

## **Social work promoting community and environmental sustainability: A workbook for global social workers and educators (Volume 2)**

Edited by: [Meredith Powers](#) and Michaela Rinkel

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### **Abstract:**

Incredible work is being done all over the world by social workers addressing issues at the nexus of community and environmental sustainability. We hope this book will inspire you, whether you have been involved with these issues for decades, or you are new to and curious about the topic. This volume of the workbook series focuses primarily on Indigenous voices and knowledge, ecotherapeutic practices, and the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability in social work. As allies with Indigenous peoples, we aim for this workbook resource to make space for those working to decolonize, especially within the social work profession in education, research, and practice. This book is formatted as a workbook, with short lessons accompanied by exercises that help you apply the lessons theoretically and in your own practice. It is intended as a tool for international social work practitioners, students, and educators to help advance the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development theme of working toward environmental sustainability. We hope that by making this workbook available, we are enabling climate justice issues to be acknowledged as urgent and repositioned as central to social work in particular, and to life in general.

**Keywords:** ecosocial work | environmental sustainability | sustainable development | environmentalism | social workers | community development

### **Article:**

**\*\*\*Note: Full text below**



# SOCIAL WORK

**PROMOTING COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:**

A Workbook for Global Social Workers & Educators

Edited by Meredith Powers & Michaela Rinkel



# **Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability: A Workbook for Global Social Workers and Educators**

## **Volume 2**

**Edited by Meredith Powers and Michaela Rinkel**

The International Federation of Social Workers



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# Acknowledgements

We would like to honor those who helped develop the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* and so clearly tied together the environment, sustainability, human rights, and social and economic equality. The *Global Agenda* commitments guide our profession as a whole toward acknowledgement of our role and responsibility to be involved and help the world move in this direction. We are so incredibly proud to be part of a profession that has a global agenda that includes addressing climate change and creating sustainable communities (both ecologically and socially).

We would like to thank IFSW for publishing this tool, and helping us see this vision come true. We knew from the beginning of this project that we wanted, most of all, to create a set of materials that were accessible: free, open access, digital, and, dynamic. You helped to make the seemingly impossible come true.

Most of all we would like to thank our contributing authors. To work with this diverse range of social workers was nothing less than inspiring. At times sustainability work can be isolating and the improvements we see seem too miniscule when faced with the enormous tasks at hand. These contributors, from across the world, are not only doing their part to reshape society, but have built solidarity with all social workers through their efforts. For many authors, this was the first time writing and publishing their work, and we are thankful to them for taking this risk and sharing their stories. We are indebted to each author for their contribution to this collaboration and appreciate their time, and effort. We have learned so much from each of them and consider it an honor to edit their work.

From Meredith:

I especially want to thank my friend and colleague, Fred Besthorn, who is an incredible pioneer with his influential body of scholarship in the area of Deep Ecology, sustainability and social work. Over a decade ago he welcomed me into the social work academic scholars' community and demonstrated how it is possible to lay a foundation of collaboration for our profession's collective work on these topics. Through his encouragement and mentorship I have developed my own professional voice and overcome my "imposter syndrome". I also admire how Fred models self-care and the

enjoyment of our wonderful environment that we strive to preserve and improve.

I am unreservedly grateful to my friend and colleague, Rory Truell, who has championed and supported this workbook series and made publishing it possible through IFSW. I'm also incredibly appreciative that he is always open to my unconventional ideas as I endeavor to advance the *Global Agenda* theme of promoting community and environmental sustainability.

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I will always and forever be grateful to my dear friend and mentor, Dorothy "Dee" Gamble, who not only introduced me to the idea of sustainability in social work in a course she taught during my MSW program, but who continues to be a true supporter of my work and a role model in sustainability, both as a social worker and in her personal life.

I always struggle with balancing my desire to "save" the world, as I pour myself into the work of promoting sustainable communities and environments, with my desire to "savor" the community and environment in which I live; indeed, it makes it hard for me to plan the day. When I must answer my call of passion to this work, I am eternally grateful to my wonderful family (especially, Kevin and Kaia, and my parents) for encouraging me and sacrificing time that we could be savoring together.

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From Michaela:

I express my gratitude to my parents, grandparents and all of my ancestors for embedding within me a deep appreciation of our role as stewards to the land. From appreciation of every type of tree from my father, to love of birds from my mother, kinship with the planet was paramount in their souls and their parenting practices.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many in Hawai'i who are committed to Malama 'Aina, caring and nurturing the land so it can give us all we need to sustain this and future generations. Through my life here, I have come to see a diversity of cultures as the keys to sustainability. I have been challenged to expand my view of my relationship with nature beyond the role of steward. I am in the perfect place to learn.

I thank my mentor, Lorraine Marais, for helping me develop my vision and then bring my actions into concert with it. She assured me that once I acted on my vision, the path and the people would come; indeed!

I want to offer my deepest appreciation to my co-editor, Meredith, someone that I found on this path. I reached out and she gave an immediate "yes." I hope that I can learn to embrace those opportunities and people as she does. Her enthusiasm kept us buoyed through the challenges of the work.

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# Dedication

We dedicate this resource to:

... our relatives: the land, the air, the water, and the other forms of life that, together with us, humans, make up this amazing world in which we live.

... the Indigenous people of the world who have always known the true connections we have with Mother Earth and with each other, and who keep calling us back to this balanced relationship when we forget.

... the oppressed and marginalized people and ecosystems who suffer from injustices when greed and malice pervade, often times disguised as “growth” and “development”.

... the people who tirelessly set about the ongoing, daily tasks of working towards climate justice on global and local levels.

## Foreword

# Embracing Whenua, Manaakitanga, and Ūkaipō in Social Work Practice

By *Miriama R. Scott*

### Author Biography:

*Miriama R. Scott is of Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne, Scottish and English descent and born in Rarotonga, the Cook Islands. Educated at Queen Margaret College in Wellington and after working in a government department, which took Miriama to India and Belgium, Miriama returned to study at the University of Auckland completing a BA in Anthropology, History and Sociology in 1979. Family obligations have meant that the Masters in Sociology, which was started in 1980 has had to be put to one side, although now Miriama is hoping to complete a Masters in Indigenous Studies. The entry into social work has been as a kaiako through the programmes at the Centre for Social Work, Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau (the Auckland College of Education) and Te Whare Takiura o Manukau (the Manukau Institute of Technology). Miriama has returned to te Whare takiura o Manukau after working at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, attached to Counties Manukau District Health Board and has her own consultancy business assisting agencies in strengthening their social service delivery to tangata whenua peoples. Miriama is a registered social worker and writes non-fiction articles, papers, and reviews.*

*Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū te whenua*

‘As people disappear from sight, the land remains’

I write this foreword not as one person but as a representation of all those people who have gone before me and those who are yet to come. I am simply a moment in time that has been extended a great privilege to open the gateway to all the beautiful *kōrero* (discourse/information) that adorns the pages of this most important publication.

The Social Work and Social Development Joint World Conference 2018 in Dublin has “*Environmental and Community Sustainability: Human Solutions in Evolving Societies*” as the theme. It is based on the third pillar in the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* which lays the challenge of “Our Role in Promoting Sustainable Communities and Environmentally Sensitive Development”.<sup>1</sup> This theme serves to remind us of the delicate balance between human need generated by increasing populations and the sustainability of the environment through the care of Mother Earth.

Added to such concerns are the melting of polar ice caps, through continued use of gas emissions that are altering the climatic temperatures; and the warming is resulting in rising ocean levels, with the pending consequence that certain low-lying lands and island nation states, may well be in jeopardy in the very near future.<sup>2</sup>

Natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, such as Kilauea currently, may well be due to shifts in tectonic plates, but it could be that Ruamoko, the son of Papatūānuku (the Earth Mother), is voicing his displeasure at the way his mother is being treated and the harm that is being exacted on her wellbeing. These interpretations refer to the distinctions in relationships between the environment and people based on different forms of knowledge and the value that is accorded such differences.

In Aotearoa New Zealand the Indigenous knowledge connects people and land most evidently in the language, the word *whenua* means both ‘land’ and ‘placenta’. In keeping with the traditions of the *tīpuna* (ancestors) the placenta of a newly born *pepe* (baby) is taken to the ancestral land and through this process the *pepe* is connected to the land: *whenua* to *whenua*.

Also inherently important in this action is the sustainability of *whakapapa* (genealogy) to the land and implies a connection that exemplifies care of one another, the essence of *manaakitanga*. The *whenua* lies in the folds of Papatūānuku to sustain her just as she sustains the *pepe*.

The cultural mores that are typified by this action refer to the symbiotic relationship between land and people, the sustenance and sustainability of one another are imperatives to ensure continuity and longevity. The concept of *ūkaipō*, which translates as ‘the place of eternal sustenance’, is indicative of this relationship.

I will now briefly describe these concepts as they connect to social work practice: *whenua* as context for practice, *manaakitanga* as the core content of practice, and *ūkaipō* as the understanding of place that offers sustenance to practice. The suggestion being proposed is that these concepts, in some form of understanding, pervade the chapters contained in this workbook.

### **Context of Practice: Whenua (connections between land and people)**

*Whenua to whenua*

is not just about a relationship between land and people,  
it is also about a context for social work practice.

For *tangata whenua* of Aotearoa New Zealand the question *No hea koe?* asks 'To where do you belong?' The reply indicates geographical markers that refer to areas of land that form the basis of tribal affiliation, which is endorsed by reference to mountains, rivers, lakes and seas that are the natural boundaries to consolidate the connection. This is the *papakainga* (homeland) where affiliation enables a person to establish *turangawaewae* (a place to stand).

The platform for social work as a profession and as fields of practice is not just a professional identity established by membership that adheres to codes of ethics and conduct; rather it also includes the personal identity which for *tangata whenua* of Aotearoa New Zealand also includes certain practices to remind the social work practitioner of *whakapapa* (genealogy) that sustains the connection to people and as well to the land.

The intrinsic value accorded such connections is predicated on interpretation and *Ko wai koe?* meaning 'Who are you?' If we are not mindful, the knowingness of 'who I am' may well be influenced by the interpretation of a narrower social work professional identity, resulting in the context being determined by a profession rather than the *whenua*.

For me, the ability to sustain 'who I am', the *whakapapa* to the land and the membership in a profession, all contribute to the social work practice I evidence and more importantly, the relationship with the people with whom I work. Land and people are therefore inextricably interwoven in the sustaining of relationships, but more importantly, the sustenance that is accorded each relationship.

## **Content of Practice: Manaakitanga (practice as care)**

Practice as care, whether it emanates from Indigenous knowledge or the profession of social work, is the conduit by which the relationship between Mother Earth and people is sustained and nurtured.

It is proposed that *manaakitanga* (the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others) is the practice or conduit to sustain and nurture the relationship between Mother Earth and people. Thus, the relevance of *manaakitanga* to social work practice and engagement with individuals, families, and communities is undeniable.

The practice of harvesting [\*harakeke\*](#)<sup>3</sup> (a leaf fibre) is indicative of *manaakitanga* both in the process and in the resulting *taonga* (treasure). For *tangata whenua*, *harakeke* has a multiplicity of purposes: woven into articles of clothing; the fibre is used to make rope and fishing lines; the nectar is used as a sweetener; the dried flower stalks were lashed together to make *mōkihi* (rafts), while the gum and roots are used for *rongoa* (traditional medicine).

The *harakeke* is itself referred to as a *whānau* (family) with each part named as a member of the family and by so doing only certain parts are cut for the harvesting process. Any residue of *harakeke* after the preparation and weaving processes have been completed are returned to the *whānau*, being laid at the base of the plant.

Certain *karakia* (prayers) are offered before the harvesting of the *harakeke* occurs, recognising the separation of the *whānau* as well as the source of the sustenance that sustains the *harakeke*, Papatūānuku. The relationship imbued in *karakia* is indicative of the symbiotic relationship between the environment and people, served by *manaakitanga* not exploitation.

If *manaakitanga* is applied in social work as the content of practice, then 'the care of and for' land and people and their inextricable relationship would be evidenced in practice through the structures and purposes and fiscal management of organisations in the social services sector, and in the policies and obligations recognised by the social work profession at large.

Social work practice weaves a connection between social workers and *tangata whaiora* (people seeking wellbeing, service users), while the rope is exacted to bind people within the *kaupapa* (care plan) of organisations and

the role of professional membership is to ensure the *rongoa* of self-care is actively pursued by the members. The relationships built by the tangibility of these connections are sustained by *manaakitanga*.

The difficulty that social work practitioners are experiencing is that the current work environment is being increasingly influenced by budgetary constraints, a rising presence of risk and intergenerational concerns that are challenging the capacity for social workers to practice competently and effectively through *manaakitanga*. As a result, burnout is becoming a common experience amongst social work practitioners.

Whereas previously, social work practitioners would have practiced alongside *tangata whaiora* (people seeking wellbeing, service users) to achieve some form of resolution to the presenting issue or issues, irrespective of the length of time. Now the acceptance of a 'revolving door policy' is becoming all too frequent; the rationale being to meet time constraints, manage diminishing resources and adopt some form of self-preservation.

As a result, the practice of *manaakitanga* is compromised in social work practice by external factors such as contractual obligations, financial considerations and expediency in the delivery of service, redefining the sustainability of relationships and the connection to identity as a *tangata whenua* person who is a social work practitioner.

### **Contact of Practice: Ūkaipō (the place of eternal sustenance)**

The source of eternal sustenance is the land  
and it sustains social work professionals.

*Ūkaipō* (the place of eternal sustenance) is where the affiliation to particular land is consolidated as a *tangata whenua* person (person of the land). I come from the land and so shall I return to the land of the *tīpuna* (ancestors) as I begin the next journey. The certainty of this connection therefore sustains 'who I am', my identity is not only nurtured by the physical affiliation to land but also to the perception of space, both of which nurture how I practice as a person and as a social worker. Indeed, it could be said 'where I am from' has a great influence on 'who I am'. As Royal suggests, "people's emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves are born daily from the land, and thought itself is seen as coming from the land" (p. 40).<sup>4</sup>

The value of *ūkaipō* is also embedded in the connections to people who affiliate to the land and the language that is used to convey the connections. The space that is created by the connection between land and people is transcended by language, which nurtures and sustains the understanding of *whakapapa* (genealogy). The three important determinants of land, people and language are instrumental in how practice is exercised and how this practice influences the profession of social work. More importantly, the certainty of *ūkaipō* in a person's understanding sustains the *taumata* (platform) for ethical and competent social work practice.

If eternal sustenance implies the existence of nurturing, then how is this present in the profession and practice of social work? As a *tangata whenua* person who is a social work practitioner, is the nurturing an integral part of Indigenous practices such as *manaakitanga* but a position of contention when considering the notion of professionalism? Does the notion of boundaries indicate the difference between ethical and unethical social work practice, yet bring into dispute the legitimacy of *koha* (contribution with the connotation of reciprocity) as a practice of acknowledging hospitality or a form of *manaaki* (support, caring for)? Some might consider this as crossing ethical boundaries, but others view it as an essential demonstration of *ūkaipō*. *Koha* involves the many ways that we engage in reciprocity with our surroundings.

This dilemma is about definition and the execution of practices that may have different origins and hold different values depending on who or what is doing the defining. If I am 'from the land' the obligation to sustain the land is evidenced in my practice and if the practice is premised on *whakapapa* and *manaakitanga* then I am continually nurturing the connections and relationships with people. However, depending on how connections and relationships are defined, for example based on a narrow understanding of a professional identity and not taking into account where a practitioner is from, then the ability to nurture may well be constrained. Thus, the identity of **who** I am may be influenced by **what** I am and dismiss **where** I come from. As agents of social change, social work practitioners are obligated to recognise the tenuous relationship between practice and a delivery of service; between the perception of 'who I am' and the definition of professionalism; and between the nurturing of *whānau* in direct relationship to compliance with 'boundaries'. These tensions ultimately reverberate against the very land that sustains life and which we as people claim to be the source of our wellbeing.

### **Practice Examples from Workbook Chapters**

Indeed, many of the strengths of these concepts and tensions within the professional practice of social work, which I have laid out above, are also portrayed throughout this workbook in various forms. For example, Martin and Quiroga-Menéndez refer to the marginalisation of Indigenous practices and the ways social workers can advocate with and for Indigenous peoples in their chapter, 'Advocating for Social and Environmental Justice and Human Rights: Listening to Indigenous Voices'. And, social work responses and the reassertion of Indigenous strategies to mitigate climate changes are ably discussed by Masoga and Shokane in their chapter, 'Towards an Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Social Work Strategies in Coping with Climate Change: An Afro-sensed Approach'. While Kime, Boetto and Bell, in their chapter, 'Wise Practices with Indigenous Australians: Adapting to a Changing Planet', discuss the cultural significance and the environmental wisdom in the care of Country, highlighting the idea that local issues are best resolved by local solutions. In keeping with the IFSW global definition of social work, the importance of Indigenous knowledge and practices are affirmed in the relationship between people and the environment.

The importance of place is emphasized by Trinidad in her chapter, 'Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place: Claiming Place at Multiple Levels of Sustainability and Critical Social Work Practice'. The argument of Engstrom in her chapter, 'Reconnecting with the Earth', along with the chapter by Powers and Harmon, 'The Mighty Powers of Mud: Ecotherapeutic Practices for Personal and Professional Development', are collectively powerful reminders of place, the tangible connection to Mother Earth, and the mutually beneficial relationship; these concepts are inherent in Indigenous knowledges and practices.

The promotion of community development while enhancing environmental protection and sustainability is progressed by Moonga in his chapter, 'Sustainable Community Development Practices through Environmental Protection in Zambia'. While Zambia is the focus for this discussion the relevancy is pertinent globally and the suggestion that community development work is a method of social work practice is of particular interest. The debate is further developed by Stavros, Constantinos, Marios, and Nicolas-George in considering the constant struggle between ecological values and economic quality, which are experienced at the local level, presenting the necessity for collaboration between agencies and disciplines.



These issues are raised in their chapter, 'Environmental Sustainability through Interdisciplinary Partnerships with Community-Based Interventions'.

The scope of social work practice and injustices inflicted on the environment and on specific marginalized groups of people, particularly in relationship to mental health, are discussed by Cuskelly, McCann, and Murphy in their chapter, 'Partnership Approaches to Address the Impacts of Environmental, Social and Economic Injustices on Mental Wellbeing with the Traveller Community in Ireland'. Narusson, Geurden and Kool, see the benefits for mental health in deriving solutions and inspiration from engagement with the environment and present this in their chapter, 'Promoting Mental Health: Engagement with the Environment as a Source of Solutions and Inspiration'.

While the innovation of thought that is explored in the chapters is important for social work and the environment, the ever-present challenge of financial capacity is still an influence. The socio-political challenges that are faced within a welfare model as discussed by Vincenti in his chapter, 'Challenges of a Sustainable Development Approach to Social Work in a Danish Welfare State Context', are perhaps indicative of just some of these issues. Rabadi further develops the notion of challenge when examining communities under military occupation in his chapter, 'Social Work on Social and Environmental Issues in Communities that are Under Military Occupation'.

As Boetto, Bell and Kime propose in their chapter, 'Holistic Ecosocial Work: A Model for Transformative Change through Being, Knowing and Doing', there is a necessity to realise the philosophical aspects of practice so that the dominant discourse can be recognised with a view to facilitating informed ecosocial work. The presence of power and its complexity is further discussed by Cwikel and Blit-Cohen in their chapter, 'Charting Strategies to Social Sustainability: Lessons from Community Environmental Struggles', as they critically examine the role of social workers in developing, alongside communities, creative tactics to enhance success in community environmental struggles.

The pertinence of age as implied in *whakapapa* and its relevance to environmental sustainability is discussed by Tatum and colleagues in their chapter, 'Youth Empowerment through Interdisciplinary Outreach', while Casal Sánchez presents the value of traditional knowledge as held by elderly people in her chapter, 'Aging and Sustainability'.

The thought that promulgates the connections between people and land, and between people and the environment is a consequence of perception. Rinkel and Mataira state in their chapter, 'Developing Critical Self-Awareness to Incorporate Sustainability into Worldviews', that a worldview is facilitated through culture; and, if sustainability is to be an objective then the recognition and nurturing of shifting worldviews may be critical to explore. Finally, Wheeler, in his chapter, 'Teaching Environmental Empathy in the Social Work Curriculum', proposes how to work with students of social work and practitioners to build environmental empathy as a mechanism for generating awareness and sustainability for the future.

## Summary

*He taonga, no te whenua  
Me hoki ano, ki te whenua*

'What is given by the land  
Should be returned to the land'

The challenges for our profession which I have presented here and which are discussed throughout the workbook relate to what our roles are in addressing a warming climate, melting ice caps, shifting tectonic plates and a rate of consumerism that is having such an adverse effect on the environment. Perhaps the response lies in the determination of origin, the delicate balance between land and people, nurturing and need, sustainability and exploitation, longevity and immediacy. But of greatest importance is the legacy that is left for those who are yet to come.

By using the great variety of chapters in this workbook as a resource, we can help to shape the profession of social work to overcome tensions in professional identity and embrace the concepts of *whenua* as context for practice, and practice as care in *manaakitanga*, and the contact of practice in *ūkaipō*, so that as a profession we can honor the concept of 'what is given by the land should be returned to the land'.

*Mauriora* (The Spirit of Wellbeing)!

Miriama R. Scott

Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne

Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association

Aotearoa New Zealand

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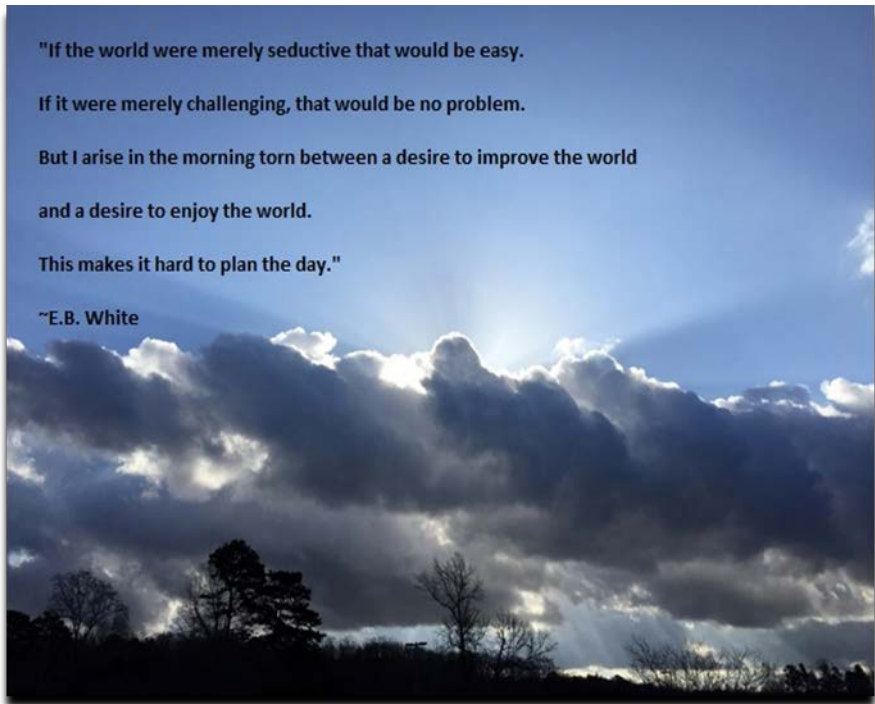
"If the world were merely seductive that would be easy.

If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem.

But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world  
and a desire to enjoy the world.

This makes it hard to plan the day."

~E.B. White



## Preface

# To ‘Savor’ or ‘Save’ the World? It’s Both

*By Meredith C. F. Powers and Michaela Rinkel*

### **Authors’ Biographies:**

**Meredith C. F. Powers**, PhD, MSW, is an assistant professor and a Sustainability Faculty Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA. Her current research includes the professional socialization of social workers, university-community partnerships for sustainability, climate justice, and issues of climate migration and environmental refugees. She established and administers the growing, online network: ‘Green/Eco Social Work Collaborative Network’ for social workers around the world who are committed to ecological justice. Among other engagements, Powers was recently invited to speak at the United Nations on climate justice and sustainability as part of the annual Social Work Day event. Email: [MCFPowers@UNCG.edu](mailto:MCFPowers@UNCG.edu)

**Michaela Rinkel**, PhD, MSW is an Associate Professor and the BSW Program Director at Hawai’i Pacific University, USA. Her research interests include the intersection of social sustainability and social work, spirituality and social work practice, the development of curricular resources to support the integration of sustainability in social work education, and the importance of culture and localization to sustainability. Email: [mrinkel@hpu.edu](mailto:mrinkel@hpu.edu)

We believe that this workbook, *Volume 2*<sup>1</sup> of this workbook series, comes at a critical time for the profession as it offers multiple perspectives which challenge the profession to take action as we seek to **save** or “improve the world”, but to also be mindful of our relationship with Mother Earth as we seek to **savor** or “enjoy the world”. We must find the balance of **both** as we seek to promote community and environmental sustainability as social workers.

We are pleased to offer, once again, an incredible resource to encourage the profession to embrace its role. We had such a great response to the first workbook that we decided that we should offer another volume. In this second volume we aimed to broaden the content on particular topics and voices that we felt were lacking in [Volume 1](#).<sup>2</sup> Thus, *Volume 2*<sup>1</sup> focuses primarily on Indigenous voices and knowledge, eco-therapeutic practices, and the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability in social work. We hope that by making this workbook series available, we are enabling urgent climate justice issues to be acknowledged and repositioned as central to social work in particular, and to life in general.

Around the world, the ecological crisis is growing more severe by the day, and people's lives are in peril as a result of the injustices created in the way we are handling ambitions for growth and development. We, the editors, are currently positioned in the USA and continue to find ourselves in a context that is rife with environmental injustice and calamities: the dismantling of the Environmental Protection Agency, the ongoing injustices challenging the water protectors in the face of the Dakota Access Pipeline, threats to eliminate school meal programs that work to assuage food injustice, the reversal of renewable energy progress and an embracing of coal, gas, and oil, and divisive policies toward immigrants and refugees, including many environmental refugees. In times like these, we may be prone to despair, fear, and even paralysis from eco-grief. Working on this resource has been cathartic for us as we felt we could offer something to address the community and environmental sustainability issues in the world; it was also a wonderful sense of relief as we read the contributing authors' work and were reminded we are part of an entire profession of social workers doing their part all over the world.

We approach life, in both personal and professional endeavors, from a stance of 'cultural humility' rather than 'cultural competence', meaning no matter how much we learn, we will likely never become competent in another culture. Rather, we approach other cultures with honor and respect, always acknowledging our humble position of outsider. Neither of us are Indigenous, but we are indebted to those who patiently have allowed us to come alongside them as we learn about other cultures and ways of knowing, and try to integrate these into our practice, research, and teaching. Indeed, we are deeply grateful to all the authors who have shared their knowledge and expertise with us in the chapters in this workbook; we have learned so much from them and know that the global audience will as

well. We hope that it allows you to not only approach the world with a new mindset or perspective, but will also enhance your cultural humility.

We acknowledge the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples throughout the world, and the ongoing marginalization of oppressed populations. We acknowledge that we, the co-editors, come from positions of power and privilege. Within our personal and professional lives, and especially through this workbook resource, we aim to position ourselves as allies with Indigenous peoples as we facilitate and make space for those working to decolonize, especially within the social work profession in education, research, and practice.

### **How to Use this Book**

We are excited that you have chosen to read *Volume 2*<sup>1</sup> of the workbook series: *Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability: A Workbook for Global Social Workers and Educators*. We also encourage you to read *Volume 1*<sup>2</sup> if you have not already done so. We hope this workbook series will inspire you, whether you have been involved with these issues for decades, or you are new and curious about the topic.

We encourage you to slow down and be mindful and present as you read and process the great expertise the authors have so graciously offered you in these pages. Take time to look up things you may not know about, to deliberate on them, speak to others about them, then return to these chapters and read them again. You may even reach out to the authors if you are eager to learn more.

The workbooks in this series are to be used as tools by audiences of international social work practitioners, students, and educators with the aim to advance [The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitment to Action](#) (*Global Agenda*)<sup>3</sup> theme of “working toward environmental sustainability”. The four themes of the *Global Agenda* are interwoven and all equally important for social work and social development: promoting social and economic equalities, promoting the dignity and worth of all peoples, working toward environmental sustainability, and strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships.

This workbook series was created to be a digital, free, open access, dynamic, and interactive tool. Thus, you may download the workbooks in this series

for free and use them as digital tools. If you decide to print, please consider sustainable printing options (e.g., recycled paper, double sided printing). In addition, this book is available for purchase as a hard copy, and we are pleased to note that they are printed on recycled paper (100% post-consumer waste).

We hope that you will find the entire book an interesting and helpful tool. However, we also designed it so that each chapter could stand alone and could be used individually as modules in formal courses or self-study on the array of topics covered. The book is in the style of a workbook, with short lessons and exercises that follow to help you apply the lesson theoretically and in thinking about your own practice. These lessons could apply to research, policy, ethics, practice, theory, interdisciplinary work, etc.

The chapters are organized along some themes that we saw, but each chapter can be used separately or with other chapters around other themes. Furthermore, they can be coupled with chapters from *Volume 1*.<sup>2</sup> We begin the workbook with chapters on being mindful about our frameworks and worldviews, and how our positionality influences our worldviews. Some chapters suggest that if we are to seek sustainability in our communities and the environment, we may need to have a shift to embrace new concepts and frameworks. Many chapters draw upon the rich content of a variety of Indigenous perspectives, such as Wise Practices in Australian Indigenous groups, to the cosmview of the Aymara Indigenous people in Chile, to Afro-sensed approaches in South Africa. Some are more focused on interdisciplinary community practice for sustainability, some reminding us to incorporate the wisdom of all constituents, such as youth and older adults. These chapters vary from working on community and environmental sustainability issues with oppressed populations such as the Travellers in Ireland, to those in military occupied territories of Palestine. Others teach us about alternative sustainable practices in Estonia, Israel, Spain, and Zambia, and environmental conservation and education efforts in Greece and the US. Finally, some are focused on promoting mental health in connection with ecotherapeutic practices and learning about environmental empathy. These lessons are for us as social workers to incorporate into our daily lives, as well as with our professional practice with our service users/communities.

We have attempted to create a tool that has a breadth of topics that all acknowledge the position of social work in the interdisciplinary, global



movement to address climate change and sustainability issues. We acknowledge that there are infinite topics not covered in this workbook series. We hope to expand the breadth of topics in future volumes. We also acknowledge that the topics that are covered in this book could each be written about for volumes worth of content, yet we have asked the contributing authors to briefly present the material in a few short pages. Thus, we have attempted to bring some added dimensions of depth as the reader can interactively engage in guided, self-study with hyperlinks sprinkled throughout the chapters, linking to resources beyond the chapter. The reader, particularly instructors, may also find useful the additional resources provided in the summary notes at the end of each chapter.

Each chapter includes terminology and concepts that may have multiple meanings across contexts. The authors approach the topics from a variety of perspectives and paradigms, which they elaborate on in their own chapters. We hope that it is evident, through the reading of these chapters, that there is no one way to “do sustainability” in social work and, indeed, no single, correct definition of the term of sustainability.

Each chapter begins with a brief biography of the contributing authors. These authors are from all over the world and bring with them their own unique experiences and expertise. There is a range of contributing authors from academics to practitioners; many chapters are co-authored by social workers along with those from other disciplines and/or community members. While we realize this volume is still not an exhaustive representation of all perspectives or of all the amazing work being done by social workers around the world on these issues, we hope this will at least move the conversation forward. Also, the views and opinions in each chapter are of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the co-editors or the publisher. If anyone would like to discuss alternative viewpoints, please contact the authors; their contact information is provided with their biographies at the beginning of each chapter.

### **It’s Both: Finding Balance**

We chose the quote at the beginning of this preface as it portrayed our vision for this resource: to encourage the balance between **both** of our needs as social workers — to **save** or “improve the world” and to **savor** or “enjoy the world”. Indeed, we can’t only go about each day tirelessly saving the world (the people and ecosystems which are unjustly treated). If we did, we would surely burn out. Thus, we must also find time to enjoy the world,

the connections to Mother Earth and to each other. We must find ways to slow down, perhaps host a no-waste, neighborhood [picnic](#)<sup>4</sup> and a “swap shop” to share meals and things that clutter our space, but which could be useful to another, or perhaps take a walk on a beach or in a woodland trail, you could even do so barefoot.

We know how often we are torn with the dilemma of “how to plan our day”, how to spend our precious time. We are thankful that you are choosing to spend some of your time exploring this workbook and we hope it is a useful tool for you, both personally and professionally. We hope it inspires you to **savor** the world so that you are reminded ‘who you are’ and ‘why’ you want to **save** the world in the first place. We need you; we need you strong and refueled and working by our sides to promote community and environmental sustainability. Thanks for who you are and all you do!

### **Summary Notes:**

We thank the reader for learning with us, and we appreciate our international audience accommodating our collaborative book being offered in English, with limited translations available at this time, as we do not have the capacity to publish the entire workbook series in multiple languages. We affirm that all languages are equal and English is in no way superior to other languages, it simply happens to be our native language as the co-editors. We are grateful to the authors who have responded to our invitation to submit their translated chapters in their own native languages and we are pleased to provide them as part of the Appendix in this workbook.

We also want to offer an invitation to all social workers to join the ‘Green/EcoSocial Work Network’, an international, collaborative network for sharing ideas, resources, asking questions, and building solidarity around ways to address sustainability and ecological justice issues within our profession. To join, please contact the group’s administrator: Meredith C. F. Powers at [MCFPowers@UNCG.edu](mailto:MCFPowers@UNCG.edu)

## Resources:

1. Powers, M. & Rinkel, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Social Work Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability: A Workbook for Social Work Practitioners and Educators* (Vol. 2). Switzerland: International Federation of Social Work (IFSW).
2. Rinkel, M. & Powers, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Social Work Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability: A Workbook for Social Work Practitioners and Educators* (Vol.1). Switzerland: International Federation of Social Work (IFSW). (Free, downloadable PDF at <http://ifsw.org/product/books/social-work-promoting-community-and-environmental-sustainability-free-pdf/>)
3. International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). (2012). *The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitment to Action*. Retrieved from <http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/globalagenda2012.pdf>
4. Picnic 4 Degrowth. <https://picnic4degrowth.wordpress.com/>

# Developing Critical Self-Awareness to Incorporate Sustainability into Worldviews

By *Michaela Rinkel and Peter Mataira*

## Authors' Biographies:

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*Peter Mataira* is of Maori descent from Aotearoa New Zealand. He earned his PhD in social policy and social work and holds a M.Phil in ethnographic sociology and a BSW with a minor in anthropology. Dr. Mataira's research and teaching interests are in community and organizational capacity building, social economics, entrepreneurship, sustainability, Indigenous practice and knowledge development. When not working Dr. Mataira enjoys running, reading, music, tennis, rugby, travel, and being with family. He is faculty at the School of Social Work, Hawaii Pacific University and serves as the MSW Program Chair. Email: [pmataira@hpu.edu](mailto:pmataira@hpu.edu)

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe the many connections between culture and sustainability.
2. Define worldview, describe how it is developed, and articulate your own worldview as it relates to sustainability and the relationship between humans and nature.
3. Consider the role of decolonization in the transformation to sustainability-based worldviews and how this impacts and/or transforms the social work profession.

**Lesson:**

The [doomsday clock](#)<sup>1</sup> continues to click closer to midnight, demanding changes to our social systems in order to deal with the growing ecological crisis. Despite this, there is a consistent flow of evidence of resistance to the transformations that are needed at the individual and societal level. In the United States, polls indicate a lack of belief on the part of many about the effects of humans on our ecosystem.<sup>2</sup> Nascent national policies enacted in the US to make small changes toward a sustainable future are, at present 2018, being rolled back. Even in social work, though progress has been made to include topics such as environmental justice in the curriculum of our training programs, there is little evidence of the acknowledgement of or action to address the magnitude of transformation needed in the profession. The profession of social work needs to redefine itself in light of this urgent ecological crisis.

One evident barrier to making these needed transformations is the dogged presence of worldviews that separate humans from nature, usually placing humans in a dominant role over nature. If change begins at the individual level, then examination of our personal worldviews (ways of thinking about how the world exists and operates) is a necessary initial step to transformation. This chapter explores how culture influences the creation and application of worldviews, and how those worldviews relate to sustainability. Activities are presented that ask the reader to explore their worldview, challenge the assumptions inherent in it, and offer an opportunity to explore alternative worldviews.

**Culture**

As champions of the person-in-environment framework, our profession embraces the centrality of context in understanding and assisting individuals, groups, and communities. Culture is a primary vehicle for context. Culture, as defined for this chapter, is the totality of learned meanings maintained by identifiable segments of society that are transmitted from one generation to the next.<sup>3</sup> Matsumoto calls attention to the fact that this definition is not limited to humans, “fish swim in schools, wolves hunt in packs, bees communicate sources of food to each other” (p.4).<sup>4</sup> What makes humans different from other social animals such as these, he suggests, is the complexity of human social life. We are part of multiple groups (consider age, race, occupation, socio-economic status, country of origin, citizenship status, religion, etc.), each with different purposes and rules, that we are moving in and out of constantly. Culture

creates, organizes and maintains social systems in order to give us a chance at social order and prevent the ever-present possibility of social chaos.

The Hawaiian concepts of *ahupua'a* and *ho'oponopono* are examples of cultural practice that have relevance to sustainability and social work. The *ahupua'a*, which are designated sections of fertile land that stretch between volcanic ridges and extend from the mountains to the ocean were vital for food conservation and sustainable community socio-ecological living. Hawaiian worldviews/belief systems pertaining to sustainability and sustenance were predicated on the delicately tuned balance and interplay between people, the land and the cosmos. *Ahupua'a* were culturally appropriate, ecologically aligned, geographic-specific areas abundant in resources.<sup>5</sup> Stewardship was sanctioned through compliance to traditional rules of *kapu* (the setting of boundaries and application of checks and balances) to guard against resource depletion that may threaten survival. *Kapu* was also critical to mediating individual and family disputes and guiding principled behavior towards reconciliation, healing, and forgiveness. Known as *ho'oponopono* (making things right), individual, family and community wellbeing could be effectively sustained.<sup>6</sup> Hawaiians continue to celebrate abundance through their appreciation of land and this inspires creativity and innovation through expressions of performance - dance and rituals - that have been around for generations and still continue today.

### **Cultural Humility**

Social workers are not strangers to working with and understanding the importance of culture. Over the years, many models have been developed seeking to identify the role of culture in social work practice including multiculturalism, cultural diversity, cultural competence, and cultural humility (see [Kohli, Huber & Faul](#) for an exploration of the history of culture in social work education).<sup>7</sup> Across models, developing self-awareness is an essential first step. The aspect of self-awareness addressed in the early models regarded the practitioner's own cultural identity, including personal values and beliefs and the associated biases and comfort level in cross-cultural situations; and the primary aim beyond self-awareness was appreciating another person's identity.<sup>8</sup> These models posit that as a result of understanding one's own beliefs and identity, one is better able to differentiate between self and other; and, thus, better able to minimize assumptions and biases that might interfere with the understanding of the other. Some typical questions used to develop self-awareness in these models might be: What are my beliefs around what a 'healthy family' is?

How were 'authority' and 'affection' understood and managed in my culture? What emotions do I display comfortably and frequently? What are some of my personality characteristics that are rewarded by my culture?<sup>9</sup>

There has been some critique of the use of self-awareness in these models as being directed toward comfort with other cultures rather than developing awareness of the power differentials that are brought to relationships (e.g., the social worker-client relationship) via culture.<sup>10</sup> The 'cultural humility model' focuses on the development of **critical** awareness of the self in relation to others, including the role of power, inequality and history of marginalization and privilege in one's own history.<sup>11</sup> The addition of the word 'critical' is directed at attaining a deeper understanding of power and privilege in the shaping of one's own identity, creating space for exploring how power and privilege can shape a client's or community's identity, and how those differences and similarities affect the relationship between social worker and client/community. The argument for a cultural humility model is that it is directed more at transforming the systems that perpetuate oppression and inequality in our society and developing appreciation and respect for, even if one does not find 'comfort with' a different culture. Some typical questions used to develop self-awareness in this model might be: What are my cultural identities? How do my cultural identities shape my worldview? What views do I hold from my culture that perpetuate oppression? How does my position and identities in various groups help or hinder my connection to clients/communities? How do my practice behaviors actively challenge power imbalances and involve marginalized communities?<sup>11</sup>

### **Understanding Your Worldview**

"The best way to face the unknown is by not knowing"

~ Stephan Bhaerman writing as Swami Beyondananda <sup>12</sup>

"It's the best possible time to be alive,  
when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong."

~ Tom Stoppard

Your worldview is your philosophy of life and the world; it is shaped by culture and is dynamic in that it changes based on knowledge and experiences developed over time. One's journey of developing a worldview, we might presume, begins with a willingness and openness to learn and share, and a confidence to face and overcome a range of fears – a fear of exclusion, fear of inadequacy, fear of unfamiliarity, fear of

misunderstanding and fear of making mistakes, a fear of guilt. Having a contrived or intentional worldview of the relationship between our humanity and nature is the quintessential apprehension of sustainability.

Sustainability is a way of thinking or an aspect of worldview that focuses attention on creating a world that encourages the mutual flourishing of the human and natural world, both now and into the future. It is a transformational way of thinking that, once embraced, requires changes in behavior, decision-making, policy development, economic systems, and other social structures. To embrace sustainability is to transform the very structures that define and support society. These transformations will look differently from one community/culture to the next. Communities whose worldviews already incorporate aspects of sustainability may require less transformation. However, many societies will require significant transformations as their worldviews are so exclusive of sustainability.

If needed, how do we go about changing our worldviews to be more sustainable, and how do we help the communities in which we live and work to adopt more sustainable values and beliefs in their worldviews? First, you need to be aware of your own worldview, developing a self-awareness, as mentioned previously. An important aspect is understanding your ideas, beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, and values about the role of nature and relationship with nature in human life. Robinett makes the case for examining our own worldviews:

What separates us from nature is the ability to understand our place within it. This cognitive capacity of ours has historically been the cause of a perceived division between man and nature. However, in order to achieve a sustainable future in which humans assume a more natural role and have less of an impact it is imperative that we reconsider our role and relationship with nature. A change in the way we regard nature has obvious political, economic, and social repercussions, but our cognitive ability obliges us to reevaluate our position in the world rather than continue to degrade it.<sup>13</sup>



David Lipton and Steve Bhaerman, in writing about the transformations necessary to alter the path toward human extinction, that we seem to be on, state:

By stepping outside our *stories*, we can see that stories are, well, merely stories, no more real than words on a restaurant menu are edible. However, the meaning we bring to those words ultimately determines our choices of what we end up eating. By lifting ourselves outside the matrix of unquestioned beliefs, we allow new stories to emerge that will take us [forward] (p. 4).<sup>12</sup>

As mentioned in the discussion above regarding cultural humility, developing self-awareness is not enough as it does not necessarily engender transformation. Understanding how one views the relationship between humans and environment needs to include dynamics of power and oppression (e.g., are humans outside of/over nature, or an equal part of nature). And, this needs to be followed by an exploration of how those views have affected others, including the land, air, water, plants, and animals who share this planet. Recent work on decolonization and indigenization are informative in this critical assessment of the effects of our worldviews.

### **Decolonization and Sustainability**

One effect of colonization was, in many parts of the world, a suppression of cultures that were more in concert with sustainability, including many Indigenous cultures (see chapter 4 in this volume for a discussion of the colonization experiences of the Aymara, Dakota and Lakota peoples). Colonization drastically altered the societies that were colonized by restructuring the economies for the colonizers' own benefit, and ignoring the needs, values, and knowledge of the colonized peoples.<sup>14</sup> Transforming our global society to one that is based on sustainability means "change of the dominant monoculture of Globalisation into a diversity of cultures of Sustainability" (p.27).<sup>15</sup>

The social work profession decolonizes when it, "divests itself of its colonizing origins and oppressive practice toward Indigenous communities and removes itself from the inclination to define the profession by the reference points created by its Western origins" (p. 979).<sup>16</sup> Indigenization refers to the need for social work to transform practices to suit the local context of practice. There is a need to indigenize social work because of the shortcomings and inadequacies of western social work theories and practices in addressing social problems for many communities, including,

but not limited to, Indigenous communities. In social work, decolonization and indigenization unmask the profession's uncomfortable ties to coloniality; that is, to the forced marginalization of Indigenous people, the annexation and occupation of their ancestral lands, and the appropriation of their cultural knowledge. It challenges us as social workers to resist the systematic assigning of Indigenous people to sub categories of social and political class. And, entreats us to accept Indigenous knowledge and processes which are critical to our understanding of life's concentric dualities and relational interconnectedness that bind our senses of place and belonging. Decolonization as a process, in this manner, challenges the core assumptions of social work and social work education forcing us to continually interrogate the integrity of our practice and our obligation as change agents to fight for global sustainability and [environmental justice](#).<sup>17</sup>

In 2013, the University of Hawaii, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work developed the first national competency standard for decolonizing social work. This standard is derived from the school's commitment to indigenize its curriculum and seek reaccreditation based on these efforts. The standard set out to measure social work students' competency to:

Engage, honor, and respect Indigenous culture towards decolonized professional practice (EPAS 10):

Fairness and justice for Indigenous people and respect for traditional ways of knowing requires understanding processes that actively seek to decolonize dominant cultural hegemony. Social workers are informed about institutional barriers and cultural intolerance; strive to eliminate all forms of injustice; and, acknowledge the inalienable rights of Indigenous people to self-determine.

Social workers will be able to:

1. understand the impact of inhabitation and occupation of Indigenous lands and the effects of historic cultural trauma on the lives and experience of Indigenous people;
2. recognize the significance of place in developing and communicating culturally resonant practice;
3. respect local traditions, protocols, ceremony, Guesthood, and spirituality as central to decolonized professional practice;
4. demonstrate knowledge of their own culture and associated beliefs, values.<sup>18,19</sup>

Decolonizing social work relates directly to sustainability as it lifts up and values the Indigenous understanding that the source of all life is connection to land, an essential aspect needed in our worldview if we are to create meaningful transformation in the face of the global ecological crisis. By decolonizing social work, mainstream social work practices and professional identities (which were developed within postmodern industrial growth model) are critically re-evaluated and transformed based on Indigenous concepts and values; thus, social workers are more able to embrace sustainability. Educators, researchers, and practitioners therefore need to develop and maintain a stance of cultural humility, and remain open-minded to appreciating that all cultures offer reflective explanations to understanding people in relation to land and their environment. Thus, decolonization in social work creates space for an important paradigm shift needed for the profession to expand its comprehension of what sustainability, collective responsibility, and resiliency mean in action.

### **Summary**

The intent of this chapter is not to suggest that there is one worldview that is sustainable and all of the others are not; that would simply be a new effort at colonization. Rather, the world benefits from diversity, including diverse worldviews. The import is on the critical examination of those worldviews in relation to aspects of sustainability for those around us (human and non-human).

Through global endeavors towards sustainability and efforts of decolonization and indigenization, society has made significant progress in beginning to address the ecological crisis; however, there is still much to be done and with critical urgency. We must continue to become more aware of our worldviews and develop cultural humility so that we are open to ideas, such as Indigenous knowledge and sustainability, and allow them to re-shape or shift our worldviews. While we anticipate change gradually ensuing at the individual level as people shift their worldviews to embrace sustainability, it must *ipso facto* transcend and connect to more systemic and structural level change if we are to impact the ecological crisis and the related injustices. These transformations must take place at a societal level, as well as within our profession of social work.

## Application:

### Exercise 1: Assessing Your Connectedness to Nature

A useful starting point in the exploration of incorporating sustainability into your worldview is critical self-awareness and exploration of your beliefs regarding human connectedness to nature. The “Connectedness to Nature Scale” (below) was designed to explicitly measure the degree to which a person feels emotionally connected to nature and cognitive beliefs about the environment or an environmental attitude.<sup>20</sup> The scale below is used with permission of the author.<sup>20</sup> As a starting point to understanding your cognitions and feelings related to nature, please answer each of these questions in terms of the way you generally feel. There are no right or wrong answers. After you have completed the scale, compare your responses to someone else’s and discuss how this impacts your ability to incorporate sustainability into your worldview.

Connectedness to Nature Scale	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	5
I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I recognize and appreciate the intelligence of other living organisms.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I often feel disconnected from nature. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	5
When I think of my life, I imagine myself to be part of a larger cyclical process of living.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I often feel a kinship with animals and plants	1	2	3	4	5	5
I feel as though I belong to the Earth as equally as it belongs to me.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I often feel part of the web of life.	1	2	3	4	5	5
I feel that all inhabitants of Earth, human, and nonhuman, share a common ‘life force’	1	2	3	4	5	5

Like a tree can be part of a forest, I feel embedded within the broader natural world.	1	2	3	4	5
When I think of my place on Earth, I consider myself to be a top member of a hierarchy that exists in nature. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel like I am only a small part of the natural world around me, and that I am no more important than the grass on the ground or the birds in the trees.	1	2	3	4	5
My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the natural world. (R)	1	2	3	4	5

(R) = reverse scored items

To compute the scale, reverse score items 4, 12, & 14, then average all items together. (For example, if you marked a 5 on question 4, it is computed as a 1 and so on.) Higher total scores indicate higher propensity to sustainability in your worldview.

