights to meaningful and gainful employment, rest and leisure, adequate shelter, medical care, security in old age, and education, mirroring for the most part the Age of Industrialization and the Soviet constitution of 1924. They are also referred to as second generation or positive rights because they emphasize government's role to do positive things to fulfill human need and promote well-being (Wronka, 2008).

Finally, there is the notion of solidarity rights (Articles 28–30), also referred to as third generation rights. Still in the process of conceptual elaboration, these rights are the product of postmodernism, reflecting largely the failure of domestic sovereignty. Emphasizing duties to the community and intergovernmental cooperation, they have come to mean rights to humanitarian disaster relief, international distributive justice, self-determination, development, protection of the cultural and common heritages of humanity (such as places of worship, the oceans, mountains, and space), and the right to environmental sustainability. It is important to emphasize that all of the above rights are indivisible and interdependent (What are human rights?, 2014). What, for example, is freedom of speech if a person is homeless and lives in a world at war?

The Right Panel: Guiding Principles, Declarations, and Conventions

The right panel consists of documents such as the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (United Nations, 2012), the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), and Principles for the Protection of Persons With Mental Illness and Improvement of Mental Health Care (United Nations, 1991). Documents with stronger judicial force are gener-

ally called conventions or covenants, which have the status of treaties. Some countries, such as the United States in its Supremacy Clause, have statements in their constitutions that assert that treaties when ratified shall "become the Supreme Law of the Land. ... And the judges bound thereby' (Article VI). Not many people know of that important clause, which former Attorney General Ramsey Clarke has called a "failure of our legal system" (personal communication, Human Rights Council, Geneva, 2012). This lack of awareness is also indicative of the failure and provincialism of the U.S. educational system, challenges that social workers in school and other settings can play a role in reversing. Certainly, the UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights represent a breakthrough in eradicating extreme poverty (Redegeld, 2013), calling largely for a restructuring of global economic and social arrangements. Yet that document could be buttressed by an international convention (or treaty) to abolish extreme poverty, which since 2007 the IFSW and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) have advocated in the fora of the Human Rights Council (Wronka, 2008, 2012, 2013; Wronka & Staub-Bernasconi, 2012).

In addition to the UN Charter—a treaty ratified by all member nations of the United Nations—there are nine major conventions: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966a); the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR; United Nations, 1966b); the Convention Against Torture (CAT; United Nations, 1984); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; United Nations, 1979); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (United Nations, 1965); the Rights of the Child (CRC; United Nations, 1989); the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (United Nations, 1990); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006); and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (United Nations, 2010).

Generally, documents in the right panel of the triptych elaborate on rights the UDHR only touches on. Thus, the UDHR says simply, "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance" (Article 25); CEDAW

and CRC establish what this special care and assistance means. For instance, CEDAW states that governments ought to "encourage the provision of necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities" (Article 11). They should also ensure "women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation" (Article 12). Examples in CRC are the right of the child to be "registered immediately after birth ... and the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents" (Article 7); the right of the child "who is capable of forming his or her own views" to "express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (Article 12); and "the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child" (Article 19).

Elaborating in part on the UDHR's notions of human dignity (Article 1) and the right to a standard of living for himself and his family (Article 25), the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights assert that we should no longer perceive those in extreme poverty as passive victims, poor helpless people to receive charity or to be rescued and unable to act for themselves. Rather, they are agents of change; rights holders to hold duty bearers, such as governments, private, and business entities accountable.

As a general rule, first there are guiding principles, then declarations, and finally conventions, which have more judicial force as discussed earlier. To emphasize, from 2007 to the present IFSW and IASSW have advocated for a convention to abolish extreme poverty before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, attempting to jump from guiding principles to an international convention in this instance. This urgent, if not emergency situation, is largely due to the growing gap between the poor and the rich in the 21st century (Carter Center, 2002), which also gave birth to many Occupy movements throughout the world (Zayas, 2012).

Elaborating on the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (UDHR, Article 27), the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) asserts, for example, redress for deprivations of cultural values and ethnic identities; full guarantees against genocide; and the right to strengthen distinctive spiritual and material relations with lands, waters, and seas. Elaborating on the "right… to medical care" (UDHR, Article 25), the Principles on the Protection for Persons With Mental Illness asserts the need for appropriate disclosure of treatment in form and language understood by the patient and medication meeting the best health needs of the patient, not to be given for the convenience of others (Wronka, 2008).