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Exercise 2: Exploring and Articulating Your Worldview as It Relates to Aspects of Sustainability and the Environment**

Answer the questions below. In considering these questions, recall lessons from your culture including your family, peers, heroes, mentors, and the community in which you grew up.

1. How would you describe “nature” and how would you describe the boundary (if any) between humans and “nature”?
2. What were the messages you received over the years that informed your belief?
3. From where did each of those messages arise?
4. What are your memories of nature from when you were growing up?
5. What is role of nature in human wellness/unwellness?
6. What are your beliefs about your ancestors and their role in the present world?
7. What are your beliefs about your responsibility to future generations?

An essential outcome of critical self-assessment is the creation of space to understand other ways of being, thinking, and doing. Interview someone else that you think might have a different worldview. Ask the same questions above. In considering these questions, have them recall lessons from their culture including their family, peers, heroes, mentors, and the community in which they grew up.

**Exercise 3: Incorporating Sustainability more into Your Worldview**

Using the critical self-assessment in Exercise 1 and what you have learned from Exercise 2, fill in the chart below to identify potential changes you can make to incorporate sustainability more into your worldview.

Worldview Aspects	My Worldview	Worldviews that Incorporate Sustainability	Differences between My Worldview and Sustainability Worldviews	Potential Changes I Can Make
Relationship between Humans & Nature:		Humans are a part of nature, not separate.		
Time Focus:		Past, Present, and Future are all important-- living in the present by relying on knowledge of the past, and conservation for future generations.		

<b>Focus of Society:</b>		Ensuring well-being of the entire ecosystem (whole and parts).		
<b>Other:</b>				

**Exercise 4: Historical Connections to People and Places**

Have you ever traced your historical connections to people and places? If so, why? If not, why not? If you have not yet done so, trace your lineage as far back as you can, also exploring your family’s ancestral lands.

1. How does it make you feel knowing you are connected to these people and these places?
2. Have you visited your family’s land? What was that like?
3. If you haven’t yet, do you have plans to go?
4. If you have children how do you hope to instill in them ‘sense of place’, ‘sense of belonging’ and ‘sense of self’?

**Exercise 5: Decolonizing Social Work**

After reading the above lesson on culture, decolonization of social work, and indigenization, reflect on the following questions as they apply to your region of the world:

1. What are some aspects of social work practice that allow the continuation of and perpetuate colonization, even now?
2. What are the possible effects of this type of social work practice on service users and communities?
3. What could decolonized social work practice look like where you are?

## Summary Notes:

'Cosmosview' is another way to describe worldview as it encompasses how we think about the natural and spiritual world. This could be an additional aspect that you incorporate and explore with the above lesson, including the consideration of how using this term instead of worldview could change the discussion.

The topics of decolonization and the related term indigenization are broad and covered on a very surface level in this chapter. There are many excellent resources to explore related to these concepts and how they intersect with social work practice and the profession. Here are a few:

- Chapter: Explore Chapter 6 of this workbook, 'Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place: Claiming Place at Multiple Levels in Sustainability and Social Work Practice' by Alma M.O. Trinidad for more on indigenization of social work.
- Book: Gray, M. Coates, J. Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T. (Eds.). (2013). *Decolonizing social work*. England. Ashgate.<sup>21</sup>
- Journal Series: [Journal of Indigenous Social Development](#) (JISD) formerly the Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work.<sup>22</sup>
- Video: Mataira, P. J, Morelli, P. T. and Yamashita, M. (executive producers). (2010). [Strengths-Enhancing Research \(SEER part I\): Paths and Practices: Toward. Relevant, Effective Program Development](#). DVD, 25-minutes. Consuelo Foundation and Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work in association with Quazifilms Media Production. Honolulu, Hawai'i.<sup>23</sup>
- Article: Weaver, H.N. (1999). Indigenous people and the social work profession: Defining culturally competent services. *Social Work, 44*(3). pp217-225.<sup>24</sup>
- Chapter: Wilson, A. C. (2004). Reclaiming our humanity: Decolonization and the recovery of Indigenous knowledge. In D.A. Mihesuah & A.C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenizing the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. pp 69-87.<sup>25</sup>



## Resources:

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# Holistic Ecosocial Work: A Model for Transformative Change through Being, Knowing and Doing

*By Heather Boetto, Karen Bell and Karen Kime*

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**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Summarise the attributes of ecosocial work and understand the importance of transformative change within the profession.
2. Construct a holistic model of ecosocial work using the philosophical dimensions of being, knowing and doing.
3. Critically evaluate one's frame of reference and consider ways for moving towards a worldview that reflects holism with the natural world.

**Lesson:**

This chapter can be undertaken in a single session or spread across various sessions. As the content is based on philosophical aspects of practice, it may be better suited for students who have established some understanding about the knowledge base of practice. The chapter will commence with a summary of key attributes relating to ecosocial work, highlighting that ecosocial work is distinct from conventional methods of practice. The need for transformative change involving a shift in the profession's philosophical base is presented as a way forward to challenge inherent modernist assumptions that impede effective ecosocial work practice. A model of ecosocial work will be constructed according to the philosophical dimensions of ontology (being); epistemology (knowing); and methodology (doing). Exercises relating to each of these dimensions will be provided, as well as an exercise exploring the influence of dominant modernist discourses on student worldviews. Finally, Indigenous content will be embedded throughout the lesson in an attempt to pursue ongoing decolonisation and indigenisation processes within the profession, and to inform ecosocial work.

**What is Holistic Ecosocial Work?**

Fundamental to ecosocial work is an understanding that the delicate balance of Earth's ecosystems sustains humanity, and alternatively the disruption of healthy ecosystems threatens life on Earth for all living organisms. Ecosocial work understands humanity as having a mutually interdependent relationship with the natural environment, involving a holistic understanding of life on Earth and the larger cosmos. Ecosocial work represents a move away from anthropocentric understandings of the environment based predominantly on a socio-cultural understanding in conventional social work, towards transformative change of the profession's philosophical base reflecting interdependence, holism and

sustainability. In the context of a global environmental crisis that threatens the ecology upon which humanity depends, transformative change within the profession has never been more important.

### **What are the Characteristics of Ecosocial Work?**

According to various authors, fundamental aspects relating to ecosocial work include: <sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</sup>

1. *Environmental sustainability and degrowth*: Environmental sustainability promotes the health of Earth's ecosystems and ensures that demands placed on the natural environment to meet human needs do not compromise or disrupt the balance of Earth's ecosystems. Degrowth recognises that over-consumption and over-production within industrialised and industrialising economies is depleting the Earth's natural and finite resources.
2. *Holistic worldview*: Adopting a holistic worldview perceives every aspect of life as interconnected within a much larger system. Not only is human well-being dependent on the health of natural ecosystems, but all living organisms share an interconnected dependency on having a healthy ecosystem.
3. *Indigenous worldviews*: A holistic worldview is reflected in Indigenous epistemology and ontology which recognizes the interdependent relationship between humans and the non-human world. Each Indigenous nation has its own spiritual and ecological knowledge in the care of Country, expressed through rites of Custodianship, ritual and strategies in the care of the earth. What distinguishes Indigenous knowledge from Western knowledge is the integration of spiritually nurturing 'place' – inseparable from practical conservation.
4. *Global citizenship*: Global citizenship shifts attention from an individual to worldwide perspective and recognises that the behaviours of people in industrialised and industrialising nations are largely responsible for causing environmental injustice in poorer nations. Wealthy nations, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, have historically profited from industry and big business initiatives, which have placed the livelihoods of communities in poorer nations at risk.
5. *Ecofeminism and critical approaches*: A critical approach recognises the interplay between the environment and broader social and political systems, which cause exploitation, disadvantage and

unequal power relations. In particular, ecofeminism highlights the connection between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women, largely from patriarchal structures in society.

6. *Re-defining wellbeing*: Human well-being requires the integration of holistic, environmental and relational attributes, which understands wellbeing as embedded within complex relationships between all living and non-living (e.g. water, landscapes) entities. This holistic view challenges economic perspectives of wellbeing pervasive in many industrialised and industrialising nations, which are often determined by individualism, income, employment, competition and status.
7. *Multidimensional practice*: Holistic ecosocial practice recognises that problems associated with the environmental crisis are complex and consist of various multi-dimensional factors. Holistic ecosocial practice involves environmentally related work at personal, individual, collective, community and political dimensions of practice.

### **Why Does Ecosocial Work Need to be Transformative?**

The term 'transformative' implies that fundamental change needs to occur within the profession. Indeed, transformative change requires that conventional methods in social work practice are undertaken differently. This change involves a paradigmatic shift in orientation about the place of humans in the natural world from being human-centred (which prioritises human needs and wants) towards a transformative ecosocial approach (which understands Earth as a holistic entity). This shift represents an underpinning philosophical change to the way social work has traditionally viewed the world. Rather than viewing humans as the centre of development in the world, humans represent just one part of a much larger, holistic and interdependent system. At the core of this philosophical shift is understanding the interdependence between the natural environment and human wellbeing. Although the profession's worldview has received scant attention in social work literature, a philosophical base of practice centred on holism and interdependence is foundational for advancing transformative ecosocial change.<sup>2</sup>

Like many modern professions, social work was formed during the modernist movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>6</sup> Understanding the history of social work as developing within the "complex cultural system of modernity" is critical for reconciling present day issues within the profession

(p. 39).<sup>7</sup> The attitudinal shifts occurring within Europe at the time; for example, the developing importance of independence and self-reliance, as well as the quest to improve one's situation, formed part of the sociocultural and economic dimensions of charity work espoused by early social workers during this time.<sup>7</sup> These modernist values, including individualism, industrialisation and capitalism, have been incorporated into contemporary Euro-Western social work. Although modernity has enabled the profession to pursue certain freedoms relating to individual empowerment, the concern is that industrial capitalism is critiqued for contributing to the environmental crisis through the unsustainable use of Earth's natural resources. Various authors have argued that social work is at odds with developing an environmentally sustainable society, due to pervasive modernist roots associated with industrial capitalism.<sup>2, 6, 8, 9, 10</sup> Consequently, the co-dependency between social work and values associated with industrial capitalism represent a major dilemma for the profession currently in transition towards a more ecologically centred stance. Transformative change involves the re-defining of philosophical beliefs and values underpinning social work practice.

### **Application:**

#### **A Model for Holistic Ecosocial Practice**

A framework for holistic ecosocial work involves adopting a philosophical base that emphasises holism, interdependence and sustainability across the ontological (being), epistemological (knowing) and methodological (doing) dimensions of practice.<sup>2</sup> This paradigm shift represents a re-orientation of the place of humans in the natural world and challenges existing modernist values embedded within social work.

**Ontological (being) dimensions.** Ontology addresses questions about the nature of being, existence and reality. For example, a significant question is 'what characterises reality?' For ecosocial work, ontology relates to the worldview, beliefs and attitudes of the practitioner towards nature. This personal dimension of how practitioners understand the natural environment requires practitioners to examine their own identity and connectedness with the natural environment. For example, do you view the natural environment as an objective entity and perhaps of instrumental value to the fulfilment of human development? Do you see yourself as an integrated part of the natural world? Or, are you positioned somewhere in between these two perspectives?



### **Exercise 1: Eco-mapping Your Relationship with Nature**

The following exercises can be undertaken individually, in pairs, or adapted to a group setting to assist participants to reflect on their relationship with nature.

Write your name in the middle of a piece of paper and draw a circle around it.

1. Add the names of natural systems you interact with, as well as the services you utilise that come from natural systems. Draw circles around them too. (e.g. local park, vegetable garden, ornamental garden, electricity, water, fuel for motor vehicle or public transport, clothes, pets and animals).
2. Draw lines connecting the natural systems with your name.
3. Add arrowheads to the lines. The arrows are used to indicate the dominant direction of the relationship. If you use the resources for your wellbeing or service, then the arrow points towards you. Alternatively, if you provide resources or service to the natural system, then the arrow points away from you.

Now reflect on this diagram by answering the following questions:

1. How many natural systems did you identify in your diagram? How many activities during your day relate to or impact on these natural systems?
2. Which way do the majority of arrowheads point – towards you, or towards natural systems? Count how many for each.
3. What does this say about your relationship with the natural environment? And how does living in modern industrial society influence your relationship with nature (i.e. the direction of your arrows)?
4. What beliefs and attitudes towards natural systems does your diagram portray? Is this congruent with your personal understanding and beliefs towards the natural world?

**Epistemological (knowing) dimensions.** Epistemology addresses questions about knowledge and how knowledge is created. Relevant questions include ‘what counts as knowledge?’ For ecosocial work, this involves recognising marginalised knowledges within society and the profession, which challenge prevailing, dominant and oppressive discourses. These knowledges may include: Indigenous knowledges; ecological theories, such

as ecofeminism, deep ecology, permaculture; and scientific knowledge underpinning the environmental crisis.

### **Exercise 2: Valuing Indigenous Knowledges**

The following activity can be undertaken individually, in pairs, or adapted to a group setting to assist participants to develop knowledge about Indigenous ways of living sustainably. Such knowledge in the care of Country has ensured the survival of people on the Australian landscape for approximately 65,000 years. However, the process of colonisation has marginalised this knowledge and it is now at risk of being lost; unavailable to future generations. Complete the following activities to increase your knowledge about sustainable living practices undertaken by Indigenous peoples to inform your approach to ecosocial work. The activity assumes that students' worldviews have been formed within dominant modernist discourses, so some adaptation may be needed for students who already have an established Indigenous worldview.

1. Research information online about the sustainable living practices of an Indigenous group from around the world, for example the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, the Inuit and Aleutians of the circumpolar regions, the Saami of northern Europe, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia, or the Maori of New Zealand (Aotearoa). See summary notes at the end of chapter for further Indigenous Australian resources.
2. What are the main beliefs of the Indigenous group you selected to research? Take particular note of the beliefs associated with spirituality and oneness with Country.
3. What kind of practices underpin the Indigenous group's system of land management? Make note of how biodiversity is protected, and how natural resources (e.g., fire, water) are used for purposes of living sustainably.
4. What land care methods used by the Indigenous group might address some modern issues relating to environmental degradation and climate change?

**Methodological (doing) dimensions.** Methodology is the plan or approach for undertaking action and provides a rationale for the particular methods being used. For social work, this involves the actions, interventions and strategies used in everyday interaction with individuals, families and communities. In keeping with a transformative approach, ecosocial work incorporates being, knowing and doing dimensions of practice. Ecosocial

work aims to challenge human-centred perspectives of the natural environment, including the existing social and economic order that tends to misuse the natural environment to fulfill human needs and wants. There are five levels of practice conducive to transformative ecosocial practice, including personal, individual, collective, community and political levels of practice.<sup>2</sup> These five levels of practice transform the conventional micro/meso/macro model of practice to ensure that the ‘self’ and political systems are adequately considered, and that ecosocial practice is consistent with ontological foundations of ecosocial work. Ideally, these levels of practice are interconnected and form an integrated whole.

### Exercise 3: Strategies for Ecosocial Work

The following activity can be undertaken individually, in pairs, or adapted to a group setting to assist participants to develop strategies for ecosocial practice.

1. Identify an environmental issue within your local community or with an individual/family case study. Write it in the center circle using the diagram below.
2. Using the diagram below identify strategies that might address the problem and/or promote sustainability at the personal (meaning you, the social work practitioner), individual (meaning the social service user), collective, community and political levels of practice.
3. Use table 1 below listing examples as a guide to prompt ideas if needed.

Table 1: Practice Examples.

Level of Practice	Examples
Personal	Self-examination of your personal views (consider using <a href="#">critical reflexive practice</a> ) <sup>11</sup> in relation to nature, an activity to enhance your relationship with the environment, an activity to promote sustainability in your household or community
Individual	Ecotherapy, <a href="#">eco-grief</a> <sup>12</sup> counselling, advocacy, animal assisted therapy, adventure therapy; gardening and outdoor exercise, mindfulness, individual disaster response plan, sustainable living practices, household energy audits

Collective	Backyard garden exchange/barter systems, self-help and mutual aid groups, food banks, street gardens, therapeutic and self-help groups, organisational change, partnerships with organisations
Community	Public health promotion/education, public forums, disaster mitigation and recovery, food security initiatives, community response planning, social planning
Political	Public campaigns, fundraising activities, lobbying, research, social media activities, petitions, policy changes

### **Paradigm Shift: Challenging Your Frame of Reference**

As professionals, it is important to examine the beliefs and assumptions gained through socialisation processes. In many cases, the process of socialisation for social workers with a Euro-Western background has occurred within the context of dominant modernist discourses, such as capitalism, individualism, and economic prosperity, which separate humanity from nature. These discourses, unless challenged, unwittingly become frames of references from which assumptions are made. For example, ‘health and happiness will be improved through the pursuit of economic prosperity’ is an assumption often associated with capitalism. Although many practitioners may be aware of the influences of modernism on Euro-Western social work, some assumptions are so embedded within society that they are difficult to distinguish. In contrast, Indigenous approaches are distinctly holistic in such a way that there are no boundaries between people, Earth and the larger cosmos. This critique acknowledges cultural privilege of people with a Euro-Western background, the invisibility of whiteness, and the concept of ‘white as normal’ embedded within society and the profession.<sup>13,14</sup>

### **Exercise 4: Examining Your Frame of Reference**

The following activity can be undertaken individually, in pairs, or adapted to a group setting to assist in developing an awareness of the influence of dominant modernist discourses on individual participants’ worldviews. Undertake a reflective and critical analysis in relation to the origins of your frame of reference by answering the following questions:

1. Who are the key people in your life that have influenced your beliefs (e.g. parents, school teachers, friends, mentors, colleagues, grandparents)? What values have they imparted?
2. What major events in your life have impacted on your beliefs (e.g.

- unsettling or difficult life experiences, accidents, celebrations, achievements)? How have they influenced you?
3. What kind of media do you watch/listen to and what values do they represent (e.g. social media, television programs, movies)? Provide details.
  4. What social groups are you a member of (e.g. ethnic background, gender, class, culture)? What assumptions underpin your membership of these groups?
  5. How has your association with these influences formed your worldview, and how might the assumptions that make up this worldview be different from other perspectives?
  6. What is the paradigm you currently operate under? Is it a modernist/post-industrial growth paradigm? What alternative paradigms you could consider?
  7. What things could you do to shift your frame of reference towards a worldview that reflects holism with the natural world? Think about changes in behaviour, habits and personal associations that relate to the previous questions.

### **Summary Notes:**

This chapter summarized a holistic ecosocial approach and presented a transformative ecosocial model for practice. Transformative, holistic ecosocial practice refers to a fundamental re-orientation of human-centred perceptions of the world toward views that reflect a holistic and interdependent view of humans as part of the natural world. This reorientation requires the profession to acknowledge the influence of the modernist discourse on social work, both from the past and within contemporary society. Various authors contend that social work has contributed to the exploitation of the natural environment by helping people to adapt and participate in a society where the dominant economic model is centred on values of individualism, competition and economic growth. Consequently, the co-dependency between social work and the modernist discourse represents a major dilemma for the profession whose aims are at odds with industrialist capitalist objectives. One way to challenge the modernist discourse in social work is to re-conceptualise the philosophical base of practice in such a way that they are congruent with holism, interdependence and sustainability.

### Further Indigenous Australian Resources:

The following clips provide the perspective of Indigenous Australian people and their unity with connection to Country. Although many now live in urbanised locations, they discuss how their spiritual connection to Country is an important factor for enabling them to function within modern industrial society [Who We Are: Country/Place](#)<sup>15</sup>; an Aboriginal boy from northern Australia shares insights from his father about his inseparability from nature [The Indigenous people of Tropical North Queensland](#)<sup>16</sup>; spiritual connection to country through Mother Earth and the receiving of energy from Earth is the feature of this clip [Connection to Country](#)<sup>17</sup>; the following YouTube clip features a Yankunytjatjara Elder and traditional owner of Uluru explaining how the connectedness of all is central to an Indigenous Australian worldview. Take note of key aspects that might be different to Euro-Western understandings of land, for example, the concept of owning land in Euro-Western society does not reflect a holistic Indigenous Australian worldview, [The land owns us](#).<sup>18</sup>

### Resources:

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# Challenges of a Sustainable Development Approach to Social Work in a Danish Welfare State Context

*By Gordon Vincenti*

## **Author Biography:**

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## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand the location of Danish social work within the public sector and the way that this position is defining of Danish social workers understanding of the profession, offering little room for the growth of green and sustainable social work in Denmark.
2. Describe how the focus of Danish social work and social work contextual legislation on labour market rehabilitation, treatment and statutory action towards challenges faced by children, youths and families, leaves little room for the development of sustainable social work.
3. Describe how a move towards human rights based approaches and the introduction of a more eco-social approach involves inclusion of factors from the physical environment and infrastructure on both a mezzo and macro level into social work practice.



**Lesson:**

The intention of this chapter is to explore some of the challenges facing social work in Denmark, when considering the agenda of sustainable development. The chapter will present some of the challenges within the socio-political context of the Danish welfare model and ask you to reflect on your thoughts (including similarities and differences) when considering your own social work context. Finally, the chapter will offer a suggestion for an alternative way forward that promotes community and environmental sustainability within social work at a practical level in Denmark.

**Sustainable Development as a Concept in a Danish Context**

**The location of social work in Denmark.** Social work in Denmark is located within the welfare state with only 8% of Danish social workers being employed within the non-governmental sector, either at municipal, regional or national level. The remaining 92% are employed within the public sector and, as such, work within the guidelines of the national, socio-political legislative framework. Qualified social workers have a BA degree in social work, and the national BA curriculum is regulated by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education ([example of the BA social work curriculum](#)).<sup>1</sup> The national Danish BA social work curriculum is designed to qualify social workers to work in Denmark, where the vast majority work within the public sector as caseworkers. As caseworkers within the public and statutory sector most social workers work on a micro level.

Social work in Denmark is not only located within the public sector but is also exclusively focused on the idea of individually oriented support and treatment to vulnerable children, youths and families, not on their environment or community.<sup>3</sup> In a similar fashion the focus of the labour market rehabilitation policy is the reintegration of individuals within the existing labour market, a framework governed by the principles of regulated free market.<sup>4</sup> The focus of Danish labour market rehabilitation is on labour market activation of the individual and not on community or society based initiatives (see Table 1).

Table 1: Danish social worker employment by sector

<b>Danish social worker employment by sector, 2017 in percentages.<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>Sector:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Local Municipal Authorities, within the statutory sector (the majority as statutory sector caseworkers) working with the following types of challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families, youths and children</li> <li>• Labour market rehabilitation</li> <li>• Supporting adults with physical and or psychological challenges</li> </ul>	<b>67%</b>
Regional Local Authority level, working in supportive and specialised treatment institutions mainly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and children placed in residential care</li> <li>• Supporting adults with physical and or psychological challenges</li> <li>• Hospitals, especially psychiatric units</li> </ul>	<b>17%</b>
State level and national state-run institutions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal prevention in jails and in the community</li> <li>• National research and dissemination centers, within the social field</li> <li>• Universities offering social work courses and degrees</li> <li>• Other national public sector agencies</li> </ul>	<b>7%</b>
Private and Civil Society Sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent consultants</li> <li>• National and local NGOs</li> <li>• Community work for housing associations</li> </ul>	<b>9%</b>

A brief search of the available literature, in Danish, on sustainable development and social work only produced two short articles, aimed at qualified practicing social workers and social work education on a BA level;

one an account of a speech by Professor Malcolm Payne to the Association of Social Workers in Denmark in 2011 and the other a short article based on a lecture by the author, Vincenti.<sup>6,7</sup> In spite of this lack of literature, in Danish, acknowledging the importance of sustainable development in social work practice, there is a beginning interest for eco-social work at research conferences and seminars in Denmark (for example Dr. Reima Ana Maglajlic from the University of Sussex in England presented a paper at the ESWRA 2017 conference in Aalborg, Denmark). Also, within Denmark, there is a limited interest within the field of research for sustainable social work, but it seems that the initiative and drive is from outside Denmark and has not moved down from research papers and articles to be included within mainstream BA social work programmes. Although, it is possible to find elements of sustainable development discussions within [optional courses on a BA level](#).<sup>8</sup>

Sustainable social work in Denmark, when introduced into teaching discussions at a BA in Danish social work education level, draws on the ideas of Dominelli, where she expands her model of holistic practice to include physical environments and infrastructures.<sup>9</sup> The model is used to encourage students and social workers to expand their understanding of the elements of a holistic approach interacting on and influencing and being influenced by individuals, families, communities, national societies and an international domain. Within the context of Danish social work with its prime location within the statutory sector of Municipal Departments of Social and Labour Market Services, “social work investigations, within the statutory sector are influenced by a relatively traditional psychodynamic approach, with focus on the relationship between mother and child and the ‘local world in the home.’ The focus is on .... the vulnerability and weaknesses in the home, amongst parents and children” (pp. 165-66).<sup>10</sup>

The introduction of physical environmental and infrastructure elements, on micro, mezzo, macro and international domains offers a possibility of considering issues of sustainability within individually oriented statutory sector casework. Dominelli’s model supports reflective processes that include environmental issues in their considerations.<sup>9</sup> The model encourages social workers to consider environmental and sustainability factors in their practice and move from a psychodynamic focus to a more holistic one, including reflection on the importance of environmental factors and issues of sustainability.

There is some interest for sustainable social development in a small sector of community work within the civil society sector. The focus of this work is community development and is moving towards the idea of developing sustainable social capital in vulnerable neighbourhoods. In Denmark, vulnerable neighbourhoods are defined as the 22 areas on the [National Vulnerable Neighbourhood list](#)<sup>11</sup> produced by the Ministry of Housing. The discussion in this sector is how to move these vulnerable communities to be sustainable communities characterized by a commensurate degree of social capital when compared to society in general. The focus is not sustainability in the sense of the physical environment (built and natural), but that of social, political, and economic equality with the rest of society.

In social work discussions in Denmark, community development is not seen as a mechanism of increasing environmental sustainability, but as action aimed merely at increasing labour market integration, reducing rates of criminality and increasing vocational training and educational levels. (See Strand Hutchinson 2009 for a discussion of community development in the Nordic countries, including Denmark).<sup>12</sup>

In a Danish context the ideas of sustainability offered by Dominelli such as an expanded holistic approach, including, amongst others, environmental, physical conditions, renewable energy, provide a theoretical framework which could be contextually applicable in Danish social work practice and community development.<sup>9</sup> The expanded holistic practice chart, developed by Dominelli, could provide a practice based framework for the introduction of elements of an eco-social and sustainable development approach to national community redevelopment of vulnerable communities.<sup>9</sup>

The aim of this section has been to show that social work in Denmark is located within the public sector and that only eight percent of all social workers are employed within the civil-society and NGO sector. Social work in Denmark is governed by a very closely regulated legislative system that focuses primarily on working with individuals on a micro level and with neither a community, nor societal focus.

**The location of sustainable development in Denmark.** Having argued that social work in Denmark does not encompass discussions and understanding of sustainable development, it becomes interesting to look at the long tradition of initiatives of sustainable and green development in Denmark outside of the social work profession. There is in Denmark a wide interest in and for issues of sustainability and a long tradition of sustainable

development initiatives. Amongst some of the most prominent initiatives are:

- Bicycling culture in Denmark.<sup>13,14</sup> Bicycle lanes are widespread in Denmark as there is a strong tradition of using bicycles as a means of transportation in the urban areas supported by bicycle transportation policies in municipalities.  
Copenhagen is world famous for its biking culture and now officially the first Bike City in the World. Last year, it was also voted the 'Best city for cyclists' and the 'World's most livable city'. The Danes are well known for their love of cycling and cities all around the world are now looking at ways to copy this phenomenon. It really is biking heaven for the cyclist in Copenhagen with over 390 kilometers of designated bike lanes.<sup>15</sup>
- Another example of an increased interest in sustainability is seen in the production and consumption of organic food. Eight percent of all food is produced organically and 7% of all agriculture is organic. The Danish government has set a goal of a 100% increase in the organically farmed area by 2020, which will mean that approximately 12% of the Danish farmland will be organically farmed. In order to reach the goal, the government provides direct support through subsidies in areas such as farm conversions, new investments and organic market activities. The support is partly financed, through the EU's Rural Development Programme.<sup>16</sup>
- There is an increasing interest in socio-economic enterprises with a focus on sustainable development. In the Gellerup Neighbourhood of Gellerup in Aarhus, Denmark, in one of the so-called government designated Ghetto areas, the socio-economic association "World Gardens" combines the business venture of creating ecological products with the social venture that offers citizens experiencing developmental, intellectual, and mental health challenges therapeutic activities in the form of gardening.<sup>17</sup> The association behind the initiative does not have any social workers and is in limited contact with municipal social work departments. Financial support comes from the members themselves, Brabrand Housing Association and only to a lesser extent by the Department of Labour Market Rehabilitation of the Municipality of Aarhus. Together with a local evening-school, they provide courses and activities for referred vulnerable citizens.

There is, in Denmark, a strong tradition of interest in sustainability and sustainable development, but all of these efforts are outside of mainstream social work. Given that social work is so strongly located within the public sector and so strongly focused on the individual and not the community or broader level societal changes, social work in Denmark is disconnected from current civil society and public-sector movements in sustainable development.

As mentioned above the small Danish tradition for community development, has as its focus the rehabilitation or reintegration of vulnerable neighbourhoods into mainstream society.<sup>7</sup> The focus has been one of problem-fixing more than building vibrant and sustainable communities. The use of the Ministry of Housing vulnerable neighbourhood list with its focus on levels of employment, criminality, economic independence, and vocational and higher education as a measure of identification of the areas that can apply for redevelopment grants, does not include issues of sustainability and sustainable development as criteria for applications for national redevelopment financial support. The aim of nationally supported redevelopment of vulnerable neighbourhood initiatives is to support labour market reintegration, a reduction in the level of crime and number of citizens on social security and other forms of public sector support.

Sustainable development is not located within mainstream social work in Denmark. Social work is dominated by individually- oriented, problem-responding approaches and located within the public sector; especially the statutory sector. Neither this location nor the BA programme of social work support the ideas of sustainable development.

### **Possibilities of Sustainable Social Work in a Danish Welfare Context?**

Social Work in Denmark is strongly located within the public sector and within a statutory, individually oriented focus. Social work in its contextual construction in Denmark has an emphasis on methodologies and approaches that support this focus and social work education on a Bachelor level underpins this narrow focus. Although there is a growing number of social workers with a master's degree from Aalborg University and other similar programmes available in collaboration with other European Universities, the majority enter their professional carriers with a generic BA in social work.

However, it is still possible that social work in Denmark can expand to incorporate a sustainable development approach. This section will present some possibilities for incorporation of this approach.

**An opportunity to embed eco-social and sustainable development within teaching on community development on a BA level.** There are some small but developing initiatives towards renewed interest in community development which could provide a framework and jumping-off point for eco-social and sustainable development in social work education and practice.

There is in Denmark a small but long tradition of social work involvement in and concern for community development. Ole Hermansen, the former Dean of the School of Social Work in Aarhus, Denmark, initially led this tradition, going back at least fifty years. He not only introduced the tradition of community development to Denmark, he wrote the first theoretical discussion on the topic in Denmark in 1975. Writing in Danish, Hermansen introduced the principles of community development to Denmark, drawing on his experiences of community development at York University, England.<sup>18</sup> Hermansen initiated programmes of collaboration between the School of Social Work in Aarhus and vulnerable districts of Aarhus. The Klostergade project (1972) was an example of a [service-learning initiative](#).<sup>19</sup>

This tradition of community development led in the 1980s and 1990s to a renewed interest in community development and by 2010 to a renewed interest in [Service-Learning programmes at the School of Social Work in Aarhus -VIADEM](#).<sup>20</sup>

Viadem is a collaboration between The Municipality of Aarhus, Det Boligsociale Fællessecretariat (a Centre for Community Development for vulnerable neighbourhoods in Aarhus), the Centre for Voluntary Action, Aarhus, and VIA University College. The aim is to provide students from all departments with the opportunity to gain experiences and competences within community development, in collaboration with residents of the vulnerable neighbourhoods. (The word VIADEM is a combination of VIA meaning journey or pathway and DEM from democracy, together they represent a pathway to democratic inclusion).

There are now between 60 and 140 students involved in the project in several neighbourhoods of Aarhus and the project has been awarded two national awards for innovative collaboration. Through this initiative there is

a possibility for bridging mainstream social work and its individual micro-social focus, with the opportunities and challenges of sustainable development, using the holistic practice chart of Dominelli (p.197).<sup>9</sup>

There is a possibility of renewed interest in community development, within social work in Denmark, and this could offer the opportunity to expand to a multi-dimensional holistic approach to housing including ideas of sustainability in terms of renewable energy, a low carbon footprint, collective traffic and other aspects of a sustainable approach supporting sustainable social capital.<sup>21</sup>

**An opportunity to build on the human rights approach.** A second opportunity to expand the scope of social work practice is through the increasing interest by social workers on the position of human rights of people. Increasingly in Denmark, users in contact with welfare services and social workers are conceptualized as individuals with rights and especially the right to be involved and be a part of their own case and treatment. Indeed, this attention to participation has been codified into *Section 4 of the Act on Legal Protection and Administration in Social Matters*, which states that users must be consulted and directly involved in the treatment of their cases.

This introduction of human rights and the legislative emphasis on citizens (used here to encompass all people living in Denmark) as partners in their case, have led Danish social workers to see and construct citizens as co-creators of social change. Using a human rights approach requires focusing on the rights of individuals within a social, economic, political, cultural context. Focusing on human rights offers an opportunity to widen the current narrow approach to social problems, challenges and contexts by adopting an expanded holistic position and makes possible the introduction of sustainability to social analysis.

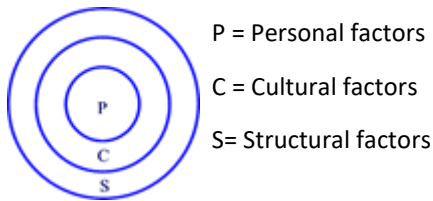
This position is supported in Thompson where he describes a coupling between social problems and social justice and uses a “PCS” nested analysis model, embedding cultural factors within a structural framework and personal elements or factors within a cultural sphere.<sup>22</sup> Thompson’s model (Figure 1) encourages social workers to look beyond micro, personal factors when trying to understand the factors underlying a social condition and examine both the cultural factors, and structural issues on a macro level which surrounds an individual. It introduces a possibility to combine micro,



mezzo and macro level elements. Thompson shows how it can be used to focus on issues of social justice and connect to issues of human rights.

The increasing interest amongst Danish social workers for human rights and citizen involvement in solutions, combined with Thompson's PCS model seems to provide another opportunity for social work to adopt a more sustainable development approach.

Figure 1: Thompson Model <sup>21</sup>



**An opportunity in the current political climate.** Another area of expansion is seen in the increased political focus on the development of local and sustainable solutions to the challenges communities face. The Danish Welfare Model is reliant on the ability of all citizens to pay for it in solidarity with each other through taxation, and then for potential users to submit to needs assessments by professional social workers in order to be able to receive services. An exception to this are the more universal services, such as free education, health services, child allowances, and subsidized day care for children and the elderly. Recently governments have expressed that there is a limit to taxation and a limit to how much citizens are prepared to pay in taxation used to support individuals with specific social problems.

In response to this challenge of political limits to levels of taxation, governments have turned to the idea of supporting sustainable social capital and sustainable solutions based on the idea of local and community involvement and an increased combination of resources from different sectors. Collaborations between the public sector, market based companies and civil-society organisations have created possible solutions to the challenges faced by citizens. Increasingly, civil-society organisations and market-based firms are following the public in looking for sustainable local solutions that are based on a multi-disciplinary or expanded holistic approach. They are also increasingly bringing these positions into their collaboration with public sector welfare providers and social workers. An example of the increased collaboration between the public sector welfare

providers and civil-society based organisations is the development of socio-economic enterprises, whom in collaboration with local municipalities provide supported jobs (jobs for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities), retraining opportunities, or the possibility of supported employment to vulnerable individuals.

One example of this collaboration is the Café Pakhuset, located in Odder, Denmark. The café is a socio-economic enterprise offering protected employment to citizens with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and café facilities to the town. Local restaurants have provided support in the form of on-the-job training. The café serves organic and ecologically grown products. The two social workers employed by the project work in an inter-sectional field between mainstream Danish social work, the voluntary sector and local businesses.

The three opportunities described above offer a possibility for Danish social work to challenge its traditional position and approach. This challenge is not new to social work in a Danish tradition, as shown by the work of Hermansen in 1975.<sup>18</sup> Social work needs to disconnect itself from the dominant and traditional discourse of social work as an activity that is focused on the statutory sector, individually oriented, and utilizing top-down solutions and instead create a description of practice that incorporates community and environmental sustainability. This movement is possible with expansion of the role of social work such as through the strategies identified above together with support from the International Federation of Social Work and taken up by the Danish Association of Social Workers, and despite if they will receive support from the Danish social workers and/employers in the public sector and especially municipalities. The slowly increasing number of examples of collaboration between sectors in the provision of social welfare via socio-economic enterprises are providing an environment for new solutions based on synergy of inter-sectional collaboration.

Using the [ideas of Antonio Gramsci](#),<sup>23</sup> an Italian philosopher, social work needs to move from being a traditional activity to adopting a more “organic” approach to its identity and theoretical approaches.<sup>24</sup> In this way, social work in Denmark should take this opportunity to challenge the traditional dominant discourse and develop a more citizen/user led approach that is holistic and built on sustainability and sustainable development.

## **Application:**

### **Exercise 1: Sustainability in your Social Work Context**

Do a brief literature search in your own country/locale and see how the issue of sustainable social work is described (e.g., do your local/national social work organizations have any policies or statements on the environment, or sustainability) and then think about which sector social workers are employed in your country? Is it similar or different to Denmark? How does the location of social work in various sectors impact on its ability to promote community and environmental sustainability?

### **Exercise 2: Location of Sustainable Development in your Country**

Read Isadora Hare's 2004 article "[Defining Social Work for the 21st Century](#)"<sup>25</sup> and then reflect on how social work in Denmark and your country functions and then consider how using the ideas of the article about sustainable development can change the role of social work.

1. How is social work understood, as a profession in your setting?
2. Do you think social work in your setting also has similar opportunities to challenge the dominant discourse and develop a more sustainable approach based on sustainable development?
3. Are these possibilities similar or different from those presented here for Danish social work?
4. Do discussions of sustainability and sustainable development have a place in social work educational programmes in your country and if so in what way and form?
5. Look at the Danish programme and reflect on similarities and differences?

## **Summary Notes:**

The chapter has tried to present a discussion of the position of sustainable social development in Denmark today as seen from the perspective of social work. It has also tried to show that there are some exciting possibilities and opportunities for social work in Denmark to adopt a more sustainable form of practice, especially within the field of community neighbourhood development, where most initiatives are in collaboration with civil-society agencies and private sector, market based firms. It is within this area and together with an increased role called for by an emphasis on human rights in Danish social work that the promotion of community and environmental sustainability might have a chance. But, as I have argued it will also be necessary to have a discourse shift in Danish social work. To move beyond a

location and identification of social work with micro orientated approaches and models.

Looking at the contextual surrounding of social work in Denmark with a very strong tradition of renewable energy technology and a population very concerned with issues of organic and ecological farming and a state sector that sees collaboration as a way forward; then perhaps the conditions are present for a discourse shift within the profession of social work. I argue that Danish social work has a unique opportunity and needs to take it up.

Finally, I hope that the activities offered for reflection will support your interest in the issue of sustainable social development and encourage you to develop your reflective and critical skills.

For more information about the legislative/statutory context of social work in Denmark, please see the following:

- [Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior \(2016\). Social Policy Report in Brief 2016.](#)<sup>3</sup>
- [Consolidation Act on Social Services of 2015. Executive Order No. 1053. Denmark.](#)<sup>26</sup>  
(read especially sections 4 and 5 of the Act)

### Resources:

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# Advocating for Social and Environmental Justice and Human Rights: Listening to Indigenous Voices

*By Michelle Martin and Pedro Quiroga-Menéndez*

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### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Examine the unique experiences of the Lakota and Dakota Nations, living in the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in the United States, and the Aymara Indigenous people of Chile, within the context of their oral traditions, cultural knowledge and wisdom relied upon as an identity worldview.
2. Explore various structural stressors that oppose or fragment Indigenous traditional livelihoods, namely land invasion and loss, forced removal, cultural diffusion and assimilation, and environmental degradation.
3. Identify ways that social workers can advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples at the macro level, in relation to the experiences of the Lakota and Dakota Nations in the United States, and the Aymara people of Chile.

### **Lesson:**

Read through each case study below, conceptualizing a comparison of how Indigenous populations have been treated locally and globally, and then answer the questions below.

### **Case Study 1: The Lakota and Dakota Nation of the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation**

The [Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation](#)<sup>1</sup> is a federally recognized Indian tribe located in North Dakota and South Dakota, USA. The people of Standing Rock are members of the Lakota and Dakota nations, often called the Sioux. The correct name for the Sioux is *Oceti Sakowin*, which translates to the Seven Council of Fires, reflecting the nation’s original seven tribes (the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Teton, Wahpekute, Wahpeton, Yankton, and Yanktonai Sioux).<sup>2</sup> The name “Sioux” was derived from the purposeful shortening of the word *Nadowessiou* (used to describe the Lakota and Dakota people) by the French. Sioux actually means “snake” or “devil”, which is why many Native Americans perceive the word Sioux as a pejorative. The term “Sioux” remains in use today and is included as a part



of the current tribe's official name, thus it is used throughout this chapter, despite its derogatory origins. Additionally, because terms used to describe the Native American people have changed through time, some terms are used interchangeably in this chapter. Historically, Native Americans were referred to as "Indians" (a misnomer rooted in colonists' error in believing they had arrived in India). Although the term "Indian" is considered outdated and socially unacceptable, it is still used in certain circumstances, such as in reference to historic treaties and legislation (i.e., "Indian law"), reservations (i.e., "Indian reservations", "Indian country"), and historic boarding schools (i.e., "Indian Boarding Schools"). The most common contemporary term used to describe Indigenous people in the contiguous U.S. (lower-48) is "Native American," (sometimes shortened to "Native"), whereas the term "Indigenous" is more inclusive, applying to Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders (Native Hawaiians and/or other Pacific Islander people). It is important to note though, that all of these descriptors are "umbrella terms," and thus do not reflect the diversity among the many tribes living in the United States. [Using the specific name of the tribe](#)<sup>3</sup> is always preferable, as it reflects an understanding of and appreciation for this diversity.

The Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, originally called the Great Sioux Reservation, was established on April 29, 1868 through the Treaty of Fort Laramie between the U.S. government and the people of the Lakota, Dakota and Arapahoe Nations. The Treaty established the geographical boundaries of the reservation, articulated the parameters for native hunting rights, and also stipulated that no reservation land could be taken from the "Indians" without the agreement of three-fourths of the tribe's adult male population.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the Treaty was to ensure the "civilization" of the country's Indigenous population through several extreme acculturation measures. For example, coercive measures were used coupled with financial incentives to those families who agreed to farm individual plots, rather than continue in their preferred communal farming practices and nomadic lifestyle. The goal of the U.S. government was to break down the tribe's collective cultural practices, thus weakening their resistance to western expansion. Another example of extreme acculturation measures was the "re-education" of Native American children in English-language boarding schools. Army officer, Richard Pratt, started the first "Indian boarding school" in 1870 based on his belief that the only way to "save the man" was to "kill the Indian". Most of the schools were located far from the reservations, and Native American families often had no choice where their

children were sent. Parents who refused to send their children away were often denied food rations, and some children were even removed from the reservations by armed police. Indian boarding schools, such as the [Carlisle Indian Boarding School](#),<sup>5</sup> were run by the Catholic Church and the U.S. Army, primarily as military schools, with a focus on domestic education. In other words, Native American children were not taught math, English and science, but were trained to work in the industrial sector of American society. Once children arrived at the schools they were subjected to kerosene baths, their hair was shaved, and their clothes removed and burned. The children were barred from speaking their native language, dressing in their native clothing, or practicing any cultural or religious tradition, and if they were caught doing any of these things, they were harshly punished. Most of the children were also prevented from returning to their homes, even during school breaks. The last of the Indian boarding schools closed in 1896, but the devastating impact on the native children, their families and communities continues to this day. The consequence of this forced assimilation policy was a lost generation and the destruction of a culture and way of life. Many of the children left the school system as adults, feeling completely alienated—they were strangers to reservation life, unable to speak the language, but were not accepted into mainstream (non-Native) society. Additionally, it was later discovered that many of the children experienced physical and sexual abuse in these schools, which added to their long lasting mental health challenges.<sup>6</sup>

### **Cultural Traditions of the Lakota and Dakota People**

The Lakota and Dakota traditionally practiced a nomadic lifestyle centered around hunting for buffalo, which provided food, clothing and shelter. The Lakota and Dakota people view the world holistically, meaning that they believe everything in the world is related. This concept of interconnectedness is the core of their spiritual beliefs and cultural practices, and is based on the belief that everything that moves, has a spirit and is thus related. The Lakota and Dakota approach the world, and their place in it, holistically, as well. Since they believe that everything is interrelated, they show deference and respect for all things—people, animals and the environment.<sup>7</sup>

The cultural and religious practices of the Lakota and Dakota people are based on a commitment to community cooperation, grounded in their physical environment. Traditionally, decisions were made by consensus (versus majority rules) with the goal of benefitting the family and the entire

group.<sup>8</sup> For instance, as nomadic buffalo herders, land ownership was a foreign concept, and respect for community and territory was interwoven into cultural and spiritual practices, which fostered shared ownership and cooperation on all levels of social functioning.<sup>6</sup>

### **Forced Removal and Treaty Violations: The Breakdown of a Way of Life**

The Lakota and Dakota people (along with all Indigenous populations in the United States) have been subject to numerous human rights violations dating back to their first exposure to European colonizers, often called “the white man.” A systematic plan to annihilate Indigenous populations was facilitated first by European colonizers, and followed by the United States government after independence.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. government has entered into more than 600 treaties with sovereign native nations between 1778 and 1871, which defined the relationship between the federal government and the tribes. To date, all 600 treaties have been, in some manner, broken by the United States.<sup>9,10</sup> Rather than negotiating treaties fairly, the U.S. government often negotiated with tribal leaders by using coercive tactics to secure agreements that met the country’s needs, such as the need for western expansion and access to minerals on ancestral lands.<sup>11</sup>

U.S. policy toward native populations in the late 1800s shifted from one of forced removal to one of forced assimilation based on the belief that the only way for Native Americans to co-exist with whites was to become both “civilized” and Christianized.<sup>12,13,14</sup> Between the 1850s and late 1880s, several treaties were made prohibiting the practice of traditional and cultural ceremonies and ending communal farming, in exchange for sustenance and (promised) protection from white settlers. Essentially, the prevailing belief of the colonizers was that the only way to “save” Indians, was to force them to abandon their culture and their ancestral lands.

### **Environmental Degradation**

A shift occurred in U.S. Indian policy with the passage of the *Indian Reorganization Act of 1934*, which was an attempt to reverse past assimilation policies, focusing instead on strengthening the traditional cultural and spiritual practices of Native American tribes.<sup>12,15,16</sup> And yet, despite the positive shift in U.S. Indian policy, there are several examples of subsequent treaty violations that have had a devastating impact on cultural and family life, and in some cases, irreversible environmental degradation of native lands. The most recent examples of the federal government’s disregard for the environmental protection of native lands are the Dakota

Access Pipeline (DAPL), which carries approximately 500,000 gallons of crude oil per day through the Dakotas to Illinois, and the Keystone XL pipeline, which will carry crude oil from Canada to Texas, through South Dakota (a few miles from Sioux land).

The DAPL runs under the Missouri River's Lake Oahe reservoir, which is one-half mile upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and provides the tribe's drinking water. The DAPL also crosses sacred tribal land of cultural and religious significance.<sup>17</sup> The Lakota and Dakota, several other tribes and non-native allies formed camps on Lakota and Dakota land in the beginning of 2016, engaging in a [fierce battle](#)<sup>18</sup> to stop the building of the DAPL. The thousands of activists camped out at what came to be known as the Oceti Sakowin Camp came to the world's attention primarily through social media and the trending hashtags #StandwithStandingRock, #NoDAPL, and #RespectOurWater. The activists raised concerns about oil leaks and water contamination, as well as the overall, detrimental environmental impacts of the pipeline on the tribe's ancestral lands. The activists call themselves "[water protectors](#)",<sup>19</sup> (and "land protectors") rejecting the label of protester because according to environmental activists, the label "protester" is negative and contributes to the stereotype of Native Americans being violent. The activists at Standing Rock made it clear to the media that the goal of the water protectors was to stop the pipeline and protect the water, not to protest. The water protectors' attempts to stop the DAPL culminated in a [standoff](#)<sup>20</sup> with authorities on the night of November 21, 2016 when police in riot gear confronted thousands of water protectors with rubber bullets, tear gas, concussion grenades and water cannons in sub-freezing temperatures.

The pipeline was originally planned to run north of Bismarck, but was rerouted to tribal land due to strong opposition from the local, non-native community concerned about possible water contamination. The company's decision to reroute the pipeline to tribal land led to accusations of environmental racism against DAPL developer, Energy Transfer Partners.<sup>21,22</sup> In response to the decision to relocate the DAPL, David Archambault, II, then tribal Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation stated, "our Indigenous people have been warning for 500 years that the destruction of Mother Earth is going to come back and it's going to harm us. Now our voices are getting louder".<sup>23</sup>

Construction of the DAPL was ordered to cease by the Obama administration pending further investigation into its environmental impact on tribal land,<sup>24</sup> but this decision was later reversed by President Trump, and construction on both pipelines resumed in March of 2017.<sup>25</sup> In October 2017, a judge ruled that the granting of construction permits failed to consider the impact of a potential oil spill on fishing and hunting rights or environmental justice issues, but the court did not order a cessation in pumping operations.<sup>26</sup> On April 4, 2017, DAPL leaked 84 gallons of crude oil, and on November 17, 2017, the Keystone pipeline leaked 210,000 gallons of crude oil.<sup>27</sup> According to the South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources the Keystone pipeline spill impacted the surface soil and shallow perched groundwater. Cleanup began immediately, but further assessment and monitoring will be conducted by TransCanada.<sup>27</sup>

### **Case Study 2: The Aymara People of Chile: The First Globalized Culture in the Andes**

The Aymara people are “the heart of the Chilean Andean world,” a cultural region located in the Tarapacá Region of North Chile.<sup>28-32</sup> The Aymara are believed to have originated as a people approximately 800 years ago, but can be traced back at least to the 15<sup>th</sup> century Inca era. They were given the name, Aymara, during Spanish occupation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Currently, there are approximately two million Aymara, with 40,000 living in the northern Chilean territory in the Andes mountains. Approximately two thirds of the Aymara live in urban areas, such as Arica, Iquique and Calama, with the balance living in their traditional highlands at very high altitudes.<sup>30</sup>

The Aymara’s survival through the centuries is attributed in part to their ability to negotiate commercial trade deals with outside groups (dating back to centuries), including the trade of livestock (e.g., camelids, alpacas) and agricultural products, such as quinoa and garlic.<sup>32,33</sup> The Aymara have also been relatively successful at adapting to colonization, reflected in their ability to effectively negotiate with authorities—Inca imperialists, the Spanish Kingdom (during the era of colonization), and more recently with the Chilean republic.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Symbolic World in the Aymara Region: What About the Water?**

The Aymara worldview (more commonly referred to as cosmoview) reflects their strong relationship with the environment, which they perceive as the sustainer of life.<sup>35</sup> Most Aymara cultural traditions are focused on their relationship with nature, with much of Aymara folklore centering on

environmental elements and their territorial lands. The focus on nature, including land and water, is reflected in their traditional song and dance.<sup>35</sup> The Aymara conceptualize the environment vertically, with three levels: the *Alajpacha* (the sun), the *Akapacha* (the earth), and the *Manqhapacha* (water). Water is considered the symbolic and actual life source in the Aymara culture, and is considered primary among the three key natural elements of the Aymara's *Akapacha* (earth or world): the *Mallkus*, the *Pachamama*, and the *Amaru*.<sup>36</sup>

The *Mallkus*, (which loosely translates to 'leader, '), refers to the hills where the spirits of the Aymara ancestors, the *Achachilas*, reside. The *Achachilas* are guardian spirits of the ancestors and are the protectors of the Aymara people and their community. The *Pachamama*, ('Earth Goddess' or Mother Earth), is considered by the Aymara to be the mother of time and space—a deity as well as the natural giver of life. *Pachamama* provides life to the earth, soil, hills, stones, and the entire cosmos. The *Amaru*, which is a mythical creature envisioned as a snake or serpent, enables the *Pachamama* to fertilize the soil and generate fruit and other food. *Uma* (water) ties these three elements together to create the Aymara's cosmosview. The *Mallkus* deliver the water, the *Pachamama* contains water, and the *Amaru* distributes the water, providing the necessary resources to support the Aymara's agricultural economy, and to sustain life.<sup>36</sup> The Aymara's belief in the balance of these various elements reinforces their cultural belief in the importance of protecting nature.

### **Indigenous Rights in Chile: For Them but Without Them**

Despite the various strengths of the Aymara people, their negotiation with colonizing forces often occurred in the midst of significant oppression, which at times included slavery and other serious human rights violations.<sup>37,38</sup> More recently, the Indigenous peoples of Chile, including the Aymara, have experienced the negative effects of [neoliberalism](#)<sup>39</sup>—the application of market theory to governance, including the privatization of public services.<sup>38,40</sup> Such policies have led to the loss of cultural ways and environmental degradation, including the loss of territorial lands. Under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), Chile instituted a set of "one culture" policies that recognized only the majority culture in Chile, called *mestizo* (meaning "mixed blood" of Spanish and Indigenous), while failing to recognize the existence and rights of Indigenous tribes. One culture policies were in opposition to multiculturalism, and resulted in the loss of Indigenous culture, overt discrimination, increased poverty, the

marginalization of political processes, and the loss of rights among the Aymara (and other Indigenous) people. Additionally, in recent years, the Aymara have also experienced depopulation, as the youngest members of the community have migrated from the highlands to urban centers in search of better opportunities.<sup>41</sup>

In the 1990s, the Chilean government attempted to mediate the negative effects of one culture policies by formally recognizing the rights of Indigenous people and acknowledging that Chile is a multicultural state. In 1993, the Chilean government established the Special Committee of Indigenous Peoples as the foundational legal structure for Indigenous rights.<sup>42</sup> The creation of this committee was in response to international pressure by way of UN treaties—the UN Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, also referred to as [ILO Convention No. 169](#)<sup>43</sup> and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>44</sup> Both treaties recognize equal human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Indigenous peoples, without any kind of discrimination, and collective rights as Indigenous peoples, including land rights. Despite these efforts, Indigenous people, including the Aymara, are not satisfied with how Chilean law, policies and programs are being implemented because of the top-down approach and their exclusion from the processes. Chile’s policy responses represent privileged Western approaches to Indigenous preservation that do not necessarily promote a harmonious, horizontal, non-conflictive and non-hierarchical coexistence.<sup>42,45,46</sup>

And yet, there have been signs that the Chilean government has maintained a commitment to its Indigenous communities, particularly with respect to their rights to ancestral lands and water rights. For instance, in 2006 the Aymara and Atacama communities filed a lawsuit against the Agua Mineral Chusmiza SAIC company for bottling and selling water obtained from under Aymara and Atacama ancestral lands. The Indigenous communities claimed that the water company was depriving them of their ancestral lands and water source afforded by ILO Convention No. 169<sup>43</sup> and Chile’s “Indigenous Law”.<sup>47</sup> The company argued that it owned the land, thus the Indigenous communities had no legal right to the water. The lower court ruled in favor of the Indigenous communities based on their ancestral use of the water source in question. The company appealed the decision in 2008, and in 2009 Chile’s Supreme Court ruled in support of the lower court’s decision, and in favor of the Indigenous communities. The court’s decision was based on the Indigenous communities’ historic use of the land and water source, which

according to ILO Convention 169 (ratified by Chile in 2008) and Chile's Indigenous law,<sup>47</sup> superseded a company's subsequent land ownership, thus upholding Chilean Indigenous communities' ancestral water rights.

### **Social Work's Commitment to Social Justice and Social Equality**

Social workers are unique among helping professionals in that they have the additional responsibility of advocating for social justice and human rights on a macro level, particularly on behalf of more vulnerable populations. Additionally, since the social work profession operates on both a community and global level, social workers must develop a level of competence in global dynamics so they can better understand historic patterns of oppression and discrimination and confront them appropriately and effectively. For instance, according to the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Statement of Ethical Principles, social workers have a duty to challenge "unjust policies and practices (4.2.4), impacting populations marginalized due to a range of characteristics, including skin color and nationality status (4.2.1)".<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the IFSW recognizes the commitment the social work profession has to global human rights standards reflected in the United Nations' treaty system. Of particular relevance to this chapter is the ILO Convention No. 169,<sup>43</sup> which states (in part) that "[g]overnments shall take measures, in cooperation with the peoples concerned, to protect and preserve the environment of the territories they inhabit" (Article 7), and "...governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship" (Article 13).<sup>43</sup>

Advocacy for social justice on behalf of oppressed populations is concerned with power relationships, equal participation in society among all members, personal rights inherent to being human (i.e., human rights), and striving for a just and decent society.<sup>49</sup> Advocacy for social justice within the context of social work practice relies on theoretical frameworks foundational to the profession,<sup>50,51</sup> such as the ecological systems approach where individuals and their situations are evaluated within environmental context,<sup>52,53</sup> and the strengths-based perspective, which seeks to identify the strengths in individuals and communities, rather than targeting deficits.<sup>54</sup>

It is important that social workers (who are not themselves Indigenous) engaging in community and environmental sustainability work with Indigenous populations understand the populations' unique history of



human rights violations, including the range of marginalizing factors used to rationalize oppression by colonizing forces, particularly those embedded in social and political systems (such as legislative codes) often relied upon to justify the illegal seizure of Indigenous lands.<sup>55</sup> Rather than approaching Indigenous populations from a privileged perspective, social workers can adopt an intercultural approach that acknowledges the differences of privileges and historical injustices between the dominant culture and Indigenous peoples.<sup>55</sup> This approach implies generating deliberate spaces of communication and egalitarian dialogue, which suppose a critical reflection of a range of cultural forms, remaining open to change, while valuing and incorporating the knowledge and positions of “the other,” in a deconstructive and transforming process.<sup>56</sup>

One way of accomplishing this approach is by avoiding the danger of adopting a single story of the Indigenous populations with whom we work, recognizing the rich, varied and inherently worthy stories of Indigenous people. Finally, effective advocacy and community work with Indigenous populations values local knowledge over Westernized approaches. Thus, social workers must take the time to truly *hear the voices* of those Indigenous people with whom they work, and not impose top-down knowledge that favors the culture and values of the colonizing powers.<sup>57</sup>

### **Application:**

**Instructions:** Answer the reflection questions in relation to the case studies individually or in groups.

#### **Exercise 1: Application of Ecological Systems Approach**

Using the ecological systems approach and the strengths-based perspective describe the identified populations in each case study. For instance, what environmental and social factors may be impacting the Lakota and Dakota people of Standing Rock, and the Aymara of Chile? What strengths have each population demonstrated that might otherwise be framed as deficits?

#### **Exercise 2: Identifying Human Rights Violations**

Investigate and identify key historic and current human rights violations experienced by the populations explored in the case studies. Include a description of how the human rights violations have impacted each communities’ territorial lands and their way of life. Compare and contrast the impact on each respective population, including how the dominant

governments in each country have responded to land and water rights of the respective Indigenous populations.

### **Exercise 3: Assessing Vulnerability**

Describe some characteristics of the Lakota/Dakota and Aymara people that have made them more vulnerable to marginalization, leading to human rights violations, environmental degradation, and a loss of a way of life (e.g., cultural, religious, family life).

### **Exercise 4: Multiple Stories**

Watch the TedTalk featuring Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, entitled [The Danger of a Single Story](#).<sup>58</sup> What is the single story of the Lakota and Dakota at Standing Rock, and the Aymara of Chile? How can you, as a social worker, counteract the single story of Indigenous populations? Write a few paragraphs involving multiple stories of each population using the guidance provided in the film.

### **Exercise 5: Indigenous People in Your Community**

What Indigenous people are in your local region? Are you an Indigenous person yourself? If not, how can you become an ally? How can you learn more about them? Whose voices can you listen to? What privileges and biases might you have about the Indigenous people with whom you want to work? How can you be accountable for these privileges in relation to others? What are some ways that you can *listen to the voices* of Indigenous people in your region and around the world? (i.e., visit official tribal websites or social media pages). Do you live near any Indigenous communities that might permit informational visits?

### **Exercise 6: Using Local Knowledge**

Provide some examples of how you would use local knowledge to effect change with each of the populations explored in the case studies, related to community and environmental sustainability. Consider searching for recent research and reviewing any websites facilitated by Indigenous populations in the United States and Chile.

## Summary Notes:

1. Using an ecological systems approach when working with Indigenous populations considers the long history of communal living that reflects each population's culture and traditional ways of living, as well as each populations' history of human rights violations, including treaty violations when evaluating the populations' level of functioning. Using a strengths-based perspective when working with Indigenous populations reframes deficits as strengths. For instance, rather than perceiving the Lakota/Dakota as dependent people who are demanding handouts, they would be views as a people who are effective self-advocates, demanding that valid contracts (treaties and legislation) be fully enforced.
2. The Indigenous populations explored in the case studies have experienced a range of human rights violations, against individuals, families, and their communities. The case studies detailed human rights violations that involved depriving the communities of their cultural ways of life, their land and water rights. The [Chilean courts recently upheld Indigenous water rights](#)<sup>59</sup> in a significant case involving a wealthy water company, whereas the U.S. government has consistently sided against Indigenous populations, including those involving the DAPL and Keystone Pipeline. Despite recent court rulings in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the [oil in the Dakota Access Pipeline continues to flow](#).<sup>60</sup>
3. Marginalizing factors may include not being a member of the majority population, having darker skin color, living in a rural area, being an identified member of an Indigenous community (nationality), dressing in non-Western clothing, working in agriculture, practicing a non-Western religion, practicing communal living, and laws that favor majority populations.
4. Adichie discusses how Indigenous populations and other marginalized groups are often identified by a single story of tragedy. For instance, the Lakota and Dakota people of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in the United States might be identified as a conquered people who struggle with grinding poverty and substance abuse. But, if one considers their history before colonial occupation, their story is rich with cultural complexity and organization. After colonization, their story is one of survival and triumph through physical and cultural genocide.

5. Those working in the social work field may hold biases against Indigenous populations struggling with family dysfunction and substance abuse. They may perceive members of Indigenous populations as broken and may be tempted to use a top-down intervention approaches. Social workers may confuse cultural admiration with cultural appropriation, and as such, may believe that admiring Indigenous culture (and adopting parts of it), without taking the time to understand it holistically, is appropriate. Social workers can increase their insight into the nature of their pre-existing biases through using reflective practices in supervision, as well as through gaining increased knowledge about Indigenous cultures, and by practicing cultural humility.

### **Further Resources about Indigenous Healing Practices and Local Knowledge:**

[Standing Rock Sioux Tribe website](#)<sup>1</sup>

[Indigenous native American healing traditions](#)<sup>61</sup>

[Building partnerships: Conversations with Native Americans about mental health needs and community strengths](#)<sup>62</sup>

[Understanding Aymara Perspectives on Development](#)<sup>63</sup>

[Enduring Aymara Cosmivision in the Context of Development in Chile: Review of Aymara Indian Perspectives on Development in the Andes by Amy Eisenberg](#)<sup>64</sup>

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# Towards an Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Social Work Strategies in Coping with Climate Change: An Afro-sensed Approach

*By Mogomme Alpheus Masoga & Alucia Lulu Shokane*

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## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand the role of social work in mitigating climate change.
2. Explore the interface of Indigenous knowledge paradigms with social work approaches.
3. Examine local Indigenous strategies in mitigating climate change challenges in rural and marginalised communities.

**Lesson:**

Climate change is a threat to sustainable and ecological development globally and particularly in Africa. Climate change is defined by the [RSA White Paper on national climate response](#)<sup>1</sup> as “an ongoing trend of changes in the earth’s general weather conditions as a result of an average rise in the temperature of the earth’s surface, often referred to as global warming” (p. 8). To put it simply, global warming is an increase in global mean temperature.<sup>2</sup> This rise in the average global temperature is due, primarily, to the increased concentration of gases known as greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere that are emitted by human activities. According to Green, these gases intensify a natural phenomenon called the “greenhouse effect” by forming an insulating layer in the atmosphere that reduces the amount of the sun’s heat that radiates back into space and therefore has the effect of making the earth warmer.<sup>3</sup> Evidence of rapid climate change, including more frequent and intense weather systems and greater climate variability, has already been observed in many countries, including South Africa, such as:

- Increases in the average global temperature, with the past decade being the hottest on record;
- Rises in the average global sea level;
- Changes in average rainfall patterns, with some regions experiencing higher rainfall and other areas experiencing drying;
- Increased frequency of heavy rainfall and extreme weather events over most land areas;
- More intense and longer droughts, particularly in the tropics and subtropics.

Furthermore, it is recognised that South Africa is a relatively significant contributor to global climate change with significant GHG emission levels from its energy-intensive, fossil-fuel powered economy. South Africa is extremely vulnerable and exposed to the impacts of climate change due to its socio-economic and environmental context. Climate change impacts are the consequences of both natural and human systems. The impacts depend on the vulnerability of the system, which in the climate change literature of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is explained as a “function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity” (p.1).<sup>2, 4</sup> Tackling climate change cannot focus only on ‘mitigation’ (reducing

emissions) but must also give priority to 'adaptation' (building people's resilience to climate impacts).

Despite the South African government's attempt to mitigate against harsh conditions of climate change, the challenge remains. One notes with concern that those most affected by climate change are the vulnerable, poor, and/or marginalised, often those residing at the peripheral spaces. Therefore, this chapter seeks to focus on this gap by providing local Indigenous strategies that can be utilised to both mitigate and adapt to climate change specifically in rural and marginalised communities.

### **Understanding Climate Change and Social Work**

It is imperative to provide an understanding of how climate change intersects with social work. One of the first presentations by social work about climate change on the world or global stage occurred in Copenhagen during the 2009 Conference of the Parties (COP15). This late entry of social work to the climate change conversation is supported by research conducted by Dominelli, suggesting that "climate change is seldom discussed in mainstream social work".<sup>5</sup> Over the next few years, social workers, educators and social development practitioners worked to draft a *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* (Global Agenda) which was released in 2010.<sup>6</sup> The Global Agenda expressed the commitment to action of the social work and social development communities working to promote sustainable communities and environmentally sensitive development. Environmental sustainability is one of the four pillars of the Global Agenda to which social workers should commit to action.<sup>7</sup> This included, amongst others, responding to environmental challenges such as climate change. Furthermore, Rinkel and Powers assert that these environmental challenges should be addressed ecologically and socially.<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason that Jones and Truell suggest the commitment towards environmental sustainability should involve conducting climate change research in social work in cooperation with communities.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Role of Social Work in Climate Change**

Social work is dynamic and has, over time, solidified its belief in the importance of the empowerment of vulnerable people within its service. Consequently, a global definition of the social work profession by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) was adopted, stating it is:

A practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and Indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Zakour and Gillespie emphasize that “social work research, education and practice have an important role to play in dealing with environmental challenges because they are able to intervene and examine all systems involved” (p.12).<sup>9</sup> in order to improve the wellbeing of the people. It is therefore, imperative for the social work profession to continue to play a significant role and develop various approaches and strategies to deal with climate change impacts.

### **Afro-sensed Theoretical Framework**

For many centuries African communities have developed Indigenous knowledge, skills and beliefs, passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. This knowledge continues to maintain a high degree of acceptability in the majority of populations where it has been preserved. Kaya believes sharing Indigenous knowledge across communities can also enhance cross-cultural understanding and promote the cultural dimensions of development.<sup>10</sup> It is for these stated reasons that the authors have embraced Indigenous knowledges and cultural theories to discover unique, Indigenous ways of coping with the impacts of climate change.

The Afro-sensed theory encompasses Indigenous knowledges and cultural approaches used to discover uniqueness and Indigenous ways of coping. This theory was developed with the intention to guide practitioners to intervene in climate change impacts in a local, culturally appropriate, and sensitive manner. ‘Afro-sensed’ differs from Afrocentric, as it refers to one’s innate awareness, a ‘sense’ of one’s identity, that is, being African; without making it ‘centric’ (cf. Ngugi wa Thiongo, Molefi Asante, Dani Nabudere), at the exclusion of all else, implicating oneself in another hierarchical regime structure, where one is better than another.

## **Understanding Indigenous Knowledge**

Mascarenhas defines Indigenous knowledge as embedded knowledge that has been “around when it is needed” and that a “considerable part of Indigenous knowledge is related to the survival of the community, in general or specific fields, whether in terms of protection or use of the environment, optimizing or enhancing food, especially during the periods of stress” (p. 4).<sup>11</sup> Serote, on the other hand, provides the following impeccable definition,

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) emanating from the human spirit are life experiences organized and ordered into accumulated knowledge with the objective to utilize it to enhance the quality of life and to create a livable environment for both human and other forms of life (p. 310).<sup>12</sup>

The authors have adapted a case example of what Indigenous knowledge is based on the research on Indigenous knowledge and medicine by one of the co-authors of this chapter, Masoga.<sup>12</sup> The case example is about Mme Maake who was regarded as a community ‘midwife’, presented below:

Interestingly, when I met with her she was busy attending to a mother-to-be who had a complicated case of childbirth. I was amused by the level of ‘recording’ that Maake maintained. There were no papers on her table to recall the progress already done about this case but she was able to provide dates and actions taken to remedy the problem experienced by the mother-to-be. She has never been educated in the formal sense of education except being trained and skilled by her late mother as a ‘midwife’. However, she was able to recall and record all cases she was attending to and her traditional practice, and on the floor, there were 85 strings tied differently. She indicated that the 85 tied strings represented the number of cases that she has so far attended to. Each string could tell a story about the birth case attended by Maake: age, sex, date and the respective case – whether it was a complex or simple case. It was interesting how Maake classified her cases – using nodes of strings as codes to unlock the confidentialities of some cases that she was dealing with; a point that all the records about her clients were kept safe and managed accordingly. This management system of Indigenous knowledge challenged one on how it was possible (pp. 312-313).<sup>12</sup>

The above excerpt emphasises the fact that Indigenous knowledge has been a tool for both survival and resistance for many communities. Mme Maake in the excerpt, represents a number of Indigenous knowledge practitioners in communities. She has never been formally schooled but is recognized by her community as a leader and knowledge holder of note. Critical here are issues of survival and resistance of local communities in the face of harsh realities such as climate change.

### **Exploring the Interface of Selected Indigenous Knowledge and Social Work Strategies**

The process of climate change is not new; throughout history people have been adapting to changing conditions, including natural, long-term changes in climate. However, these adaptations have typically been discrete and reactive. The strategies and actions that different people take in response to or in anticipation of climate change seek to adjust and to cope with impacts, moderate damages and/or take advantage of opportunities. Since climate change affects communities differently according to their respective vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities, adaptation must be locally specific and appropriate to the context.<sup>13</sup> All communities need to assess their vulnerability to climate change, identify adaptation options and plan responses to protect their populations from impacts.

The Indigenous knowledge strategies focus on particular **values, beliefs, rituals, traditions** and **environmental relationships** that exist in any community. Shokane and Nel emphasize that “the potential of skill, local resources and capacities of communities, should never be undermined” (p.118).<sup>14</sup> Social workers can enhance their skills to mitigate the impacts of climate change by learning from the custodians of Indigenous knowledge, especially in rural areas where resources are limited. Some examples of Indigenous knowledge strategies from Indigenous communities in South Africa:

- Religious motifs – *badimo* (ancestors) and *Modimo* (the supreme source of life – in this case God) who are in charge of land, environment. Local references included expressions such as *Motho ke Modimo* (a human being is godly). Humans have the capacity to protect the environment around him or her given the innate “godly” capacity and gifting.
- Political motifs – *magoši a buša mo lefaseng* meaning that local leaders have the responsibility to protect the environment around them.



- Science motifs – *tsebo ka leratadima* (knowledge about astronomy) – *go bala leratadima* (reading closely the life of stars) – some of the common local phrases include the following: *hlogo e a bolela, e thieletše* (nature speaks, listen to it). Singing and poetry recitation forms part of this Indigenous understanding of the environment.
- Knowledge motifs – *tsebo ka hlogo e bohlokwa* (general knowledge) – thereby making use of proverbs, songs and games, narratives as storages of heritage and culture to capture issues of the environment.

### **Adaptive Coping Strategies**

#### Example: Food Preservation

Masoga postulates that Indigenous knowledge is related to the survival of the community, in general or specific fields, such as protection and use of the local environment and enhancing food security, especially during periods of stress such as climate change.<sup>12</sup> This could include preservation of *morogo* (vegetables) to *mokhuša* (dried vegetables) and *mašonja* (Mopani worms) and brewing of traditional beer such as *bjala bja mabele* and *morula* (beer made from Marula fruit).

#### Example: Addressing Water Shortage

People in rural areas who are dependent on subsistence farming for survival suffer as a result of climate change, such as when droughts occur resulting in water shortages. There is a need to address the water shortages that are experienced because of climate change. One strategy is water preservation through preserving rainwater or digging boreholes for people who can afford or have financial support. However, ordinary people in the community can also use their Indigenous knowledge in rain making rituals. In addition, the people can also use Indigenous knowledge to assess where they can find ground water. The role of the social worker will be to enhance or promote and highlight the various skills available in the community. Indigenous knowledge could be essential for the survival of the community, in general or specific fields, such as protection and use of the local environment, enhancing food security, especially during periods of climate change.

## **Application:**

### **Exercise 1: Exploring Indigenous Knowledge**

**Instructions:** Read the story below and answer the corresponding reflection questions.

After hearing that Indigenous ways of knowing were a good thing, a social worker wanted to bring this knowledge into the community but did not know how. In spite of reading book after book, no answers were found. 'Maybe', s/he thought, 'if I get in touch with nature, the answers will come to me'. So, donning a backpack s/he set out for the bush. After walking for several hours s/he sat beneath a large tree and began to think, but although bit by mosquitoes and blackflies s/he was bit by no ideas. Feeling sorry for herself/himself, s/he sighed, 'Will I ever learn how to include Indigenous knowledge in Social Work?' While the social worker was still lost in thought..., a custodian of IKS was in the bush digging traditional medicine, overhead this self-talk and responded...'yes you can! (Adapted from Dumbrell & Green).<sup>15</sup>

### **Reflection Questions:**

- 1) What was the social worker in this story missing?
- 2) What could the social worker have done differently?
- 3) How could the social worker have approached learning about Indigenous knowledge?
- 4) How could you begin to learn about various Indigenous knowledge strategies that could be helpful in work on climate change issues in your community?

### **Exercise 2: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Social Work Strategies in Coping with Climate Change**

**Instructions:** After reviewing the above "Examples of Strategies from Indigenous Communities in South Africa", and the two examples given on "Adaptive Coping Strategies" (i.e., "Food Preservation", "Water Shortage"), answer the following questions:

- 1) How can local Indigenous knowledge strategies be utilised to mitigate climate change in rural and marginalised communities?
- 2) Do you know of any Indigenous knowledge strategies that are not listed in this chapter?
- 3) Describe some roles for social work in addressing climate change.
- 4) How can the profession of social work and Indigenous knowledge be integrated in addressing climate change challenges?

- 5) How does an Afro-sensed worldview inform social work approaches to mitigate climate change?

### **Summary Notes:**

Suggested answers are provided to give insight to the reflection questions posed in exercises 1 & 2, as well as suggested readings for further review of the topics:

### **Possible Responses for Exercise 1:**

- 1) IKS is not in books nor in nature but with the people.
- 2) Look within his/her community.
- 3) The social worker was supposed to have started in the community, in line with the community development principle of inside-out approach as pointed out by Shokane and Nel “that any change in interventions should always be initiated within the community in order for the efforts to have lasting effects” (p. 109).<sup>16</sup>
- 4) The readers need to conduct a self-study for the answers.

Resources for further reading:

- Makhubele, J. C., Shokane, A. L. & Mabasa, M. A. (2016). Rural perspectives, challenges and strategies of climate change amongst small-holder farmers in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. *Indilinga: Journal of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 15(2), 151-174.
- Shokane, A. L. (2016). Indigenous knowledge and social work in the context of climate change and older persons in rural areas. *Indilinga: Journal of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 15(2), 105-174.
- Masoga, M. H., & Kaya, H. (2011). Building on the Indigenous: An appropriate paradigm for sustainable development in Africa. *African Philosophy and the Future of Africa Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*, 14, 153-169.

### **Possible Responses for Exercise 2:**

- 1) Marginalised communities can be made aware of and empowered to identify and recognize their Indigenous knowledge as well as strategies that can be utilised to mitigate climate change.
- 2) The readers need to conduct a self-study for the answers.
- 3) Social workers have the expertise to provide professional intervention which enables them to address many social issues and

unpredictable challenges faced by people in life including climate change.

The social worker's role includes, but is not limited to:

- Advocacy: where the social worker lobbied on behalf of the community.
- Community action research: studying the needs of people and assessing the impact of climate change.
- Social planners: studying the local needs, focusing on Indigenous knowledge strategies and developed community practice models.

Social workers can be involved in assessing the effects of climate change and developing plans for the distribution of aid, as well as re-uniting families and participating in long-term development.

- 4) Sharing and exchanging knowledge between the custodians of Indigenous knowledge holders such as chiefs, elders and Indigenous birth attendants and traditional healers in the community and social workers through community forums. As previously stated by Masoga (2017) Indigenous knowledge is exchangeable and can provide interactions that connect people to the environment and its changes such as climate change.
- 5) The Afro-sensed worldview believes that Indigenous knowledges systems and cultural approaches should be used in a culturally sensitive manner to discover uniqueness and Indigenous ways of coping with climate change.

**Further reading:**

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## Resources:

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# Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place: Claiming Place at Multiple Levels in Sustainability and Social Work Practice

By Alma M.O. Trinidad

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## Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe the Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP) as an approach and method for sustainability and social work practice.
2. Apply Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP) to sustainability and social work practice on multiple ecosystemic levels.
3. Identify ways that social workers can serve to facilitate change and promote equity on multiple levels with Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP).

**Lesson:**

This chapter first describes Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP) as an approach and method that can challenge the dominant and conventional ways of healing, explain or explore systemic oppression, indigenize, and foster responsibilities nurtured through place aimed to promote sustainability in social work practice. The reader then engages in a case study of The Farm, which is part of a food sovereignty movement in rural Hawai'i. Through the case study, the reader learns how CIPP is conceptualized and operationalized. Lastly, the reader identifies strategies that social workers can deploy utilizing CIPP on multiple levels to facilitate change and promote equity in sustainability movements.

**Introduction to Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place and Its Rationale**

The longstanding agenda of imperialism among Indigenous and other minoritized communities of color around the globe has contributed to historical trauma and strikingly detrimental social conditions such as genocide, displacement, loss of land, the decimation of traditional knowledge systems, ecologies, and economies across time, people, and place, and structural discrimination. In result, minoritized communities of color face an array of disparities, such as severe poverty, environmental hazards, toxic waste, military ownership, and chronic health diseases. Due to historical trauma, communities of color have suffered from multiple losses—religion, language, traditional healing practices, and traditional family systems due to colonialism. For community members to live well and overcome such socio-historical-political conditions, access to opportunities for them to engage in culturally appropriate, community based social justice and sustainability work is key. Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP)<sup>1</sup> can serve as venue, process, and method to motivate community members to learn about their cultural knowledges, histories, collective values, and healing practices, and thus, be social, cultural, and political change agents in sustainability and social work practice.

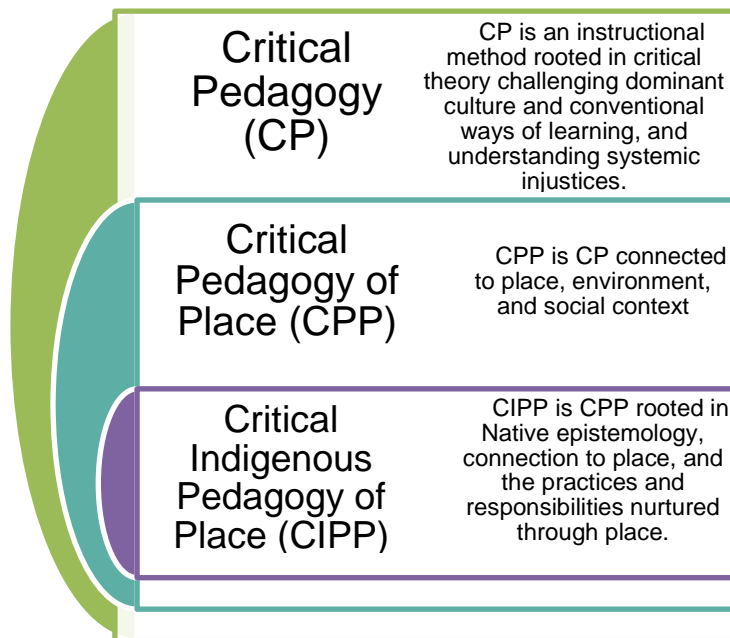
**Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP): Centering Knowledge in Place**

As seen in Figure 1,<sup>2</sup> CIPP builds upon the concept of place, and Indigenous and cultural studies.<sup>3,4</sup> With the growing literature linking sustainability and wellness to the construct of place, the social context—the social, psychological, and cultural dimensions of geographic place that capture the deep symbolic meaning people have in which they live in—needs to be integrated. Place and place-making with attention to the dynamics of power



and control, oppressive forces, colonial structures, and historical trauma and re-traumatization is key. Place, with attention to these dynamics, is an embodiment of the processes of critical consciousness of historical trauma of one's community and community knowledge on how to live well and healthy in one's environment. Place is set as a geographical setting for political action and to relate its changing character to the political outlook it produces among community members in relation to sustainability and wellness.

**Figure 1: Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place**



**Key Components of CIPP**

Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (CIPP) has three major components: 1) analysis of power and oppressive forces;<sup>2</sup> 2) indigenization and reinhabitation;<sup>3</sup> and 3) sociopolitical development through community.<sup>2</sup> Table 1 below defines each component.

**Table 1. Components of Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place**

<b>Analysis of Power &amp; Oppressive Forces (decolonization)</b>	<b>Indigenization &amp; Reinhabitation</b>	<b>Sociopolitical Development through Community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● raise questions about inequalities of power and disparities that exist among diverse communities</li> <li>● challenge the assumptions, practices, and outcomes of the dominant culture and belief systems that have been internalized, deemed hegemonic, and may have been harmful and traumatic in the past</li> <li>● attempt to dispel the false myths of opportunities and merit</li> <li>● learn to recognize disruptions and injury, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● reclaim Indigenous epistemology by remembering the past with a purpose                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● allow space for native and/or local community to retell its own story or past— local and global, its places, genealogy, local knowledge, culture, language, and social practices</li> <li>● learn to live well, socially and ecologically, in a place or area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation and colonization</li> <li>● learn how to live well from where one is</li> <li>● regain ownership,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify the disparities that exist in the community through communal learning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● critically explore the complexity of oppression and systemic inequalities within the community through workshops, gatherings, and community political engagement</li> <li>● explore the role of media and its framing on communities’ needs and issues</li> <li>● build alliances and solidarity through social networking and sharing of knowledges across communities and disciplines</li> <li>● foster and facilitate a commitment to serve the community and instill a sense of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>addressing colonial causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take apart the stories, reveal underlying texts, and give voice(s) to things that are often known for its dominant discourse and taken at “face value” without question</li> </ul>	<p>control, and access to natural resources that sustain living and spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interweaving, replacing, or speaking against Western narratives of place that have been oppressive with Indigenous narratives that instill hope and healing</li> </ul>	<p>responsibility and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a cycle of critical praxis (knowledge-action-reflection), including a process to cope, engage with, and strengthen the emotional faculties of community members</li> </ul>
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**Case Example: The Farm in a Food Justice Movement**

A case example of how CIPP is applied to the food justice movement<sup>5</sup> is provided.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> It involves a youth-run, organic farm that targets Native Hawaiian and other Asian Pacific Islander youth in a rural community in Hawai‘i. Formed in 2000, the youth program is part of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nongovernmental community development organization. The overarching goal of the parent organization is to empower the rural community to move toward self-sufficiency, especially around the issue of food security. Food insecurity relates to hunger and is defined as “the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality of sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so” (p.9).<sup>6</sup> In response to this particular issue, the founders of the parent organization characterize the youth program as a social movement to develop a comprehensive plan and sustainable local food system by educating youth; fighting hunger; improving health, nutrition, and wellness; and being part of the expanding organic agricultural industry. To meet its mission, the program formed a holistic and interconnected economic development and educational project. Youth and young adults are recruited to the program primarily through word of mouth or local advertisement. The Farm provides

youth activities related to managing and operating the youth-run organic farm, participating in cultural-based workshops and leadership and entrepreneurial training, and administering the community organic agricultural center.

### **Findings of the Farm: A Multi-Level Impact of CIPP**

A case study was done of The Farm, and findings demonstrate how CIPP has promise in promoting change and equity on multiple ecosystemic levels,<sup>1</sup> and suggest implications to sustainability and social work practice. An ecosystem perspective, which is commonly used in social work assessment, is used to highlight the findings of the case study in an organized fashion depicting ways CIPP can be applied/used at multiple levels. As seen in Figure 2<sup>1</sup> CIPP can affect individuals in areas of self-improvement, communication, engagement with diverse people, life skills such as applying to college or job, and healthy habits regarding eating and nutrition. In addition, CIPP has the potential to promote an *'ohana* (family) mentality which instills values and morals, Hawaiian language, and ways of life across generations. Finally, CIPP has the potential to foster meaningful relationships in the community, build social capital, and solicit strong partnerships for food security and sustainability. With an emphasis on knowledge, values, and practices rooted in place (geographically or spatially) in a cultural community, CIPP can clarify and position the roles and responsibilities of social workers in facilitating the analysis of power and control, the indigenization and reinhabitation processes, and sociopolitical development through community based engagement. Social workers can serve a vital role in providing opportunities for individuals, families, groups (youth, young adults, parents, etc.), and communities to explore the meaning of place and its faculties—sources of wisdom, values bestowed, and voices harnessed in the process of social change. If not Indigenous themselves, social workers can have a profound impact in becoming and being a humbled ally by facilitating the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous epistemology in the sustainability movement.

**Figure 2: CIPP's Influence on Multiple Ecosystemic Levels**



**Application:**

**Instructions:** To apply CIPP, three exercises are formulated to invite the reader to reflect how they can integrate CIPP and its components into their sustainability and social work practice. The articles, findings of research, and resources presented in the lesson above should guide the exercises.

**Exercise 1: Where I'm From/Where I'm a Local/Reclaiming My Place of Origin**

The first exercise facilitates a process of grounding the reader to their own place of origin and deep human experiences through creative work. Each of us comes from a place, or finds their human experiences stemmed from an array of places and spaces. Individually or in a group, review the following videos/web links, chronologically, adding other references relevant to the topic:

1. ["I Am From" Student Alliance Project Trailer](#)<sup>7</sup>
2. ["Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon, writer and teacher](#)<sup>8</sup>
3. ["Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local" by Taiye Selasi](#)<sup>9</sup>

Through one's own creativity (e.g., poetry writing, doodling, drawing, etc.), the reader is invited to create or document where they're from or where they're local. The reader may free write, draw, or color. This [Where I'm From template](#)<sup>10</sup> may be helpful. To encourage an encompassing set of identities or social positionalities that are important to one's place of origin, critically reflect upon one's lived experiences by domains (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, age, first language, ability, religion/spirituality, etc.) as they are contextualized in a geographic place or space.

The reader is encouraged to share their creative piece and discuss with colleagues or peers in a learning community (e.g., course, team, practicum, professional setting, etc.). Some potential questions for critical reflexivity include:

- 1) What did you learn about yourself and others?
- 2) What kind of emotional response(s) did you have, and why?
- 3) What came out of learning about your place of origin, and those of others?

It is highly recommended that this activity be done in the initial phase or stage of a sustainability or equity work with a community.

### **Exercise 2: Honoring Place and Building Community Assets**

The second exercise encourages the reader to examine and map out community assets through the processes in CIPP. Individually or in small groups, use Table 2 to brainstorm together and identify the community assets or strengths that exist in contributing to the CIPP processes. Consider who (e.g., people <sup>11</sup> or partnerships) can be involved in such process and function and resources that exist to foster such. Table 1 Components of Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place and Table 2 below can be used hand in hand to complement and further assist the reader in probing who, what, and how. The reader is invited to use this table however they want. Be creative!

**Table 2. Brainstorming Community Assets through the Processes of CIPP**

<b>CIPP Process</b>	<b>Community Assets (Existing or Potential People, Partnerships, Resources, etc.)</b>
analysis on power and oppressive forces (decolonization; critical consciousness)	
indigenization--reclaiming traditions, values; defining needs and framing issues that center the community	
sociopolitical development through community engagement	

**Exercise 3: My Vision in Promoting Change and Equity through CIPP**

The last exercise encourages the integration of the realities and struggles of an organization, partnership, or collaborative work. It can ultimately be a tool to assess and identify infrastructural needs in sustainability work. Integrating an ecosystemic approach, this last exercise facilitates a process to imagine one's role and/or responsibilities for change and equity in social work interventions on multiple levels. As seen in Table 3, the reader can document the following by level of change or influence: 1) personal and professional social work values; 2) potential or desired vision of change; and 3) potential or desired social work roles, opportunities, and responsibilities in the work of sustainability. This exercise can provide clarity, tension or conflict, and intentional planning. It is useful to utilize this as part of an exercise to simulate strategic planning, programming, and individual and collective supervision.

**Table 3. Envisioning Multisystemic Levels of Change through the Processes of CIPP**

<b>Level of Change</b>	<b>My Personal &amp; Professional SW Values</b>	<b>Potential or Desired Vision of Change</b>	<b>Potential or Desired Social Work Role(s), Opportunities, and/or Responsibilities</b>
<b>Individual</b>			
<b>Group</b>			
<b>Family</b>			
<b>Community</b>			
<b>Organization</b>			
<b>Policy</b>			

Some potential questions for critical reflexivity as the reader sifts through their roles and/or responsibilities, individually and/or collectively, include:

- 1) What are potential personal values and/or social work values that are important to the work? What are potential personal values and/or social work values that are contentious or in conflict in the work?
- 2) What are potential or desired vision(s) of change to be achieved within the next three, six, nine, and twelve months? What are



- factors or opportunities to change? What are barriers or challenges to change?
- 3) What are potential or desired roles and/or responsibilities that you, as a social worker, can presume in the given sustainability work? What are organizational structure and processes that can facilitate and support such roles and/or responsibilities?

### **Summary Notes:**

In these exercises, the facilitator should be aware of their values, insights, and thoughts on place-based approaches to addressing inequities. The facilitator's stances and positionalities must be made transparent and inviting, so authentic and courageous dialog can take place. These exercises build upon strength-based perspective in social work and trauma informed care that hopes to centralize historical trauma and move towards healing. Indigenization as a process can be done with, by, and for culturally specific communities that face historical trauma and continue to experience re-traumatization as they navigate in multiple systems of care. It is hopeful that these exercises can link, bridge, and facilitate creativity and innovation in solving issues related to sustainability, locally and globally.

### **Resources:**

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<https://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=12733>

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<http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>
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[https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye\\_selasi\\_don\\_t\\_ask\\_where\\_i\\_m\\_from\\_ask\\_where\\_i\\_m\\_a\\_local](https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local)
10. "Where are you from?" Retrieved from  
[www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm](http://www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm)
11. Rabb, H. (2017). Sustainable wellbeing and social work with children: Promoting our connectedness with nature through nature-assisted interventions. In M. Rinkel & M. Powers (Eds.), *Social work promoting community and environmental sustainability: A workbook for global social workers and educators* (pp. 133-145). Berne, Switzerland: International Federation of Social Workers. (Free, downloadable PDF at <http://ifsw.org/product/books/social-work-promoting-community-and-environmental-sustainability-free-pdf/>)

# 'Wise Practices' with Indigenous Australians: Adapting to a Changing Planet

*By Karen Kime, Heather Boetto and Karen Bell*

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## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Develop understanding of the cultural strengths, wisdom and spirituality of Indigenous Australians embedded in the care of Country.
2. Understand the Wise Practices model for working with Indigenous Australians as part of a holistic eco-social approach in practice.

**Lesson:**

This chapter uses the voices of Indigenous Australians to outline cultural significance of Country, including their relationship with Country, and the cultural and environmental wisdom in the care of Country. It highlights the values embedded in the care of Country, including the connection between human and non-human wellbeing. In addition, a 'Wise Practices' model of social work is shown as an effective way of working and collaborating with Aboriginal people. Indeed, Wise Practices centres Indigenous culture and heritage while recognising that social work must be inclusive of the strengths and the spirituality of the people. Moreover, Wise Practices prioritises the use of *local* culture, knowledge and leadership, while using only that which is appropriate from Western academia. In this way, the Wise Practices approach to community work harnesses *local* solutions to address *local* issues.

**Living and Listening to Country**

The term 'Country' is an Australian Indigenous term used to describe not only the physical elements of land, such as fauna, flora, and waterways, but also the supernatural elements of all creation. Country embraces all things, and is regarded as the 'spirit filled', living, breathing cosmos. For Indigenous Australians, Country speaks to its people, heals and nurtures its peoples, and listens to its people. The following verse by Bird Rose<sup>1</sup> encapsulates the meaning of Country:

*So when we dance on land  
So when we play on land  
Work with, and care for land  
This not just to produce.... or benefit  
It is to be with, to live with... the Sacred*

Within Australia, Aboriginal people have lived on a changing landscape for many thousands of years. Indeed, the oldest human remains have been dated at least 45,000 years and represents at least 2,000 generations of Aboriginal people and families living on the Australian continent. Such history includes longitudinal knowledge of adaptation, essential to the survival of the human and non-human world. Pretty et al., point to biodiversity and cultural diversity as necessary for survival, citing cultural diversity as perhaps the most important.<sup>2</sup> In relation to the loss of cultural diversity, Greiner refers to 'Indigenous knowledges that represents a living library of options available for preventing and/or adapting to local and global change' (p. 23).<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organisation cites Indigenous knowledges as vital to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, both cultural diversity and biodiversity are fundamental to human and non-human survival in the face of such present and future challenges.

### **Exercise 1: Locating Indigenous Australian Nations**

**Instructions:** Open the following [interactive map](#)<sup>5</sup> which highlights the cultural diversity of Indigenous Australia. If you live in Australia, use the zooming facility to locate the Aboriginal nation where you live and those surrounding it. If you live outside of Australia, move around the map, zooming in to explore the different nations that make up Australia. Discuss the impact of landscape on the lifestyle of different nations. For instance, the differences between arid and coastal on the availability of resources, landcare, mobility, etc. As you work your way through this chapter and associated links, make a note of any terms unfamiliar to you, research the meaning of those terms, and share them with classmates, peers, etc.

Alongside this knowledge are the common values which have facilitated the continuation of Indigenous peoples worldwide. Hertel<sup>6</sup> refers to these values as “the four R’s”, which include the prioritising of relationships, responsibility, reciprocity and redistribution. These values are directed equally to all of life, with the understanding of the constant interdependency which enables wellbeing of all. For instance, the relationship one has with Country and the responsibility in caring for such; or the sharing and redistribution of resources to ensure the common good, values which are found within the oral storytelling of many Indigenous Australians. Thus, despite the ongoing impact of colonisation, Indigenous peoples often demonstrate resilience, strength and resourcefulness in the face of the dissimilar values from those of the colonisers.

Consider the work of Bird Rose<sup>6</sup> in her ethnography entitled, *Nourishing Terrains*, which captured the deeply spiritual relationship many Aboriginal people have with Country:

Kakawuli (bush yam) come up from Dreaming; no matter what come up, they come out of Dreaming. All Tucker they come out of Dreaming. Fish, turtle all from Dreaming. Crocodile, anything they all come from Dreaming. Kangaroo, makaliwan (wallaby), all birds, all from Dreaming.

Prior to European invasion, almost a million people lived in approximately 600 different Indigenous Nations across Australia. Each nation had its own

language, lifestyle and culture. For instance, the research of linguist, R. Dixon, found that in the Dyirbal language group of north Queensland, around Innisfail, Cardwell and inland to Ravenshoe, there were at least six language groups, of approximately 500 members each. Indeed, throughout the continent almost 250 different languages were recorded, with the majority of Aboriginal children speaking several languages. Many nations had natural boundaries that separated their country from that of the next. For instance, Wiradjuri Country (the largest nation in south eastern Australia) has the boundaries of the Great Dividing Range, the Murray River and the Hay Plains. Other nations had few natural features that divided them from one group to the next, however use of landmarks (for instance carved trees) distinguished territorial boundaries of Country between neighbouring groups.

Aboriginal society was very sophisticated, in that they had their philosophers, doctors, lawyers, botanists, educators, artisans, weather forecasters, astronomers, etc. and practised a deep spirituality which kept them in harmony with their environment, and these strengths enabled them to endure the many difficulties of a hunter/gatherer lifestyle. There was, and continues to be, great cultural diversity amongst nations. One major reason for this was the availability of resources such as food and water. For example, the communities situated along coastal areas were less mobile than those occupying the sparse inland regions of the continent. Another cultural difference was in the area of land management. For instance, 'fire stick' farming was and continues to be a widespread practice and includes the use of cool slow fires to regenerate life, whilst nurseries and fisheries were built in other locations. A study of the Narrandera Shire undertaken by Gammage<sup>7</sup> details the active management of the *Narrungdera* clan with regards to their Country:

The rich resources of their country required constant maintenance. Each area was policed by a *jungjung*, or keeper, a man of authority who protected it from needless exploitation. This was an honored post, open to any totem but often passing to eldest sons, and usually occupied by very senior men. Keepers would stay in their areas, generation after generation. Indeed, the remains of a keeper's midden, used for thousands of years lies just north of the Leeton road at about the Seven Mile.