The Left Panel: Implementation Measures

The left panel, undoubtedly the weakest part of the triptych with its emphasis on implementation, consists of UN charter and treaty-based approaches; the Universal Periodic Review; world conferences; and global commemorations of days, weeks, and decades deemed significant in the implementation of human rights principles. The former primarily consists of the appointment of special rapporteurs to examine and report on a particular theme and/or country that gained prominence in the global community. Such themes include racism and xenophobia (1993); violence against women (1994); extreme poverty (1998); the right to food (2000); the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (2004); torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment (2006); the right to freedom of expression and opinion (2010); the situation of indigenous peoples (2012); and the promotion of democracy and an equitable international order (2013). Treaty-based mechanisms also involve human rights monitoring committees that examine, with a spirit of creative dialogue, a country's progress vis-à-vis each article of the nine major conventions that a country ratified.

Implementation mechanisms can be extremely powerful tools for creating awareness of human rights principles. Ideally, this will result in a collective change of character for peoples and entire nations toward the creation of a human rights culture. One example is the plethora of laws and policies that have arisen in the last two decades to combat violence against women,

not long after the special rapporteur's report on violence against women. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also write their own shadow reports, which generally differ from government reports, such as statements on forced drugging, electro-shock, and mental health screening of children (Minkowitz, Galves, Brown, Kovary, & Remba, 2006) and indigenous peoples (Barnes, 2008).

The Human Rights Council set up the Universal Periodic Review Process when formed on March 15, 2006. Whereas only those countries that have ratified conventions go before the monitoring committees, all 192 members of the United Nations must submit a report every 4 years to the Human Rights Council concerning their efforts to adhere to human rights principles. Assisted by three troikas, member states are chosen by lots to review the country's report. (A country's reporting before the Human Rights Council can be viewed at http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/c/un-human-rights-council.html.)

There are also world conferences. These are generally under the auspices of the United Nations, but in concert with numerous NGOs, which have become a powerful force governments must consider. An exception was the Conference on Peace in 1998 at The Hague, which was sponsored by NGOs rather than the governments of the United Nations. Some conference examples, with their attendant action plans, often revised every 5 years include population in Cairo (1994), women in Beijing (1995), food in Rome (1997), racism in Durban (2001), sustainability in Johannesburg (2002), the information society in Tunisia (2005), climate change in Copenhagen (2009), and sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro (2012).

Commemorating international days is another way to create awareness of human rights concerns and engage in questioning how to apply such values in socially just policies. Should we wish, as Gandhi said, to be the change we want to see in the world, such awareness might also result in major individual character transformation. Select international days are Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27), World Social Justice Day (February 20), Women's Day (March 8), World Water Day (March 22), International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9), International Day of Peace

(September 21), International Day of Older Persons (October 1), World Day Against the Death Penalty and World Mental Health Day (both on October 10), International Day to Eradicate Extreme Poverty (October 17), International Day of Tolerance (November 16), Universal Children's Day (November 20), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), International Human Rights Day (December 10), and International Day of Solidarity (December 20). In general, a few days before and after an international day consist of a weeklong commemoration.

Examples of international years are Women's Year (1975), World's Indigenous Peoples (1993), Eradication of Extreme Poverty (1996), Oceans (1998), Sanitation (2008), Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), Forests (2011), and Cooperatives (2012). Examples of decades are Against Racism (1993–2003), Second Decade on Human Rights Education (2005–2015), Second International Decade for the Eradication Against Colonialism (2001–2010), Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), Action for Water for Life, (2006–2015), Second Decade for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty (2008–2017), and Fight Against Desertification (2010–2019).

Ultimately, the UN Charter, UDHR, guiding principles, declarations, conventions following it, and implementation mechanisms in general are only as powerful as public sentiment allows. The values of the Human Rights Triptych mirror the collective wisdom of almost the entire global community. They need discussion and debate in public fora, because research consistently demonstrates that only chosen values endure. Former Supreme Court Justice Brandeis's feeling that government is our omnipresent teacher has special relevance here.

For the sake of brevity, the above discussion mentioned only the triptych of the United Nations. The Organization of American States, the African Union, the European Union, and the Southeast Asian Human Rights Association, to mention a few, are regional organizations with their own documents and implementation mechanisms. Although their thrusts are similar to those from the United Nations, they appear to have different emphases, such as the European Charter emphasizing economic and social rights and the African Charter emphasizing rights to solidarity.

Implications for Advanced Generalist Social Work Education

These human rights principles, which represent societal values that have crystallized into rights, fulfill human needs and promote well-being. This creates a socially just world and has implications for advanced generalist social work education. This approach emphasizes multipronged levels of intervention to eradicate individual and social malaises. Although demarcation among levels is often blurred, such interventions can be classified roughly as global (meta–macro); whole-population (macro); at-risk (mezzo); clinical (micro); and everyday life (meta–micro) (Wronka, 2008, 2012; Wronka & Staub-Bernasconi, 2012).