Keepers enforced rules all Narrungdera knew, for all were conscious land managers. Baiame commanded this, and on their

success at it Narrungdera comfort depended. They farmed both plants and animals. If food was short they reduced their consumption, yet also planned to avoid or minimize shortfalls by husbanding scarce resources or banning their use. They estimated seasonal production carefully, and they were prepared to go short to provide for the future - with food as with everything they planned for balance and continuity. Spring was a relatively difficult time because young plants, eggs, and breeding animals were protected. On the whole however, planning and bush craft enabled them to predict and provide food supplies reliably. Consequently, they could afford to take land out of production by declaring fauna or flora reserves, for instance the duck sanctuary at Deepwater station. The Narrungdera were farmers and graziers, except that they minimized work rather than making a virtue of it.

Huge varieties of fruit and other edible plants were often transplanted and then carefully husbanded. Patches of seed grass and nardoo, used to make flour, were never cropped out, and careful note of the weather told the Narrungdera when the stock left might be cropped again. Medicinal herbs and bushes were planted at suitable points throughout Narrungdera Country, and if necessary protected with logs from grazing animals. Trees were protected from fire by back burning and from mistletoe by cutting it out. Female quandong trees were fertilized with male blossom and the branches left to show what had been done. Species were declared protected if the seasons threatened them, and soil erosion was controlled. (Indeed, Wiradjuri people warned early European farmers that their carelessness was destroying the soil, and that in time it would become useless). Wiradjuri coolamons carried breeding fish and crayfish across country to seed watercourses, and brush and log dams built across creeks to establish habitats were once common in Narrandera Shire. (p.19)<sup>7</sup>

The term 'Kin' is used in relation to all those with whom one has a relationship and includes those in the human *and* non-human world. At the centre of these relationships is the requirement to care for one's Kin - including the land itself. Thus, it is a system of belonging, made up of a rich cultural and social matrix of relationships and obligations. In addition, while in some parts of Australia the intricacies of the Kinship system, including

totems, may not be practiced, Aboriginal people continue to feel very closely connected to their `mob' which is inclusive of the non-human world.

Similar to the cultural diversity of Aboriginal nations, what is knowledge in one nation (and community) is different within another. Knowledge was, and in most nations continues to be, transmitted orally. Likewise, each nation has developed its own knowledge in relation to survival within a changing landscape, including ways of physically and spiritually caring for Country. Moreover, when Aboriginal people refer to Country, they are referring to not only fauna and flora, but the earth and its waterways. It includes the elements and the supernatural. Indeed, Country for Aboriginal people embraces all, and is respected as the living breathing cosmos that it is.

## **Exercise 2: Significance of the Cosmos to Indigenous Australians**

### **Instructions:**

1) Enjoy watching the video found at the following link which illustrates the significance of the cosmos and the stars - to the culture and spirituality of Aboriginal people: [ABC Interview: "Aboriginal astronomy the star of Dreamtime stories"](#).<sup>8</sup>

2) Share what you know about the night sky with your classmates and/or peers. Discuss where this knowledge may have come from including the cultural differences in what you see.

All of creation is seen as 'spirit filled', as having consciousness and therefore possessing an intrinsic right to exist. Alternatively, in Western society, humans have come to see themselves as being separate from nature and have commodified it as an economic resource. The intrinsic rights of creation 'to exist' have been subjugated. Thus, species are often overexploited, wasted and certainly not shared equitably. For governments and policy makers, the intrinsic value of nature is largely unacknowledged.

For Indigenous Australians, Country speaks to its people; heals and nurtures its peoples and listens to its people.

....they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, grieve for country and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, today, and tomorrow, with consciousness, action, and a will toward life. Because of its richness in



meaning, country is home and peace; nourishment for body, mind and spirit; and heart's ease.<sup>9</sup>

These beliefs form part of Aboriginal Law and The Dreaming, where Aboriginal people are required to act as *co-creators* of life. This is more than activities such as conservation and/or sustainability. The custodial role of caring for Country means that one is responsible for promoting *new life*. It is a spiritual role as much as it is a physical role and the two cannot be separated, as much as it cannot be separated from those who came before and those who are yet to come. Within some nations, people continue to 'sing to Country' to ensure it might 'grow strong', or 'greet Country' after a long absence. Aboriginal people refer to 'growing Country strong', illustrating the active process of creating life. Thus, people continue to spiritually care for Country, for instance through music and song – it is a sacred act. Consider some of the ancient [Song Lines](#)<sup>10</sup> which crisscross the Australian continent, such as that of the Seven Sisters.<sup>9</sup> It is more than a simple story of creation, it has mapped the resources, waterholes and healing places across Australia. It holds wisdom about Country, Kinship and survival in an ever-changing landscape.

The values which governed the use of such resources included the avoidance of waste, never using all of a resource and the sharing of all, for all understood the interdependence in which everything exists. Bird Rose<sup>6</sup> refers to Country as “an ecological web; a nourishing terrain and a place that gives and receives life” (p.39). Indigenous Australians perceive themselves as inseparable to this. They are both nourished and informed by Country. Eckerman, et al.<sup>11</sup> highlight this in the following:

There are spiritual beliefs, such as the spirits of the dead and important signs and occurrences, which herald news. For instance, the janjardi who is thought to be a friend of children, although adults have a fear of him in that he has the ability to take children with him to the 'spirit world'. In addition, premonitions, visitations and apparitions occur with enough regularity to ensure that even the young, who may scoff as 'blackfellas ways', show a healthy respect when such events are recounted. There are many special signs - the death bird, the night owl, a mysterious knocking, the howling of dogs at night, 'black' dreams - which will herald bad news. Many people also have personal signs (e.g., the willy wagtail or the curlew which will bring them news) (p.69).

The above highlights a way of thinking and being which includes communication with the non-human world and is common amongst many Indigenous peoples.

### **Exercise 3: Indigenous Australian Connection to Country**

- 1) Purchase the book or access the DVD by Sullivan, B. (2016). '[Yindymarra Yambuwan: Respecting everything](#)'. Sharing and Learning, Mt Austin, New South Wales.<sup>12</sup>
- 2) When viewing of the DVD has been completed, answer the following:
  - a) Identify the central role of Country in relation to ways of knowing, being and doing for the Wiradjuri Nation.
  - b) How is the spirituality of Aboriginal people expressed in their relationship to Country?
  - c) What are the attitudes and values towards the environment that may contribute to sustainability and conservation programs?

### **Wise Practices in a Changing Landscape**

*Social work, like sailing, gardening, politics and poetry are crafts of place....and work by the light of local knowledge (p. 1).*<sup>13</sup>

The [Wise Practices model](#)<sup>14</sup> is a way of working with Indigenous peoples, increasingly used in social work practice. This includes areas such as Aboriginal community development, drug and alcohol prevention, youth programs, as well as leadership programs.<sup>14,15</sup> Calliou and Wesley-Esquimaux argue Wise Practices has been shown to be more effective, culturally safe and appropriate, as well as addressing the issues of colonisation in Indigenous families and communities.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Wise Practices harnesses the wisdom, knowledge and heritage of Aboriginal peoples, so that culture and identity are affirmed, while also using aspects of Western knowledge and practice to enhance family and community wellbeing. Within Australia, a Wise Practices framework has been applied to community development and leadership programs.<sup>15,17</sup>

The Wise Practices model requires social workers to become 'learners' within the Aboriginal communities they work. Indeed, the Wise Practices model prioritises the knowledge and heritage of Aboriginal people at the local level, recognising their unique experience in caring for the land. Such knowledge can only be gained through 'getting to know the people'. Thus, social workers must begin with developing relationships, recognising that

this can be a lengthy process. Community leaders and Elders must be included in this, as well as Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations directly involved in the care of Country, such as local Aboriginal Land Councils and/or conservation workers.

Likewise social workers need to develop a detailed picture of the Aboriginal community and places of significance, including an understanding of [Indigenous Australian protocols](#)<sup>18</sup> to ensure ethical practice. Places of significance may include:

- Historical sites, such as massacre sites, missions or reserves
- Places that have great cultural heritage, such as ancient campsites, carved trees, caves, etc.
- Spiritual sites of significance, such as burial grounds, initiation sites including men's and/or women's places

As one develops relationships within the community, knowledge will be shared. However, respect, humility and patience are what is needed here. Similarly, critical personal and professional self-reflection is important as you explore another way of thinking being and doing; another way of being in the world. The Wise Practices model often challenges social workers, particularly those who operate from a Western rationalist culture.

Questions which might be explored include: What is the historical experience of welfare and/or community development in this place? What are the issues of concern to the community? What are the cultural practices, stories and beliefs in caring for Country? How might these contribute to local initiatives in eco-social work? How can we facilitate Aboriginal leadership in this work? To facilitate leadership, social workers often have an important role to play, since there may be training, skill development and/or advocacy that is needed. However, once obtained, Aboriginal leadership, especially where Aboriginal knowledge is sought and/or cultural practices are used, is vital.

In contrast to Western knowledge, knowledge for Aboriginal people includes intuitive knowledge. It is a knowing that does not fit within Western frameworks, for instance 'evidence based practice'. Further, it is a way of being and doing that intersects with the spirituality of the people and community.

Consider the following:

- *'Jardi' was a young person from Barkanji Country who had been placed in residential care a long distance from home. It had been many years since he'd been 'on Country'. When finally taken back to his community, the caseworker spoke of the eagle circling the edges of Country, seemingly to welcome the young person home. The eagle is Jardi's totem.*
- *Regardless of Western timeframes, ways of being include 'doing' when only the 'right people' are present. This includes occasions such as celebrations, meetings, funerals and other forms of 'sorry business'. It also includes permission from the 'right people' to be on certain parts of Country and to undertake strategies in the care of such.*

Western holistic frameworks of practice focus on the physical and emotional aspects of people and communities. However, they often overlook the spiritual life of the people. The Wise Practices model of social work needs to be 'informed' by Aboriginal people and knowledges and inclusive of the spiritual beliefs and ways of being and doing at the *local* level. Similarly, Wise Practices does not mean a rejection of Western knowledge, indeed it uses what is necessary while centring the wisdom and heritage of Indigenous peoples.

In summary then, the principles of Wise Practices include:

- 1) A holistic approach to practice, with an emphasis on physical, emotional **and** spiritual wellbeing;
- 2) The centring of Aboriginal knowledge and heritage;
- 3) Working at the local level;
- 4) Promoting opportunities for Aboriginal leadership; and
- 5) Self Determination.

The Wise Practices model of social work, acknowledges the ongoing impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people and communities. Thus, it facilitates decolonisation through affirming Aboriginal culture and heritage, while prioritising self-determination at the local level.

### **Protocols Surrounding Indigenous Australian Knowledges**

The use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge is determined by culturally specific protocols that are common for many nations. For instance:

- Men and/or women's business: some knowledge is not shared between men and women;
- Secret/sacred knowledge: this often involves the spiritual life and practices of the people and belongs to specific knowledge holders;
- Knowledge of Country: is knowledge held by the custodians of specific and inherited areas of one's Country; such people are often referred to as the Custodians or Knowledge Keepers of that place, have responsibility for it and are authorised to 'speak for that place'.

For instance, Song Lines and stories that are often termed 'open' as well as those that hold deeper levels of meaning which can only be revealed to specific people. Indeed, one needs to be within the appropriate relationship to the speaker, to receive knowledge or hear the deeper meaning of stories. For example, those that belong to one's clan, one's totem, one's sex, etc. They are the heart of Indigenous identity and are found within almost every nation and used to pass on important cultural knowledge including Aboriginal Lore. Stories are the title deeds to a culture which connects you to that place, or to those people. They are about belonging.

The right to tell stories and to link into that history, to that Country, and that connection is an Indigenous cultural right. It is one that is fiercely guarded in post-colonial societies. However, they too are under threat when people circulate stories without consent, without attribution and where the authenticity of the story has been compromised. Similarly, specifically Aboriginal terms can be misappropriated. For instance, terms such as The Dreaming and/or Dadirra are often distorted. Indeed, the latter is increasingly referred to as 'deep listening' which negates the strong spiritual component within the original meaning which has a focus on the Sacred. Using such terms inappropriately damages culture.

#### **Exercise 4: Indigenous Australian Dreaming**

**Instructions:** Consider the following 'open' Dreaming story *from Ellis*.<sup>19</sup> Read this several times and try to discern its teachings.

##### ***Water Peanuts***

*An Aboriginal man lived alone in an area which is known today as Oenpelli. He chose to live there because he loved eating the water peanuts which grew there. Sometimes he ate them raw. Sometimes he cooked them whole. Sometimes he pounded them into a powder and made damper. He seldom ate anything else.*

*However, there was a problem. The Aboriginal man's water peanuts needed water to grow and sometimes there was not enough rain to water them. After worrying about this for some time, he realised that if he cried continually, his tears would water the water peanuts. He began to think of sad situations, such as his loneliness. He cried about being lonely. A visitor arrived to tell him of the death of a friend. He cried about the death of this friend. The visitor left and he cried because his visitor had left. Then he received news that his visitor had been bitten by a snake and died. He cried about the death of his visitor.*

*Eventually he could cry no more. This concerned him greatly because he was afraid that the water peanuts would be lost to future generations. He believed that many people would live in that place in the future and that he had to keep the plants alive at all costs. He decided to give up his earthly life for the sake of the water peanuts. He left the earth for the sky-world where he was able to raise a little corner of the sky when he needed to let extra rainfall.*

*As he had believed, many people did come to live in the area many generations later. As their ancestral spirit, he came to them and showed them how to cook and care for the water peanuts. He still guides and guards the Oenpelli people today.*

Like many Dreaming stories, the above is complex and layered in meaning. It is not just a story explaining how the water chestnuts continue to exist but illustrates the importance of place and belonging including a love of Country and self-sacrifice for its continued wellbeing. At a time when environmental concerns, such as sustainability, are at the heart of major discussions, the story reveals the extent to which one generation cares for another; and that sometimes sacrifice is essential to 'good custodianship'. If Australians (and others around the world) could consider these responsibilities more fully and the need to care for the environment for future generations, many of the 'hard decisions' would be made clear.

### **A Place of Wellbeing**

For Aboriginal people the concept of wellbeing is multi-dimensional and immersed within a specific cultural landscape. Kite and Davy<sup>20</sup> identified the multiple layers of Indigenous wellbeing and quality of life, highlighting the deeply cultural perceptions of physical emotional and spiritual wellbeing, claiming such perceptions are drawn from the relationships Indigenous

peoples have between themselves, their communities, their environment and the natural and spiritual worlds. For instance, “Aboriginal ways of being are a tapestry of spirituality, values, attitudes, concepts and relationships interwoven into their physical and material worlds” (p. 192).<sup>20</sup>

Thus, Indigenous peoples perceive a direct link between the health of Country and the wellbeing of their communities. Moreover, the tradition of working *with* Country for the wellbeing of all is highlighted within the stories of Aboriginal people. For instance, Somerville and Perkins<sup>21</sup> gathered stories from Indigenous peoples on the New South Wales coast, who refer to “the old people calling to the dolphins *in language*....to bring the fish home”. Further, they note the “singing of the Country for the renewal of the land; for the wellbeing of people and places.... into the present”. Knowing, understanding and affirming such connections are central to the Wise Practices model of social work. Moreover, the wisdom in working ‘with’ Country (as opposed to subjugating it) is an important lesson for all.

Indeed, Indigenous peoples have long understood the connection between Country and wellbeing. For instance, in North America and Canada, Indigenous people continue the purification ceremony of a Sweat Lodge - firmly embedded in the four directions of Country. In New Zealand, Maori healers continue to care for their people through the use of bush medicines. Within Australia, many Indigenous people continue to rely on the knowledge and spiritual gifts of the Ngangkari – the traditional healers.

### **Exercise 5: Indigenous Australian Spirituality**

The oldest human remains discovered in Australia (42,000 years) was returned to Lake Mungo in Barkanji Country, western New South Wales in November, 2017. Prof Jim Bowler, speaks of the sophistication of Aboriginal society at the time in which Mungo Man had lived. He points to the differences in relationship to Country between Aboriginal people and other Australians and illustrates the deep spiritual connection between humans and the Spirit – so evident in the burial rites of Mungo Man. For Aboriginal people, the spiritual care of Country is inseparable to the practical, representing the reciprocal relationship of care for the ‘Mother’ as she cares for us.

- 1) Listen to the following youtube [video featuring Jack Kelly, \(Barkanji man\)](#),<sup>22</sup> describing this relationship.

- 2) Contemplate an answer this question: What is it Dr. Jim Bowler believes all Australians can learn from Aboriginal people in the care of Country?

### Summary Notes:

This chapter has outlined an Indigenous Australian understanding 'of' and relationship 'with' Country. It highlights the values, cultural wisdom and knowledges important for informing social work about how to live sustainably and adapt to a changing planet. A Wise Practices model is also explained as an effective and culturally safe way of working with Indigenous Australians, where honouring the culture, experiences and knowledge of the local community is essential to sustainability and conservation in social work practice.

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# Social Work on Social and Environmental Justice Issues in Communities that are Under Military Occupation

By Issa B&B. Rabadi

## Author Biography:

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## Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe the characteristics of social workers and social work practice in communities that are under military occupation.
2. Discuss the possibility of practicing social work under military occupation despite the challenges and difficulties.
3. Explore social work practices which promote community and environmental sustainability despite injustices due to military occupation.

**Lesson:**

This lesson provides an understanding of social work that addresses social and environmental justice issues in communities that are under military occupation. While the following lesson and case study is specific to social work with communities under military occupation, it could also be useful to social workers who address similar, unfair and unjust practices in other oppressed communities, such as those under oppressive dictatorship regimes, or communities that suffer from direct threats on their lives and rights through other means of physical brutality and oppression.

Social workers can serve to support people in communities which are oppressed, helping them to regain power and opportunities for self-determination. Social workers in the Palestinian Union for Social Workers & Psychologists (PUSWP) have successfully worked in [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(OPT\)](#)<sup>1</sup> through the development of a lively system and flexible structures that support such oppressed communities.

Military occupation practices create intense struggles for [basic human rights](#)<sup>2</sup> and often [prevent any possibility of sustainable communities and environments](#)<sup>3</sup>. Examples of military occupation practices include: restricting ability to travel, restricting access to economic gain, restricting access to water and food.<sup>4,5</sup> In Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Amnesty International has noted that:

The Israeli army's destruction of Palestinian water facilities – rainwater harvesting and storage cisterns, agricultural pools and spring canals - on the grounds that they were constructed without permits from the army is often accompanied by other measures that aim to restrict or eliminate the presence of Palestinians from specific areas of the West Bank. These are areas where Israel has a particular interest in appropriating land, usually for the expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure or with a view to its possible future annexation to Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Such infringements on human rights demand not only international intervention by entities that seek to uphold human rights (e.g., [United Nations](#), [UNRWA](#), [UNOCHA](#), [Amnesty International](#), [Anti-Slavery International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))<sup>7</sup>, but also require the attention of the social work profession. International Federation for Social Workers (IFSW) has declared clear positions against human rights violations in OPT through different statements that harmonize with the social work profession's

ethical principles.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Military occupation, in itself, contradicts with not only basic human rights, but also with the social work profession's ethical principles.<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch noted:

Israel enforces severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' human rights, and it builds and supports unlawful settlements in the occupied West Bank. Its security forces appear to use excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators and suspected attackers, raising the specter of extra-judicial killings. It has renewed the practice of punitive home demolitions. The Palestinian Authority has arrested students and activists allegedly for their political affiliation or because of expressed criticism.<sup>12</sup>

Social workers can play strategic roles in designing, implementing and developing new practices based on social workers' ethical principles and principles of human rights, that are useful in empowering those facing military occupation practices. Empowering such communities could include: finding ways to address power imbalances, creating more opportunities for the communities' self-determination, enhancing decision making processes, developing in-depth understanding of the community needs and challenges, participating in analyzing and evaluating the socio-economic and political situations in the community, participating in designing and leading advocacy campaigns, etc.

### **'Training in Solidarity'**

One example of such empowering practices useful in communities facing military occupation comes from social workers who are working in the field as part of PUSWP. They have developed a new training model, 'Training in Solidarity', that social workers can use to raise awareness of the community for the historical reasons of their social, economic, political, and environmental challenges and problems. Raising the awareness of local communities under occupation to these challenges and problems is considered to be one of the major elements of preserving their mental health and their social cohesion, since they will understand the roots and reasons of the social, economic, political, environmental, and psychological pressure they are facing. Understanding such reasons and knowing that it is a common thing that all people are facing or might face may bring people to better understand themselves and to support each other.

Awareness campaigns, such as 'Training in Solidarity', also affects external communities. Raising awareness helps outside communities understand the

real social and psychological pressures that other human beings are facing, regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, etc. and encourages them to participate in defending human rights since humans are equal, and to defend the environment since the planet is for all species and has rights itself, as well.<sup>13</sup> 'Training in Solidarity' encourages social workers to be creative since they can design their own training methods that could be directed at social workers, human rights and environment defenders, people that are suffering from direct military occupation practices, and/or solidarity groups. And they can implement it and develop it with their participant trainees and/or with their colleagues in the field to adopt and modify according to the needs of different groups. This method also draws upon real life events, that are experienced and known by local communities, rather than exported examples and methods, thereby making the training more meaningful and of greater interest to trainees. One example of how social workers with PUSWP used local examples in their trainings is included in the case study below that explores exploitation of water rights.

**Case Study:** The Israeli army has been destroying and damaging water wells in OPT since 1967. Additionally, 73% of the water available in the OPT is redirected to the State of Israel, and within the West Bank water is utilized disproportionately as 300,000 Jewish settlers consume 10%, meaning only 17% of water is left for nearly 2.5 million Palestinians.<sup>14</sup>

One example of the injustices that occur daily happened on 15 January 2008 when Israeli soldiers demolished nine rainwater harvesting cisterns southwest of Beit Ula, a village north-west of Hebron, north of West Bank that was built in 2006. The land had been levelled in the traditional terrace style and more than 3,000 trees, mostly olive, almond, lemon and fig, had been planted at considerable cost. The cisterns were a vital part of the lives of the Palestinian citizens and for the sustainability of the trees in the area. The water cisterns were very important to the local farmers and their families, who had also contributed a significant percentage of the overall cost.

An Amnesty International delegate who visited the area after the demolition, found out that the cisterns had been systematically smashed and with the exception of a few saplings, the orchard trees had been uprooted and destroyed. Bulldozers had been used to churn up the land, the fencing around the fields had been torn down and even old olive trees, planted many years before, had been uprooted and crushed. It was a scene of devastation.<sup>5</sup>

This is not a unique case, rather Amnesty USA reported that in most villages they visited they found that rainwater harvesting cisterns had either been recently destroyed by the Israeli army or had demolition orders pending against them. This is a daily life story of the Palestinians living throughout the Occupied Territories. The Israeli army not only admits these violations but justifies them as a routine action that they do every day in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank]. While in “Aqraba and other nearby villages Palestinians have no running water and are prevented even from collecting small amounts of rainwater, the nearby Israeli settlements of Eli and Shilo have swimming pools, and the Israeli settlement of Itamar has a fish farm on top of a hill” (p. 45).<sup>6</sup>

The first picture below (Figure 1) shows water availability for all kinds of recreational activities at the Israeli settlements with green fields in the background of the picture. While in the second picture (Figure 2) shows an empty pool that is left without water, and is used to gather water for drinking and plant watering and in the background the desertification is clear despite the fact that both pictures are taken from the very same area.



Figure 1: Israeli Settlements of Eli and Shilo



Figure 2: Empty Palestinian water collection pool

### **International Law: The Right to Access to Water**

[Resolution 181](#)<sup>15</sup> of 29 November 1947, which partitioned the territory of Mandate Palestine and led to the establishment of the State of Israel, contains a provision for: “*Access for both States and for the City of Jerusalem on a non-discriminatory basis to water and power facilities*” (4.D.2.e).<sup>15</sup>

Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power in the OPT, has well defined responsibilities to respect the Palestinians’ human right to access to water. It must not only refrain from taking actions that violate this right or undermine the Palestinian population’s opportunity to realize the right, but also protect the Palestinian population from interference by third parties in their enjoyment of the right to water, and it must take deliberate, concrete

and targeted steps to ensure that this right is fulfilled and fully realized. Since 1967, after the Israeli occupation of the OPT, Israel's actions and policies have greatly either diminished existing water sources, or harmed these resources by different means; demolition, poisoning of water, denying access and restricting the availability of water for the Palestinian population in the OPT is in breach of Israel's obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. So, the international community is calling on Israel to "uphold its obligations as the occupying power by putting an immediate end to current policies and practices which arbitrarily restrict the Palestinians' access to and availability of water in the OPT."<sup>6</sup>

Despite all these violations, and despite the ignorance that Israeli government shows toward the international law and human and environmental rights, social workers in OPT and all over the world are and will never be helpless. Social workers in OPT through The Palestinian Union for Social Workers & Psychologists and through their daily practices at different social, environmental, political, legal and other kinds of organizations, managed to highlight the effects of the Israeli violations against the civilians, and managed to reveal the social and mental effects of these practices.<sup>16</sup>

The Palestinian Union for Social Workers & Psychologists managed to network with different unions around the world and joined IFSW to be part of the international efforts to strive for "social justice, human rights and social development through the promotion of social work, best practice models and the facilitation of international cooperation."<sup>17</sup>

**Application:**

**Instructions:** These exercises can be used in multiple settings: in a class or group setting to highlight an example of an oppressed/occupied population and instruct on designing intervention activities, advocacy planning and conducting a campaign; in the field to design and conduct an advocacy campaign in a specific area of interest; and online to promote a cause and attract solidarity for a targeted area. To conduct these exercises in a class, it may help to divide into two groups. You may also conduct these exercises as an individual, or in an informal group setting. Make modifications as necessary.



### **Exercise 1: Understanding Oppression in the OPT**

Using the case study presented above or more updated stories presented in the news, discuss the following concepts.

- The first group should discuss the different violations by the occupation forces in relation to: trees' uprooting, prevention of access to clean water, destruction and poisoning of water wells in the OPT, or other hazards or destruction to the environment.
- The second group should discuss the social and mental effects of these violations and additional violations like prevention of free movement, prevention from access to health and education services, etc.
- After each group has completed their analysis, ask one or more of them to present the findings to the bigger group. Keep the focus on discussing the role of social workers in supporting oppressed communities under occupation and to reveal the real practices of the oppressing forces.

### **Exercise 2: Developing Strategies for an Oppressed Population in Your Area**

To begin, identify a population that is experiencing military occupation or one that is oppressed in another way, such as colonization, in the area in which you live.

- Review the steps in Exercise one and complete an analysis of what violations are occurring related to environmental injustices and what are the social and mental effects of these violations.
- Strategize possible social work actions related to the oppression. Brainstorm a list of all "to do activities" that social workers can take in solidarity to stop military violations against civilians' human rights, the environment and social work ethics. We can suggest the following as brainstorming ideas:
  - We can ask the participants, either individually or in pairs or in small groups, to write letters of protest against these practices to their parliament representatives, Israeli embassy in their areas, and their governments. Then, the social worker could help by addressing these letters of protest and sending them to the appropriate government officials, or parliament representatives, and the Israeli embassy in their areas.
  - We can ask participants to write an article for the local paper in their university/area, or to the social media, or to share it

through online forum or solidarity group. If one does not exist, then they can possibly establish such a group. Social workers can assist by getting their articles circulated beyond these mediums to additional international media outlets. And, they could help the community arrange solidarity visits to the OPT in cooperation with PUSWP and hold events to promote international solidarity.

### **Summary Notes:**

For further readings to help you gain insight on the situation in OPT, I would encourage you to read more from different, specialized, international organizations such as:

- [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [United Nations Relief and Work Agency](#)<sup>19</sup>
- [Humanitarian facts and figures on OPT](#)<sup>1</sup>  
This publication brings together a series of factsheets that were published by OCHA over the course of the past five years, highlighting different issues of humanitarian concern in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT). This can be used to easily introduce main facts on humanitarian facts in OPT.
- [Israel: 50 years of occupation abuses. Human rights watch](#)<sup>5</sup>  
Fifty years after Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it controls these areas through repression, institutionalized discrimination, and systematic abuses of the Palestinian population's rights, Human Rights Watch said today.

### **Readings from IFSW:**

- [Towards a Social Work Rights Framework](#)<sup>13</sup>  
By Dr Rory Truell, IFSW Secretary-General  
On International Human Rights Day, social workers celebrate and advocate for a broader framework of Rights. One that does not only focus only on individuals, but also includes the social, relational and environmental realities in which we all live.
- [Palestinian Social Workers Stand Against Child Detention](#)<sup>20</sup>  
Nigel Hall, IFSW Commissioner for Human Rights. 2016.
- [IFSW Executive Censures the Israeli Union of Social Workers](#)<sup>21</sup>

## Readings from local Palestinian organizations and specialized researchers:

- [Union of Agricultural Work Committees](#)<sup>22</sup>
- [Maan development center](#)<sup>23</sup>
- [The Applied Research Institute Jerusalem](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [Land Research Center](#)<sup>25</sup>
- [Mental health, social distress and political oppression: The case of the occupied Palestinian territory](#)<sup>26</sup>

By Rita Giacaman

This paper presents a brief history of Palestinian mental health care, a discussion of the current status of mental health and health services in the occupied Palestinian territory, and a critique of the biomedical Western-led discourse as it relates to the mental health needs of Palestinians.

## Readings on Israeli violations by Israeli organizations:

- [Testimonies by Israeli soldiers on the Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory](#)<sup>27</sup>

## Read more on Israeli violations against environment:

- [POICA. Israeli violations against the Palestinian environment.](#)<sup>28</sup>
- [B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#)<sup>29</sup>

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# Sustainable Community Development Practices through Environmental Protection in Zambia

By Fred Moonga

## Author Biography:

*Fred Moonga, PhD, MSW, BSW is a lecturer in the Department of Social Development at Mulungushi University in Zambia. He spent a substantial number of years working in international non-governmental organisations focusing on many areas including poverty alleviation and livelihood enhancement and psychosocial support, among others. He also worked in the department of social welfare in Zambia prior to obtaining postgraduate qualification. He is the current Treasurer of the Social Workers Association of Zambia (SWAZ). His research interests are in social protection, child welfare, social policy, gerontological social work and social development. Email: [fmoonqa@mu.ac.zm](mailto:fmoonqa@mu.ac.zm) or [moonqa4@gmail.com](mailto:moonqa4@gmail.com)*

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Explore the current community development initiatives and practices in Zambia and understand their sustainability in relation to environmental protection.
2. Assess the negative effects of community development activities.
3. Discover measures that would promote community development while enhancing environmental protection and sustainability.

**Lesson:**

The origin of the social work profession can be traced to welfare provision to the most vulnerable people. This original approach to welfare provision focused on individuals who were often, and still are, considered to contribute to their situation - 'blaming on the victim.' The prominence of community development as a social work method is partly due to the desire to depart from this type of 'welfarism' to a model of promoting people's welfare while fostering development of their communities at the same time. The *Ashridge Conference of 1954* is seen as a significant push towards 'developmental social welfare' which, among other things, promotes community participation in developmental activities.<sup>1</sup> According to Midgley, it was at this conference where the term 'social development' was formally adopted to foster this idea.<sup>1</sup> The developmental approach to social welfare is regarded as sustainable partly due to its participatory approach.<sup>1,2</sup> Within this broad movement, there is recognition of the importance of protecting the environment. This is because of the important role that it plays in the satisfaction of human needs, for example through agriculture and energy production.<sup>3</sup>

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) and its member states across the globe sought to address many of the world's problems through the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#),<sup>4</sup> to address eight global goals by 2015. The MDGs represented global efforts to address poverty and deprivation through measurable and concrete targets.<sup>5</sup> Since their adoption, several assessments were being done to determine the progress and possible attainment thereof. These progress reports were indicating that some of the 2015 targets would not be attained or would be only partially attained. For example, the '[2006 Livingstone Call for Action](#)'<sup>6</sup> observed that the MDGs may not be achieved in Africa unless development efforts incorporated actions that directly promoted social development.<sup>7</sup> This is affirmed by the MDGs progress report of 2013 for Zambia which showed that some targets would not be attained.<sup>8</sup> Experts began contemplating the next steps, and thus, the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)<sup>9</sup> were adopted with a new agenda of 17 goals to transform the world by 2030.

Around the same timeframe (i.e. 2010), social workers around the world established the [Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development \(Global Agenda\)](#)<sup>10</sup> with four complementary themes: *Promoting social and economic equalities; Promoting the dignity and worth of peoples; Promoting community and environmental sustainability; and Promoting the*

*importance of human relationships.*' The Global Agenda adopted by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) was envisioned to guide social work research, education, and practice. The Global Agenda not only unifies the social work profession with common goals, but it also serves as a collaborative mechanism for social workers and community development workers around the world.

The inclusion of the third theme of the Global Agenda, 'promoting community and environmental sustainability', is appropriate as social work's focus on the environment is long-standing. For example, Mary Richmond, one of the earliest pioneers of social work, recognized the importance of the physical environment, especially in relation to poverty at the time.<sup>11</sup> Since then, the environment in relation to social work has increased both in scope and importance. The 'ecological perspective in social work' or the 'person-in-environment framework'<sup>12-15</sup> has been hailed as the central approach in social work practice.<sup>12, 13, 16,17,18</sup> The Person-In-Environment (PIE) approach views a person's situation as being influenced by a person's immediate surroundings which includes friends, family and other institutions as well as the interactions among the ecological spheres. However, individuals also influence their environments, either in positive or negative ways. Cutting down trees, for instance, reduces the benefits that the individual can get from nature through unpolluted air, undisturbed wildlife and abundant rainfalls. The latter importantly affects food security to communities reliant on agriculture. In spite of the long-standing foci on the person-in-environment within the social work profession, the focus on the environment in the context of natural resources (commonly referred to as green social work or ecosocial work) is more recent.<sup>19-20</sup>

The third theme of the *Global Agenda*, 'promoting community and environmental sustainability' derives from the devastating effects of climate change and environmental degradation on people's lives and wellbeing. There is limited scholarship on community development and the environment in Zambia, yet the degradation of the environment in rural communities and in unplanned urban settlements (i.e., "shanty compounds") is rife. Although people in these areas are cooperative, especially in relation to poverty alleviation and community development measures, some of the community development interventions have negative effects on the environment. On one hand, the urban areas are particularly under threat through pollution from industries, poor waste



management, and overconsumption of resources, among others.<sup>21</sup> In the case of Zambia, unplanned settlements (sometimes even in [water discharge points](#))<sup>22</sup> have resulted in poor or blocked drainage systems thereby causing flooding in residential areas especially in the capital city Lusaka, leading to outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and other diarrheal diseases. This has been exacerbated by allowing trading in undesigned market places in recent years. On the other hand, the rural areas face the challenge of unsustainable energy sources (e.g., charcoal burning which is also used as an income generating activity) and poor farming methods such as the Chitemene system discussed below. Despite all this, issues of environmental sustainability have received little attention in Zambia.

This chapter attempts to show how unfettered community development endangers the environment and proposes ameliorative measures. While appreciating the important role of industrialism in bringing about employment and development in general, it argues that industrialism causes the major threat to the environment if not planned properly. Based on past and present practices, this chapter explores the future of community development practice and how to sustain the gains thereof in Zambia; special consideration is given to the complexity of issues involved in community development work as a method of social work practice.

### **Chitemene System**

In many rural communities in Zambia, the [Chitemene system of agriculture](#)<sup>23</sup> and charcoal burning, are two income generating practices which are destructive to natural resources. Chitemene is a local Zambian name referring to the clearing of land for agriculture and settlement which involves cutting down trees and burning them to enhance soil fertility. Chitemene is practiced in about five provinces in Zambia, although a different name is used in each. Clearing land either for industry or agriculture involves destruction of natural resources, but what makes this system particularly destructive is the number of trees cut and burnt at the same time. As such, there is both destruction of the natural resources and pollution of the environment with the smoke from the burning wood, as well as destruction of the habitat for wildlife. The same can be said of charcoal burning which is used both as an energy source and as an income generating activity (both in rural and urban areas).

It is acknowledged that poverty compels the people in such communities to resort to practicing such destructive methods of earning an income, but it is

arguable that these communities can achieve more through less destructive and more sustainable practices. Drawing partly from the [Biophilia hypothesis](#)<sup>24</sup> which suggests a relationship between people's psychological wellbeing and their relation to nature,<sup>25</sup> this chapter proposes that these environmentally unfriendly practices can be substituted with *bee-keeping and zero tillage*.

### **Beekeeping**

Beekeeping is not only more profitable when compared to charcoal burning but is also an environmentally friendly and sustainable option. This is because it combines and promotes the social, economic and environmental spheres that enhance human wellbeing and are the cornerstones of sustainable community development.<sup>21</sup> Beekeeping contributes approximately 25 percent of annual household income among rural communities in Zambia and creates both formal and informal employment.<sup>26</sup> Beekeeping, as an alternative source of income, is an example of the 'sustainable livelihood approach'.<sup>27</sup> This approach to community development seeks to enhance understanding of rural people's livelihoods. It regards agriculture as a key mechanism for enhancing rural livelihoods since it enhances both food and income security. However, there are limitations of bee-keeping as an alternative means of income, *inter alia*, its dependence on water resources with which not all rural areas are endowed. For example, although it is practiced in most rural parts of Zambia, it is mostly viable in high rainfall and woodland areas.

### **Zero Tillage**

Agriculture provides employment, both formally and informally, and is a source of livelihood for most rural and even urban households. Until recently, it has been the second highest contributor to Zambia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 1965.<sup>28</sup> However, it can also degrade the environment and be unsustainable if not practiced properly. [Zero tillage](#)<sup>29</sup> (growing crops without ploughing the land) is one of the better, sustainable agricultural practices. This is because it reduces costs associated with tilling the land while maintaining or even improving crop yields and sustaining soil fertility. Tilling the land every time one wants to plant crops reduces its fertility and reduces its organic matter retention, compacts the soil, and reduces soil microorganisms. Therefore, zero tillage enhances sustainability and environmental justice while ensuring food security. By and large the two alternatives of beekeeping and zero tillage require less energy expenditure and less capital injection, yet they have high returns from investment.

## **Sustainable Community Development**

Sustainable Community Development (SCD) draws extensively from sustainable development which stresses that meeting the needs for the current generation should not compromise those for the future generations.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, in addition to this futuristic focus, “sustainable communities are environmentally sound, economically productive and socially just” (p. 1).<sup>31</sup> Here, an attempt is made to unpack this statement a bit: being ‘environmentally sound’ means that the impacts of human activity (e.g., industrialisation, food production, human population) in relation to available natural resources are handled in such a way that the natural resources are not under pressure or destroyed insensitively. It is for this reason that the forestry department in Zambia initiated an annual national tree planting exercise from 15<sup>th</sup> December to 15<sup>th</sup> January. According to Sattanno et al., ‘economic productivity’ means that members of a sustainable community make productive investments in their communities through sustainable agricultural practices and conservation of natural resources.<sup>31</sup> Zero tillage discussed above is indeed economically productive. ‘Social justice’ relates to equitable access and utilization of natural resources. Proponents of sustainable community development often relate it to sustainable development. Consequently, they argue that the difference lies in geographical scope: such that sustainable development is considered a global imperative while sustainable community development is a local imperative.<sup>32</sup>

The main community development initiatives in Zambia under the [Department of Community Development](#)<sup>33</sup> are: the food security pack programme; women empowerment programme; self-help initiatives programme; and non-formal education and skills training programme. However, there are others carried out by non-governmental organizations focusing on various aspects of livelihood.

### **Case Study: Honey Production in Northwestern Province, Zambia**

Beekeeping is very common in most parts of Zambia, particularly in the Northwestern province. The latter is characterized by high rainfalls and natural forests, as well as a population with Indigenous skills which makes it conducive for beekeeping. Therefore, the strong link between forests and traditional beekeeping creates opportunities for promoting beekeeping as an incentive for sustainable forest management in this area.<sup>34</sup> Honey and its by-products provide income and employment for people in this and other rural areas. Therefore, social workers can help promote sustainable

community development and social change in communities where they work by helping community members to come up with alternative livelihoods that complement their culture and skills, such as beekeeping. This can be done by, first and foremost, conducting assessments with the community to determine factors such as: what is known by the community members, what is culturally appreciated, and what requires the least external resources, yet would result in high returns.

Social workers have a crucial role in reconnecting humanity to nature. For instance, bees (wildlife) and humans have a historical relationship, and beekeeping is one form of reconnecting humans with bees. Historically, human beings have been engaged in harvesting honey, but were often destructive to the bees by burning them or using other destructive measures. However, in modern times, better methods of collecting honey that preserve the bees have been developed. Consequently, there are more bees and more honey harvested every year entailing more income for those involved in beekeeping. In addition, bees are critical for our food system as they are the pollinators for the crops that humans rely upon for our food sources. Without bees, there would be no food, and without honey, life wouldn't be as sweet.

This chapter proposes measures that would enhance sustainable community development using local resources and skills while preserving natural resources. The case study demonstrated how beekeeping promotes community development and income generation among local (rural) people using local resources, while at the same time preventing deforestation, which is the major threat to bee-keeping. The project encourages cooperative work among local people, it enhances income among participants, and generally connects the communities to other communities within and outside the country who come to buy the commodity. Similarly, zero tillage enhances the yields from the farming communities, given the implicit improvement of soil fertility (by this method) through preservation of micronutrients. People in these areas cannot easily afford artificial fertilizers and may not have equipment to till the land or resources to pay for land tilling. The focus on rural areas is due to the high poverty levels and low levels of development in these areas and therefore the need for enhanced income and food security, as well as availability of natural resources. In so doing, the discussion attempts to reconcile community development and the need for sustainable environmental management and demonstrates how sustainable community development can provide

successful alternatives and can promote the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals within low income countries, like Zambia.

**Application:**

**Exercise 1: Sustainable Community Development**

Using information from the lesson and what you know about sustainable community development, answer the following questions based on a community of your choice:

- 1) What are some of the sustainable community development activities that you know about in this community?
- 2) What are some sustainable activities the community already engages in for generating income and promoting livelihoods?
- 3) What are some of the non-sustainable activities that the community engages in for generating income and promoting livelihoods?
- 4) What sustainable alternatives for income and livelihood enhancing activities would you recommend?
- 5) What are some of the sustainable community development activities that you would recommend to this community?
- 6) What are some of the ways that these activities would be environmentally sound and productive?
- 7) What activities would complement economic livelihoods in a socially just way, while also preserving natural resources?
- 8) Discuss ways in which these activities would be socially just. What are some cultural factors of people in the community that you should consider when planning sustainable community development activities? How would these activities have an impact on food security?

**Exercise 2: Promoting Human-Nature Connections**

Using information from the lesson and what you know about the biophilia hypothesis, use the community you picked for Exercise 1 above, and answer the following questions:

- 1) In what ways are people in that community already connected to their environment?
- 2) What are some of the threats to this connection now and in the near future?
- 3) How could social workers be involved in promoting connections between humans and nature in this community?

### Summary Notes:

The lesson is about sustainable community development aimed at reducing the degradation of natural resources. The relationship between humanity and nature is often lost through industrialization and urbanization. Modern social work should, among other things, strive to reconnect their service users to their natural environment based on the historical imperative of the person-in-environment and the biophilia hypothesis benefits. By doing so, they will be contributing to improving food and economic security, promoting environmental sustainability, and promoting cognitive and social development (especially among children), all of which are partly or wholly enhanced when humanity is connected with nature.

The lesson draws from the person-in-environment complemented by biophilia hypothesis that emphasises the importance of the original relationship between humanity and nature. It focuses on alternative and sustainable livelihoods that are aimed at reducing environmental and natural resources degradation while promoting food and income security. Chitemene system and charcoal burning both bring quick money and they may help to improve soil fertility in the short term. But, they are destructive to the environment and both require able-bodied human resources (which are depleted in the rural areas due to urbanization of youthful people in search of employment and the impact of HIV and AIDS) while the alternatives promote environmental sustainability and could be done by the young and the old who are often the most vulnerable and make up the majority of the population.

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# Partnership Approaches to Address the Impacts of Environmental, Social, and Economic Injustices on Mental Wellbeing with the Traveller Community in Ireland

*By Kerry Cuskelly, Thomas McCann and Nick Murphy*

## **Authors' Biographies:**

**Kerry Cuskelly** is an enthusiastic and committed social worker with experience in homelessness, disability, community development, medical and mental health fields. She has knowledge and practice of working in partnership with diverse populations. Her ethos is to work for social justice while engaging in critical reflexive practice and continuing professional development. She is a Social Work Team Leader in the [public adult mental health services](#) in Dublin, Ireland. [Kerry.cuskelly@gmail.com](mailto:Kerry.cuskelly@gmail.com)

**Thomas McCann** is a member of the Irish Traveller community and a long time Traveller activist. He is a founding member of the Irish Traveller Movement where he was also employed as the Equality Worker and as a Director among many other roles. Thomas established and currently manages the [Traveller Counselling Service](#) which was launched in 2008 in Dublin, Ireland.

**Nick Murphy** is a long-time community development activist in the areas of housing, equality and employment. He previously managed [Fingal Traveller Organisation](#) in Dublin, Ireland.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Learn about the Traveller population in Ireland.
2. Describe the implications for mental health (positive and negative) of various aspects of policy, built and natural environments, cultural mores, daily life, etc., which bear on the Traveller population in Ireland.
3. Explore how to develop working partnerships with ethnic minority communities in respect of mental health.
4. Examine the impact that environmental, social, and economic injustices have on mental health and wellbeing in the Traveller community.

**Lesson:**

The Traveller community in Ireland are a minority ethnic group who have a shared history of customs,<sup>1</sup> [traditions and values](#).<sup>2</sup> Travellers have lived as a distinct cultural group in Ireland for several centuries and retain their own language and traditions.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, Travellers were a rural people who travelled around a certain number of counties in Ireland and were associated with these counties.<sup>4</sup> Travellers identify themselves as a distinct community and are seen by others as such.<sup>5</sup> The population of Travellers in Ireland is between 35,000 and 40,000 people.<sup>6</sup> The [Traveller community](#)<sup>7</sup> in Ireland have faced multiple inequalities and injustices over many years. These inequalities have had a detrimental impact on the [mental health of the community](#).<sup>8</sup>

Some of the more visible aspects of Traveller culture include a nomadic lifestyle; trades, like tin smiting and recycling; and the Traveller language dialects, Shelta, Gammon, and Cant.<sup>9</sup> Recycling,<sup>10</sup> as one of the core activities of the Traveller community, has a positive economic benefit for the community in terms of providing an income and for society as a whole through improving the environment. One of the biggest influences on Traveller culture is the [nomadic lifestyle](#),<sup>10</sup> which is possibly the most distinctive feature of Traveller culture, differentiating Travellers from the settled community. Nomadism serves three functions within the community: social, economic and cultural. Nomadism refers to a mind-set, not just to the act of travelling.

The Partnership Process Model, which was developed by the Traveller Counselling Service, is a way of empowering local communities to develop structured approaches to addressing injustices faced by the Traveller

community. The “Mind the Gap” lunchtime discussion group series emerged out of implementing the Partnership Process Model in Balbriggan, Ireland. The series aimed to bring together members of the local Traveller community, local service providers, and the general community in order to create a forum in which all parties could talk on an equal footing about the effects of economic, social, and environmental injustices on the mental health of the Traveller community.

### **Intersecting Injustices Faced by the Traveller Community**

**Environmental injustices.** Since the criminalisation of their nomadic way of life,<sup>11</sup> the Traveller population has been assigned “culturally appropriate” accommodation (e.g., halting sites or group housing where Travellers can live in caravans or mobile homes with their extended families). Inevitably, however, these sites are chronically under-resourced and under-developed and lack proper infrastructure; in many cases they have no running water and no proper sanitation, which violates health and safety standards.<sup>12</sup> Access to safe play spaces is an issue for children and young people in the Traveller community. Such deplorable conditions in the built and natural environments are considered environmental injustices. In addition, due to a lack of sufficient investment of funding in the area, the access (or lack thereof) to appropriate accommodation is a significant problem for the Traveller community.<sup>13</sup> The state has historically abdicated, and continues to abdicate, its duty to properly invest in culturally appropriate housing<sup>14</sup> and environmental justice for the community; there is evidence of structural discrimination in government policy.<sup>15</sup>

**Economic injustices.** The Traveller community in Ireland has been excluded from mainstream society and has been denied access to goods and services, which the settled community takes for granted.<sup>16</sup> The oppression that Travellers experience takes multiple forms, from individual name calling to institutional and structural discrimination and exclusion.<sup>17</sup> For example, Travellers are often prevented from using facilities, such as shops; they are followed around stores when out shopping; they are not accepted in schools or by doctors who are not willing to take Travellers on as patients; whole families, often with very young children, are evicted from their homes, sometimes very early in the morning. These forms of exclusion and discrimination have a detrimental impact on Travellers’ mental health.<sup>18</sup>

Travellers have a very high rate of unemployment (80% as compared to 14% in the settled community).<sup>19,16</sup> Travellers also have a lower rate of school

completion than those in the settled community; this, combined with the erosion of traditional modes of employment in the Traveller community (e.g. tin-smithing, recycling, horse dealing), has contributed to the high unemployment rate. The resulting impact of exclusion from the education and labour market, coupled with the disappearance of traditional forms of employment has had a marked negative effect on the [mental health of Travellers](#).<sup>20</sup> When Travellers do get work it is often precarious, which results in a lack of income security and can lead to poverty. These stressors can result in poor mental and physical health, relationship/family problems, and can also contribute to a feeling of hopelessness among younger Travellers.

**Health injustices.** Evidence from the recent [All-Ireland Traveller Health Study](#)<sup>21</sup> highlights the [appalling health conditions](#)<sup>6</sup> in the Traveller community. Traveller men, for example, can expect to die 15 years earlier than their settled peers, Traveller women can expect to die 12 years earlier than their settled peers, and infant mortality rates are three times higher than in the majority population. Travellers fare poorly on every indicator used to measure social disadvantage, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, [health](#),<sup>22</sup> infant mortality, life expectancy and living conditions.<sup>23</sup>

**Cultural injustices.** From the 1960s onward, the dominant discourse around the Traveller community in Ireland construed Travellers and Traveller culture as a problem and viewed assimilation and absorption of the Traveller community and Traveller culture into the mainstream settled community as the solution to this problem.<sup>24</sup> This was the first time that the state had actively endorsed and sanctioned a policy of assimilation and absorption, which attempted to bring Traveller culture in Ireland to an end. The rationale for this policy stance was an erroneous assumption that Travellers were previously settled, but due to poverty and evictions during times of famine, had been forced to go on the road. This, however, is not the case; the Traveller community is a minority ethnic group who have a shared history of customs, traditions and values (including nomadism). Travellers have lived as a distinct cultural group in Ireland for several centuries<sup>25</sup> and retain their own language and traditions. Travellers identify themselves as a distinct community and are seen by others as such.<sup>26</sup>

## **Critical Approaches to Mental Health and Well-being with the Traveller Community**

Maintaining good mental health can be a challenge for all members of Irish society, particularly in the face of economic hardship,<sup>27</sup> which Ireland has experienced in recent years. However, when this is combined with the experience of racism, exclusion, and discrimination, as it is for the Traveller community, the challenge is even greater.<sup>28</sup> Due to the injustices discussed above, Travellers experience exclusion and oppression from the time they are born; they have been discriminated against and treated as outcasts over many generations and have been told that their culture is not valid. This has a very negative impact on how the members of the community view themselves<sup>29</sup> and how they view the wider Traveller community and settled society.<sup>30</sup> It shapes what people believe about themselves and how they engage with the world around them. It shapes both, the relationships Travellers have with each other, and the relationship between the Traveller and settled communities. This is what has been referred to by scholars, such as [Barro](#)<sup>31</sup> and [Freire](#),<sup>32</sup> as 'internalised oppression'. What happens during this process is that barriers, which had been external, become internalised; negative stereotypes, perpetuated by the settled community about the Traveller community, are also internalised and Travellers begin to believe that these stereotypes are true of themselves.<sup>33</sup> This has a profoundly negative impact on one's mental health and wellbeing. It can affect one's sense of identity, self-esteem, self-confidence, and understanding of one's place in the world.

### **The Social Model of Mental Health**

From a social work perspective, examining the impact on the mental health of the Traveller community through the lens of a [Social Model](#)<sup>34</sup> can be helpful. This model<sup>35</sup> takes the whole person into account and acknowledges the many societal issues that can give rise to mental distress. From a radical social work perspective, the Social Model acknowledges the detrimental impact that [capitalism](#)<sup>36</sup> has on the mental health of the members of the Traveller community. From a clinical social work perspective,<sup>37</sup> the Social Model allows for micro-level discussions that acknowledge the dire consequences that social, economic and environmental injustices have on the mental health and wellbeing<sup>6</sup> of Travellers. Giving due consideration to the connections between [societal injustices and personal pain](#),<sup>38</sup> both of individuals and of the community as a whole, is vital in this process.

### **The Partnership Process Model**

The [Partnership Process Model](#)<sup>39</sup> was developed as the result of a very successful conference held by the Traveller Counselling Service in 2012 called, *“Shaping the Mental Health Needs of the Traveller Community”*. It is a Partnership Process Model of working between the local Traveller community, local mental health service providers, local Traveller organisations, and the Traveller Counselling Service, which aims to:

- Engage the community in addressing issues of mental health for Travellers.
- Empower the community through engagement regarding mental health.
- Bring in a historically excluded community.
- Share the responsibility of addressing issues of mental health between all invested parties.
- Reduce stigma regarding mental health within the Traveller community.
- Engage families/communities who have been historically excluded so that they can better support those experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Improve relations between Travellers and service providers.
- Increase [cultural competency](#)<sup>40</sup> within mental health service provision.
- Improve outcomes for service providers.
- Improve mental health outcomes for Travellers.

The Partnership Process was the model initiated by the Traveller Counselling Service, in partnership with Fingal Traveller Organisation, in 2013. There were a number of meetings between the Traveller Counselling Service, Fingal Traveller Organisation, and the Mental Health Social Worker with responsibility for the area. The group decided to name itself the Fingal Traveller Mental Health Action Group (FTMHAG).

After a number of initial meetings, a survey of Travellers in the Fingal area was conducted by the [Primary Health Care Workers team](#)<sup>41</sup> in the Fingal Traveller Organisation. This survey identified key issues such as the impact of inappropriate housing, difficulty in accessing employment, inability to provide for one’s family, and the mental health of members of the community (note, we believe this was the first time such a survey had been carried out by a local Traveller group). After the survey had been completed, a local conference on Traveller mental health was held in [Balbriggan](#),<sup>42</sup> a

town in the northern part of County Dublin, Ireland, in which the Traveller community and mental health and other service providers were invited to participate. The conference explored the issues that the community had identified in the survey and looked at possible ways to move forward in partnership to address these issues. One of the many recommendations that came from these discussions was the need to bring Travellers and service providers together in a partnership to explore the issues that were affecting the mental health of the Traveller community and were creating barriers that prevented Travellers from seeking help. As a result of this, the *Mind the Gap* series of lunchtime discussion groups was born.

### **Mind the Gap**

The application of the Partnership Process Model resulted in the development and implementation of the *Mind the Gap* lunchtime discussion group series. As previously indicated, the aim of these lunchtime discussion groups was to bring together local service providers and members of the Traveller community in order to “mind the gap” that exists between the Traveller community, services, and service providers in the area of mental health and to explore ways that the service providers and the Traveller community could work together to bridge the gap. A lot of ground-work went into ensuring the successful outcome of the discussion group series. The key person in this process was Suzie McCarthy, manager of the Primary Health Care Workers team in Fingal Traveller Organisation. Suzie and her team ensured that as many members of the local Traveller community as possible knew the sessions were happening and encouraged community members and local service providers to get involved. She also ensured the practicalities of each session were taken care of (e.g., refreshments, projectors, laptops). Without this level of dedication and coordination, the series would not have been as successful as it was. Topics and discussions in the lecture series were framed by an understanding of the impact that social, economic and environmental injustices have on the mental health of the Traveller community.

Several themes were identified by FTMHAG as potential discussion topics. Some of the themes that were explored and discussed in these lunchtime discussions were:

- The impact of internalised oppression on Traveller Mental Health.
- The impact of inter- family conflict on Travellers’ sense of wellbeing.



- Addiction and drug use in the Traveller community and the impact of this on mental wellbeing.
- Cultural competency and the need for culturally inclusive services.
- The social and environmental conditions that Travellers are living in and the impact this has on mental health, anxiety, stress, depression, etc.
- Relationships.
- What is mental health?

The *Mind the Gap* series highlighted the importance of developing partnerships in which all parties to the process were equal, and in which the affected community would lead the way.

### **Outcomes**

The *Mind the Gap* lunchtime lectures were a great success, with many Travellers and service providers attending all of the sessions. The sessions were relaxed; people introduced themselves and stated where they were from (e.g., a member of the community; a service provider). At each session there was a short presentation on the identified theme, after which there was a facilitated discussion. During discussions people could have a sandwich and a cup of tea, provided through funding secured by FTO, and could discuss the lecture topic and presentation in more detail. Members of the FTMHAG facilitated each session. Brief notes were kept of each session with the aim that a work plan and future *Mind the Gap* sessions could be developed.

Some tangible outcomes of the series included:

- The need for a mental health worker from the Traveller community who would have the capacity to build relationships between the community and local service providers.
- Attendees of the lectures who were from the Traveller community feeling more empowered to engage with local service providers in respect of their mental health and to demand their right to appropriate mental healthcare.
- Acknowledgement of the sizeable impact environmental, social, and economic injustices have on people's mental health.
- Acknowledgement of the continued structural racism and discrimination faced by the Traveller community.
- Acknowledgement of the substantial impact that internalised shame and internalised oppression have on people in the Traveller community.
- The need to develop culturally inclusive mental health services.

**Application:**

**Instructions:** After reading the above lesson, complete the exercises below, individually or in groups.

**Exercise 1: Briefing Document**

Design a briefing document for a group tasked with structuring a series of lunchtime discussions about mental health, considering both positive and negative factors, in an ethnic minority or another marginalized community. Use the worksheet below to guide your discussion. The following are suggested topics to explore:

- a) The impact economic, social, and environmental injustices have on the mental health of people from the community. Ways to address aspects created by each type of injustice and the potential impact it could have on mental health.
- b) Aspects of cultural identity, which serve to support positive mental health.
- c) External cultural and perception issues which bear on members of the community through media, daily interaction with individuals and organisations, etc.
- d) Positive supports for mental health available and how such supports could be adapted to be more accessible to members of minority ethnic groups.

<b><i>Type of Injustice</i></b>	<b><i>Social</i></b>	<b><i>Economic</i></b>	<b><i>Environmental</i></b>
<b>Ways injustice is experienced</b>			
<b>Ways injustice is affecting mental health</b>			

<b>Possible ways to intervene</b>			
<b>Potential positive impact of proposed intervention on mental health</b>			

**Exercise 2: Strategies for Inclusion and Participation**

Brainstorm strategies to outreach to and work with ethnic minority and/or marginalized communities in respect to mental health. Be sure to consider:

- a) Cultural appropriateness.
- b) The personal nature of mental health difficulties.
- c) Aspects of a specific culture which support positive mental health.
- d) Aspects of your organisation/personal culture which may be at odds with the target group.
- e) The effects on family and close friends of an individual’s mental health.
- f) How cultural issues may impact the support available to the individual from their social circle/family and service provider.
- g) How does the environment promote or hinder their mental health?  
How does the environment (both built and natural) promote or hinder their ability to access mental health care services?

**Exercise 3: Discuss and Debate**

Drawing on the information in the above lesson, break into two teams and debate the propositions:

"Sustainability is best achieved by setting universal standards that societies need to meet." versus "Sustainability is best achieved when one considers the local culture and establishes standards that uniquely fit each culture."

**Exercise 4: Translating Policies of Service Provision for Consumers**

Search online to identify the governmental department responsible for policies regarding minority ethnic groups in a community about which you

are concerned. Visit the web site and download an appropriate policy document. Prepare a SHORT briefing note for a consumer who is a member of the ethnic minority, which CLEARLY outlines how the policy affects them individually and as a community. Attend to details of access, affordability, cultural appropriateness, etc. Be sure to include questions in the briefing note that engage the consumer in sharing their expertise and ideas of how this policy affects them.

### Summary Notes:

To learn more about the history and cultural mores of the Traveller community, please explore the following sites:

- [The Traveller Movement: Irish Travellers and Romany gypsies.](#) <sup>43</sup>
- [Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre.](#) <sup>44</sup>
- [Exchange House Ireland.](#) <sup>45</sup>
- [Irish Traveller Movement.](#) <sup>46</sup>
- [Traveller Primary Healthcare Project.](#) <sup>47</sup>

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# Charting Strategies to Social Sustainability: Lessons from Community Environmental Struggles

*By Ariella Cwikel & Edith Blit- Cohen*

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## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Critically examine the role of social workers and community social workers in environmental sustainability issues, and local environmental struggles in particular, based on case studies of three environmental struggles in Israel.
2. Utilize an assessment tool for complex power structures at play in community environmental struggles.
3. Practice defining strategies with the community and transforming those into creative tactics to better the chances of achieving success.

**Lesson:**

There is an interdependence between humans and the physical environment, or nature - earth, air, water, and diverse species of flora and fauna – upon which humans rely for their physical existence.<sup>1</sup> There is also a connection on another, metaphysical level – an emotional and spiritual one, and its importance cannot be overestimated for human development and even survival.<sup>2</sup> While dominant discourse around [sustainability](#)<sup>3</sup> is based on a triad of social, environmental and economic elements, or a triple bottom line; the perspective of [social sustainability](#)<sup>4</sup>

“concerns how individuals, communities and societies live with each other [...] also taking into account the physical boundaries of their places and planet earth as a whole [...] blends traditional social policy areas and principles, such as equity and health, with emerging issues concerning participation, needs, social capital, the economy, the environment, and more recently, with the notions of happiness, wellbeing and quality of life” (p. 4).<sup>5</sup>

That said, it seems surprising that social work, as a profession, has been slow to enter the environmental field, in terms of research, teaching and practice.<sup>6,7</sup> Nevertheless, it has made “promoting sustainable communities and environmentally sensitive development” (p. 4)<sup>5</sup> one of the four main themes in the [Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development](#).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it has become clear that there is a need for a holistic approach to social work, one that promotes practice which considers the importance of the environment, cares for those who are most vulnerable to the effects of changes in it,<sup>9</sup> and strives for equity in environmental benefits and burdens, no matter what religion, race or color one may be<sup>10</sup> [or what gender with which they identify](#).<sup>11</sup> This approach also resonates with the core values of social work, as they are reflected in macro social work practice (Read more: [“Why Macro Practice Matters”](#)).<sup>12</sup>

In many countries, local environmental struggles have become increasingly common, as development pressures impinge on equality, public health and habitat protection.<sup>13</sup> From the community environmental monitors in Tamil Nadu, India,<sup>14</sup> to the Water Protectors in Standing Rock, North Dakota,<sup>15</sup> vulnerable communities who are being [environmentally discriminated](#)<sup>16</sup> against are mobilizing to fight [environmental injustice](#)<sup>17</sup> of all kinds. Although these struggles have become more widespread, these local environmental struggles were, until the last decade, subject of few social work research studies.<sup>13</sup> These struggles are usually fierce, complex, drawn-

out, exhausting, and resource-consuming affairs. Community activists taking part in such a struggle, often find themselves fighting against big, influential, powerful and wealthy forces such as international corporations, developers and even governments. Those forces have a lot at stake, so they may hire paid professionals such as lawyers to file [SLAPPs](#),<sup>18</sup> campaigners to delegitimize resistance movements, efforts to [green-wash](#),<sup>19</sup> lobbyists to muzzle the opposition, or - as in many cases- all of the above. They are also willing to pay big money to get their way.<sup>20</sup> The activists organizing to resist environmental threats are usually volunteers, from an array of professions, who have limited time and resources to invest as they may work full time jobs and have family obligations to which they need to attend.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the odds are usually against them.

These disparities in power between communities and developers call for community organizing and empowerment as a means to uphold the rights of communities to a safe, accessible and sustainable environment. As social work becomes more engaged with environmental and social sustainability and environmental struggles become more prevalent, there is a growing need to educate social workers and supply them with best practice models and relevant, useful (maybe even *avant-garde*) tools to help them take on meaningful roles in these struggles. This will enable them to assist communities they work with in organizing, creating a narrative, defining targets, planning and implementing strategies and tactics, identifying allies, and so forth- thus achieving better chances of success. While there is much to be said of organizing and recruiting strategies, this chapter will focus on examples of action strategies and tactics used (and some which weren't used, but maybe should have been) in real local environmental struggles based on a study conducted by the authors in Israel in 2014-2015.

Our frame of reference is Rothman's **Social Action Model**, which aims to redistribute power and resources, achieve access to decision makers and participate in creating policies and institutional practices.<sup>21</sup> This is an oppositional approach which utilizes tactics of negotiation, direct action, and confrontation. In the last two decades, social action movements, including environmental ones, have reinvented their strategies and tactics, to make them wider and more sophisticated.<sup>21</sup> This approach fits situations where people feel threatened by impending wrongdoing, and seek to organize to accumulate power and demand change and justice.<sup>22</sup>

[Alinsky](#)<sup>23,24</sup> said that power comes from money or people. Those who have little or no money, have to rely on their ability to **recruit** as many people as possible, as a means of gathering power.<sup>23</sup> This is done by writing pamphlets, holding house meetings, going door to door, networking, connecting with religious communities and more – all in order to be able to harness "People Power" for pressure, attention or disruption purposes.<sup>25</sup> Another way to grow in strength is to create **coalitions** with like-minded organizations who share a common interest and are willing to invest in the same cause.

In trying to identify **strategies** and **tactics**, one must first define the difference between the two. Bobo, Kendall & Max<sup>22</sup> state that you need a strategy only if your objective is getting someone – like a decision maker or public servant - to do something they don't want to. Otherwise, all you need is a [plan](#).<sup>26</sup> Thus, a strategy is planning combined with analysis of power structures and relations, aimed to bring forth a decision-maker to act on behalf of a certain cause. Tactics, on the other hand, are separate, defined steps with which one implements a strategy. Tactics should not stand alone, rather, they ought to be defined in context and understood as a means to carry out a chosen strategy.<sup>22</sup> Different tactics may be useful at different points of an environmental struggle, the volume and intensity may change over time, peaking when new threats or opportunities to influence policy arise.<sup>27</sup> Defining a strategy depends on an assessment of the power on either end of the equation, their relationship and their willingness to cooperate.<sup>28</sup>

When there is symmetry in power between two sides, and willingness to cooperate, there may only be need for **negotiation** or **dialog**. Reluctance or lack of enthusiasm to cooperate might require **negotiation**, a **public hearing** and/or an **accountability session**. One tactic in negotiation could involve showing a **petition** signed by as many people as you can gather- these might be enough to convince your opponent to have a change of heart. This strategy has demonstrated success when used to persuade a business to change its behavior by getting current or future clients to sign a petition *en masse*.<sup>29</sup> **Financial pressure** and **divestment** work in the same way. If there is little communication but similar power, a community might be able to make use of the justice system and **file a lawsuit** (as long as you have enough resources for that). If you have decision-makers on your side, you might be able to encourage them to **change policy** or even make new **legislation** in favor of public interest.

It could be useful to look at these tactics on a scale (Table 1) where one side marks disparities in power, and the other side marks greater power –money or political power. When you have little of those, you may choose to use tactics which require the resources you may be able to recruit, and that is people power.

Table 1: Choosing Tactics Based on Power Disparities

<b>Power Dynamics</b>			
	<b>Disparities in Power</b>	<b>Equal Power, Willingness to Cooperate</b>	<b>Greater Power</b>
<b>Tactics</b>	Protest, public hearing, accountability sessions, petitions, divestment, boycott, civil disobedience, sit-ins, non-violent resistance, confrontational strategy	Negotiation, dialog, education, collaboration, joint action	Legislation, policy changes, filing a lawsuit, financial pressure

Unfortunately, by their very nature, most community environmental struggles are characterized by disparate power relations and a lack of communication between those with competing agendas. Therefore, typically, a **confrontational strategy** is in place.<sup>25</sup> In accordance with confrontational strategies, **power tactics** aim at changing the power relations by stating clearly that something is not right.<sup>30</sup>

As we know, words and language can carry very important, political, social and cultural meanings.<sup>31</sup> Thus, **naming** is another tactic that can be utilized with regard to environmental struggles. Naming can be used to give a place an identity, one that people can unite around and stand up for and can help to create a meaningful symbol for people. Many times, a natural, beautiful, formally unknown place, only gets named when it is fought over. Whoever claims the name, claims the meaning. If you can forge the name into public awareness and it is accepted and used, then you can shape the way it is

depicted and thus, protected. In some cases, this practice goes as far as granting a natural place equal rights as humans, as was the case of the [Whanganui River in New Zealand](#),<sup>32</sup> as well as the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in India.

**Direct action** makes strategic use of effective measures in order to encourage a decision maker to do something for the public which they do not wish to do. [Direct action](#)<sup>33</sup> is a collective action which takes on a defined target so as to achieve a certain demand. Direct action includes: **boycotts, strikes and hunger strikes, sit-ins, civil disobedience, graffiti, writing protest songs, protest events, public hearings,** and others.<sup>34</sup> The powerful opponents of communities in environmental struggles- e.g., tycoons, decision makers, developers and corporations- have direct and indirect access to the media and other public opinion makers. Consequently, direct action has an important role in changing the rules, disrupting the status-quo and turns a spotlight on a situation which may have been comfortably ignored by those in power, thus far.

Keep in mind that a mix between creative, symbolic, daring, humoristic, and satirical or ridiculous elements can go a long way when it comes to direct action (and can make all the difference between another well-thought-out protest that no one knew of, and an item on the evening news or viral post). In his book, DeLuca gives several examples of direct action in local environmental struggles.<sup>35</sup> In one such case, in Allegany County, New York, USA, six senior citizens, the eldest aged 86, with a "*Grandparents for the Future*" banner, handcuffed themselves to a bridge to protest a plan to site a radioactive waste dump in the area. They got arrested and cited for disorderly conduct. It was a field-day for the media, and the campaign. Creative direct action was also used by a group of citizens opposing a mine in Kentucky: setting up a "lemonade stand" in the state capitol- selling different samples of contaminated water; posting "wanted" signs with state representatives who would not agree to meet; serving decision makers "coffee" at a public hearing on lead chemicals causing water contamination where they had a choice of 3 types of coffee- "decaf, leaded or unleaded", as a way to illustrate the problem in a thought-provoking way. Generally speaking, young people who join these groups often bring with them ideas, courage and social acceptance of mischief that allow the use of some of the more creative tactics.<sup>36</sup>

This group of tactics also includes **distractive tactics**, used to achieve progress in unexpected fronts or to burden your target with many fronts at once.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, **disruptive tactics** can be useful for those who lack the means to affect the political system.<sup>37</sup> Environmental struggles use disruptive tactics when blockading roads, blocking tractors, chaining people to machines, organizing tree-sits, passive civil disobedience, and protests. It is important to mention that all of these tactics are non-violent in nature. Another, more extreme and violent kind of disruption is **Ecotage** or **Monkey-wrenching**, meaning sabotage of machines that are used to harm nature. These actions are usually illegal and their legitimacy is disputed. Other examples of disruptive tactics include getting a large group of people to join a relentless **email campaign**, using the strength of numbers to disrupt functional work by slowly crossing the road back and forth, **phone campaigns** requesting public access to information, **crashing** a conference or a meeting with T-shirts and signs, and other unexpected, creative actions. Though they may not result in immediate change, carefully used disruptive tactics can resonate with potential supporters, building support over time, and have often achieved meaningful change in environmental policies.<sup>34</sup> Typically, these types of actions have been more successful when implemented by large, environmental activist organizations. Greenpeace is one example of an organization that is adherent to confrontational, non-violent, direct action strategies since 1971.<sup>38</sup> But there are many examples of small groups who resorted to extreme measures in environmental campaigns.<sup>13,27,34,37,40</sup>

Another extremely important component of any confrontational strategy is the **media**. In addition to **mainstream media action**, these past two decades have seen the rise of **digital activism**. Digital tools and their applications are constantly advancing; smartphones, in particular, are changing the way information is created, collected, and distributed. This is really a game-changer, and allows using unique tools and tactics in environmental struggles.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, **social media** offers environmental struggles a wide variety of ways to bypass conventional media, with new ways of spreading information, exposing wrongdoings, keeping people posted and recruiting support.<sup>42</sup> If in the past only armed rebellion brought about revolutions, undoubtedly, nowadays social media has become a most potent weapon, while using **powerful text, images and videos** to surface issues and change public discourse. Great images serve as **mind bombs**- an image that changes public view of an issue, as it “explodes” into the public consciousness. These can be created through **image events** (staged protests

designed for media dissemination) - occasions which serve to bring forward an image of an action that is sometimes even more powerful than the action itself.<sup>34</sup> Some examples of these events, including Greenpeace's arctic campaign creating a [melting Vitruvian Man](#)<sup>43</sup>; [Earth First! using a 90-meter long black ribbon to create a "crack" in Glen Canyon Dam](#)<sup>44</sup>; as well as many [iconic moments](#)<sup>45</sup> in the Standing Rock fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Although digital tools have an important role in bridging power disparities between community environmental activists and their adversaries, the literature is in dispute over the question of whether or not we are witnessing the creation of a new sphere or platform for eco-activism. With such eco-activism digital tools, there is a new way for broadening circles of participation to include roles such as preachers, distributors of information, and campaigners. Alongside criticism of this kind of participation, mockingly tagged as "[clicktivism](#)"<sup>46</sup>, or simply another form of "[slacktivism](#)"<sup>47</sup>, some researchers claim that digital tools actually increase the continuum of activism, and that it often leads to activism in the real world.<sup>42</sup>

As we have shown, there is a myriad of tactics that can be used in strategies with environmental struggles. The challenge is to employ the most effective ones for achieving your goals. It is expected that some are harder to execute and rely on resources or large numbers of constituents. However, in our study, we found that many tactics were overlooked, discarded, or just not used. This is possibly due to communities lacking in planning, energy or creativity. But we think some communities may simply need ideas and inspiration; we hope this lesson contributes to both.

**Application:**

**Instructions:** Read the following case studies and complete the exercises below. The exercises can be conducted as an individual, as a part of a staff meeting, a class, or with the community. The exercises can be used separately or in combination with the other exercises. Note, in addition to using the case studies provided here, you may also like to incorporate current events from newspaper stories, movies/videos (see Summary Notes below for more ideas).



## Case Studies:

### A) The struggle against the establishment of a phosphate mine near Arad.

[Arad](#)<sup>49</sup> is a city in the Negev region in southern Israel, home to 23,400 residents and rated below the national socio-economic average- 4 out of 10 in the countries' socio-economic scale in 2016, with an average income 20% lower than the state average. It was established in the early 1960s as a workers' town. In 1980, a vast deposit of [phosphate](#)<sup>50</sup> ore, used in the chemical, agricultural, and food industries, was accidentally discovered under the city. Mining of phosphate ore contains radioactive elements, such as radon, that accumulate as dust particles, which if inhaled, increases heart and lung disease morbidity. Plans for construction of mines on two different sites were submitted by a mining company but were rejected following the advocacy struggle of the residents and the opposition of the city officials.

In 2004, Rotem-Ampert, a subsidiary of Israel Chemicals, controlled by Israel's biggest holding company, filed a plan to build a phosphate mine at "Barir Field" ("Barir" is a name coined by the company, meaning "clear", and "field" is what they call mining zones). The profit from the mine is estimated at 25 billion dollars. The proposed site, spreading out on 3,200 acres, was planned less than four kilometers from the city, extremely close to the *Bedouin* - an Arab semi-nomadic ethnic group- towns of Kseiffe and Al-Forah (three and a half and less than one kilometer, respectively). A health impact report found that the mine was dangerous and that the air pollution it would cause could lead to seven deaths per year. A report by the Ministry of Environmental Protection determined that the mine would cause an increase in the incidence of heart and lung diseases among the residents of Arad and the surrounding area.

### B) The struggle to preserve urban nature, urban biodiversity, and equity in a valley in Jerusalem.

The valley is an open area located in southwest Jerusalem, between four, medium-low income neighborhoods, and is the only public green space in the area. In the past, companies leased the land to grow orchards, then abandoned it and the lease was not renewed. As time passed, a herd of gazelles (an endemic, endangered subspecies of the [Mountain Gazelle](#))<sup>51</sup> found itself trapped between the highway

and the residential neighborhoods, and as a result of its vulnerability, it was reduced to a few members. Over the years, the land value had quadrupled. In the mid-1990s, some construction companies submitted a plan to establish in the valley a residential neighborhood, a commercial area, and an industrial zone. The Jerusalem Municipality at the time requested that the plans be submitted for approval to the local planning committee.

### **C) The struggle to save the Sasgon Vale in the northern Timna Valley.**

In 1995, an outline plan was submitted by a developer for the [Timna Valley](#),<sup>52</sup> in the south of Israel, which proposed that a hotel area would be built in the northern part of the valley. The southern part of Timna Valley was formerly used for copper mines and its center is a park with an entrance fee. The north part, an unnamed vale between Sasgon hill and Mount Michrot, remained natural, unaffected and accessible to the public. It has rare sandstone and is part of the Eilat Mountains reserve, where the Israel National Trail passes. In 2005, it was discovered by a member of a nearby [Kibbutz](#)<sup>53</sup> that a plan was approved by the local committee for planning and development to give a developer the right to establish the largest recreation complex in Israel - which exceeds its permit by 400 percent- just a 25 minutes' drive from [Eilat](#)<sup>54</sup>- a tourist town full of hotels, never at full capacity. Therefore, the need for a huge hotel in the middle of a natural reserve, and so close to a touristic city, could not be justified.

### **Exercise 1: Case Study Analysis**

Using any one of the above case studies, conduct a group discussion with the following discussion questions:

1. What are the key issues these communities face? Address the different aspects of community sustainability. Be sure to include impacts on the whole ecosystem, not just on humans (e.g., how does it affect plants, animals, etc.).
2. Are there other ways to tell their story? Other perspectives?
3. What perspectives does the social sustainability approach add to this case?
4. What would you do, if you were a social worker/community worker in this community?
5. What role would you take and what skills do you imagine you would need?

6. What challenges would you expect, and how would you handle them?
7. How would you help the community gather strength?
8. Were there tactics you refuse to use? Where do you draw the line and why?
9. What collaborations or coalitions could be formed? What is the shared interest?
10. How does macro practice relate to this case?
11. How would you acquire and manage the resources needed for the struggle?
12. What are some policy changes that can be suggested based on this case?

### **Exercise 2: Developing Strategies**

Imagine you live in one of these communities, trying to mobilize and demand change, or are a community social worker in the community. Practice using the “Strategy Chart” (see below) to devise a strategy to address the environmental struggle.

### **Exercise 3: Planning Tactics**

Divide into small groups (of 2-3). Choose one strategy (see below) and plan out a tactic in detail (e.g., a protest, a media/social media campaign, a press release, public hearing, etc.) to be used on an environmental struggle. Each group can then present their work to the class and explain their choices.

### **Strategy Chart for Planning Community Environmental Struggles**

Note: Part 1 of the chart in this exercise is an adaptation of the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart <sup>22</sup>, and a 2017 revision of it, together with concepts from Freemans’ Model for Analyzing the Strategic Options of Social Movement Organizations. <sup>55</sup> Part 2 is based on our experience and the study we conducted.

Ideally, while working to complete the chart, the two parts of the chart are placed side by side, and another-blank version- of the full chart is used by the group to fill in the relevant information for each case.

*REMEMBER: Be Specific as Possible! If you only write in general statements, it will be difficult to follow and use this tool! So, when answering, always mention Who? How much? How many? When? Where?*

## Strategy Chart for Planning Community Environmental Struggles

<p><b>Problem:</b> A problem is a broad area of concern  <b>Issue:</b> An issue is a topic that needs to be addressed and changed</p>				
<p><b>Part 1: General Decision-Making</b></p>				
<p><b>Long Term &amp; Short Term Goals</b></p>	<p><b>Mobilizable Resources, Organizational Needs</b></p>	<p><b>Your People, Your Power: Constituency</b></p>	<p><b>Target: Decision-Maker</b></p>	<p><b>Tactics</b></p>
<p>• <b>Long-Term Goals</b>            What you want to achieve in the end (Example: Policy change, new law).</p> <p>• <b>Short-Term Goals</b>            A step to the Intermediate Goal (Example: Get public representative Jones to vote for the policy change).</p> <p>• <b>Personal goals for group members</b>            Include positions in the organization, skills that you wish to develop, opportunities you would like to peruse as a part of the struggle**.</p> <p><i>Goals are real, tangible changes for the better in people's lives!</i></p>	<p>• <b>What resources do you have now?</b>  <i>Think of tangible and intangible ones!</i></p> <p>• <b>Specialized Resources:</b> Unique knowledge, expertise, access to network and decision makers, status.</p> <p>• <b>Institutional resources:</b> Rights, committees, higher instances (in court), ombudsman, freedom of information resources, government agencies, etc.</p> <p>• <b>People based resources:</b> Commitment and dedication (whose?) How many people? Professional volunteers? Links to media? Social media followers?            How much (and who's) time?</p> <p>• <b>Tangible resources:</b> Meeting space, office supplies, copiers, etc.? Money?</p> <p>• <b>Partner/ Host organizations?</b> To create a coalition with/ to use as organizational hosts in case your organization is not yet set up to cater for all your needs. What are their interests in taking part and joining the cause?            What do you have to offer them?  <i>Think coverage, credit, courage, reputation, people power!</i></p> <p>• <b>How are these resources and assets managed?</b>  <i>Who is in charge of each?</i></p> <p>• <b>How will this action affect your organization?</b>            Will you need new members? How many?</p>	<p>• <b>Who cares about this issue?</b></p> <p>Whom does the issue most directly affect?            Who else will be an ally on this issue?            Sympathizers who can provide resources and support?            What power do they have over the Decision Maker? How can they influence them?            How and where are they organized? How can you get to them?            Why would they join? What do they gain if we win?            What do they have to lose?            What risks are they taking?</p> <p>• <b>Opponents?</b>            What is their interest?            What are their assets?            Can you neutralize or divide any opponents?</p>	<p>• <b>The person who has the power to give you what you want!</b></p> <p>• <b>Who are they?</b>            Elected, appointed or corporate?            Who votes for them, or buys from them?            Do you have electoral or consumer power?            Pressure points?            Do they have a personal stake in this?            Do they personally know someone who is affected by this issue?</p> <p>• <b>Why say yes?</b>            What are the concrete consequences for the Decision-Maker if they say no to you?            Analyze your potential power over them very concretely so that you can</p>	<p>• <b>How you will show power to the D-M so s/he will say yes to the goals?</b></p> <p>These can educate, raise awareness, target organization building, or show power directly to the Decision-Maker by:            Letter / Phone / Email campaign; Petitions; Social Media Tactics;            Group Visits to D-M;            Media Events; Rallies, Protests; Strategic Civil Disobedience; Public Forums; Banner Campaign; Teach-Ins; Media events; Demands for information; Strikes; Sit-ins            Accountability sessions; Town Hall meetings; Disruptions; "Mind Bombs";            Lawsuits;</p>

	<p>Do you need more money? How much?  New Leaders? Who? What effect will this have on the organization?  How will this action affect your public recognition?</p> <p>• <b>Internal problems you expect to encounter, which constraints?</b> (i.e.; values, past experience, a constituency's reference group, expectations, relations with target groups) How can you avoid/overcome them?</p>	<p>• <b>Risks</b>  What could we potentially lose from this action?  What is the worst-case scenario? How do we minimize the chances of it happening? How do we deal with it, if worst comes to worst?</p>	<p>use it strategically!</p> <p><i>Always a specific person with a name, not a policy or an institution!</i></p>	<p>Legislation;  Boycotts;  Non-violent direct action;  Financial pressure;  Divestment;  Calling out a bluff;  Chaining to trees/ machines;  Monkey-wrenching</p>
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## Part 2: Detailed Planning

Questions / Missing information	Target audience, messages, narratives, Ethical Codes	Schedule	Assigning roles/ tasks, decision making structures	Comments, thoughts insights and inspiration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Unanswered Questions at this point</b> <i>Make sure to assign a member of the group in charge of research for each</i></li> <li>• <b>Different professional areas relevant to the issue</b> Environmental, Legal, Financial, Community Organizing, Media, Policy, Resource development, Medicine (what fields? i.e. Epidemiology)</li> </ul> <p><i>If any member of the group is a professional in any of these fields, add that to your resources list</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For each tactic, define a target audience, narrative and main message</b> Based on the target audience, and depending on the medium, the message must be short/long; simple/ complex; pugnacious/ benevolent</li> </ul> <p><i>Always be ready and able to reduce to an easily understood sound bite.</i></p> <p><i>Be as consistent as possible in your messages!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take a moment to consider...</b> What kind of campaign/ struggle do you want to lead? What will be in the best interest of the issue and help you succeed? What kind of messages do you feel/ not feel comfortable with? How will your chosen medium affect your message? What are the gains and prices of honesty vs. dishonesty? Maintaining credibility vs. losing it? Being civil vs. taking the gloves off (ask yourselves – will it possible to put them back on again?). Which actions will bring you shame and which pride? What, if any, kind of example do you want to set for others? What are the ethical considerations and moral lines? When, if ever, should they be crossed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anchor dates and opportunities for action</b>, such as deadlines for filing objections to a planning program; a Decision maker's visit to the neighborhood; the scheduled beginning of a project; a court hearing, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>For each opportunity try to track back in time and pin actions on a calendar for what needs to be done ahead of time in order to be ready for it (you can create a <a href="#">Gantt chart</a><sup>56</sup> or other chart for this)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who does what?</b> For each topic assign roles (e.g., treasurer, photographer, spokesperson) and assign someone responsible for each task.</li> </ul> <p><i>Consider skills, experience, spare time and capacity, roles of professionals vs. activists.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do you decide what?</b> Decide which kind of decisions is necessary to be discussed as a group and which, for each role, are up to the members to decide on. (e.g., Financial decisions, meetings with other organizations, media appearances.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning vicariously</b> Is there anyone you know who has been involved in an environmental struggle? (Preferably a successful one, though there is much to learn from those which are not).</li> <li>• <b>Inspiration and strengths</b> Is there a leader, a celebrity, an experienced activist or professional you can turn to for support, and maybe a brainstorm?</li> </ul> <p><i>Could you get them to join and/ or be part of your constituency?</i></p>

**Strategy Worksheet for Planning Community Environmental Struggles**  
 (This is a blank chart to be filled in according to the case in question)

<b>Problem:</b>				
<b>Issue:</b>				
<b>Part 1: General Decision Making</b>				
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Organizational Considerations</b>	<b>Constituents, People Power</b>	<b>Decision-Maker</b>	<b>Tactics</b>
<p><b>1. Long-Term</b></p> <p><b>2. Intermediate</b></p> <p><b>3. Short-Term</b></p> <p><b>4. Personal goals for group members</b></p> <p><i>Goals are always concrete improvements in people's lives!</i></p>	<p><b>1. What resources can you put in now?</b></p> <p><b>2. How are these resources and assets managed?</b></p> <p><b>3. How will you build your organization?</b></p> <p><b>Internal problems in the way?</b></p>	<p><b>1. Who cares about the issue?</b></p> <p><b>2. Opponents?</b></p> <p><b>3. Risks</b></p>	<p><b>1. The person who has the power to give you what you want!</b>  <i>What is your power over them?</i></p> <p><i>Always a person with a name, not an institution!</i></p>	<p><b>1. How will you show power to the D-M so s/he will say yes to the goals?</b></p> <p>Show power directly to the Decision-Maker</p> <p>Public Education and Organization Building</p>

Part 2 Detailed Planning				
Target audience, messages, narratives, Ethical Codes	Questions / missing information	Schedule	Assigning roles and tasks, decision making structures	Comments, thoughts insights and inspiration
<p>1. For each tactic, define a narrative and main message</p> <p>2. Ethics, moral “red lines”...</p>	<p>1. Questions that you don't have answers to at this point</p> <p>2. Different professional areas relevant to the issue</p> <p><i>If any member of the group is a professional in any of these fields, add that to your resources list</i></p>	<p>1. Anchor dates</p> <p><i>Count back and pin actions on a calendar for what needs to be done ahead of time</i></p>	<p>1. Who does what?</p> <p>2. How do you decide what?</p>	<p>1. Learning vicariously</p> <p>2. Inspiration and strength</p>



## Summary Notes:

This lesson was designed to help community activists and social work/community organizing students and practitioners, conceptualize social sustainability through stories of community environmental struggles, and to practice strategizing to address them. We hope that this chapter contributes to the tool-set and mind-set needed for activists and community workers engaged in these conflicts. There are many more stories of local environmental struggles, and the ones presented in the case studies above and others can offer guidance and inspiration for those who follow in their footsteps on the road to making this world a better place for all who inhabit it. Here are a few additional examples:

- [The Seventh Generation: Youth at the Heart of the Standing Rock Protests](#)<sup>57</sup>
- Community activists mobilize to defend their communities against mining operations and their impact on their life and environment, in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Lesotho. [“We Are Activists: Reflecting on our struggles in mining communities”](#)<sup>58</sup>
- The story of South Central Farm in Los Angeles, California, USA. [“The Garden \(2008\)”](#)<sup>59</sup>
- The case of the city, Flint, Michigan, USA and its’ fight for clean water. [“Murky Waters of Flint. How a whole city was poisoned”](#)<sup>60</sup>
- The story of Indigenous groups facing corporations planning to build dams along the Amazon River. [“Brazil - in the shadow of the mega-dams”](#)<sup>61</sup>

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# Aging and Sustainability

*By Lola Casal-Sánchez*

## **Author Biography:**

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## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Recognize the impact of climatic change on elderly people.
2. Become aware of the importance of building aging capacity in moving towards environmental and social sustainability.
3. Identify social work practices and strategies that acknowledge the role of elderly people as agents to keep the value of traditional ecological knowledge.

**Lesson:**

The population of the world is aging. In 2017, 13% of the population will be age 60 or above and every year this rate increases 3%. On some continents, such as Europe, this percentage reaches 25%, and the UN estimates that by 2030, there will be less children under 10 years of age than people over 60. In 2050, it is expected that all regions, except Africa, will have nearly a quarter or more of their populations at ages 60 or above, resulting in over 2.1 billion people.<sup>1</sup>

These figures show that almost one quarter of the world population cannot be left behind, and the development of sustainable and environmental strategies must involve the active participation of older adults. Their experiences and the role they play in their families and communities can provide vital information on issues such as managing disaster impacts, identifying a community's vulnerabilities and strengths, and relating between socio-environmental factors. Climate mitigation and adaptation strategies must be inclusive of older adults in order to maximize these capacities in addition to addressing their rights and vulnerabilities.<sup>2</sup>

Climate change, disasters and emergencies impact everybody, but have specific risks for elderly who are more vulnerable to the effects of temperature extremes as they have a significantly higher mortality risk in extreme weather, are potentially less able to mobilize quickly in the event of an eminent disaster threat and are more susceptible to the effects of stresses on the food and water supply. In fact, in the USA some studies show that people over 85 are more likely to suffer negative health effects from climate change due to their fragility and their physical decline.<sup>3</sup>

The potential effects of climatic change on older adults can be approached considering the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.

The **social dimension** relates to the sex / gender structure and with demographic phenomenon—increase of the population, cultural homogenization, vulnerabilities of minority cultures, desertification of rural areas; social changes in the structures in families and communities.<sup>4</sup> Potential effects on older adults involve:

- Feminization of ageing;
- Discrimination by age and sex, mainly in the case of women;
- Lower quality of life in the population for women;
- Barriers to social participation in the community life



In the **economic dimension**, the main aspects relate to globalization, the detriment of the social economy in opposition to the increase of the speculative economy; more focus on technology and a decrease in artisanal work; relocation of the productive settlements; specialization of areas by productive sectors or activities.<sup>5</sup> Some risks for aging are:

- Loss of purchasing power;
- Pre-retirement or premature unemployment or lengthening of working life beyond the capabilities of the person;
- Overload in responsibilities of economic support of the family;
- Difficulties accessing the health care system

Regarding the **environmental dimension and the habitat**, we need to talk about how the ground is occupied (e.g., industrial, commercial, residence, etc.), what kind of activities are developed (e.g., cultural, educative, religious, leisure, etc.), and how the resources are managed (e.g., public transportation, collecting waste and recyclables, diversion of water, etc.). We also need to talk about global deforestation; loss of water resources; loss of biodiversity; degradation of air quality; depletion of food resources; loss of traditional landscapes; spoiled coast and urban areas; territorial planning and urban planning that do not take into account the aging demographic structure of the society; more toxic products on our houses.<sup>4</sup> All these circumstances place older adults at risk because:

- Environmental health is worsening;
- Diminishing quality, quantity and accessibility of natural resources;
- Increasing movements of human migration to urban and coastal areas;
- Desertification of rural areas;
- Loss of customs and traditional activities.

The vulnerability of older adults related to environmental degradation and climate change links to their sensitivity to quality changes in the environment. Their physical, psychological and emotional health is affected by inadequate or insufficient water and food supply, poor air quality, loss of connections to place and loss of social networks and relatives. There is a loss of resources and opportunities for the active aging, particularly in rural habitats, as well as a devaluation of traditional knowledge in our current technological culture. The older adults face specific difficulties for mobility within their habitat or between different habitats, in everyday life and especially in forced migratory processes due to environmental degradation, environmental disasters, and climate change.

Social workers must take into consideration the three dimensions of sustainability as well as intersecting factors (e.g., age, gender, etc.) as they work to develop inclusive community and environmentally based strategies. People live longer, meaning they have more time to invest in themselves, as well as in their communities. They can do this as they contribute to developing policies and initiatives that impact the wellbeing of the whole community. Social workers must interact with older adults to help them tap into their knowledge and resources, as well as to develop new sustainable strategies to function well in society. It is necessary to involve all groups of society in environmental education and break the myth that only children are the target group for environmental education. Environmental education can help older adults to become aware of the current state of the environment and its evolution (from the past to the future), of the measures to be taken to promote sustainability and of the ethical position and the potential for action of each person in the face of this reality.

Practitioners also need to work to improve the social participation structures so that older adults can be an active part of the development of strategies for achieving sustainable communities and environments. Older adults have a wisdom (e.g., information, knowledge, experience, etc.) that, viewed under the critical prism of sustainability, our society must not ignore. Also, older adults can act as an intergenerational bridge, between past and future scenarios, through exchanging with other age groups to create a joint vision of building the present and future of sustainable communities and environments. Environmental education can convert older adults into formal and/or informal educators with great capacity to influence their most direct and close areas (e.g., family, friends, civic organizations, religious groups, senior centers, etc.).

As older adults contribute to the sustainability of their communities and environments, they also benefit as it contributes to their own ability to enjoy active aging in such communities. Social workers intervene and contribute to active aging through the promotion of personal development and active participation in community life as well as by encouraging intergenerationality as a work approach, not only in environmental education but also in continuing education. Older adults are also needed to promote and share knowledge and experiences that we cannot let fall by the wayside, especially in regards to traditional agriculture, medicinal plants and native flora.

As Fijjrot Ckat stated *“Living sustainably means recognizing that we are an inseparable part of the web of life, of human and nonhuman communities, and that enhancing the dignity and sustainability of any one of them will enhance all the others”* (p. 4).<sup>6</sup>

**Application:**

**Instructions:** Please, read the following case studies and using the idea that the development of sustainable and environmental strategies must involve the active participation of older adults, answer the question that follow each exercise.

**Exercise 1: Intergenerational Celebrations of Green Day/Earth Day**

1. Imagine you live in a community with two primary schools, one day care center, one nursing home and one center of social services. It is going to be the celebration of the Green Day/Earth Day and the social worker of the social services center has a meeting with her colleagues (listed as the above organizations) in order to plan for the celebration. The objectives of this celebration are to strengthen intergenerational ties, recover popular/traditional knowledge, promote good environmental practices, promote the collaboration and cooperation among citizens and support the social inclusion of all. Based on these ideas, please develop a proposal to achieve these objectives.
2. Now, think of ways you could potentially do this in your community. Who is already working on such community celebrations? How could you become involved as a social worker? What community partners and individuals would you need to make sure are involved?

**Exercise 2: Learning about Sustainability from Older Adults**

Older adults have first-hand information (objective and subjective) about the state of the environment and its evolution. Please, discuss with your peers how these circumstances can help to understand the current climatic, and environmental situation. Think how their knowledge, their experience, of having living in a simpler society (regarding technologic, socio-economic issues) closer to the nature can contribute to achieve sustainable and environmental communities.

### **Exercise 3: Green Day/Earth Day Intergenerational Activities**

This lesson and subsequent exercises is designed to assist the reader to understand that economic sustainability and social sustainability cannot be achieved without the involvement of all social groups. Each person and each group have experiences that can add value to our societies, the role of social workers is to mobilize the capacities and contributions of each individual to enrich and add social value to achieve sustainable communities. **Partners:** Any local agent can be involved in community work. Public administration, neighborhood associations, public libraries, associations of retired people, animal organizations, etc.

- **Plant a tree together older adults and students.** While the young people plant the trees, the older adults can explain stories about what kind of vegetation was in the neighborhood before, how vegetation must be cared for, what were the methods to plant or to seed vegetables, etc.
- **Create together a greenhouse.** At the nursing home a small greenhouse can be created and maintained together between older adults and young people
- **Recycling** – For some older adults understanding the recycling boxes might not be easy. Young people can explain what container corresponds to what material
- **Cook together.** In the nursing home or in the social services older adults can explain how eating was based on the local products according to the season and if it is possible, they can cook a traditional meal
- **Washing.** Using natural cleaners such as vinegar, lemon juice, talcum powder etc. are friendlier to the environment than chemical products. Organize a small session where older adults show these tricks to young people

#### Exercise 4: How Life Used to Be

Share experiences about how life used to be with less technology, and discuss if any practices, habit or consumption patterns used by older adults could be recovered to improve the care of our environment. For instance,

What older adults did	What younger adults do
Shopping at the market fresh product	Buying at supermarkets products that last weeks
Washing dishes by hand	Using the dishwasher with half capacity
Using naturals products to clean: vinegar, lemon juice, talcum powder, etc.	Using chemical products
Having a bread bag or a home egg boxes and go shopping with them	Buying plastics bags
Using sustained containers for food	Wrap food in aluminum foil/paper
Work with manual tools	Work with tools with batteries – brush teeth, shaver, etc

#### Resources:

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# Youth Empowerment through Interdisciplinary Outreach

*By Leigh Tatum, Sadie Weiss, Lisa Reyes Mason, Evan Norton, Jessica Thompson, Michael Camponovo, Jon Hathaway, Yingkui Li, Robert Washington-Allen, and Madhuri Sharma*

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#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe how interdisciplinary teams can collaborate to most effectively promote environmental sustainability.
2. Discuss and analyze the connections between environmental education, youth development, and community empowerment.