Select examples that speak to the relevance of human rights principles on first the global level echo the words of Martin Luther King that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (King, 1963). It emphasizes social work's concerns for every person, everywhere. This is often asserted by David Gil, and world citizenship is emphasized by Jane Addams, often referred to as the mother of social work. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—the organization for which Jane Addams was first co-president—exemplifies this approach through its concerns to eradicate the proliferation of nuclear arms, extreme poverty, and global social and economic inequities in general. The UN Charter has the status of treaty. It must be implemented in the United States (as least according to the federal constitution's Supremacy Clause discussed earlier) and commits all member states to promote full employment and the development of conditions favorable to economic and social progress. Implementation would help realize human rights for every person, everywhere, which is ultimately social work's mandate.

Additionally, implementation of the UN Charter and other facets of the human rights triptych, which are interrelated like guiding principles and reports of special rapporteurs, would alleviate violence against children. Research has demonstrated that violence against children can be a direct result of unemployment, underemployment, and lack of collective bargaining in the workplace (Gil, 1978). Full employment would also provide hope to the mentally ill, whose suffering is prefigured by despair. Such a global consciousness would also alleviate other malaises like AIDS. Policy makers and

activists would seriously need to consider a socially just international order as enunciated throughout the triptych, thus ensuring that victims in developing countries have access to medications at reasonable prices.

During the dawn of the Third Phase of the World Program for Human Rights Education, human rights education has emphasized social media from the preschool to the professional levels. Using the media and other public venues for longstanding social change is a perfectly reasonable intervention on the whole population at the macro level, which generally encompasses interventions in only one country. The metaphor of putting out the burning ship to prevent victims from floating down the river is most amenable here; whereas, the meta–macro seeks interventions that will prevent all ships from burning in the oceans and seas, from which rivers flow. School social workers, for example, could then engage in creative discussions with administrators, teachers, and students for ways to include human rights principles in curricula. Or practitioners could ensure that professional agencies' policies are consistent with human rights documents on medical ethics and the protection of persons with mental illness. Social activists could also have public service announcements, develop human rights shows and even MTV skits that could help spread the word about human rights in an effort to expand people's consciousness. Indeed, teaching about the fundamental principles of human dignity, nondiscrimination, and rights to free expression, health care, and education that should promote tolerance and friendly relations among nations, as asserted in the UDHR, could easily create an attitude among people that no person shall be prejudiced against, or live in poverty or a global hostile environment. One poignant example is that human rights education has been found to be an effective antidote to bullying (Greene, 2006).

Working with vulnerable or at-risk populations is fundamental to social work theory and praxis (Staub-Bernasconi, 2012). Such vulnerable groups include children; undocumented immigrants; minorities; women; indigenous peoples; people with disabilities, including mental illness and substance abuse; workers vulnerable to employer whim; prisoners; and other groups as they evolve. As a human rights profession (Wronka, 2008; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012), social work must adhere to the following principle: Its professionals must view

the aforementioned populations not as charity cases or research specimens, but rather as marginalized people whose voices need to be integrated into policy-making and who should be treated with human dignity. An extreme case was Nazi doctors indicted at Nuremberg for crimes against humanity. Other examples of mezzo- level interventions that derive from human rights documents are forming trade unions for the protection of workers' interests (ICESCR); maternity leave with pay and services for parents to balance family with outside work and public interests (CEDAW); maintenance of contact with both parents for the child in cases of separation and integration of an abused child into the community (CRC); and prohibiting torture by persons in an official capacity (CAT). The micro level is most associated with clinical social work, yet it almost entirely deals with the symptoms of an unjust social order, where other levels of intervention have failed.

Thus, social workers as a whole may strategize advocacy efforts for an amendment to the federal constitution for a right to adequate shelter as asserted in ICESCR. This would specify culturally appropriate housing at a reasonable cost, with adequate infrastructure and lighting, and nearness to employment by its monitoring committee. As an at-risk strategy social workers may organize workers to form a union for reasonable wages and job security. But if there is no right to shelter or collective bargaining, the person may become unemployed and homeless. Thus, the social worker might apply for a grant to construct a homeless shelter, and then not only administer it, but also counsel clients about searching for jobs. Ultimately, he or she would assist the client in overcoming learned helplessness, yet acknowledging somewhat paradoxically that they are victims of an unjust social order.

Also, other clients in hospital and outpatient settings ought to have treatment that is in accordance with such human rights documents as the Protections of Persons with Mental Illness. Thus, the clinician should be aware that diagnoses should not be given on the basis of membership in a minority group or class; no child should be given medication for the convenience of others; patients ought to know of alternatives to treatment, their length, and expense; treatment should be in the least restrictive environment.