#### **Lesson:**

Because some of the earth's resources, such as freshwater, are in fixed, limited supply, social work seeks to promote environmental sustainability with a particular focus on distressed communities whose residents are often disproportionately impacted by environmental stressors. Action is needed now to empower vulnerable communities not only to have better immediate outcomes but also to create positive impact on the environment for future generations.<sup>1</sup> By specifically targeting youth, outreach efforts can increase understanding of complex problems,<sup>2</sup> influence attitudes about the environment, and promote meaningful engagement with change in both the short and long-term.<sup>3</sup>

Social work is well positioned both to work with youth and to respond to water issues as they connect to the social, economic, and political spheres.<sup>4</sup> Social work deeply values social justice and, as a result, seeks out and amplifies voices that may otherwise be silenced or disregarded. In keeping

with this value, social work brings key perspective and skill for effectively engaging youth, whose unique contributions are at times discounted because of their age. Social work values youth's understanding of their communities—they are their own experts—and views youth as capable of influencing decision making and creating sustainable change in their communities. Youth are regarded as participant-leaders in outreach or research while social workers serve as facilitators. Additionally, social workers have long viewed individuals and their environments as integrally connected entities and, as a result, have an important perspective to offer in the quest to promote environmental sustainability in communities.<sup>5</sup> Rock asserts, "The roles and skills of the social worker in working with community residents are 'key' to implementing effective interventions geared toward both environmental and social sustainability" (p 10).<sup>6</sup> However, environmental social work needs to be interdisciplinary to access the knowledge, skills and resources from fields ranging from ecology or agriculture, to education or engineering, in order to provide multi-faceted solutions to complex environmental problems.<sup>7</sup>

The departments of Social Work, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Geography at the University of Tennessee in Tennessee (TN), United States, secured a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Urban Waters grant to engage in interdisciplinary outreach to empower youth and promote sustainability in their own community. The project's focus was Baker Creek, which supports an urban wilderness preserve, has high levels of nutrients, and flows through South Knoxville, TN past South Doyle Middle School, and into the Tennessee River. The team engaged area youth through a four-day youth science camp at two locations of a non-profit organization, the Boys and Girls Club, whose students are zoned for South Doyle Middle School and thus are impacted by the state of Baker Creek. The science camp served as a way to engage youth to learn about global sustainability, identify personal or community behaviors that could be modified to protect the environment, evaluate a local problem, and share this experience with others. The social workers coordinated interdepartmental communication, camp curriculum and logistics, and relationships with the Boys and Girls Clubs. The engineers led nutrient testing at Baker Creek, and the geographers created an interactive iPad application for students to record and analyze their data.

On the first day of science camp, the social workers led multiple interactive activities to help the youth learn about and explore the concepts of water in the world, watersheds, sources of pollution, and water conservation. The



camp was conducted on site at two Boys and Girls Clubs, both in vulnerable neighborhoods, one housed in a government subsidized public housing community and the other in a community center. On the second day, the geography team led the youth in activities to explore the intersection of science, technology, and their environment including a hands-on augmented reality sandbox that gave students a 3-dimensional, hands-on experience of watersheds and various geographical formations. Additionally, the youth surveyed the area surrounding the club for litter and used the iPad application, specially created by the geography team, to input data. The youth were then trained on how to analyze the data using an interactive online GIS (Geographic Information Systems) program. On the third day, the interdisciplinary team took students from both Boys and Girls Clubs on a field trip to four sites along Baker Creek. The students collected water samples at each site, testing nitrate levels and water temperature, in addition to performing visual inspections to identify unusual stream conditions and any noticeable signs of pollution or degradation. Students then recorded this data on iPads, providing a geospatial referencing to potential problem areas.

On the final day of science camp, youth were invited to review all they had learned and share their knowledge with others from their community, although as it turned out the audience consisted of fellow youth, Boys and Girls Club staff, and project staff. The youth presented about water, pollution, and conservation through board games, posters, and skits—some of which were designed by the youth themselves. These activities engaged the youth in understanding and assessing environmental problems in their own backyard, comprehending the urgency of water conservation as a global concern, and empowering them to share this knowledge and experience with others in their community. In addition, this interdisciplinary outreach empowered youth to envision themselves as activists for positive community change, whether as engaged citizens or as professionals in various scientific fields, some of which they may not have previously considered.

Similar to many new programs and collaborations, we also experienced challenges that required flexibility and creativity. We had originally planned to focus on middle school age youth because of their connection with South Doyle Middle School and therefore greater personal connection to the health of Baker Creek. We expanded to children from grades 2 to 10 due to low numbers of middle schoolers attending the Boys and Girls Clubs as well

as overall inconsistency in attendance. Youth also had to choose an unknown activity called “Science Camp” over options such as basketball or video games, perhaps contributing to low participation. We originally intended for youth to share their conclusions with both fellow youth and with parents and other adults in the community, but only the former were present. To encourage attendance at the student presentations, we sent home flyers inviting parents, posted these at the Boys and Girls Clubs, invited community participation from the Vestal Community Center (housed at the same location as the Vestal Club), and invited the Montgomery Village Residents Association to come to the Montgomery Village Club.

Additionally, while overall communication was positive and responsive, coordinating a large team with conflicting schedules sometimes proved challenging. For example, not every team member was able to attend a pre-sampling day planning meeting, which led to some lack of clarity on the exact procedures and roles for the day. Also, the Boys and Girls Club staff allowed us great latitude in working with their youth, but we experienced some challenges in coordination. For example, we learned that we were “double-booked” with a nature-themed field trip on our first day of science camp, and thus many of the youth who might have been most interested in our activities could not be present.

**Application:**

**Instructions:** Answer the following discussion questions stemming from the example case presented in the lesson above. Complete the exercises to further explore how you can implement these principles in your work.

**Exercise 1: Interdisciplinary, Community Engaged Work for Community and Environmental Sustainability**

Discussion Questions:

1. How might projects like the one presented in the lesson above have different impacts or outcomes due to the involvement of social workers with interagency or interdisciplinary partners? How would the absence of social workers have affected the Baker Creek project? What other partners could have been included in the Baker Creek project to make it even more effective?
2. What difference do you think it makes when sustainability programs (e.g., by community agencies or academic departments) include community members in all stages of a project? How would it have impacted these youth if the engineers had simply reported

- the results of measuring nitrate levels in Baker Creek rather than involving them in the sampling and data collection?
3. The youth were able to share some ideas and knowledge with other youth. What could have been done to foster greater sharing with parents or other community members outside of the Boys and Girls Club? What would be other ways to help them disseminate their knowledge and create community change?
  4. The youth expressed knowledge gain and ideas for individual behavior change as a result of their participation with Science Camp (e.g., turn off the faucet while I brush my teeth, take a shorter shower, don't litter). What additional activities could be done to help them envision, advocate for, and enact community-wide change?

### **Exercise 2: Working with Interdisciplinary Partners for Community Engaged Sustainability Initiatives in Your Context**

1. Identify a sustainability issue of interest to you or relevant to your work or community.
2. Using brainstorming and planning tools such as [freewriting](#),<sup>8</sup> [mind mapping](#),<sup>9</sup> [SMART goal setting](#),<sup>10</sup> and others, develop a concept of how you can creatively and effectively collaborate with other organizations, sectors, or disciplines to co-create and co-implement a plan to address the sustainability issue that you identified.
3. Create a concrete deliverable to communicate your plan that is meaningful to your educational or work setting—for example, a 2-3-page concept paper, PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, or poster board—and share your concept with others. Consider ways to “translate” the information to various audiences, such as interdisciplinary partners or community participants.

### **Summary Notes:**

Possible answers to the discussion questions from Exercise 1:

1. There would be a loss of knowledge, skills, perspective, community connections and resources. In the Baker Creek project, social workers established trust and rapport with the Boys and Girls Clubs, meeting with them multiple times to ensure the Science Camp was designed with their communities and cultures in mind. Social work values cultural diversity and justice, caring deeply not only about the outcome or data from projects but also for the

process of truly listening to the community, creating interventions to meet felt needs, and elevating marginalized voices. Geographers brought multiple technological tools as well as skills in outreach education that enhanced student learning. The engineers led in water sampling, planning and arranging the equipment and technical aspects of that day. We all brought unique contributions to the endeavor, and we needed each other to be successful. We informally partnered with the Tennessee Water Resources Research Center, but this partnership could be increased by working more closely with their outreach educators. We could have reached out to the Ecology department, local advocacy groups (such as Tennessee Stormwater Association or the Tennessee Clean Water Network), or the local housing agency (Knoxville Community Development Corporation) to inquire about partnering with residents of the Montgomery Village apartments. This project deliberately focused on youth, a historically marginalized population, living in distressed communities, often the most vulnerable to environmental injustice. Social workers promoted the advancement of not only individual knowledge but also community impact by having the youth share their learning with others on the final day of camp. So, while there was an implicit focus on social justice and opportunity for youth to practice community engagement, the social workers could have brought a more explicit focus on justice issues and advocacy as a part of the Science Camp curriculum and activities.

2. Including the community from the origin of a project builds ownership in both the process and the outcomes and promotes self-determination and representation—that the community has a voice rather than outsiders defining both problems and solutions. Including youth in data collection and documentation promotes connection to the place (and potential problems), exposes students to hands-on science, and builds investment in the process.
3. Project team members could have attended Montgomery Village Resident Association meetings to personally invite members (rather than inviting via the Association president) and/or alter the time of students' presentations to fit with their meetings. Team members could have asked for parental contact information and personally invited them (via phone or email) rather than sending flyers home with youth. Youth could have been tasked with "homework" of sharing what they learned with community

members after each day of Science Camp and possibly incentivized for whoever shared with the most people. They could have designed alternative sharing formats such as short videos on their presentations, which could be shared with others not present for the original presentations.

4. After eliciting student ideas for change, have them consider what groups they are part of (family, class, school, neighbors, sports team, religious institution, etc.) and then ask them how much more of a difference would it make if everyone in your group adopted your idea? Then have them brainstorm around the question, “What would it take for everyone in your group to engage in your idea?” Encourage creativity—they are the experts on their community!

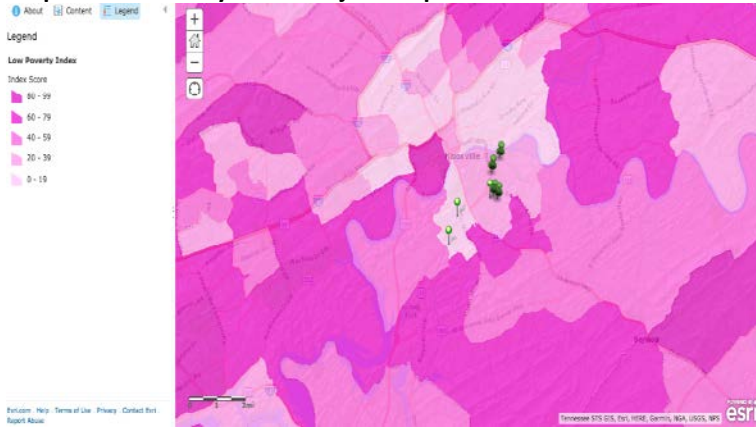
### **Supplemental Information:**

Consider the following information and how similar information about your location could influence the focus of environmental sustainability outreach.

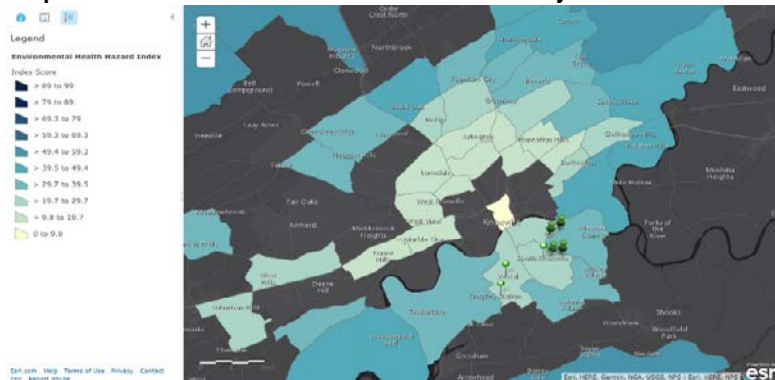
The federal government collects data that measure a number of factors by neighborhood, including the [Environmental Health Hazard Exposure Index](#)<sup>11</sup> which summarizes potential exposure to harmful toxins and the [Low Poverty Index](#)<sup>12</sup> which captures the depth and intensity of poverty. For both measures, a low score represents high exposure to environmental health hazards or poverty, respectively. Maps 1 and 2 show these indices in the Knoxville, Tennessee area with lighter colored areas representing lower scores. The maps and table below show a trend that areas with a higher concentration of poverty are often the areas with greatest exposure to environmental toxins.

Many students attending South Doyle Middle School live in the neighborhoods served by both Vestal and Montgomery Village Boys and Girls Clubs. The light green pins on both Maps 1 and 2 identify these facilities, and the dark green pins identify the four Baker Creek testing locations. Map 1 details the Low Poverty index by census tract, with lighter colored areas representing the greatest exposure to poverty. Map 2 shows the Environmental Health Hazard Index with the lightest blue color representing the greatest level of exposure to health hazard, it should be noted that areas that are dark gray do not have a score on this measure.

## Map 1- Low Poverty Index Project Map



## Map 2- Environmental Health Hazard Index of Project Area



Location/Census Tract	Low Poverty Index	Environmental Hazard Index
South Doyle Middle School & Baker Creek Test Site- 23	27	29
Montgomery Village and Vestal BGCs- 24	18	29
Baker Creek Test Site- 22	27	32
Baker Creek Test Site- 8	37	22
West of MV/Vestal- 35	52	36
South of MV/Vestal- 34	70	34

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9. Writing SMART Goals. Retrieved from [http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing\\_SMART\\_Goals.pdf](http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf)
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# Environmental Sustainability through Interdisciplinary Partnerships with Community-Based Interventions

*By Parlalis K. Stavros, Kounnamas Constantinos, Andreou Marios, and Eliades Nicolas-George*

## **Authors' Biographies:**

**Parlalis K. Stavros**, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Social Work, Department of Psychology and Social Work, Frederick University, Cyprus. He has published one monograph and he has edited the publication of one book; in addition, he has published fifteen papers in international journals and ten chapters in books. He has participated in many European funded research projects, while the LIFE projects mentioned in the chapter are the first ones relating to environmental sustainability.

**Kounnamas Constantinos**, PhD, is a Conservation Biologist and a member of the Nature Conservation Unit of Frederick University, Cyprus. He has participated in numerous scientific conferences, workshops and workgroups dealing with environmental issues, environmental education and youth. He has also participated in numerous research projects focusing on environmental education, biodiversity conservation and natural resources management in Cyprus, funded through various organisations, like the European Commission (ERASMUS, LIFE programmes), the Cyprus Government, the Research Promotion Foundation of Cyprus, etc.

**Andreou Marios**, PhD, is a Conservation Biologist and works as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Nature Conservation Unit of Frederick University, Cyprus. His research interests focus on the aspects of biodiversity and conservation biology, as well as on plant physiology and seed ecophysiology. In his short professional career, he has participated in many LIFE projects, in the elaboration of a significant number of environmental

*studies; appropriate impact assessments; monitoring and management plans, and in mapping of plant species and habitat types.*

**Eliades Nicolas-George, Ph.D.**, is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Nature Conservation Unit of Frederick University, Cyprus. He deals extensively with environmental science and particularly with population genetics and conservation biology. He has published in international journals and chapters in books, while he participated in numerous international scientific conferences. He has also participated in many European and nationally funded research projects on sustainable management and conservation of wild populations and the environment.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand the development of multi-agency and cross-professional collaborative work at the local level.
2. Identify the dynamic of working with a variety of community groups and the benefits of enhancing citizen participation.
3. Demonstrate various methods and strategies through which social work promotes community-based interventions directed at environmental projects.

### **Lesson:**

The protection of the environment constitutes one of the major issues of our century.<sup>1</sup> At the highest policy level, world leaders design their policies towards this aim, whereas numerous policies are also promoted in the lowest level at the local community.<sup>2,3</sup> Local communities are increasingly being requested to evaluate the risks, benefits, and costs of environmental protection and more specifically, they are asked to make difficult decisions to sacrifice local environmental quality and ecological values (such as wildlife, natural habitat, etc.) for improvements in local economic quality. Social work recognises that “people’s health and wellbeing suffer as a result of inequalities and unsustainable environments related to climate change, pollutants, war, natural disasters and violence...”<sup>4</sup>; therefore, social workers have to promote community capacity building in response to environmental challenges and human or natural disasters. In addition, human well-being has been proven to have vital connections among intact ecosystems and the preservation of avian biodiversity.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter the authors describe the methodology employed by the beneficiaries during the implementation of two projects funded by the European Union, and more specifically the *LIFE* program (see below for description). A well organised consortium of public

authorities, environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and academic organisations was established for the implementation of both projects. Faculty and staff in the Nature Conservation Unit and the Department of Psychology and Social Work of Frederick University (Cyprus) are collaborating to implement the following two projects:

- A) *Improving lowland forest habitats for birds in Cyprus (acronym LIFE-FORBIRDS)*
- B) *Integrated conservation management of priority habitat type 9590\* in the Natura 2000 site Koilada Kedron-Kampos (acronym LIFE-KEDROS)*

The project “Improving lowland forest habitats for birds in Cyprus” ([LIFE-FORBIRDS](#))<sup>6</sup> was implemented within three Special Protection Areas (SPAs) of the Natura 2000 network, namely: Kavo Gkreko, Koshi – Pallourokampos and Stavrovouni – Potamos Panagias Stazousas. These sites are neighboring with numerous rural areas (villages). The project *LIFE-FORBIRDS* had three major objectives: (i) to implement conservation/management measures that would substantially improve the ecological conditions for selected bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive occurring in the targeted Natura 2000 sites; (ii) to demonstrate to the Cypriot foresters and other stakeholders the benefits of adopting a more holistic forest management approach that would address the needs of birds dwelling in or visiting the forest; and (iii) to contribute towards the enhancement of public awareness on the need to conserve wild birds and combat bird crime within the broader project area. The project’s duration was from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

The second project entitled “Integrated conservation management of priority habitat type 9590\* in the Natura 2000 site Koilada Kedron-Kampos” ([LIFE-KEDROS](#))<sup>7</sup> is implemented in a Site of Community Importance (SCI) of the Natura 2000 network namely “Koilada Kedron – Kampos”, the only site in the world where the priority habitat type 9590\* “*Cedrus brevifolia* forests” occurs (see Figures 1 and 2). The *LIFE-KEDROS* project aims towards ensuring the short- and long-term preservation of the priority habitat type 9590\* in good conservation status. The project’s aim will be achieved through the adoption of specific conservation actions, both within (*in situ*) and outside (*ex situ*) its natural range. The project’s duration is from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Figures 1 and 2: The habitat type 9590\*.



Both projects were designed by following the [“Community-Based Environmental Protection Approach”](#).<sup>8</sup> This approach refers to an integrated, place-based, participatory approach for managing the environment that simultaneously considers environmental, social, and economic concerns.<sup>8</sup> It aims to give community members a voice in the remedy decisions to ensure the protection of local ecological resources. Moreover, community-based environmental education was considered a part of this approach, in order to “help to build an infrastructure for change that is sustainable, equitable and empowering”.<sup>9</sup> The adoption of this approach in both projects was achieved through the establishment of the following three pillars: 1) partnership development between interdisciplinary organisations, 2) social work community-based interventions (community groups, local resources and citizen participation), and 3) awareness raising campaigns. These pillars are further elaborated below.

### **Partnership Development Between Interdisciplinary Organisations**

The successful implementation of the above projects was based on a strong consortium, with the participation of interdisciplinarity organisations, which brought together the environmental knowledge and awareness-raising expertise of a university (**Frederick University** – Nature Conservation Unit (NCU)), a key national authority responsible for the management of State Forest Lands (**Department of Forests**-Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment), the competent authority for the management of the avifauna in Cyprus (**Game & Fauna Service** (Ministry of Interior)) and the extensive experience of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and Non-Profit Organization in Cyprus in nature and biodiversity protection (**Cyprus Forest Association**). Interdisciplinarity enables stakeholders to create something new by

thinking across traditional boundaries and promotes collaboration between academic disciplines, as new needs and professions emerge. It is crucial to understand the possibilities of multi-agency and cross-professional work and acknowledge how to contribute towards the development of greater opportunities for effective collaborative work. Also, the projects' consortium managed to involve specific groups of stakeholders in the project's implementation process who had the opportunity to express their opinions on specific actions of the project. Such stakeholders were: local authorities, professional associations, the Federation of Environmental Organisations, Cyprus Hunting Federation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), policy implementers on Natura 2000 networks, etc. In addition, the projects focused on informing specific target audiences about their outcomes and on encouraging their involvement. Such audiences were: local people, general public, tourist guides, members of environmental NGOs, etc.

The various scientific fields of the personnel involved in the aforementioned projects and their different approaches and perspectives have been utilized for the benefit of the projects and their goals. However, in many cases the decision processes also involved consultation with several stakeholders, either of people living nearby the targeted project area or people participating in relevant NGOs, competent authorities or scientific groups. This approach aimed to ascertain the opinions of all affected, direct or indirect stakeholders, through the implementation of specific conservation or management measures on the environment by the project consortium. The ultimate goal was acceptance by the stakeholders of the project actions and, in some cases, their involvement in the implementation of selected activities. Moreover, the consultation with stakeholder groups provided the project consortium with valuable knowledge, because either they live within/nearby the targeted site or their scientific field deals with the project's activities.

### **Social Work Community-Based Interventions**

Both projects adopted the stance that the local communities and local people (citizens) need to contribute to and participate in the process of making decisions regarding the conservation of their environment.<sup>10-13</sup> Such prospects ensure the protection and the sustainable management of the protected areas, since the needs of local citizens were taken into consideration. This is congruent with the social work values of inclusion and self-determination. Thus, the involvement of local citizens and local

authorities helped the projects' team to reach particular segments of population in the targeted area and obtain important area-related information, ensuring that knowledge of local resources can be gained and citizen participation can be enhanced. Because the focus of the social work community-based projects was primarily on changing individuals' behavior, community-based interventions were used to garner community input (e.g., through advisory/stakeholder committees or community coalitions) to assist in tailoring interventions to specific target groups or to adapt programs to community characteristics. Also, it was decided that various levels of intervention could be employed, including educational or other strategies that involve individuals, families, social networks, organisations, and public authorities. To this aim, the social worker's role was to employ various methods in order to engage local people in the projects, inform them about the work, and enable them to have a voice in the projects. Overall, the social worker's roles could be summarized as: a) "advocate" (fighting for the rights of others and working to obtain needed resources), b) "educator" (teaching people about resources and how to develop particular skills), c) "facilitator" (gathering groups of people/professionals together for a variety of purposes, such as community development), d) "organiser" (involving many levels of community organization and action), and e) "broker" (making referrals to link the community to needed resources). Finally, the methods employed can be summarised as follows:

- Establishment of a **stakeholder committee**, aiming to enhance public participation in conservation initiatives by providing the project with the necessary support and commitment, as well as information, to overcome external, political, administrative, and management issues that might have arisen.
- Implementation of **training events** for volunteer groups on forest fires, with events providing information and knowledge on fire-prevention measures and firefighting.
- Organisation of **rural workshops**, in which local people from the villages neighbouring the project's areas were informed about the threats on nature/environment and the management measures and conservation actions applied during the projects' implementation.
- Implementation of **educational excursions** of schoolchildren (in the projects' sites) in agreement with local schools and the Ministry of Education & Culture.

- Organisation of a **competition among school** children (from the areas neighbouring the projects' sites) focusing on the projects' environmental topics (i.e., bird-watching).
- Sharing of **information and promotion material** in order to increase the awareness of local communities on nature conservation issues.
- Implementation of **focus groups** with local citizens (of communities near the projects' study sites), in order to register the local people's opinions on the socioeconomic impact of the project.

### Awareness Raising Campaigns

The last pillar of the projects was the promotion of the awareness raising campaigns. The aim of the dissemination of project results was to make the outcomes of the project known to a wide audience and not only to policy-makers and local citizens (as discussed above). In order to reach these broader audiences, a variety of methods were employed to raise awareness and inform people on the usefulness of both projects. These methods can be summarised as follows:

- **Two highway billboards.** The billboards were placed in the main highway linking the areas of interest, targeting the local population and other users of the general area (e.g., tourists, commuters, etc.). The billboards focused on the promotion of short and quick expressions/phrases [*"Stop this tradition!"* (meaning the illegal hunting of wild birds) and *"Let them fly"* (meaning to stop the mass trapping using illegal methods)], followed by simple designs (see Pictures 3 and 4). Needless to say, both billboards were commented/discussed by local society and local media.

Figure 3: *"Stop this tradition!"*



Figure 4: *"Let them fly"*



- **Production of two TV-spots and broadcasting in public television stations, annually during the hunting season.** The aim of the TV-spots was to increase awareness of the importance of wildlife and

to point out the destructive impact that illegal hunting/bird trapping can have on avifauna. The TV-spots '[Life for Birds](#)',<sup>14</sup> even though short in length (approximately 30 seconds each), encapsulated the main issues that the project dealt with in a way that captured the interest of the average viewer. The public TV stations, which have about 12-14% [audience share](#)<sup>15</sup> during the hunting season, broadcasted the spots to increase hunters' awareness on the importance of biodiversity/ wildlife conservation.

- **Display of spots at cinema halls.** Cinema halls are visited by a large number of people who can only observe one screen, without the "opportunity" to go to another programme. The spots that were produced for broadcasting at the TV were also used at the cinema halls.
- **Leaflet production and door to door delivery at communities close to the study areas.** The leaflet informed people about the goals of the projects and increased awareness on the targeted issues. They were delivered door to door to ensure that the locals could access it. This activity was directed at the people most probable to affect and/or be affected by the project so that they could be informed/educated on the specific goals of the projects.

### **Conclusion:**

This chapter elaborated how the "Community-Based Environmental Protection Approach" was employed in two projects in Cyprus. The socioeconomic impact study of the first project revealed that locals are aware of the most significant environmental issues that concern their community. This is an expected outcome, since numerous awareness activities were implemented during the projects' lifespans (e.g. trainings, workshops, educational excursions, focus groups). However, it was identified that there is not a strong community commitment and, correspondingly, no community-based environmental strategy/ies on how to tackle these environmental issues. This outcome is based on the fact that social workers were not involved in every action of the project and not throughout its lifespan; moreover, the specific local authorities looking to address environmental issues in these communities do not employ their own social workers. To conclude, it has to be illustrated that local authorities must place community social workers in the heart of their activities, in order to enhance community commitment and people's powerful participation in numerous environmental issues. Also, future projects must promote closer



cooperation between local authorities aiming at greater improvements in local economic and environmental quality.

### **Application:**

#### **Exercise 1: Planning for Community-Based Environmental Protection**

Think of your community, or a community where you work. Work with a partner or team to answer the following questions and develop a plan.

- 1) What are some environmental issues facing that community?
- 2) How does it affect the people?
- 3) How does it affect wildlife and plants?
- 4) Who is working on these issues?
- 5) How could social workers play a role?
- 6) How could you implement the “Community-Based Environmental Protection” approach?

#### **Exercise 2: World Café**

[World Café](#)<sup>16</sup> is a very popular method for creating a collaborative learning conversation around issues that matter amongst a group of people. World Café offers a collaborative interaction between participants, sharing experience and/or knowledge, generating ideas and constructing dialogues. The exercise presented hereby can be used in a very fruitful way for all involved parties.

First, the leader must create three “main groups” consisting of 2-3 persons each: the first group will focus on young people, the second group on middle-aged people, and the third group will focus on older people. The rest of the participants will be divided into three “players groups” (the size of each group depends on the overall number of participants) and they will be the ones moving around the café-style tables.

After creating these groups, the “main groups” will be seated at café-style tables. The leader must clarify the context of the café and state the following question: *Which methods could you identify and employ in order to motivate and enhance people’s participation in environmental projects?* Each café-table selects a host; the host selects a time keeper and a lead writer. The question is written at the top of the easel paper in the center of the table. In each round, “players groups” will visit a different table, a dialogue will be developed and the conversation will last for 15-20 minutes. Afterwards, the “main groups” stay at the table and “players groups” move to another table.

The second round begins by having the “main group” briefly share with new table members the key insights and ideas discussed in the first round, then new members build on what has already been documented and add to the depth and breadth on the conversation topic. This round will also last 15-20 minutes. Lastly, the same practice is repeated for a third time. Finally, each “main group” will come to some conclusions, which will be presented to the whole group.

### **Exercise 3: Brainstorming and Debate**

Brainstorming and debate are two of the most productive methods of learning. Brainstorming is a way to introduce a new subject, encourage creativity and generate a lot of ideas very quickly. It can be used for solving a specific problem or answering a question; also, various scholars have presumed that group idea sharing can enhance cognitive stimulation and idea production.<sup>17</sup> The use of a debate can also be a very productive method, since a dialogue between students could be developed and opposing arguments could be used. The design of a debate typically features a judge (e.g., the leader/instructor) who determines outcomes.<sup>18</sup> The exercise presented hereby combines brainstorming and debate in a very fruitful way.

Step 1: The leader divides participants into two groups, noting to the participants that debate increasingly surrounds the appropriate mixture of energy sources creating a balance of fossil fuels, renewable and nuclear power. All forms of energy production have strengths and weaknesses and we must be able to defend the form despite the weaknesses, as it could still be more advantageous than other forms. In this respect, participants have to work in two groups: (1) those who are champions of these two forms of community-based, renewable energy investments, and (2) those who oppose these two forms of community-based, renewable energy investments. Both groups should be able to support their stances.

Step 2: The leader then reads the following statement:

“Your local authority decides to create two community-based, renewable energy sources: a wind farm and a solar panel farm in your community. Debate/discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these forms of energy production and compare them to the alternative forms of energy production currently used in your community.”

Step 3: After hearing the above statement, the two groups will spend some time brainstorming their arguments before the debate. The two teams have 15 minutes to prepare; they should then elect one speaker per group to represent their group in the debate and come back to address each other. The leader is the chairperson, conducting the debate and controlling the discussion. Each speaker is limited to five minutes. To answer the topic introduced above, it can be helpful to look at the “pros” and “cons” of using renewable energy sources.

**Summary Notes:**

The information presented below could be used to support the participants’ arguments in the debate.

**Data that can support the participants’ arguments:**

<b>Discussion Points <i>For</i> - Wind Farm</b>	<b>Discussion Points <i>Against</i> - Wind Farm</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wind energy is an economic form of energy generation reducing both running costs and environmental harm</li> <li>- Wind energy provides a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels and nuclear power</li> <li>- Wind energy provides for price stability in the long-term, wind will be with us for the duration</li> <li>- No carbon or Sulphur dioxide emissions so wind farm doesn't contribute to global warming</li> <li>- A clean solution</li> <li>- No fuel needed: free energy</li> <li>- Low maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wind energy is unreliable and provides only an irregular source of supply – and even then, only in some countries</li> <li>- Wind turbines represent a threat to the wildlife</li> <li>- The financial support required to further develop wind technology would be better deployed in more consistent processes such as geothermal and nuclear</li> <li>- Output depends entirely on wind speed: no wind, no power!</li> <li>- Still need conventional power stations for when there is no wind</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Onshore wind energy costs about 3 pence per kwh whereas offshore costs 5 p per kwh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can only make a limited contribution due to lack of suitable sites</li> <li>- Harm to birds which fly into their turbine blades</li> <li>- Can look unsightly</li> <li>- Need lots of them as only small amount of energy produced by each, so high building costs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion Points <i>For</i> – Solar Panel Farm</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion Points <i>Against</i> – Solar Panel Farm</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No carbon or Sulphur dioxide emissions so solar panel farm doesn't contribute to global warming</li> <li>- A clean solution</li> <li>- No fuel needed: free energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quite expensive to build solar power stations</li> <li>- Only really effective in equatorial countries which don't have much cloudiness</li> <li>- Not particularly efficient</li> </ul>

Participants can also visit the following papers and websites:

1. [Efficiency and effectiveness of promotion systems for electricity generation from renewable energy sources – Lessons from EU countries](#)<sup>20</sup>
2. [Fostering the use of renewable energies in the European Union: the race between feed-in tariffs and green certificates](#)<sup>21</sup>
3. [Renewable Energy Pros and Cons](#)<sup>22</sup>
4. [The Real Pros and Cons of Renewable Energy Sources](#)<sup>23</sup>
5. [The Pros and Cons of 4 Common Alternative Energy Sources](#)<sup>24</sup>

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# Promoting Mental Health: Engagement with the Environment as a Source of Solutions and Inspiration

*By Dagmar Narusson, Lauris Geurden, and Helen Kool*

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**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Explore the mental health benefits of recognizing the human connection to the environment.
2. Describe the re-conceptualized personal recovery concept that takes into account affective nature atmospheres.
3. Indicate how social inclusion and work towards co-production of well-being for individuals and their environments are concepts that unite social workers, their service consumers, and people within the network of eco-villages.
4. Recognize how deinstitutionalized individuals can enrich their communities.

**Lesson:**

This chapter discusses the natural environment as a highly valuable and often-overlooked means of promoting and preserving mental health and supporting day-to-day functioning. Being in contact with nature and spending time outdoors facilitates emotional and cognitive restoration. For example, this chapter discusses how people living with a long-term mental health condition and focusing on personal recovery may find that affective nature atmospheres (i.e., natural environments with restorative effects) support the process of finding health in illness. This chapter also describes examples (i.e., personal stories) about how people living in eco-communities which focus on social inclusion and co-production of wellbeing of the environment and humans in communities, are excellent partners for social workers. Finally, social workers can help communities embrace individuals who are undergoing the deinstitutionalization process, thereby helping the individuals thrive and co-produce with their community new, resilient, and sustainable solutions for living in harmony with their natural environment.

**Mental Health, Well-being and the Restorative Effects of the Natural Environment**

Mental health is defined as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”<sup>1</sup> In this discussion, we consider mental health broadly to cover anyone in society, and we pay particular attention to the mental health of those with mental illness and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). How successful humans are in our

everyday activities and in our family, work, and community roles is very much dependent on our mental health. One way to take care of oneself and accumulate positive emotions is through interaction with nature.

Positive interactions with nature can provide a range of psychological, cognitive and social benefits.<sup>2-4</sup> Research indicates that interaction with nature can vary from direct interaction, such as being physically present in nature, to indirect, such as having a view of nature through a window or the placement of natural items inside (e.g., plants, seashells). For example, visits to natural settings such as the forest offer visual, audible and odorous stimuli derived from the natural environment which provides positive emotional, restorative and vitality-increasing effects.<sup>5</sup> Recent research by Cox et al. showed that people who spend time outdoors and in green environments have reduced levels of depression, anxiety and stress.<sup>4</sup> Research done in Japan showed that even short, 15-minute-long visits to the forest (known as “forest bathing”) can generate multiple positive psychological effects, such as an improved mood, a feeling of restoration, and a feeling of vitality.<sup>6</sup> Experiences of nature can provide positivity and stress relief, and for this reason people choose to visit places with restorative effects, such as (1) large forest areas, small wooded areas, scenic fields and meadows, small natural state areas such as river valleys, wetlands, bushes, rocks, (2) built-up (urban) green spaces, and (3) waterside environments (e.g., beaches, harbour areas).<sup>7</sup> The restorative effect of views of nature on hospital patients has been examined in various studies.<sup>8</sup> As research by Ulrich has shown, patients with views of trees from the window had shorter postoperative hospital stays, fewer negative evaluative comments from nurses, and slightly lower scores for minor postsurgical complications.<sup>9</sup> For social workers, it is beneficial to recognize how visits to nature could have a restorative effect, help to relieve stress, and also generate positivity and inspiration; this is important for their work with clients and also for themselves. It is also important for social workers to be mindful that some clients may have negative emotions about nature, for instance if they suffered a trauma from a natural catastrophe. Thus, working with these clients may also involve using the healing power of nature to address their mental health needs.

Figure 1: Narusson, 2018. "Image while I Write."



### **Case Example: A Personal Story: A Touch of Inspiration in Natural Environments**

*When I am writing about social work, I always try to find an opportunity to spend some time outdoors. I am doing this even now, while writing this paper (see Figure 1). I feel that this is the best way to clear my mind. When I am looking at a vast landscape, such as a lake or a field, or when scanning the horizon from the top of a hill, my thoughts become less restrained and my focus broadens. Nature provides inspiration and helps to overcome an impasse in preparing myself for writing, gathering thoughts or the writing process itself.*

### **Mental Illness, Personal Recovery Process, and Connection with the Environment**

The conventional understanding of mental health, illness and recovery has been confounded in recent decades. The new understanding of recovery in the context of mental health describes recovery as a process of restoring a person's positive identity and functioning in the community and society after the devastating experience of mental illness.<sup>10</sup> This personal recovery process is much deeper than treating mental illness itself.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to understand that clinical recovery, as a traditional concept, focuses on **recovery from** mental health difficulties (i.e., full symptom remission, 'return to normal') and the novel **personal recovery** concept focuses on **recovery with** mental health difficulties.<sup>11,12</sup> "It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even within the limitation caused by illness" (p.15).<sup>13</sup> The personal recovery concept has different focus than clinical recovery. Personal recovery is understood as a process or a

continuum, is subjectively defined by the person who is experiencing mental health difficulties, and, so, means different things to different people, although there are aspects that many people share.<sup>11</sup> The newer conceptualization of personal recovery introduces the need for a new kind of understanding—*health in illness*. Individuals with experiences of mental illness may lead healthy, productive and fulfilling lives, despite the continuing experience of mental illness symptoms.<sup>14</sup> The personal recovery orientation in mental health has changed the focus of interventions to five recovery process domains, identified according to a synthesis of studies as the *Connectedness—Hope and optimism—Identity—Meaning and purpose in life—Empowerment* (CHIME) framework.<sup>15</sup> The CHIME framework of personal recovery provides a richer description of recovery, and in the future, attention should be turned to processes, aspects, and the role of the context to recovery.<sup>14</sup>

The elements of connectedness and hope in the CHIME framework and the previously described affective nature atmosphere notions have overlap. In the personal recovery process, it is crucial that an individual is connected with their surroundings. The connections of an individual to family, peers, community, and also the environment (i.e., affective nature atmospheres) have central importance, as recovery begins when a person finds someone or something to which they can relate.<sup>16</sup> Connectedness facilitates recovery. Duff clearly indicates how individuals who have experienced mental illness can get support and connectedness, which facilitates recovery, from the environment.<sup>14</sup> Duff uses the term ‘affective atmospheres,’ meaning that an individual assigns an affective meaning to a certain environment based on their feelings (i.e., the atmospheres belong neither to an environment nor to a subject, but to an in-between subject and object).<sup>14</sup> Bissell says that affective atmospheres inspire, suggest or provoke specific kinds of embodied experience.<sup>17</sup>

Hope is one of most central elements of the recovery process. Bird et al. emphasize that hope is a relational achievement, not only an inner state.<sup>19</sup> Research by Duff shows that natural atmospheres and environments may influence the experiences of people with mental illness so that they experience them as effectively transformative, modifying the body’s structure of feeling.<sup>14</sup> This type of transformative effect might be experienced by being in fresh air, sensing light, wind, sand, water, the smell of vegetation, spaces of solitude, being in the garden, forest, open green spaces, or sitting on park benches.<sup>14</sup> People with mental illnesses have

observed that mindfully breathing in the air, taking in light, and looking around have the positive effect of relaxation, restoration of hope, and improved moods, and these encounters provoke memories of previous visits and related positive affective states.<sup>14</sup> Green spaces and affective atmospheres provide better emotional, physiological, and restorative effects, and a real experience of recovery.<sup>6,14</sup>

### **Personal Niche and Natural Environment**

One way for individuals to help themselves in the personal recovery process is to create and use a personal niche. When mental health is compromised and some individual feels that they are unsafe, threatened, sad, alone or confused, they can benefit from this personal niche.<sup>19</sup> A personal niche is a place selected by that individual where they can withdraw and feel safe. They can be alone where nobody requires anything from them; nobody threatens them; nobody else can ever take over control of this space.<sup>19</sup> For many people, being outside in nature or somewhere with connections related to nature, can be such a safe haven—a personal niche.

A nature-related personal niche can be employed in various ways, such as: (1) being physically in a safe place of scenic beauty; (2) retreating to a personal niche in one's mind (psychological space); or (3) being in contact with nature by looking at a landscape created by an artist. A pleasant, familiar and safe place of scenic beauty can become a personal niche where one can go from time to time to calm down, to generate positivity, feel free and draw strength. A personal niche in nature may not be suitable for everyone, but it can help many. Where there is such a personal niche and memories connected to it, but it is physically not accessible, an individual can retreat to that place in their mind by using memories; such a place is called a psychological space. Photos and videos can also be used to enter a personal niche. People can also find visual images created by artists, which help them to enter a personal niche (see Figure 1). Art can speed the healing process and can be a refuge from intense emotions associated with illness<sup>20</sup> and can ease distress by allowing for catharsis, distraction and/or reflection.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 2: Mägi, Konrad. "Pühajärv" <sup>23</sup>



Nanda et al. came to the conclusion that "viewing visual images through art can impact health, and positive, calming images of nature are particularly therapeutic".<sup>22</sup>

To conclude - forests, lakesides, riversides, wetlands, parks, gardens, beaches, and various natural environmental spaces, and activities like breathing fresh air, sitting on a bench, and taking in the light, enable people with mental illnesses and/or mental health conditions to feel better emotionally (changes affective state), physically (relax), and spiritually (finding hope).<sup>14</sup>

**Case Example: Personal story of 'Jonas', a 31-year-old boy with autism and a severe learning disability**

*11 am in the morning, it's calm in the house, most of my housemates are in the workshop or working outside at the moment. I'm in my own room, listening to the radio and playing with a little piece of wire, feeling calm and relaxed. Today's kitchen team is preparing lunch. I can smell it already. Suddenly my housemates enter the house one after the other; it's the tea break. The peaceful quietness from just before is disappearing. People are talking, chairs are moved loudly, cups and spoons shrilling in between. At first, I manage to stay calm, I join the tea break and sing a song while standing next to the table. Suddenly, I'm frightened by somebody's movement close to me; this makes me nervous and I start to yell and scream very loudly. One of the support people in the house tries to calm me down with some music in my room,*

*but my head feels like exploding and I just continue my hysteric yelling. Then, she invites me to come outside and go for a walk in the forest. At first, I'm not enthusiastic about it, but I put my clothes on anyway and together we go. After 5 minutes we are already completely on our own in the forest. I cannot see the house anymore, and barely get distracted by the faraway noises of our own village. As soon as I arrive in the forest and continue walking, I completely forget about my hysterical reaction in the house. I feel how the tension in my body is being released.*

### **Promoting Social Inclusion and Co-production of Individual and Environmental Well-being through Interaction with Nature**

Social work practitioners, community developers, and people living in eco-villages can work together to promote community and environmental sustainability, while at the same time finding opportunities to promote social inclusion. This section will give an overview of the examples from the [Social Inclusion in the Baltic Sea Region through Eco-villages and Communities project \(SIBREC\)](#).<sup>24</sup>

In order to improve the existing environment, the question of which solutions in this environment could help us overcome a disadvantage should be examined. Slade argues that everyday problems require everyday solutions and we should learn from the solutions already existing in society.<sup>16</sup> For example, to make society more inclusive, we must find ways to collaborate with representatives from different areas. The partners of the SIBREC project were representatives from eco-communities and transitional communities. [Ecovillages](#)<sup>25</sup> are consciously designed through a locally owned, participatory process in all four dimensions of sustainability (social, culture, ecology and economy) to regenerate their social and natural environments. A transition community is guided by the recognition that resources are limited, therefore, opportunities should be created to support resilience, promote social inclusion and fairness, promote grassroots solutions, collaborate, and look for synergies (see [Transition Network](#)).<sup>26</sup> In addition, co-production is an inspiring process, where equal and reciprocal relationships create the space, which predisposes the learning from each other. In the SIBREC project we experienced how important it is to be aware of the co-production features described by Slade et al.<sup>10</sup> and New Economic Foundation<sup>27</sup> such as (1) breaking down barriers and distinction between professionals, producers and community members, (2) to recognise people as assets, and (3) to build on people's existing capabilities.

SIBREC projects described below demonstrate innovative ways to “think outside the box” to find solutions that may already exist in different communities, including eco-communities, that can promote sustainability in one’s lifestyle (including finances) and promote health and mental health. The SIBREC project provided an opportunity for social workers to reflect on and identify the opportunities to work together with different communities in order to involve more people occupying marginal positions in society (i.e., how to promote sustainable communities and proper use of nature). The project involved many programs that offered not only the benefit of social inclusion, but also other health and mental health benefits through gardening, forestry management, and animal assisted therapy. Examples of these projects are presented below.

### **Benefits of Gardening and Forestry Management Programs**

Good practice examples of partnerships between social workers and gardening experts/educators can be found in the special study program at the School of Horticulture in the southern part of Estonia,<sup>28</sup> available to residents of [Maarja Village](#),<sup>29</sup> a village of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through this program, residents who have completed the national curriculum for students with moderate and severe learning disabilities can study horticulture, leading to a possible job in this field. One outcome for participants connects to the national occupational qualification system list of qualifications that now includes the profession of assistant gardener, level 2, including the profession of planter and carer for horticultural plants. The impact is three-fold: this cooperation provides an opportunity to pursue education and find employment; can lead to gardening becoming a hobby and a therapeutic activity to promote mental health; and cooperation between the Rāpina horticultural school and Maarja Village has diversified the professional opportunities they are now eligible to pursue. This partnership resulted in two new vocational qualifications for gardening assistants registered in the national occupational qualification system.<sup>30</sup>

In Södertälje, Sweden, *Södertälje Vegetables & Social Inclusion* is a social enterprise initiative utilizing social workers. The initiative uses a model of co-production as it offers immigrants and refugees the opportunity to work on garden plots and local residents provide coaching for work and life in order to further their integration into Swedish society. Participants learn about gardening (for example, turn wasteland into a field), make garden beds, plant and take care of various plants, as is customary in Nordic



countries. Socialization is also very important: during coffee breaks, everybody working on the plots gets together and interacts in order to get to know each other, learn the language, and share their concerns and delights. Everybody is encouraged to participate in the coffee breaks, although at first it can be difficult for immigrants, but this socialization promotes solidarity with their new community and builds social capital, which also promotes mental health. Working together, local residents and refugee and immigrant participants can share in cultural exchange, as the refugees and immigrants learn about local culture and are able to share about their culture and gardening practices from their homes of origin. Finally, there is an economic benefit as well, as the garden produce is sold and the income distributed among the workers.<sup>30</sup>

Another example is from the Russian organisation, *Resource*, which presented their *Forest School* initiative. This initiative offers rehabilitative activities in a village with strong forestry traditions (Bereznjuk). The initiative is targeted at youth with behavioural problems that have been involved with law enforcement and the justice system. The youth learn about the forest ecosystem; they plant saplings and participate in forest maintenance. They learn how local villagers maintain good relations among themselves and take care of the surrounding environment. Evenings are dedicated to singing and playing, visiting the sauna, and doing handicraft.<sup>30</sup>

### **Animal-assisted Therapy**

*Hobukooli Park*, an equine therapy facility in central Estonia, is another good example of how to use the possibilities offered by nature in rehabilitation and personal recovery. The park has horses, donkeys and other small animals. The facility offers therapeutic horse riding and other animal-assisted activities to promote human physical and mental health, help to develop verbal and non-verbal interaction, and improve the capacity to manage problematic or conflict situations. The activities boost the participants' self-confidence and confidence in others. Hobukooli Park provides therapy in a natural environment. The movement and actions of calm and good-natured animals have a positive impact on participants. Equine-assisted therapy is available both to children with mental health conditions and to clients of other care services (e.g., individuals with an IDD). Particular attention is paid to essential everyday skills and to helping people to discover their skills and creativity. In 2016, children and young people attending a summer camp at Hobukooli Park took part in building a bus shelter from clay and recycled materials. The Bus Shelter Project was

recognised with the title of the Järva County Good Initiative - 2016. The park also offers experiential learning days for students and teachers and prepares teaching materials for schools to promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Enrichment of Environments and Communities with Individuals who have been Deinstitutionalized**

One area in which social workers promote social inclusion is by supporting people who are being deinstitutionalized to connect with their communities. During the deinstitutionalization process, some people with an intellectual or developmental disability and/or mental health conditions may move from rural to urban areas. This section explores how they might use their gardening skills in their new, urban environments and contribute through co-production to their own well-being and their community's well-being.

The deinstitutionalization process entails the movement of people with an intellectual or developmental disability and/or mental health condition out of institutions and into the community where they can enjoy social inclusion. This may be in a home setting with family members, in a group home setting with others not related to them and with the assistance of residential aids to assist them, or semi-independent or independent living. When learning to engage with their new environment, people being deinstitutionalized are in need of support. One possibility is to support their participation in the protection and design of the surrounding environment, and their contribution to community wellbeing through urban gardening activities. Two excerpts below describe the benefit of programs such as these from the perspective of participants.

#### **Case Example: Multiple perspectives on gardening experience.**

##### **Personal Report of an occupational assistant, 'Lauris', supporting young adults with learning disabilities, and in their free time, involved in an ecological sustainable development movement**

*I work and live as occupational assistant in community with five people with learning disabilities in an Estonian town. In my free time, I am very much involved in our town's movement for ecological sustainable development. One of the projects I participate in is the Aleksandri community garden. I want to get experience with different permaculture techniques in the garden. Working together with like-minded people in the garden is very inspiring and relaxing.*

*Yesterday I was in the community house in the role of occupational assistant. There was also a working day planned in the community garden, I decided to invite the inhabitants of the community house to join if they wanted. All were enthusiastic and decided to come with me. Together, with many other people, we did a lot of work and made the garden look much nicer. For me, personally, it felt so natural to be there; also, together with the people with learning disabilities I invited with me. They easily integrated into the group activities and I didn't feel in the role of occupational assistant as I usually feel just being at home together with them. I was close enough to support and intervene if necessary, but just participated in the gardening work like everybody else. I didn't feel, not even for a minute, like I was at work. I just spent my day together with others.*

**Personal Report from diary excerpt by 'Helena', a 30-year-old woman with learning disabilities and autism**

*Today is Saturday and I am free from work. Usually, in the community house where I live, we clean the whole house all together. But today was different, because we went all together to the community garden in Tartu. During the day, we collected trash other people left there, and also prepared some beds to plant herbs and vegetables. In the evening, we celebrated by eating pizza and chatting around the fireplace. I especially like to go there, because so many different people come. I really like to get to know others and am always curious how they live and what they do.*

*When I am at home, free days are not really my favourite, because I like to do something all the time. I get restless quite easy. But in the community garden, I enjoy being outside, actively contributing to the development of the garden, and at the same time becoming friends with new people.*

**Future Directions**

Social workers can promote community and environmental sustainability by supporting mental health and well-being through connections to nature. This can be done using affective nature atmospheres to promote personal recovery for those with mental illnesses. In addition, social workers, alongside their service consumers, can partner with people in the network of eco-villages to work towards social inclusion and the co-production of well-being for individuals and their environments. Finally, social workers can

help communities recognize the mutually enriching benefits of embracing deinstitutionalized individuals.

**Application:**

**Exercise 1: Co-production and Social Inclusion: An Opportunity to Develop Community and Environmental Sustainability Solutions**

- 1) Describe examples of co-production for individual and environmental well-being in your community/county/area.
- 2) Analyze a particular environmental issue in your community, and then make a plan for improvement. How could you consider aspects of social inclusion? What kind of opportunities do you recognize for co-production in the future? Who are potential partners? Perhaps consider people who live in eco-villages, local gardeners, sustainable community developers?

**Exercise 2: Recognizing and Promoting Personal Recovery through Interactions with Nature.**

**Aim:** To recognize and understand how many connections people with mental health problems have with the surrounding nature atmospheres/environment (e.g., fresh air, parks, gardens etc.) and how to enhance their connections with the natural environment (if needed).

**Instructions:**

- 1) Choose from the two options below or combine them to collect data.
  - a) With their permission, shadow a client with a mental health problem during a short period of time (e.g., 4, 8, or 12 hours). Ask them questions to get their view and understanding of their connection to nature. Collect this information by using the collection form below.
  - b) Ask a participant to keep a diary to identify the connections they have with the natural environment. Complete the data collection form below.
- 2) Next, analyze the emotions resulting from these affective nature atmospheres and note these in the data collection form below.
- 3) Discuss the data you have collected. You may do this in pairs, or as a group. Be sure to consider in your discussion the following:
  - a) The person's connections with the natural environment and what the connections could mean for the person.
  - b) How could these connections promote personal recovery?
  - c) What are some opportunities to empower the person to contribute to their environment and community as part of their personal recovery?

**Data Collection Form:**

Type of Interaction with Nature/ Affective Nature Atmospheres	Observations and Reflections
<p><b>Direct Interaction (being physically present in nature):</b>                      (examples: 1) large forest areas, small wooded areas, scenic fields and meadows, small natural state areas such as river valleys, wetlands, bushes, rocks; (2) built-up (urban) green spaces; (3) waterside environments (e.g., beaches and harbour areas))</p>	
<p><b>Indirect Interaction:</b>                      (examples: having a view of nature through a window or the placement of natural items inside (e.g., plants, seashells), viewing art with nature scenes)</p>	
Emotions from Affective Nature Atmospheres	Observations and Reflections
<p><b>Positive Results:</b>                      (examples: improved mood, stress relief, vitality, restoration)</p>	
<p><b>Negative Results:</b>                      (examples: annoyance with bugs or temperature, agitation with noises, anxiety from wildlife or weather)</p>	

### Summary Notes:

The natural atmospheres of public gardens, parks, lakes and riversides may cultivate inclusion of values such as openness and accessibility along with an acceptance of cultural diversity.<sup>14</sup> These spaces are open and accessible to a variety of the city's citizens/inhabitants and give the opportunity of spending restorative and recreational time without spending much money. As Duff<sup>14</sup> suggests, social workers, mental health professionals and mental health services could take the role of engineering these atmospheres of recovery and positive emotional, restorative and vitality-increasing effects.

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# Teaching Environmental Empathy in the Social Work Curriculum

*By Jack W. Wheeler*

## **Author Biography:**

*Jack W. Wheeler, MSW, is a doctoral student at The Ohio State University College of Social Work. His research focuses on environmental determinants of mental health, environmental inequalities, and environmental interventions. He practices adventure-based therapies with adolescents in an urban community mental health setting and is a member of the Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group of the Association of Experiential Education.*

## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe how the principle of empathy relates to natural environments.
2. Reflect on personal emotions regarding natural environments.
3. Practice strategies to increase empathy with the natural world.

**Lesson:**

The following lesson cultivates [emotional intelligence](#)<sup>1</sup> of social work students and practitioners for practice in natural environments. The lesson plan integrates concepts of empathy and environmentalism from a social work perspective. The activities use self-reflection, journaling, dialogue, and immersion experiences to build environmental empathy. The reader should be prepared to address negative emotions that may result from self-reflection, conflicting perspectives, and new environmental awareness.

**Defining Environmental Empathy**

Social work educators have been discussing the concept of empathy for decades.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis is most likely because social work research shows a correlation between practitioner empathy and positive client outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Practitioners with higher empathy also show increased use of effective communication with clients.<sup>3</sup>

Definitions of empathy vary across disciplines and over the past century.<sup>3</sup> In general, literature describes empathy through three features; (1) affect: feeling what another person is feeling, (2) cognitive: knowing what another person is feeling, and (3) behavioral: having the intention to respond compassionately to another person's distress.<sup>4</sup> The Social Work Dictionary summarizes empathy for the field to be "the act of perceiving, understanding, experiencing, and responding to the emotional state and ideas of another person" (p. 141).<sup>5</sup> In general, empathy literature and definitions historically focus on feelings and thoughts of **another person**.

The idea of expanding the definition of empathy to include natural environments was first described by John Coates in his book, *Ecology and Social Work*.<sup>6</sup> Coates recognizes extreme individualism in modern society as degrading the connection that humans feel for global and environmental problems.<sup>7</sup> As a result, people are less likely to feel empathy toward species and habitats that are in decline. Coates suggests, "social empathy could be expanded to become global empathy, where the reality that a person's experience can be seen not only in the context of their immediate situation (such as abuse or poverty) but also in the context of global poverty and ecological destruction" (p.101).<sup>6</sup> Global empathy requires the individual to gain awareness of the interconnectedness between personal experiences and global ecologies.<sup>7</sup> Like global empathy, environmental empathy builds interconnectedness between people and the Earth. However, environmental empathy contrasts from Coates original conception of global

empathy by focusing on the more manageable relationship between a person and the ecology of their immediate environment.

*Empathy with nature* (EWN) provides empirical evidence and practical insight into people more prone to show environmental empathy. Kim-Pong Tam developed EWN within the field of environmental psychology and defines it to be people who understand and share emotional experiences with the natural world. Distinguishing EWN from environmental empathy, Tam recognizes EWN to be a personality characteristic rather than an emotional state. Individuals develop EWN most frequently through the distress of observing the destruction of habitats or the harming to animals.<sup>8</sup> For Tam, a person's EWN leads to future conservation efforts and sustainability values.<sup>8</sup> EWN should be taught early and throughout the education process to develop future environmental stewards.<sup>9</sup> Studies have found that EWN is associated with efforts to protect nature.<sup>8</sup> Also, one study found certain characteristics are associated with individuals with higher EWN; they identify as female, they engage more with nature, and they personify human characteristics onto natural elements.<sup>8</sup> Current theory development in EWN shows that the concept is distinct from empathy with humans.<sup>8</sup> Individuals with high empathy toward people do not necessarily have a heightened empathy with nature.

The fact that you are reading this workbook assumes that you already have a high disposition toward environmental empathy. For instance, when you see the images below of mountaintop removal, poor treatment of livestock, or oil spills; it is likely that you feel strong emotions of anger or sadness. These emotions are not because you directly felt the suffering of the ecosystem (although in some cases you may have), but because you feel empathy with the mountains, animals, and waterways that the images represent. Rationally, you likely know that these elements of nature *feel* differently than humans; but emotionally, the suffering of Earth is felt by your own human experiences of distress. It is this aspect of empathy for nature that leads some social workers to become future stewards of environmental and community sustainability.

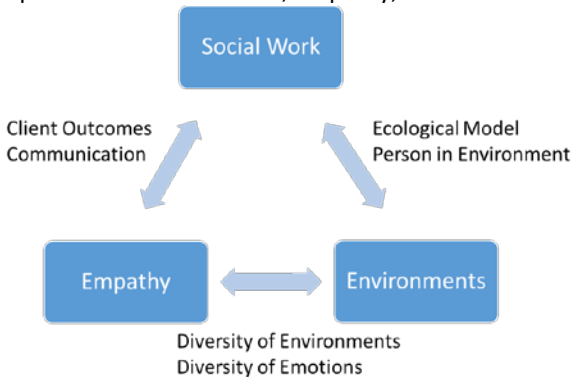
Figure 1: Mountaintop Removal<sup>10</sup> Figure 2: Investigation Manitoba Pork Factory<sup>11</sup> Figure 3: Bird- Black Sea Oil Spill<sup>12</sup>



### Relationship between Social Work, Empathy, and Environments

Many implications exist for how environmental empathy impacts the practice of social work. Despite increased emphasis on environmental issues by the United States' National Association of Social Workers and the International Federation of Social Workers, social work practitioners report similar environmental attitudes as the general public.<sup>13</sup> Teaching environmental empathy to social work students could reinforce ecological values of the profession and could increase environmental attitudes. The individual relationships between empathy, social work, and environments provide some possible implications for teaching and learning about environmental empathy.

Figure 4: Concepts that link Social Work, Empathy, and Environments



**Social work and environments.** The ecological model and the “person-in-environment” theory serve as foundational concepts linking social work with environmental contexts. The ecological model recognizes the reciprocal and changing relationship between individuals and their environment.<sup>14</sup> Person-in-environment theory describes how an individual’s behaviors must be understood within the environmental context that they live.<sup>15</sup> However, social work has predominantly focused on socio-cultural environments, while spatial and natural environments have traditionally

received less attention.<sup>16,17,18</sup> The communities that we serve are nested within systems of spatial environments that are difficult to separate from social contexts.<sup>19</sup> For instance, a neighborhood with high poverty may also be located near an industrial waste site that contaminates water. In this example, the social worker will need to assess the significance of both the proximity of pollutants and the adverse effects of poverty when determining how to intervene. Concerns with environmental justice emphasize the inseparable relationship between marginalized communities and disproportional environmental burdens<sup>20</sup> from climate change<sup>19</sup> and pollution. Environmental empathy requires social workers to not only recognize the suffering of nature, but to build awareness of the ecological and social systems that impact suffering of all members (human and non-human) of the ecosystem.<sup>21</sup> Just as social workers assess their power and privilege when intervening with social justice disparities, social workers must assess how their privilege as a dominant species impacts the larger environmental frame.

**Social work and empathy.** Research shows that increased human empathy of social workers during treatment leads to better communication and better client outcomes.<sup>3</sup> If interventions are meant to target human-environment interactions, then one can assume that a higher empathy with the environment would lead to the same increases in communication between social workers, populations, and environments. While nature communicates differently than humans, intentional listening for specific environmental cues such as biodiversity, water quality, air quality, natural disasters, and human-nature interactions can help to build an environmental awareness. Increased feelings of connection with nature and knowledge of environmental degradation should lead social workers to greater engagement with interventions and practices that promote human-environment connectedness.

**Defining *environment*.** Empathy with nature examines human responses toward features such as plants and animals;<sup>8</sup> however, spatial environments are represented by a spectrum of human and non-human elements.<sup>22</sup> For instance, nature can be observed and interpreted in the deep rainforests of the Amazon or in the urban bustle of New York City. No human experience has been absent from nature because humans are a part of nature<sup>22</sup> and require elements such as water, food and air to survive. Without a more specific definition of what constitutes “nature”, I prefer to use the term *environmental empathy* as an inclusive phrase to describe all interactions of

humans and Earth (biological, geological, and meteorological). Such a change in focus allows social workers to assess elements of nature within the diverse settings in which they practice.

**Empathic risks.** Empathy involves the sharing and understanding of diverse emotional experiences. Lessons about empathy in the social work classroom most often focus on positive experiences of empathy leading to therapeutic rapport.<sup>2</sup> However, many educators raise concern that this lesson fails to prepare students for the routine distress of sharing in adverse client experiences.<sup>2</sup> Any lesson on empathy must include both the positive and negative emotions that are inherent to social work practice, socially and environmentally. While some people build environmental empathy from experiences of enjoyment in nature, others may experience sadness or anger when they become aware of habitat destruction or species decline.<sup>23</sup> As people develop greater environmental empathy, the emotions associated with global climate change and environmental degradation may become overwhelming and lead to burnout.<sup>6,23</sup> In contrast, many people experience feelings of friendliness, playfulness, elation, and affection when personally engaging with natural environments.<sup>24</sup> Social workers must reflect on their own positive environmental experiences if they are to cope with the emotional drain from prolonged sustainability efforts.

### **Application:**

#### **Exercise 1: Self Reflection**

Complete individually as a journal entry and then, if possible, discuss as a group.

1. What part does the natural world play in your daily life?
2. Are plants, animals, land, sky, and waterways important to you? Why/why not? In what way?
3. What relationship should human beings have with the natural world?
4. Have you ever had an experience in the natural world or interaction with an animal that influenced your life?
5. Does spending time in a natural world have benefits for people? What sort?
6. What positive or negative impacts do human beings have on other animals, plants, land, and waterways?
7. How do other living beings experience their relationship with humans?

8. What is the difference between the natural world and the non-natural world?

\*Note - questions were adapted From *Unit 1: Nature and the Self* in *Teaching for EcoJustice* by Rita J. Turner. <sup>25</sup>

### Exercise 2: Mindfulness

- Watch the following video [“Environment Inspiration for Action”](#) <sup>26</sup>
- After watching the video, what emotions do you recognize in yourself? What sparked this emotional response? How can this emotion impact future environmental work?

### Exercise 3: Dialogue: Environmental Scan and Assessment

Complete the following questionnaire and then compare your answers with another.

1. Air: Think of the air that you are breathing.
  - a. Is it ventilated or circulated?
  - b. Is it near any industrial sites, high traffic areas, or other polluters?
  - c. From 1-10 rank its quality. *(Pause and Discuss)*
2. Water: Think of the nearest source of water to you.
  - a. How did it get there?
  - b. Where is its source?
  - c. How easy is it to replenish?
  - d. Is it drinkable?
  - e. From 1-10 rank its quality. *(Pause and Discuss)*
5. Food: Think of the nearest food to you.
  - a. How did it get there?
  - b. Where did it come from?
  - c. Whose labor went into producing it?
  - d. What died to make it?
  - e. Who will likely eat it?
  - f. From 1-10 rank its quality. *(Pause and Discuss)*
6. Soil: Think of the nearest source of “natural” ground cover.
  - a. How did it get there?
  - b. Is it native?
  - c. Who owns it?
  - d. What will it grow?
  - e. From 1-10 rank its quality. *(Pause and Discuss)*
7. Plants: Think of the nearest plant to you.
  - a. How did it get there?

- b. Is it native?
  - c. Who owns it?
  - d. Do you feel an emotional response from it? If so, what?
  - e. From 1-10 rank its health. (*Pause and Discuss*)
8. Animals: Think of the nearest non-human animal to you.
- a. How did it get there?
  - b. Where does it live?
  - c. What does it eat?
  - d. Is it in danger?
  - e. Do you feel an emotional response from it? If so, what? (*Pause and Discuss*)
9. Humans: Think of the nearest human to you.
- a. How might you learn about their environment?
  - b. Compare how you assess humans versus air, water, food, soil, plants, and animals. (*Pause and Discuss*)

#### **Exercise 4: Experiential Immersion (Individual or Group Project)**

**Option #1:** Connect with the future of environmentalism.

Children’s literature serves as a tool to spark dialogue about environmental empathy and to spark the imaginations of future generations.<sup>27</sup> Select one or two children’s books from the [list](#).<sup>28</sup> After reading the story with a child, have a short conversation about 1) the environmental problem, 2) why a character was sad about the environmental problem, and 3) how the character tried to solve the problem. Then answer the following: *What emotions and thoughts did the child have during the reading and discussion? How did you feel during the discussion? How might the activity change future behaviors of you and/or the child?*

**Option #2:** Connect with diverse environmental perspectives.

Personal experiences inform the way that we perceive environments. Imagine an environment where you feel most at home and write down characteristics that make it comfortable. Imagine an environment that would be drastically different (preferably within an accessible distance). Determine an accessible and safe place to experience the new environment. Visit the new environment and perform the assessment from Exercise 3 found above. Following the assessment, discuss with another 1) the emotions you felt while there, 2) comparisons between environmental elements in the new versus old environments, 3) possible changes to either the new or old environment that promote a healthier environment.



**Option #3:** Connect with environmental actions around the world.

Search the internet for environmental action initiatives that address an issue that is personally relevant to you. Think of ways you could replicate the initiative in your local setting. Respond to the website with information about how it served as inspiration and about how the initiative was/will be implemented in your setting. Think creatively of ways the information is presented (videos, pictures, infographics, etc.) Find ways to network with others to keep dialogue going on these issues.

**Summary Notes:**

In social work, environmental empathy represents a concept that can be difficult to teach. However, when students acquire this emotional intelligence early in their education, it can help to transform their future practices toward sustainable action. Transformative learning theory describes one approach for teaching difficult concepts to adult learners.<sup>29</sup> As modeled by the theory, this curriculum assists students through a perspective transformation. The process occurs when students become consciously aware of themselves, revise personal beliefs and assumptions, and form new strategies for behaving in the world. Specific to social work education, transformative strategies of reflection, dialogue, and experience serve as particularly important components for student learning.<sup>30</sup> Social work students develop environmental empathy in this lesson when they critically reflect on their personal assumptions regarding access to clean air, water, shelter, and food. Through the discussion based activities, students explore multiple points of view, critically considering knowledge from ecoliteracy, Indigenous ways of knowing, and spiritual understanding.<sup>31</sup> Finally, social work students become immersed within hands-on practice settings to connect with other people, new environments, and sustainable interventions.

Social work educators can prepare students for the positive and negative feelings associated with environmental empathy by emphasizing particular components of the curriculum. Research has found that specific skills are associated with lower levels of empathetic distress. Practitioners feel less psychological distress from empathy when they reflectively process their emotional reactions, separate their personal identity from that of their clients', and feel control over their own emotional experiences.<sup>2</sup> Extrapolating these concepts to environmental empathy, the activities in this curriculum provide time to increase environmental reflection, differentiate between personal environments and practice environments,

and teach emotional coping strategies through affect recognition and interpersonal discussions. The activities intentionally include mindfulness, experiential learning, and reading fiction because all three are thought to prepare social work students to cope with empathic distress.<sup>2</sup>

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# Reconnecting with the Earth

By Sandra Engstrom

## Author Biography:

*Sandra Engstrom, PhD, is a lecturer of Social Work at the University of Stirling, Scotland. She has practiced in Vanuatu, St. Lucia, the US, Canada and the UK primarily working with youth or those affected by HIV. She has research interests related to international social work and eco-social work. She is currently working on two research projects involving children on the move and unaccompanied minors, as well as developing research links with interdisciplinary colleagues in Colombia, SA. Email: [sandra.engstrom@stir.ac.uk](mailto:sandra.engstrom@stir.ac.uk)*

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Enhance the development of an ecological identity.
2. Explore tools useful with staying connected to the environment.

**Lesson:**

This chapter is about supporting those who are interested in reconnecting with the earth and facilitating that process with others. Perhaps you haven't even realised how disconnected you are from the natural environment until you started reading this workbook, or perhaps you are looking for more tools to add to your already overflowing toolbox of ways to work with others, or perhaps you are somewhere in the middle. Whatever the reason, this chapter will remind you about the importance of staying connected to the earth, how to support others on their journey to realize their connectedness to the environment, and how to promote environmental sustainability.

The primary theme here is highlighting the importance of having a positive and deeply connected relationship with the natural environment. Diminished contact with nature and an ever-present reliance on technology make it clear that it is becoming vitally important, now more than ever, to start intentionally creating opportunities to reconnect with the earth. Humans have an innate and fundamental need for nature and connectivity, this includes a place to be connected with a community, people as well as plants, animals, and the land.<sup>1</sup> Without these connections, we can feel alone and lost. This recognition of our place within the interconnected spheres of the physical environment can anchor us and reignite a way of life that is rooted in a stronger relationship with the earth.

By integrating theory, research and practices from [biophilia](#),<sup>2</sup> mindfulness and ecotherapy (also known as nature based interventions, eco-psychology, land based healing) the reader, along with whomever you are working with in your professional practice, will reflect on what their place is in the world and the interconnectivity that exists. Learning more about the concept of biophilia will help us understand from where this innate need and sense of belonging linked to the natural world stems. Learning more about ecotherapy will provide you with some information and activities that you can use on yourself, as well as with others, to reconnect with the natural environment.

**Biophilia**

First labelled by E.O. Wilson (1993), biophilia is the recognition that there is a fundamental, genetically based human need to affiliate with life or "the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" (p.31).<sup>3</sup> Biophilia is the positive response and attraction to certain aspects

of nature which could aid our survival, but can also be linked towards more modern associations such as why we are likely to be attracted to advertising that incorporates scenes of nature, in other words, broader human fulfilment. The concept can be looked at from a variety of disciplines and therefore help provide numerous insights into the human relationship with nature.<sup>4</sup> Biophilia helps explain why people, although not guaranteed especially for those who have had a negative experience with or in, nature, prefer natural environments to built environments, but also how nature can be linked to stress recovery.<sup>5,6,7</sup> The biophilia hypothesis suggests that peaceful, nurturing elements of nature help us regain calmness, clarity, empathy and hope.

Ulrich has a particular research interest in the restorative qualities of the natural world in response to individuals experiencing stress.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Many studies reveal that people recovering from stress find solace from being involved in outdoor recreation, feel more relaxed and describe feeling at peace when surrounded by water, open natural space and trees.<sup>11,12,13</sup> Spending time in nature has also provided the opportunity for individuals to reflect on nature's interplay which in turn has helped people find more meaning and guidance within their life, of vital significance when thinking about health and wellbeing<sup>13</sup>

What this shows us is that spending time outside can be seen as an integral component to our own health and wellbeing in addition to helping us think more about how we can live a more environmentally and socially sustainable life. That being said, if you or someone that you are working with is having trouble thinking about how the natural environment can help them with their health, adding mindfulness and ecotherapy may be an avenue you want to consider to bridge that gap.

### **Mindfulness**

[Mindfulness](#)<sup>14</sup> is about deliberately paying attention in the present moment without judgment. It is having awareness and acceptance, of one's thoughts, feelings and sensations without dwelling on them or allowing them to take control of the mind.<sup>15,16</sup> To be intentional about connecting with one's own world without avoidance or judgement can lead to insight and more self-awareness or acceptance, which are important outcomes for not only service users, but also for social workers and those training to be in a helping profession.

Linking this with an environmental lens, this awareness can bring a deeper reflection on one's relationship with nature and sense of place in the world if one works on being present within a natural environment. A mindfulness practice can provide space to examine difficult tensions and discomfort around various issues that may arise for an individual about their relationship with the environment such as disconnection, loss, fear or uncertainty. Mindfulness allows individuals to pause and be aware, to enhance reflection in action<sup>16</sup> and allow for deeper exploration of the origin of their thoughts, emotions and discomfort.

### **Ecotherapy**

Ecotherapy can be used as a tool with service users, students or others, and as a tool for our own self-care. Therefore, the activities described within this chapter can be utilised for a variety of purposes and can be adapted for a variety of needs. Ecotherapy is about recognising and being mindful of our deeper connection to nature and about being curious about the human-nature relationship, as well as human-human relationships.<sup>17</sup> It recognises that in order to be happy and healthy, we need to be embedded in our place within the context of human, plant and animal inhabitants. Practicing social work, and reflective work, from an ecotherapy standpoint also encourages us to become more aware of our direct experience in the world and subsequently widens our sense of self.

We often talk about the use of self within social work practice and yet we tend to neglect to get to know this side of our self, the side that is deeply connected to a wider ecological system of natural patterns and characters. Therefore, incorporating ecotherapy into social work practice and teaching, can allow us to see how truly connected we are and the impact of wider environmental systems on micro practice (i.e., practice with individuals and small groups).

### **Application:**

**Instructions:** The following exercises revolve around practical activities and points of discussion that facilitators can use to help participants, and themselves, learn more about their connection to the natural environment. These exercises can happen in groups, in pairs or on an individual level.

### **Exercise 1: Becoming Conscious of Constant Change**

It can be useful for ourselves and others, to reflect how we, and the world, are in a constant state of change. This can be especially useful for people



who are feeling “stuck” in their lives. For yourself, or for the individual(s) you are working with, take some time outside in a natural environment and reflect on the following:

1. Where are shadows at this time of year? Where will they be in a few hours, days, months?
2. Depending on the season during which you are outside, at what stage of growth are the trees/plants? Are they budding or are the leaves falling? What does this say about change and the cycles that living things go through?
3. Notice temperature changes, does it get warmer and cooler as the sun moves in and out from behind the clouds?
4. What animal behaviour do you see? Are birds flying south? Perhaps nesting or can you identify different mating calls?
5. What are your experiences of change? This can be reflected on at the beginning and at the end of the activity to see what the difference may be after spending time noticing change in nature.

Perhaps it will be important for you to go back to the spot you have found over a period of time and work on identifying different changes that you, and your group, notice. The possibilities of noticing changes and cycles in nature are endless.

### **Exercise 2: Web of Life**

**Materials:** Something for people to sit on outside, a copy of the script which can be found in McGeeny, A. (2016). *With Nature in Mind: The Ecotherapy Manual for Mental Health Professionals*.<sup>6</sup>

Ensure you have a copy of the script found in the above book, which is inspired by a workshop of Joanna Macy’s. There is also a similar script in Macy and Young Brown’s *Coming Back to Life*.<sup>18</sup> This will help you facilitate a relaxation and visualisation exercise to support the awareness of where we, as individuals, sit within the interconnected web of life.

A more active way to do this activity would involve a ball of string and a minimum of six people. This would involve an exercise such as is found [here](#).<sup>19</sup> be sure to use animals, insects and fauna that are local to your community. Ensure you add ways that humans impact and are affected by the web of life in this activity. Think about facilitating a discussion around how we need the web of life to survive individually as well as collectively.

### **Exercise 3: Feelings of Safety**

Gather the participants in a circle and discuss the aim of the activity: To reflect on the concept and meaning of safety. Allow individuals 10-15 minutes to walk around outside and look for something they think represents safety to another living thing. This does not have to be a human being, but anything that could be living in that area. They can look at their surroundings, maybe take a picture with their mobile phone if they have one, or perhaps pick something up from the ground (being careful not to disturb the safety of the thing they are observing). Bring the group back together and discuss what they have seen/found. Some reflection questions may be:

1. How do you link your object to what you need to feel safe?
2. How does this relate to how safe you feel in your life right now?
3. How does this relate to what a service user may need to feel safe?  
(If working with professionals)

This discussion may bring up some deep and vulnerable conversations from the participants, so it is vital that you feel prepared to facilitate these discussions and know how to refer people on to further support if necessary.

### **Exercise 4: Getting to Know One Another**

This activity can be done at the beginning of your time together with the group or at any other stage in your group's time together, such as when you are transitioning from one activity to another. Encourage the participants to break off into pairs while outside. Have participants point out or pick up something from the natural world (ensure you let them know not to pick up anything living or destroy any habitats) that resonates with them and have a discussion with their partner. They can get to know each other as they are walking around looking for the object.

### **Exercise 5: Practicing Mindfulness in Nature**

Encourage participants to find a place outside where they will be comfortable for up to 15 minutes or longer depending on the group. (Some people may want something to put on the ground to sit on). Tell people to relax and look around, when something catches their attention, just notice it in as much detail as possible, as if seeing it for the very first time. Ask them to notice what they are feeling when they are being this aware and remember to look all around them and not to get distracted by other thoughts (for tips on mindfulness exercises and scripts you can look [here](#)).<sup>20</sup> The ensuing discussion could revolve around what people noticed about nature, themselves, or both throughout this process. Participants may

create a link between what they see and what they feel. If people are struggling then you may need to let them know they can repeatedly prompt themselves: "I notice..."

**Additional Discussion Prompts:** Here are some other discussion points focused on helping individuals reflect on their connection to nature.

1. What interesting thing did you see outside today?
2. Do you have a favourite memory that is tied to a place or experience outside?
3. Do you have plants or a garden in your home? Why?
4. What feelings come up for you when you think about spending time outside? (these could be positive or negative)

### **Summary Notes:**

In this chapter we discussed the concepts of biophilia and ecotherapy as ways to reconnect with nature either for our own benefit or for the benefit of those that we may be working with in a supportive role. There are many resources to provide further information on different activities you can use to promote connecting with the environment. I suggest reading the following:

- Ecominds: <https://www.mind.org.uk/ecominds><sup>21</sup>
- Ecopsychology weblinks: <https://www.ecopsychology.org.uk/web-links><sup>22</sup>
- Ecotherapy: <http://www.ecotherapy.org.uk/><sup>23</sup>
- Jordan, M and Hinds, J. ed., (2016). *Ecotherapy: Theory, research & practice*. Palgrave: London.<sup>17</sup>
- McGeeny, A. (2016). *With nature in mind: The ecotherapy manual for mental health professionals*. Jessica Kingsley. London.<sup>6</sup>
- Moss, S. (2012). *Natural Childhood*. Natural Trust: Swindon.<sup>24</sup>

### **Resources:**

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23. Ecotherapy: Personal healing and healing for the earth (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ecotherapy.org.uk/page.php?pageid=home>
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# The Mighty Powers of Mud: Ecotherapeutic Practices for Personal and Professional Development

*By Meredith C. F. Powers and Justin Harmon*

## **Authors' Biographies:**

**Meredith C. F. Powers, PhD, MSW**, is an assistant professor and a Sustainability Faculty Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA. Her current research includes the professional socialization of social workers, university-community partnerships for sustainability, climate justice, and issues of climate migration and environmental refugees. She established and administers the growing, online network: 'Green/EcoSocial Work Collaborative Network' for social workers around the world who are committed to ecological justice. Among other engagements, Powers was recently invited to speak at the United Nations on climate justice and sustainability as part of the annual Social Work Day event. Email: [MCFPowers@UNCG.edu](mailto:MCFPowers@UNCG.edu)

**Justin Harmon, PhD**, is an assistant professor in the Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. His two primary research foci are the use of music for life course development and recreation interventions post-diagnosis of cancer. When not in the classroom he is typically found in the forest with his dog or at a concert. Email: [jtharmo3@uncg.edu](mailto:jtharmo3@uncg.edu)

## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand the concepts of ecotherapy, nature therapy, biophilia, eco-grief, and climate anxiety.
2. Explore ecotherapy options and discover how they can be implemented in personal and professional practice.

**Lesson:**

“Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.”

~ John Muir

“Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet  
and the winds long to play with your hair.”

~Khalil Gibran

**The Mighty Powers of Mud** (*Written from Meredith’s Perspective*)

When I first met Michaela Rinkel (my incredible co-editor on this workbook series) at a social work conference in 2015, she impressed me with her presentation. Not only did her research sound fascinating and inspiring, but it also profoundly touched me. In the presentation, she shared a story about mud. Well, it was really about a social work project that helped youth reconnect spiritually to their land and cultural heritage as they worked on a farm in Hawai’i. She showed a photo of a few of these youth and they were thigh deep in thick, luscious mud (I was jealous!). They said this mud literally healed them; and, I believe it to be absolutely true. This is certainly considered a form of [‘ecotherapy’](#)<sup>1</sup> and has been common practice around the world for generations (e.g., the geothermal mud baths in Iceland and Rotorua, New Zealand that are known for their healing qualities in treating arthritis, rheumatism, skin complexion, burns and much more).

For me, ecotherapy often involves mud; be it gardening in my cobalt blue pots full of succulent plants that are hardy and constantly multiplying, allowing me to share them with others; or digging in the mud with my daughter to create a meditation spot in our backyard out of stone and moss; or working with my dad in the garden to grow tomatoes in the hearty North Carolina mud so we can make our favorite meal, a fresh tomato sandwich; or, one of my favorite childhood memories, walking through the muddy, family farmland to the river bottom and picking a watermelon straight off the vine. We would then take it back to share with extended family outside my grandparents’ farmhouse. We would cut it on the very same picnic table where I loved to make mud pies with my brothers and cousins.

I also find immense ecotherapeutic renewal in doing pottery in my garage studio. I don’t do it for any outcome of a finished product (I’m not that good of a potter, anyway). Rather, I just do pottery to be muddy, sloppy wet, and dirty as the clay spins in my hands on the wheel, and the mud slips between my fingers. When I am stressed, I just go out there to get completely muddy.

Recently I have had stress related skin rashes or “stress hives” and I realized that one of my solutions to *not being* covered in stress hives, is *to be* covered in mud on a regular basis. As a dear friend once very simply put it: “Water and dirt, together make mud. I just love mud.” My sentiments exactly.

Figure 1: Meredith doing pottery on the wheel



Another of my earliest and favorite childhood memories also includes mud as clay for pottery. My parents enrolled me in a week-long, summer art camp before Kindergarten. My favorite part of the whole camp was when we learned pottery. It was my first experience with it. I remember how much I loved cutting a piece of clay off the block with the wire cutter and how the wire glided through the mud. Some 30 years later, I still have my little pinch pot and plaque I made in that art class, and cutting the clay off the block is still just as fun and amazing to me. And, now I also enjoy my daughter and friends and neighbors who come to my studio to learn pottery with me.

Finally, ecotherapy, for me, includes mountain biking or running forest trails, especially after a rain when the paths are gloriously messy with mud splattering all over me as I frolic in the woods. This is why I was immediately intrigued when I met my co-author of this chapter, Justin Harmon, as he runs an ecotherapeutic program in our community called [“Celebrate the Trail to Recovery”](#).<sup>2</sup> In this program, Justin leads weekly hikes on local forest trails for people recovering from cancer. His research validates the restorative properties of nature and the relationships built on the physical and



metaphorical ‘trail to recovery.’ I have seen this program firsthand as I assisted as a co-leader on one of the hikes. It not only inspired and challenged me by engaging with nature physically and spiritually, but I also benefited as I connected with the other participants, some of whom shared their powerful stories of struggles and triumphs as we hiked.

I met Justin when I began my job teaching at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. We both began our roles as assistant professors and Sustainability Faculty Fellows at the same time, he in the Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation, and I in the Department of Social Work. It was through my work teaching a course on Environmental Justice and my ongoing conversations with Justin that I began to learn more about the depth and breadth of ecotherapy for both personal and professional development. Justin and I have since begun a new ecotherapeutic project together: a community-engaged collaboration with other colleagues and students at our university, staff from the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, local civic group volunteers, and community members. This project is called, “Parks for All People” and its aim is to enhance local parks for the benefit of the entire ecosystem, especially by making them more accessible for and more utilized by older adults for ecotherapeutic purposes.

### **Ecotherapy**

Ecotherapy is based on a concept of biophilia, a term first used by E. O. Wilson, a Harvard Zoologist, to describe "the innate human urge to affiliate with other forms of life" (p. 85)<sup>3</sup>. Biophilia is about a persistent, underlying sense of the relationships between humans and nature, whether we are mindful of and aware of the connections or not. It is about a sense of belonging, not just with the physical place (including water, land, wind, sun), but also in a spiritual belonging and relationship to a place.<sup>4,5,6</sup> And, as humans are part of nature (not outside of it or superior to it), then, what harms or nourishes nature also harms or nourishes humans. The things that harm nature (including climate change) are many times the direct result of political and social strife.<sup>7,8</sup> Indigenous biophilia moves the biophilia framework further, as it explores and emphasizes additional interwoven dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression, and seeks to resist and address injustices related to human relationships with nature/place and aspects of culture.<sup>9</sup>

Because of these connections, [eco-grief](#)<sup>10</sup> and [climate anxiety](#)<sup>11</sup> are also real mental health concerns as we witness the harm and destruction of people and Mother Earth. For example, Hurricane Maria which recently (September

2017) devastated Puerto Rico caused some people to experience eco-grief as they lost many aspects of their connection to place. One local woman noted she was paralyzed with eco-grief, stating, “I don’t want to go out there, because out there no longer exists. All the green is gone.” Additionally, when we begin learning more about the climate crisis and related injustices, we may begin to experience eco-grief and climate anxiety. For example, one student called in tears, to ask for an extension when writing a term paper, as the topic of environmental injustices she was researching in the fashion industry created such anger, sadness, and paralysis. She was granted the extension, and told to focus on the people working on the solutions, rather than on the problems. She was also reminded to care for herself through ecotherapy practices, and to acknowledge that eco-grief and climate anxiety are very real risks and must be attended to just like other mental health issues.

The “Celebrate the Trail to Recovery” program is based on the easily accessible ecotherapy resource by Williams, *The Nature Fix*, in which she explored the multiple health and wellbeing benefits of being in nature, starting her treatise with the Eastern concept of *shinrin yoku*.<sup>12</sup> This concept literally translates to ‘forest bathing,’ but when we peel back the layers of its ethos, it is a holistic approach to becoming both immersed in and inviting of the natural environment into our daily lives; to participate in *shinrin yoku*, one must attend to the five senses in their forays into the natural world. For instance, we could enjoy the sight and the sound of gurgling mud and even the feel of mud if we choose to do pottery, or walk barefoot on a muddy trail, or build [cob houses](#)<sup>13</sup>, mixing the mud, sand, and straw with our feet. And, we can even appreciate the unique, earthy smells of mud, however, few of us would want to taste it – all those childhood mud pies we made aside. But, never fear, *shinrin yoku* does not imply that you need to indulge in each and every facet of experiencing nature with your senses, such as tasting mud, perhaps instead you could taste the tomato that grew from the nutrient rich mud. *Shinrin yoku* also asks us to be open to all nature and to protect it; not simply because as humans we are its primary foe, but because *it* can be our primary health elixir. And, as soon as we recognize and accept that our ability to heal and grow is inextricably connected to the health and well-being of nature, then we may become more apt to respect it and promote our mutual well-being.

Concepts like ecotherapy or nature therapy indicate the medically proven effects of exposure to natural environments.<sup>14</sup> Ecotherapy can also include bringing elements of nature inside if someone is limited in their ability to go

outdoors into nature. This may include the presence of plants or rocks, or even photos or paintings of nature images. Ecopsychology advances the knowledge that there are psychological solutions to ecological problems.<sup>15</sup> These concepts, bridged together, give us the symbiotic construct of ecotherapy, an idea that can be traced back to Frederick Law Olmstead in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Ecotherapeutic philosophies promote the therapeutic components of natural landscapes to increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones.<sup>17</sup> It is in these therapeutic landscapes where we find restoration as it fosters a sense of otherworldliness and allows for a reflection of the innate naturalness of our humanity and our place in the world – as caretakers of the earth.<sup>16</sup>

We have only been an industrialized society for barely a blip on the radar of time immemorial. Because of this reality, humans have ingrained in their being the ability to adapt to and thrive in natural environments, thus making the potential for finding relaxation, release, and catharsis easily accessible when we embrace it.<sup>18</sup> In our hyper-mediated, sonic-paced, globalized society, we are continually at risk of “attentional fatigue,” and thus in need of something to help us restore from it; the best route to doing so is through the natural environment.<sup>19</sup> In modern times, with this expedited life pace, we are often looking for the easiest and quickest way to feed our ever-fleeting desires. We can be over-indulgent, far too easily amused, and apathetic in our appreciation for the possibility of finding true wonder in the natural world as we immerse ourselves so deeply in our “wired worlds;” but that does not always have to be the case. As Song et al. remind us, we can recharge just as easily and as quickly as our cell phones, but our “batteries” will last much longer when we do so outside.<sup>14</sup> As the old Zen saying goes, “you should sit in nature for twenty minutes every day - unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour.”

## **Conclusion**

As we return to our thoughts on the “mighty powers of mud,” and revisit Williams’ tome on embracing the happiness and health-inviting aspects of life spent in nature, we note that she reminds us that in the East, “the body and soil” are viewed as one.<sup>12</sup> If we, as unique, spiritual beings, start to realize and accept that we have a duty to take care of ourselves along the way, then that must also extend to the earth that carries us, feeds us, nurtures us, and provides the grounds for our recreation and reinvigoration. We are only as healthy – and happy – as that which sustains us, so we need to pay more attention to and offer more care of Mother Earth.

We are also reminded that through engaging our five senses in the enjoyment of mud, we can see the stability – and fragility – of its role in our lives. Mud is the mixture of earth and water, the latter being the life force for all creatures. So, in mud we see the transformation of the desolate or desert-like foundation of our ecosystem into the animated vehicle of our very life force. As water soaks into dry, hostile ground it becomes receptive, activating and replenishing nutrients for fertility in the muddy soil.

However, we also acknowledge that sometimes mud is not so therapeutic. In reality, mud can be a real problem, as in the rainy season when children have to walk to latrines from their school and are covered in mud as they return to their classrooms. Mud can also very much complicate life for refugees who are already enduring the hardships of living in transient camps. And mud can be tragically devastating when the dirt becomes so saturated with rain waters that landslides occur, sometimes wiping out entire communities. Also, we often speak of the problem of mud metaphorically, as in “muddying the waters” or “mucking up the works.” This often applies to the complex challenges we face in our work locally and globally as we seek to gain everyone’s participation in creating more sustainable communities and environments.

Despite these instances, maybe mud *is* the answer, in a sense. Maybe we all need to reconnect to the “mighty powers of mud” in ways that heal us and change our very being. If we did this, then we could address the root of the problems of climate change and ecosystem collapse. As Gus Speth, co-founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council and former Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, once said in an interview: “the top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy...and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we as scientists don’t know how to do that.”<sup>21</sup> But, it is wonderful that we social workers *do* know to create this transformation – by embracing and promoting ecotherapeutic practices, both personally and professionally.

“And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.”

~ John Muir

## **Application:**

### **Exercise 1: Slowing Down to Embrace Ecotherapy**

Stress in life does not usually come upon us all at once, rather it builds up over time. We should offer ourselves the same amount of time to “unwind” from this stress and engage in ecotherapeutic practices. Contemplate the old Zen saying: “you should sit in nature for twenty minutes every day - unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour.”

1. Make a two-month plan to engage in at least one hour of ecotherapy per week as a form of self-care. This may consist of activities done by engaging with nature in some therapeutic way while reading, writing, exercising, listening to music, prayer/meditation, enjoying a pet, gardening, sitting indoors on a rainy day and watching out the window, lying in bed while holding and contemplating a special seashell or rock, etc. You may do the same activity every week or change them. The goal of this exercise is to eventually establish a lifelong habit of self-care and explore the benefits of eco-therapy.
2. Keep a journal:
  - after each time you practice ecotherapy. Reflect about the ecotherapy activity(ies) you engaged in. Note what struggles you encountered, how it benefited you, and how such practices may be a benefit to your service consumers/communities with which you work professionally.
  - Pick at least one ecotherapeutic activity in nature and mindfully reflect on how you can engage all five of your senses.

### **Exercise 2: Engaging with Others in Nature**

Environmental justice intersects with social justice in myriad ways. One example is the lack of access to healthy, natural spaces. Oftentimes this is due to proximity, transportation, mobility issues, or other barriers, such as health or cultural capital. Think of someone who may have limited access to nature and invite them to go with you to enjoy ecotherapy together (you can help arrange a solution to a barrier they face such as offering a ride, or ensuring their safety as they navigate new terrain). Introduce them to what is meaningful to you about being in nature. Ask them about their personal histories outdoors, their barriers to being outdoors, and what their ideal day in nature would look like. After this shared outing, write a journal reflection about what you learned from the other person's experience outdoors. What

are ways you can continue to make ecotherapy activities more accessible for others who may not have ready access to the restorative properties of nature?

### **Exercise 3: Addressing Eco-grief and Climate Anxiety through Ecotherapy**

Learning about the climate crisis, environmental justice, and related issues can be taxing on one's mental health and possibly create eco-grief and/or climate anxiety.

1. Watch this video on Youtube: "[Eco-Grief and Ecofeminism](#)"<sup>10</sup> and read this article: "[Climate Anxiety Doesn't Have to Ruin Your Life. Here's How to Manage it.](#)"<sup>11</sup>
2. Reflect on your own feelings of eco-grief and climate anxiety. Think of actions you can do to promote eco-healing and address your eco-grief and climate anxiety. Discuss these with a partner or a group. (You may also want to read: *Ecological and Social Healing: Multicultural Women's Voices*).<sup>21</sup>
3. In the conclusion of the lesson above we offer a few problems with mud (e.g., landslides, mud in refugee camps or for school children). Consider these or other environmental problems you know about. What could you do as a social worker to help address these physically? What could you do to help address eco-grief and climate anxiety that people experience connected to these issues?

### **Exercise 4: Turn Your Frustration into Passion and Do Something About It!**

When you go outside, sometimes you get dirty. Sometimes you also get mad about how people treat the environment, and rightfully so! [Pogo Possum](#)<sup>22</sup> said it best, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Spend an hour picking up trash at your local park, keeping a written record of everything you pick up (e.g., beer can, candy wrapper, discarded toy, etc.). Then, once you're fully frustrated with how our fellow humans treat the earth, think of ways to address this problem. For example:

- Work with community leaders to ensure proper waste disposal options exist (e.g., trash and recycling bins at trail heads).
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, chronicling what you picked up and remind people of their civic responsibility to respect nature - and one another.

- Make mindful choices when purchasing items: consider the packaging, how you will need to dispose of it? As one of our favorite bumper stickers reads, “Throw it away? There is no *away*.”
- Discuss these issues with family, friends and colleagues. Consider how you can change your consumption and waste patterns in your home and at work.

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# Appendices

NOTE: We are tremendously grateful for the authors who took their time and effort to provide translated versions of their chapters to include in this workbook.

Translated versions of chapters were not reviewed by co-editors due to language limitations, but were affirmed by contributing author(s) that the content is as close to the original English version as possible.

# Abogando por la justicia social y ambiental y los derechos humanos: escuchando las voces indígenas

Por *Michelle Martin* y *Pedro Quiroga Menéndez*

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### **Objetivos de Aprendizaje:**

1. Examinar las experiencias únicas de las Naciones Lakota y Dakota, que viven en la reserva Standing Rock Sioux en los Estados Unidos, y de los pueblos indígenas Aymaras de Chile, en el contexto de sus tradiciones orales, el conocimiento cultural y la sabiduría basada en identidad y su cosmovisión.
2. Explorar varios factores estructurales que generan estrés y que se oponen o fragmentan los medios de vida tradicionales de los indígenas, a saber, la invasión y la pérdida de tierras, la remoción forzada, la difusión y asimilación cultural, así como también, la degradación ambiental.
3. Identificar las formas en que los trabajadores sociales pueden abogar por los derechos de los pueblos indígenas en distintos niveles de trabajo, considerando las experiencias de las Naciones Lakota y Dakota en los Estados Unidos y los pueblos Aymaras de Chile.

**Palabras Clave:** Difusión indígena, cultural, justicia ambiental, incidencia política

**Instrucciones:** A continuación, lea cada caso de estudio, comparando cómo las poblaciones indígenas han sido tratadas y consideradas de modo local y global, y luego responda las preguntas solicitadas.