At the meta–micro level, the level of the everyday life, social workers can

encourage the use of peer groups as means of support. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous are examples of groups that every clinician knows can have a positive effect on clients and significant others. It is noteworthy here that CEDAW asserts the need for support groups for rural women. Furthermore, social workers can encourage the use of positive supports in a person's environment, an essential component of any psychosocial assessment.

Finally, both quantitative and qualitative research can constantly provide input into best practice models. The key here is that human rights ought to serve as the core modal point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of an intervention. A case in point is a comparison of the UDHR with the U.S. federal and state constitutions. A content analysis of those documents revealed that the U.S. Constitution, although exemplary in the areas of civil and political rights, is almost entirely lacking in economic, social, cultural, and solidarity rights. Former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis urged that state constitutions ought to be laboratories of democracy. But they barely do any better; the only second generation right stated almost consistently is the right to education, which appeared in 41 constitutions (Wronka, 1998). Awareness of these gaps could easily move people to action in their own countries, such as the United States, where roughly 20% of children live in poverty, yet their government constantly touts itself as a leader of human rights.

Select Student Activities and Links to a Curriculum and Exemplary Group Project

If we define education in its etymological origin from the Latin *educare* meaning "to grow, nourish, strengthen," the idea of human rights as ultimately a way of life makes students extremely enthusiastic to apply it not only to their everyday lives, but also their social action projects. Whereas it is infused throughout the social work curriculum at Springfield College, here are select activities that students do in their social action group projects in a course titled Policy Implementation: Social Action in the Struggle for Human Dignity. They describe the relationship between human needs and the three sets of rights discussed earlier. Referring to Article 2 of the UDHR on nondiscrimi-

nation, they do a demographic of groups most affected as pertaining to race, gender, class, and/or other status. They trace a history of the problem through examining legislative, judicial, executive, and public discourse initiatives as they apply to the UDHR. Students also cite relevant major conventions and other guiding principles and declarations.

Students do not have to engage in all the social actions from the meta–macro to the meta–micro levels, but must engage in some substantive actions. These have included organizing readings of human rights documents, commemorating international days, passing bills to monitor states' compliance with international human rights standards, taking out Web pages and networking to sign and ratify certain conventions, urging pharmaceutical companies to abide by Article 28 of the UDHR asserting the "right to a just social and international order" as- the basis for providing reasonably priced HIV medications to developing countries.

Students get "fired up" when the curriculum quotes James Grant (1994), former director of UNICEF, who cited social critic H. L. Mencken in speaking of the need for a "pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible" (p. 9). For instance, students become aware of the UN Charter's assertion that full employment is a human right that must be implemented as the status of a treaty. They wonder why it is rarely in public discourse and alert others of its importance, along with human rights in general. Students also critique an article from *Social Work Speaks* from an advanced generalist perspective (see Wronka, 2008, and www.human-rightsculture.org for an essay on creating a human rights culture, links to human rights and social work resources, select videos, public service announcements, and opportunities to offer comments). An excellent student project on Violence Against Women illustrated an advanced generalist approach with a human rights/social justice orientation that followed the guidelines of the curriculum for the course Policy Implementation: Social Action in the Struggle for Human Dignity.

Social Justice as Struggle

In the final analysis, the challenge for social work education is how to integrate human rights into its theory and praxis to affect quality of life collectively and individually. This is a challenge more specifically for advanced general-

ist practice education. Challenges at the meta–macro level would necessitate massive global coalition building to have countries sign, ratify, and implement international treaties at considerable time and expense. On the macro level, countries inimical to human rights initiatives may attempt to stymie human rights education at the national level. Also, some school boards that might have links to elitist and profit-making companies might be threatened by some human rights documents that advocate collective bargaining. At the mezzo level, identifying at-risk groups might create a self-fulfilling prophecy in that, indeed, such groups might plummet further into society's malaises. These highlight the idea that social justice is a struggle.

The micro-level poses the possibility of working with only a few people and at considerable time and expense. The meta–micro may appear to negate professionalism. Another major challenge is that social work education must deal with the thorny problem of how to work both reactively and proactively. Thus, while counseling the homeless, the homeless keep on coming; while preventing the homeless from coming, the homeless may be dying in the streets.

Finally, we ought to keep in mind that the word *curriculum* is from the Latin *currere*, meaning to run and proceed, often within the context of good deeds and the learning of experience (Curriculum, 2013). Human rights is a powerful tool that ought to run through social work curricula. By keeping the concept of human rights in mind, good deeds and experiential learning can substantively address advanced generalist social work's multipronged levels of intervention and the challenges they pose.

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