### **Actividad**

#### **Estudio de caso 1: La nación Lakota y Dakota de la reserva india Sioux de Standing Rock**

La reserva india Standing Rock Sioux es una tribu indígena reconocida a nivel federal, ubicada en Dakota del Norte y Dakota del Sur. La gente de Standing Rock son miembros de las naciones Lakota y Dakota, a menudo llamadas Sioux. El nombre correcto para los Sioux es Oceti Sakowin, que se traduce en el Siete Consejo de Incendios, que refleja las siete tribus originales de la nación (Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Teton, Wahpekute, Wahpeton, Yankton y Yanktonai Sioux) (Feraca y Howard, 1963). El nombre "Sioux" se derivó del corte intencionado de la palabra Nadowessioux (usada para describir a la gente de Lakota y Dakota) por los franceses. Sioux realmente significa "serpiente" o "diablo", por lo que muchos nativos americanos perciben la palabra sioux de modo peyorativo.

La Reserva Indígena Standing Rock, originalmente llamada Great Sioux Reservation, fue establecida el 29 de abril de 1868 a través del Tratado de

Fort Laramie entre el gobierno de los Estados Unidos y la gente de las Naciones Lakota, Dakota y Arapahoe. El Tratado estableció los límites geográficos de la reserva, también articuló los parámetros para los derechos de caza nativos y también estipuló que no se podía tomar tierra de reserva de los "indios" sin el acuerdo de las tres cuartas partes de los hombres adultos de la tribu (Fenelon, 2006). El objetivo del Tratado era garantizar la civilización de los pueblos originarios a través de varias medidas de aculturación, como proporcionar incentivos financieros para cultivar terrenos agrícolas individuales y educar a todos los niños nativos en internados en inglés (Tsosie, 2007).

### **Tradiciones culturales de la gente de Lakota y Dakota**

Los Lakota y Dakota tradicionalmente practicaban un estilo de vida nómada centrado en la caza de búfalos, que proporcionaba comida, ropa y refugio. La gente de Lakota y Dakota ven el mundo de manera integral, lo que significa que creen que todo en el mundo está relacionado. Este concepto de interconexión es el núcleo de sus creencias espirituales y prácticas culturales, y se basa en la creencia de que todo lo que se mueve, tiene un espíritu y, por lo tanto, está relacionado. Los sioux se acercan al mundo, y su lugar en él, de manera holística también. Cómo creen que todo está interrelacionado, muestran deferencia y respeto por todas las cosas: las personas, los animales y el medio ambiente (Walker, 1980).

Las prácticas culturales y religiosas de la gente de Lakota y Dakota se basan en un compromiso con la cooperación de la comunidad, basado en su entorno físico. Tradicionalmente, las decisiones se tomaban por consenso (versus las reglas de la mayoría) con el objetivo de beneficiar a la familia y al grupo completo (Rice, 1998). Por ejemplo, como pastores de búfalos nómadas, la propiedad de la tierra era un concepto extraño, y el respeto por la comunidad y el territorio estaba entrelazado en prácticas culturales y espirituales que fomentaban la propiedad compartida y la cooperación en todos los niveles de funcionamiento social (Tsosie, 2007).

### **Expulsión Forzada y Violaciones del Tratado: El Desglose de una Forma de Vida**

La gente de Lakota y Dakota (junto con todas las poblaciones indígenas en los Estados Unidos) han sido víctimas de varias violaciones de derechos humanos desde su primera exposición al hombre blanco. Un plan sistemático para aniquilar a las poblaciones indígenas fue facilitado primero por los colonizadores europeos, y seguido por el gobierno de los Estados

Unidos después de la independencia (Tsosie, 2007). El gobierno de EE. UU. ha celebrado más de 600 tratados con naciones nativas soberanas entre 1778 y 1871, que definieron la relación entre el gobierno federal y las poblaciones nativas. Hasta la fecha, los 600 tratados han sido, de alguna manera, infringidos por los Estados Unidos (Spirling, 2012; Wiessner, 1994). En lugar de negociar los tratados de manera justa, el gobierno de EE. UU. a menudo negoció con personas nativas mediante el uso de tácticas coercitivas para garantizar acuerdos que satisficieran las necesidades del país, como la necesidad de expansión occidental y acceso a minerales en tierras ancestrales (Britten, 2016).

La política de Estados Unidos hacia las poblaciones nativas a fines del siglo XIX cambió de una expulsión forzada a una de asimilación forzada basada en la creencia de que la única forma de que los indios coexistieron con los blancos era convertirse en civilizados y cristianizados (Deloria, 2003; Fenelon, 2014; Lindenfeld, 2007). Entre los años 1850 y finales de 1880, se hicieron varios tratados que prohibían la práctica de ceremonias tradicionales y culturales y el fin de la agricultura comunal, a cambio de sustento y protección (prometida) de los colonos blancos. Básicamente, la creencia predominante era que la única forma de salvar a los indios era obligarlos a abandonar su cultura y sus tierras ancestrales.

### **Degradación Ambiental**

Se produjo un cambio en la política india de los Estados Unidos con la aprobación de la Ley de Reorganización India de 1934, que fue un intento de revertir las políticas de asimilación pasadas, centrándose en cambio en el fortalecimiento de las prácticas culturales y espirituales tradicionales de las tribus nativas (Deloria, 1992, 2003; 1975). Y sin embargo, a pesar del cambio positivo en la política india de EE. UU., hay varios ejemplos de violaciones posteriores a los tratados que tuvieron un impacto devastador en la vida cultural y familiar y, en algunos casos, la degradación ambiental irreversible de las tierras nativas. Los ejemplos más recientes de desprecio del gobierno federal por la protección ambiental de las tierras nativas son Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), que transporta aproximadamente 500,000 galones de petróleo crudo por día a través de las Dakotas a Illinois, y el oleoducto Keystone XL, que transportará petróleo crudo de Canadá a Texas, a través de Dakota del Sur (a pocas millas de la tierra de Sioux).

El oleoducto DAPL corre bajo el embalse Lake Oahe del río Missouri, que se encuentra a media milla río arriba de la reserva Standing Rock Sioux y

proporciona el agua potable de la tribu. DAPL también cruza tierras tribales sagradas de importancia cultural y religiosa (Indian Country Today, 2016). Los miembros tribales y activistas medioambientales participaron en una feroz batalla para detener la construcción del oleoducto DAPL (jugado en las redes sociales), levantando preocupaciones sobre las fugas de petróleo y la posible contaminación del agua, así como el impacto ambiental general del oleoducto en tierras nativas.

El oleoducto se planeó originalmente para funcionar al norte de Bismarck, pero se redirigió al país nativo debido a la fuerte oposición de la comunidad local no nativa preocupada por la posible contaminación del agua. La decisión de la compañía de redirigir el oleoducto a tierras nativas provocó acusaciones de racismo ambiental contra el desarrollador de DAPL, Energy Transfer Partners (Proyecto de oleoducto Dakota Access, 2014; Thorbecke, 2016). David Archambault, II, entonces presidente tribal de Standing Rock Sioux Reservation declaró: "nuestros pueblos indígenas nos han estado advirtiendo durante 500 años que la destrucción de la Madre Tierra va a regresar y nos va a hacer daño. Ahora nuestras voces son cada vez más fuertes "(Cullen y Muñoz, 2016).

El gobierno de Obama ordenó el cese de la construcción del oleoducto DAPL en espera de una mayor investigación sobre su impacto ambiental en tierras tribales (Departamento de Justicia, 2016), pero esta decisión se revirtió bajo el presidente Trump, y la construcción de ambos oleoductos se reanudó en marzo de 2017 (Casa Blanca, 2017). En octubre de 2017, un juez dictaminó que la concesión de permisos de construcción no consideró los efectos de un posible derrame de petróleo sobre los derechos de pesca y caza o cuestiones de justicia ambiental, pero el tribunal no ordenó el cese de las operaciones de bombeo (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe v Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos, 2017). El 4 de abril de 2017, DAPL filtró 84 galones de petróleo crudo, y el 17 de noviembre de 2017, el oleoducto Keystone filtró 210,000 galones de petróleo crudo (Departamento de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de Dakota del Sur, 2017). El petróleo no parece haber afectado a la tribu Standing Rock Sioux, pero la fuga de Keystone XL fue grave, afectando a un sistema de agua rural, y el impacto ambiental total sigue siendo desconocido.

## **Caso de Estudio 2: Los Pueblos Aymaras de Chile :**

### **La Primera Cultura Globalizada en los Andes**

El pueblo Aymara es el corazón del "mundo andino chileno", una región cultural ubicada en la región de Tarapacá en el norte de Chile (Chipana, 1985; González, 2016; González, Gundermann, e Hidalgo, 2014; Murra, 1975; Sanhueza; 2004). Se cree que los Aymaras se originaron como un pueblo hace aproximadamente 800 años, pero se remonta al menos a la era Inca del siglo XV, y fue durante la ocupación española en el siglo XVI cuando se les dio el nombre de Aymara (Murra, 1975). Actualmente, hay aproximadamente 40,000 viviendo en el norte de Chile, en las montañas de los Andes, estimando que pueden ser el doble. Aproximadamente dos tercios de los Aymaras viven en áreas urbanas, como Arica, Iquique y Calama, y el resto vive en sus tierras altas tradicionales a altitudes muy elevadas (González, 2017).

La supervivencia de los Aymaras a lo largo de los siglos se atribuye en parte a su capacidad para negociar acuerdos comerciales con grupos externos (que datan de épocas antiguas), incluido el comercio de ganado (por ejemplo, camélidos, alpacas) y productos agrícolas, como quinua y ajo (Murra, 1975; Sanhueza, 2008). Los Aymaras también han sido relativamente exitosos en adaptarse a la colonización, lo que se refleja en su capacidad para negociar eficazmente con las autoridades: los imperialistas incas, el reino español (durante la era de la colonización) y más recientemente con la república chilena hasta nuestros días con la influencia del proceso de globalización y la tercera modernidad (Beck, 2009).

### **El Mundo Simbólico en la Región Aymara: ¿Qué Pasa con el Agua?**

La visión de mundo Aymara (más comúnmente conocida como cosmovisión) refleja su fuerte relación con el medio ambiente, pues lo perciben como el sustento de la vida y su sistema de sobrevivencia (Cobb, 1989). Por lo anterior, la mayoría de las tradiciones culturales Aymaras se centran en su relación con la naturaleza, y gran parte del folklore Aymara se centra en los elementos ambientales y sus territorios. El enfoque en la naturaleza, incluida la tierra y el agua, se refleja en sus canciones y bailes tradicionales (Cobb, 1989). Los Aymaras conceptualizan el ambiente de modo vertical, con tres niveles: el Alajpacha (el sol), el Akapacha (la Tierra) y el Manqhapacha (agua). El agua es considerada la fuente de vida simbólica y real en la cultura aymara, y se considera primordial entre los tres elementos naturales clave del Akapacha (tierra o mundo) aymara: el Malkus, el Pachmama y el Amaru (González, 2004).

El *Mallkus*, (que se traduce vagamente como "líder"), se refiere a las colinas donde residen los espíritus de los antepasados Aymaras, los Achachilas. Estos últimos son espíritus guardianes de los antepasados y protectores del pueblo Aymara y su comunidad. La *Pachamama*, ('Diosa de la Tierra' o Madre Tierra), es considerada por los Aymaras como la madre del tiempo y el espacio, una deidad y también el dador natural de la vida. Pachamama proporciona vida a la tierra, el suelo, las colinas, las piedras y todo el cosmos. El *Amaru*, que es una criatura mítica concebida como una serpiente o serpiente, permite a la Pachamama fertilizar el suelo y generar fruta y otros alimentos. El agua (uma) une estos tres elementos para crear la cosmovisión aymara, Mallkus entrega el agua, la Pachamama contiene agua, y Amaru distribuye el agua, proporcionando los recursos necesarios para apoyar la economía agrícola Aymara y mantener la vida (González, 2004). La creencia Aymara en el equilibrio de estos diversos elementos, refuerza su creencia cultural en la importancia de proteger la naturaleza y su medio ambiente.

### **Derechos Indígenas en Chile: Para Ellos Pero Sin Ellos**

A pesar de las diversas fortalezas del pueblo Aymara para negociar con las fuerzas colonizadoras o culturas dominantes (Incas, Españoles y Chilenos), a menudo ocurría en medio de una opresión significativa, que a veces incluía la esclavitud y otras violaciones significativas de los derechos humanos (Du Bois, 1972; Gilroy, 1993). Más recientemente, los pueblos indígenas de Chile, incluidos los Aymaras, han experimentado los efectos devastadores del capitalismo neoliberal: la aplicación de la teoría del mercado a la gobernanza, incluida la privatización de los servicios públicos (Harvey, 2009; Larraín, 2000). Tales políticas han llevado a la pérdida de modos culturales y la degradación del medio ambiente, incluida la pérdida de tierras de su pertenencia ancestral. Las políticas postcoloniales de Chile establecidas por los gobiernos de Augusto Pinochet (1970-1990) de "una sola cultura" se oponían a la multiculturalidad y daban como resultado la pérdida de la cultura indígena, la discriminación manifiesta, el aumento de la pobreza, la marginación de los procesos políticos y la pérdida de derechos de los Aymaras. En los últimos años, los Aymaras también han experimentado la despoblación, ya que los miembros más jóvenes de la comunidad han migrado de las tierras altas a los centros urbanos, en busca de mejores oportunidades (Huencho, 2012).

En la década de 1990, el gobierno chileno intentó mitigar estos efectos negativos reconociendo formalmente los derechos de los pueblos indígenas



y definiendo a Chile como un estado multicultural. En 1993, el gobierno chileno estableció el Comité Especial de Pueblos Indígenas como la estructura legal fundamental para los derechos indígenas (Huencho, 2014). La creación de este comité fue en respuesta a la presión internacional mediante tratados de la ONU: la Convención de las Naciones Unidas para pueblos indígenas y tribales, también conocida como Convenio de la OIT núm. 169 (OIT, 1989) y la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas (Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, 2007). Ambos tratados reconocen la igualdad de derechos humanos y las libertades fundamentales para todos los pueblos indígenas, sin ningún tipo de discriminación, y los derechos colectivos como pueblos, incluidos los derechos sobre las tierras.

A pesar de estos esfuerzos, los pueblos indígenas, incluidos los Aymaras, no estuvieron de acuerdo con la creación de las leyes, las políticas y los programas chilenos debido al enfoque jerárquico en la definición y su exclusión del proceso. Al respecto, esta respuesta de política y leyes en Chile representó enfoques occidentales de la preservación indígena que no necesariamente promovían una coexistencia armoniosa, de relación horizontal, no conflictiva y no jerárquica (Huencho, 2014; Rodríguez, Boatcă, & Costa, 2016; Žizek, 1997).

Y, sin embargo, ha habido indicios de que el estado chileno y sus poderes (ejecutivo, legislativo y judicial) han mantenido un compromiso con sus comunidades indígenas, particularmente con respecto a sus derechos a las tierras ancestrales y los derechos de agua. Por ejemplo, en 2006, las comunidades Aymaras de atacama presentaron una demanda contra la empresa Agua Mineral Chusmiza SAIC por embotellar y vender agua obtenida de las tierras ancestrales de Aymaras y Comunidades de Atacama. Ambas comunidades indígenas afirmaron que la compañía de agua les estaba privando de sus tierras ancestrales y de la fuente de agua que les brindaban el Convenio No. 169 de la OIT (OIT, 1989) y la Ley Indígena de Chile (Ley de Pueblos Indígenas, 1993).

La compañía argumentó que era propietaria de la tierra, por lo que las comunidades indígenas no tenían derecho legal al agua. El tribunal en primera instancia falló a favor de las comunidades indígenas en función de su uso ancestral de la fuente de agua en cuestión. La compañía apeló la decisión en 2008, y en 2009 la Corte Suprema falló en apoyo de la decisión del tribunal de primera instancia y, en favor, de las comunidades indígenas.

La decisión del tribunal se basó en el uso histórico de la tierra y el agua de las comunidades indígenas, que según el Convenio 169 de la OIT (ratificado por Chile en 2008) y la Ley Indígena de Chile (Ley de Pueblos Indígenas de 1993), anuló la propiedad de la tierra de una empresa, defendiendo así los derechos de agua ancestrales de las comunidades indígenas Chilenas.

### **Compromiso de la Obra Social con la Justicia Social y la Igualdad Social**

Los trabajadores sociales son únicos profesionales de apoyo y ayuda social, que tienen la responsabilidad adicional de abogar por la justicia social y los derechos humanos en un nivel global y macro, particularmente en nombre de las poblaciones más vulnerables. Además, dado que la profesión del trabajo social opera tanto a nivel comunitario como global, los trabajadores sociales deben desarrollar un nivel de competencia en la dinámica global para poder comprender mejor los patrones históricos de opresión y discriminación, y enfrentarlos de manera apropiada y efectiva. Por ejemplo, según la Declaración de principios éticos de la Federación Internacional de Trabajo Social (FITS), los trabajadores sociales tienen el deber de desafiar "políticas y prácticas injustas" (4.2.4), impactando a las poblaciones marginadas debido a una gama de características, incluida la piel color y estado de nacionalidad (4.2.1) (IFSW, 2012). Además, la FITS reconoce el compromiso de la profesión del trabajo social con las normas mundiales de derechos humanos que se reflejan en el sistema de tratados de las Naciones Unidas. De especial relevancia para este capítulo es el Convenio N° 169 de la OIT (OIT, 1989), que establece (en parte) que "[l]os gobiernos tomarán medidas, en cooperación con los pueblos interesados, para proteger y preservar el medio ambiente de los territorios que habitan "(Artículo 7), y" ... los gobiernos respetarán la especial importancia para las culturas y valores espirituales de los pueblos interesados de su relación con las tierras o territorios, o ambos según corresponda, que ocupen o usen de otro modo , y en particular los aspectos colectivos de esta relación "(Artículo 13) (OIT, 1989).

La defensa de la justicia social en favor de las poblaciones oprimidas tiene que ver con las relaciones de poder, la participación igual en la sociedad entre todos los miembros, los derechos personales inherentes al ser humano (es decir, los derechos humanos) y luchar por una sociedad justa y decente (Martin, 2015). La defensa de la justicia social en el contexto de la práctica del trabajo social se basa en marcos teóricos fundamentales para la profesión (Dalrymple & Boylan, 2013; Rock, 2015), como el enfoque de sistemas ecológicos donde los individuos y sus situaciones se evalúan en el

contexto ambiental (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, Feinstein, Driving-Hawk, y Baartman, 2009), y la perspectiva basada en las fortalezas, que busca identificar las fortalezas en los individuos y las comunidades, en lugar de enfocarse en los déficits (Saleebey, 2012).

Es importante que los trabajadores sociales que participan en la comunidad y el trabajo de sostenibilidad ambiental con poblaciones indígenas comprendan la historia única de violaciones de derechos humanos de la población, incluida la gama de factores marginales utilizados para racionalizar la opresión por parte de las fuerzas colonizadoras, particularmente aquellos integrados en sistemas sociales y políticos (tales como los códigos legislativos) a menudo se utilizan para justificar la confiscación ilegal de tierras indígenas. (Miller y Garran, 2017). En lugar de acercarse a las poblaciones indígenas desde una perspectiva privilegiada, los trabajadores sociales pueden adoptar un enfoque intercultural que reconozca las diferencias de privilegios e injusticias históricas entre la cultura dominante y los pueblos indígenas (Miller & Garran, 2017). Este enfoque implica generar espacios deliberados de comunicación y diálogo igualitario, que supongan un reflejo crítico de una gama de formas culturales, permaneciendo abiertas al cambio, mientras valoran e incorporan el conocimiento y las posiciones del "otro", en un proceso deconstructivo y transformador (Stefoni y Stang, 2016).

Una forma de lograr este enfoque es evitar el peligro de adoptar "una sola historia-relato" de las poblaciones indígenas con las que trabajamos, reconociendo las historias ricas, variadas e inherentemente valiosas de las poblaciones indígenas. Finalmente, la promoción efectiva y el trabajo comunitario con poblaciones indígenas valoran el conocimiento local sobre los enfoques occidentalizados. Por lo tanto, los trabajadores sociales deben tomarse el tiempo para escuchar verdaderamente las voces de aquellos pueblos indígenas con quienes trabajan, y no imponer un conocimiento descendente y jerárquico, que favorezca la cultura y los valores de los poderes colonizadores (Nhapi & Mathende, 2017).

**Solicitud:**

**Instrucciones:** Responda las preguntas reflexivas, en relación con los estudios de caso de modo individual o en grupos.

**Ejercicio 1:**

El uso del enfoque de sistemas ecológicos y la perspectiva basada en las fortalezas describen las poblaciones identificadas en cada estudio de caso.

Por ejemplo, ¿qué factores ambientales y sociales pueden estar afectando a la gente de Lakota / Dakota de Standing Rock y a los Aymaras de Chile? ¿Qué fortalezas ha demostrado cada población y qué otras características, por el contrario, se podrían enmarcar como déficits?

**Ejercicio 2:**

Identificar las principales violaciones históricas y actuales de los derechos humanos experimentadas por cada una de las poblaciones exploradas en los estudios de casos. Incluya una descripción de cómo las violaciones de los derechos humanos han afectado las tierras territoriales de cada comunidad y su forma de vida. Compare y contraste el impacto en cada población respectiva, incluyendo cómo los gobiernos dominantes en cada país han respondido a los derechos de tierra y agua de las respectivas poblaciones indígenas.

**Ejercicio 3:**

Describa al menos tres factores marginales que han contribuido a las violaciones de los derechos humanos, la degradación ambiental y la pérdida de una forma de vida (por ejemplo, cultural, religiosa, familiar) entre cada una de las poblaciones exploradas en los estudios de casos.

**Ejercicio 4:**

Mire TedTalk con Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, titulado El peligro de una historia única en [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript) . ¿Cuál es la historia única de Lakota / Dakota en Standing Rock y Aymara de Chile? ¿Cómo puede usted, como trabajador social, contrarrestar la historia única de las poblaciones indígenas? Escriba algunos párrafos que involucren múltiples historias de cada población usando la guía provista en la película.

**Ejercicio 5:**

¿Qué privilegios y prejuicios podría tener sobre los pueblos indígenas con quienes desea trabajar? ¿Cómo puedes ser responsable de estos privilegios en relación con los demás?

**Ejercicio 6:**

Proporcione algunos ejemplos de cómo usaría el conocimiento local para efectuar cambios con cada una de las poblaciones exploradas en los estudios de casos, relacionados con la sostenibilidad de la comunidad y el medio ambiente. Considere buscar investigaciones recientes y revisar cualquier sitio web facilitado por poblaciones indígenas en los Estados Unidos y Chile.

## Notas Resumidas:

1. El uso de un enfoque de sistemas ecológicos cuando se trabaja con población indígena considera la larga historia de vida comunitaria que refleja la cultura y formas de vida tradicionales de cada población, así como la historia de violaciones de derechos humanos de cada población, incluidas las violaciones de tratados cuando se evalúan las poblaciones nivel de funcionamiento. El uso de una perspectiva basada en las fortalezas cuando se trabaja con poblaciones indígenas replantea los déficits como fortalezas. Por ejemplo, en lugar de percibir a los Lakota / Dakota como personas dependientes que exigen dádivas, serían puntos de vista como personas que son autogestores efectivos, exigiendo que se hagan cumplir los contratos plenamente ejecutables.
2. Ambas poblaciones indígenas han experimentado una serie de violaciones de los derechos humanos, contra individuos, familias y sus comunidades. Los estudios de casos detallaron violaciones de los derechos humanos que implicaban privar a las comunidades de sus modos de vida culturales, sus derechos sobre la tierra y el agua. Los tribunales chilenos defendieron recientemente los derechos de agua de los indígenas en un caso significativo relacionado con una compañía de agua adinerada (ver <https://business-humanrights.org/en/agua-mineral-chusmiza-lawsuit-re-chile>), mientras que el gobierno de EE. UU. se opusieron a las poblaciones indígenas, incluidas las que involucran a Dakota Access y Keystone Pipelines. A pesar de los recientes fallos judiciales en apoyo de la tribu Standing Rock Sioux, el petróleo en el oleoducto Dakota Access sigue fluyendo (ver <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/06/dakota-access-standing-rock-sioux-victory-court/530427/>).
3. Los factores de marginación no incluyen a un miembro de la población mayoritaria, tienen un color de piel más oscuro, viven en áreas rurales, son miembros identificados de una comunidad indígena (nacionalidad), se visten con ropa no occidental, trabajan en la agricultura, practican o no, la religión occidental, la práctica de la vida comunal.
4. Adichie discute cómo las poblaciones indígenas y otros grupos marginados a menudo son identificados por una sola historia de

tragedia. Por ejemplo, las personas Lakota y Dakota de la tribu Standing Rock Sioux en los Estados Unidos podrían ser identificadas como personas conquistadas que luchan contra la pobreza extrema y el abuso de sustancias. Pero si uno considera su historia antes de la ocupación colonial, su historia es rica en complejidad cultural y organización. Después de la colonización, su historia es una de supervivencia y triunfo a través del genocidio físico y cultural.

5. Quienes trabajan en los campos de trabajo social pueden tener prejuicios contra las poblaciones indígenas que luchan contra la disfunción familiar y el abuso de sustancias. Pueden percibir a los miembros de las poblaciones indígenas como dominados, y pueden verse tentados a utilizar un enfoque de intervención de arriba hacia abajo. Los trabajadores sociales pueden confundir la admiración cultural con la apropiación cultural, y como tal, pueden creer que admiran la cultura indígena (y la adopción de partes de ella), sin tomarse el tiempo para comprenderla holísticamente. Los trabajadores sociales pueden aumentar su comprensión de la naturaleza de sus prejuicios preexistentes mediante el uso de prácticas reflexivas en la supervisión, así como a través de la obtención de un mayor conocimiento sobre las culturas indígenas y la práctica de la humildad cultural.
6. Investigación útil sobre prácticas indígenas de curación y conocimiento local:

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# Zyianza Zyalusumpuko Lutolelela Mumikobo kwiinda Mubukwabilizi Bwazyintu Zytuzingulukide mu Zambia

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Twaambo tujatikizya balembi:

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## **Zyakwiiya zyilangilwa:**

1 Kuvwuntauzya milimo azyianza zytobelwa mu Zambia zyjatikizya kusumpula bukkale bwabantu mumikobo alimwi akubaa luzyibo lwamboikonzya kutolelela milimo eeyi antoomwe azyianza kweendelanya abukwabilizi bwazyintu zytuzingulukide.

2 Kulingula bubu mumilimo iijatikizya kusumpula bukkale bwabantu mumikobo.

3 Kujana ntaamu zyikonzya kuleta lusumpuko mubukkale bwabantu mumikobo kumwi kakusumpulwa bukwalizi bwazyintu zytuzingulukide bwalo butolelela.

## Ciyo:

Buhaabupampu mumulimo ujakizya kulanganya bukkale bwabantu bwakazwa kwiinda mukupa lugwasyo kubantu batacijonzi kulijanina ziyandika mubuuni. Ooku kupa lugwasyo kanji-kanji kwakali kulanganya muntu omwe-omwe oyo wakali kuyeeyelwa kuti lwakwe mukamwini ngowakali kuliletela penzi ndyajisi – *lwakwe haakacite kumutongooka*. Mulimo wakusumpula bukkale bwabantu kumwi kulubazu ngwakuyanda kuleka ‘kupa biyo lugwasyo’ kucita kuti kuciindi ncimunya, kakusumpulwa bukkale bwabantu kwiinda mukuleta lusumpuko muziyilawo zyabo. Muswaangano wamumwaka wa 1954 walo wakacitilwa kokuya ku *Ashridge* kwategwa mpaakaboolela mulimo ‘wakupa lugwasyo kwiinda mukusumpula bukkale’ calo cicita kuti basimukobo kabatola lubazu mumilimo yalusumpuko.<sup>1</sup> Kweendelanya abwaambilizi bwa Midgley,<sup>1</sup> bbala lya ‘kusumpula bukkale’ lyakatambulwa kuti libe ndelizwidiliza muzeezo oyu. Ntaamu yakuleta lusumpuko mubukkale bwabantu,<sup>1,2</sup> yajanwa kuti inga yatolelela akaambo kakuti basimukobo balatola lubazu. Mumwena mumuzeezo oyu, kuli luziyibo lwabubotu bwakuwabilila ziyantu ziyituzingulukide. Eeci cili boobu akaambo kakuti ziyantu ziyituzingulukide ziyilijisi lubazu lupati kapati mukubamba ziyandika kubuuni bwamuntu.<sup>3</sup> Mukozanyo ngwabulimi alimwi amulilo ukonzya kubambwa kuzwa kumasamu.

Mumwaka wa 2000, mbunga ya *United Nations* (UN) antoomwe azyisi ziyili mumbunga eeyi munyika yoonse mboizulwa ziyakabamba mbaakani ziyalusumpuko ziyili lusele (8) ziyitegwa mucikuwa **Millenium Development Goals** (MDGs mubufwaafwi)<sup>4</sup> zyalo ziyatikizya kulanganya mapenzi manji aamunyika kusika mumwaka wa 2015. Mbaakani eezyi ziyiminina kusoleka kwanyika yoonse kulanganya bucete akubulilwa kwiinda mukubamba mbaakani akutola ntaamu ziyikonzya kweelekwa alimwi ziyilibonya.<sup>5</sup> Kuzwa ciindi mbaakani eezyi nozyakabambwa, kuli kulingula kunjaanji-njaanji kwakacitwa kubona lusumpuko akuzwidilila kukonzya kucitika. Malembe ajatikizya kulingula oku akali kutondezya kwaamba kuti ziyimwi mbaakani ziyamu 2015 taakwe nozyakazwidiliziyigwa antela ziyakazwidiliziyigwa biyo cakutamanininzya. Mbuni mukozanyo, muswaangano wamu 2006 utegwa ‘2006 Livingstone Call for Action’<sup>6</sup> wakabona kwaamba kuti mbaakani eezyi taziyakazwidiliziyigwi munyika ya Afulika ccita biyo kuti milimo yalusumpuko iicitwa ibikkilizye yeeyo iisumpula bukkale bwabantu.<sup>7</sup> Bumboni bwabwaambilizi oobu bujanwa mubwaambilizi bujakizya mbaakani eezyi bwamu 2013 bwacisi ca Zambia bwalo butondezya kuti mbaakani ziyimwi taziyakazwidiliziyigwi pe.<sup>8</sup> Bahaabupampu bakatalika kulanga-langa ntaamu

zyimbi zyakutola, aboobo 'Mbaakani Zyalusumpuko Lutolelela' naa **Sustainable Development Goals**, mucikuwa zyalo zyili kkumi aciloba (17) zyakabambwa bumpya kutegwa nyika yoonse ibambululwe kuyakusika mumwaka wa 2030.

Kuciindi ncicon a eeci, (mu 2010), babelesi balanganya bukkale bwabantu munyika yoonse mboizulwa bakabamba muzeezo ujakizya mulimo wabukkale alimwi alusumpuko mubukkale bwabantu utegwa mucikuwa **Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development** (Global Agenda mubufwaafwi) walo uuji mitwe yamakani yone (4) yakuyungizya: *Kusumpula kweelanya mubukkale amubuvwubi; kusumpula bulemu bwabantu; kusumpula kucikonzya kutolelela mubukkale bwabantu amuziyintu zybazingulukide; alimwi akusumpula bubotu antela bupati bwazyilongwe akati kabantu.*<sup>10</sup> Muzeezo ooyu wa *Global Agenda* walo wakafwukatilwa ambunga zyaandeene zybikkiliza mbunga itegwa *International Federation of Schools of Social Work* (IASSW), *International Council on Social Welfare* (ICSW), alimwi ambunga itegwa *International Federation of Social Workers* (IFSW) wakali kuyeeyelwa kuti kausolelela buvwuntausi mumulimo wabukkale bwabantu, mulwiyo alimwi amuziyianza zytobelwa. Muzeezo wa *Global Agenda* takuli biyo kuti ukamantanya bahaabupampu bali mumulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu akubapa mbaakani zyziziyilwe, pele ninzila imwi igwasyilizya mukweendeleyanya akubelekela antoomwe akati kababelesi bamumulimo oyu wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu alimwi abaabo balanganya lusumpuko lwabasimikobo munyika yoonse mboizulwa.

Kubikkilizyigwa kwamutwe wamakani watatu mumuzeezo wa *Global Agenda* walo waamba 'kusumpula mikobo azyintu zybazingulukide kwalo kutolelela', kulelela akaambo kakuti mulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu kweendelanya azyintu zybazingulukide wakatalika kaindi. Mbuli mukozyanyo, mukaintu utegwa Mary Richmond, walo uuli ngowabamwi bataanzi mumulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu, wakabubona bubotu bwazyintu zyzizingulukide mobakkala bantu, kapati kulanganya buccete kuciindi eeco.<sup>11</sup> Kuzwa ciindi eeco, bube bwazyintu zybazingulukide bantu bwakomena akubota kweendelanya amulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu. Kulanganya 'bulenge bwazyintu mumulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu' antela 'muntu ulijana akati kazyintu zyzimuzingulukide' caba ncecintu cisyomwa kapati muziyianza zytobelwa mukulanganya bukkale bwabantu.<sup>12, 13, 16, 17, 18.</sup> Nzila yakulanganya muntu ulijana akati kazyintu zyzimuzingulukide ilanganya ciimo mwaalijana muntu kuti eeci

cikwelelezyegwa azyintu zymuzingulukide mbuli zyilongwe naa beenzyinyina, mukwasyi wakwe alimwi ambunga zyimbi biyo kubikkilizya ambuli mbwakkalana azyilengwa-Leza zyimbi biyo. Nokuba boobo, muntu amuntu ulakonzya kukwelelezya zyintu zymuzingulukide, munzila zyibotu antela zyibyaabi. Kwiile kugonkaula masamu, mbuli mukozyanyo, kucesy bulumbu mbwakonzya kujana muntu kuzwa kuzylenge mbuli kubaa muya utanyongene, banyama bamusyokwe balikwaide batanyonganyizidwe alimwi amvwula nji kapati. Imvwula ijatikizya kubaa cakulya mumikobo eeyo yalo iponena mubulimi. Nokuba kuti kwaba ciindi cilamfwu catolwa kulanganya kapati amuntu ulijana akati kazyintu zymuzingulukide mumulimo wabahaabupampu wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu, kulanganya zyintu zyibazingulukide bantu zyalo zyilenge (zyizyizylwe kapati kuti ziyatikizya zyintu zyilimwa antela zyilimenena) nkwalino-lino. <sup>19\_20</sup>

Mutwe wamakani watatu wa Global Agenda waamba 'kusumpula mikobo azyintu zyibazingulukide kwalo kutolelela', uzwa kubyaabi kwakucinca kuba mukuunga kwamuwo antela kkilaimeti alimwi akunyongana kuba kuzyintu zyibazingulukide bantu kwalo kujatikizya maumi abukklale bwabantu. Lwiiyo ndusyoonto mu Zambia lujatikizya kusumpuko lwamumikobo azyintu zyibazingulukide bantu, kakuli kunyonganya zyintu zyibazingulukide bantu muzyilawo zyamuminzi alimwi amuzylawo zyamumadolopo ziyakidwe kutali mumulawo (makkomponi aayakidwe ciyake-yake) nkupati kapati. Nokuba kuti bantu mumasena aya babelekela antoomwe, kapati muntaamu ziyatikizya kucesy bucete alimwi akusumpula mikobo, zymwi ntaamu ziyatikizya kusumpula mikobo zyiletela kunyongana kuzyintu zyibazingulukide bantu. Kulubazu lumwi, masena amumadolopo alanyonganyizyigwa kwiinda mukubisyigwa kwamuya antela kupolyusyini izwa kumafakitoli, butongo mukweendelezya antela mukulanganya tombe mbolyeelede kusowegwa, alimwi akwiindilizya mukubelesya zyakubelesya zyilenge akati kazyimbi zyintu.<sup>21</sup> Mu Zambia, masena ayakidwe kutali mumulawo (muli zymwi zyiindi **mumasena mwiinda meenda**)<sup>22</sup> kujanika kuti tamuli kabotu nokuba kusinka akaambo katombe cakuti zyilawo zyilalobelwa kapati mudolopo mpati ya Lusaka, calo cicita kuti kakuvwambaka malwazi aali mbuli bulwazi bwakkolela alimwi aambi biyo malwazi aakusoomona. Bube oobu bwaindilizyigwa akaambo kakuzumizya bantu kuti kabasambalila mumisyika iitazumizyidwe mumulawo kwamyaka misyoonto yayinda. Kulubazu lumbi, masena amuminzi ajana buyumu-yumu antela makatazo aakubula kwakujana mulilo kutolelela (mbuli kuumpa malasya kwalo kumwi kubelesyegwa kujana mali aakuligwasya) alimwi anzila zyabulimi zyinyonganya bulongo mbuli ciyanza cakwiile kugonkaula



masamu citegwa Chitemene calo ciyakubandikwa munselelo omu. Nokuba kuti kuli makatazayo aaya, twaambo tujatikizya kukwabilila zyintu zyizingulukide bantu kuti kaziyitolelela nkusyoonto kwacitwa kucita kuti ootu twaambo tulanganyizyigwe mbokweelede mu Zambia.

Eeci cibalo cipati cisoлека kutondezya zyintu ziyibazingulukide bantu mbozyikonzya kunyonyaunwa kuti naa kakunyina kubaa bukanze antaamu zyeelede zyakukwabilila zyintu zyizingulukide bantu. Nokuba kuti kuli bubotu buzwa kumafakitoli akaambo kamilimo ibambwa alusumpuko luboola, kaambo kapati nkakuti mafakitoli kapati ngaaletela kunyongana kuzyintu zyizingulukide bantu kuti naa kakunyina bukanze antela bweendelezi bubotu bujatikizya mbokweelede kweendelezya mafakitoli. Kulanganya ziyianza zyakaindi azyacecino ciindi, cibalo eeci cilalanga-linga akuvwuntauzuya mazuba azya kumele kujatikizya ziyianza zyiletela lusumpuko mumikobo akutolelela bubotu bujanwa kuzwa kuzyianza eezyi mu Zambia; alimwi kaambo kapati nkakulanganya buyumu-yumu bwatwaambo tujatikizya mulimo wakuleta lusumpuko mumikobo mbuli nzila yacyianza mumulimo wakulanganya bukkale bwabantu.

### **Cianza ca Chitemene**

Muzylawo antela mikobo minji mu Zambia, cianza cakwiile kugonkaula masamu antela Chitemene mubulimi <sup>23</sup> alimwi akuumpa malasya, nzyeziyianza zyobilo zyibelesyegwa kujana mali zyalo zyiletela bunyonyausi kuzyilegwa-Leza. Chitemene ndizyina limwi mumilaka yacisi ca Zambia lyaamba kugunkaula nyika yakulima akukkala kwalo kujatikizya kugonkaula masamu akwaatenta kutegwa kuyungizyigwe mbolezi kubulongo. Cianza eeci ca Chitemene cilajanika muzyooko zytandila kuli zyanwe (5) mu Zambia, nokuba kuti zyina libelesyegwa liliimpene mucooko acooko. Kugunkaula zysisamu kutegwakuyakwe fakitoli antela kulima zisyango cijatikizya kujaya antela kunyonyauna zyilengwa-Leza, pele kaambo kapati kacita kuti cianza eeci kacili cinyonyausi kapati nkakuti masamu manji alagonkwa akuumpwa mpoona. Aboobo, kuli bunyonyausi buba kuzyilengwa-Leza alimwi akubisya naa kunyonganya muya (polyusyini) akaambo kabusi buzwa kuzyikuni zyatentwa, alimwi abunyonyausi bwamasena mobakkala banyama bamusyokwe. Eeci alimwi inga caaambwa kujatikizya kuumpa malasya kwalo kubelesyegwa kubaa mulilo alimwi akujana mali aakuligwasya (muminzi amumadolopo).

Masimpe ngakuti bucete mbobucita kuti bantu muzyilawo eezyi kabalaa ziyianza eezyi zybunyonyausi nokuba kuti ziyibaletele mali aakuligwasya, pele alimwi inga kwaambwa kuti mikobo eezyi ilakonzya kuzwidilila kwiinda mukubaa ziyianza zyitali zybunyonyausi kapati. Kwiinda ***mukweezyeezya luswaangano lwabantu azyilengwa-Leza***<sup>24</sup> kulombozya kuti kuli kweendelana kuliko akati kakuyeeya antela mizeezo yabantu abukkale bwabo azyilengwa-Leza,<sup>25</sup> cibalo eeci cilombozya kwaamba kuti ziyianza eezyi zybunyonyausi zylakonzya kulekwa kutegwa bantu *kabavwuba nzuki akusyanga zisyango kakunyina kubulima bulongo*.

### **Kuvwuba nzuki**

Kuvwuba nzuki takuleteli biyo mpindu nji kwiinda kuumpa malasya pele alimwi takuleteli bunyonyausi kuzyintu zytuzingulukide alimwi kulakonzya kutolelela. Eeci cilaba akaambo kakuti kuvwuba nzuki cilasanganya akusumpula bukkale, buvwubi alimwi akulanganya zyintu zytuzingulukide<sup>21</sup> kucita kuti bukkale bwabantu busumpulwe alimwi ooku inga waba ngomusemo walusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo. Buvwubi bwanzuki buletela mali kumikwasyi yamuminzi aasika ku 25% wamweelwe wamali ajanwa mumwaka omwe mu Zambia alimwi kuli milimo yakulibelekela aivwolwa mali kuzwa kucibeela eeci.<sup>26</sup> Buvwubi bwanzuki, kububamba kuti bwaba mbobuletela mali, inga waba mukozyanyo wantaamu yakucikonzya *kutolelela kulijanina ziyandika mubuumi*.<sup>27</sup> Eeyi ntaamu yakuletela lusumpuko mumikobo njakuyanda kuyungizya antela kusumpula luzyibo lwabuponi bwabantu bakkala muminzi. Bulimi bubikkidwe kumbele muntaamu eezyi mukusumpula maumi aabantu bakkala muminzi nkaambo buletela cakulya amali munzila itolelela. Nokuba boobo, buvwubi bwanzuki bulijisi bumwi buyumu-yumu mukuba cimwi cibeela cakujanina mali akaambo kakuti kweelede kuti kakuli meenda ciindi coonse alo aatajaniki-janiki muzyilawo zymwi zyamuminzi. Mbuli mukozyanyo, nokuba kuti mumasena manji kapati mu Zambia bantu balavwuba nzuki, buvwubi oobu buletela mpindu mbotu kapati mumasena mvwula moiloka kapati alimwi amumasena ajisi zysisaka-saka zyinji.

### **Kutabulima bulongo**

Mubulimi kuli milimo ijanwa, yakulibelekela aivwolwa mali, alimwi bunji bwabantu bakkala muminzi baponena mubulimi kubikkilizya amikwasyi yamumadolopo. Kusikila calino-lino, cibeela cabulimi ncocali cabili mubuvwubi bubambilwa mucisi kuzwa mumwaka wa 1965.<sup>28</sup> Nokuba boobo, bulimi bulakonzya kunyonganya zyintu zytuzingulukide alimwi bulakonzya kutatolelela kuti naa kwabelesyegwa ziyianza zyitali kabotu.

**Kutabulima bulongo**<sup>29</sup> nciyanza cibotu kwiinda mubulimi butolelela. Eeci cilaba akaambo kakuti taciduli kulima pele butebuzi inga mbubotu alimwi inga bulisumpukide cakuti ayalo mbolezi mubulongo ilatolelela kwaciindi cilamfwu. Kulima naa kutipula nyika ciindi aciindi muntu naayanda kusyanga zyisyango cicesya mbolezi mubulongo alimwi mbolezi taikkalilili mubulongo pe, bulongo bulaangana, alimwi eeci cicesya buuka-uka atumbi tuntu tusyoonto kapati twalo tujanika mubulongo. Aboobo, buvwubi bwanzuki akutabulima bulongo zyoonse tazyiyandiki kubelesya nguzu zynji alimwi amali aakutalisya inga masyoonto, pele mpindu izwa mumo inga nimpati kapati.

### **Lusumpuko Lutolelela Mumikobo**

Kaambo kapati nakwaamba kuti Lusumpuko Lutolelela Mumikobo talweelede biyo kulangisisya kujana zyintu ziyandikana kumusela wamazuba asunu pele lweelede kulanganya misela yabantu iicizya kumbele amazuba.<sup>30</sup> Aboobo, kukuyungizya kukaambo kaaka kakulanganya kumbele amazuba, “mikobo itolelela *tijisi butongo kuzyintu zyituzingulukide, kubamba buvwubi bwampindu abukkale bwakweelanya*”.<sup>31</sup> Aawa, tulasola asyoonto kupandulula caambwa: ‘kubula butongo kuzyintu zyizingulukide’ caamba kuti micito antela milimo yabantu (mbuli kubaa mafakitoli, kulima zyisyango zyakulya, mweelwe wabantu) kweendelanya azyilengwa-Leza zyiliko yeelede kubelekwa muciiimo cakubikkila maanu kucita kuti kakutakwe kuzyinyonganya zyilengwa-Leza eezyi. Nkekaambo kaako cibela cilanganya zisaka-saka mu Zambia cakatalisya mulimo ucitwa kwamwaka amwaka wakusimpa masamu kuzwa mubuzuba bwa 15 mumwezi wa Nalupale kusika mubuzuba bwa 15 mumwezi wa Mukazimaziba. Kweendelana abwaamba Sattano,<sup>31</sup> ‘kubamba buvwubi’ caamba kuti basimukobo mucilawo cabo balasanga mali antela lubono lwabo muzyilawo zyabo aakubelesya kujana buvwubi kwiinda mukubelesya ziyianza zyibotu zyitolelela alimwi akubambilila antela kukwabilila zyilengwa-Leza. Bantu basungwaazya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo kanji-kanji beelanya alusumpuko lutolelela. Baamba kuti lwiindano lweendelana ambazu: cakuti lusumpuko lutolelela ncintu ciyandika munyika yoonse mbozulwa kakuli lusumpuko mumikobo ncintu ciyandika muzyilawo mukkalwa.<sup>32</sup>

Milimo mipati-pati mu Zambia icitwa ijatikizya lusumpuko lwamumikobo kwiinda **Mucibeela cilanganya lusumpuko lwamumikobo**<sup>33</sup> ibikilizya yeeyi: mulimo naa pulogilamu yakupa zyakulya kubantu; mulimo naa pulogilamu yakupa nguzu kuli bamakaintu, pulogilamu ijatikizya kulibelekela milimo; lwiyo lwakutanjila mucikolo alimwi apulogilamu yakupa makkoosi aakubaa

luzyibo lwakulicitila zyintu. Nokuba boobo, kuli ambi mapulogilamu naa milimo yalo icitwa ambunga zyitalikumbatizyi kumfwulumende ilanganya tubeele-beela twaandeene twabuponi bwabantu.

### **Ciiyo cakulangisisya: Kubamba buci kucooko cakumbo lwakunyika mu Zambia**

Kuvwuba nzuki kulizyiyilwe kapati mumasena manji mu Zambia, kapati mucooko cakumbo lwakunyika. Imvwula ilaloka kapati kucooko eeci alimwi kulajanika loonde azyisaka-saka zyilenge, kubikkilizya abasicilawo balaa luzyibo lunji lujatikizya mbokuvwubwa nzuki. Aboobo, 'luswaangano lupati luliko akati kazyisaka-saka akuvwuba nzuki kucitwa abasicilawo kuletela zyoolwe zyakusumpula buvwubi bwanzuki kusungwaazya bweendelezi bubotu bwazyisaka-saka' mubusena oobu.<sup>34</sup> Buci azyimbi zyintu zyibambwa kuzwa kubuci zyoonse zyiletela mali amulimo kuli basicilawo mucilawo eeci alimwi amuzylawo zyimbi zyamumasena amuminzi. Aboobo, babelesi balanganya bukkale bwabantu balakonzya kugwasyilizya kuleta lusumpuko lutolelela abubambuluzi mubukkale mumikobo ooko nkobabelekela kwiinda mukugwasyilizya basimukobo kubamba nzila zyimbi mubuponi bwabo zyalo ziyungizya bubotu bwatunsiya-nsiya twabo aluzyibo lwakucita zyintu, mbuli kuvwuba nzuki. Eeci cilakonzya kucitika kwiinda mukulingula mikobo kubona twaambo tuli mbuli: zyintu zyizyiyilwe abasimukobo, tunsiya-nsiya tuyandika, alimwi azyintu ziyandika lugwasyo kuzwa kunze, pele oolo kuletela mpindu mpati.

Babelesi balanganya bukkale bwabantu bajisi mulimo mupati wakubaswaanganya antoomwe bantu azyilengwa-Leza. Mbuli mukozyanyo, nzuki (banyama bamusyokwe) alimwi abantu balaa bujatane bwakaindi, alimwi buvwubi bwanzuki njeimwi nzila yakubaswaanganya antoomwe bantu anzuki. Kuzwa kaindi, bantu balalida nzuki kuyanda buci, pele mubunji bwazyiindi, kuli bunyonyausi bucitwa kunzuki kwiinda mukuzyuumpilila nokuba kubelesya nzila zyimbi zinyinyoona buumi bwanzuki. Nokuba boobo, kumazuba asunu, kuli nzila zyibambidwe zyibotu kwiinda zyakulida naa kubwezelela buci zyalo ziyigwasya kukwabilila akubambilila nzuki. Citobela ncakuti azyalo nzuki zylavwuzanyanya abwalo buci bujanwa mbunji kapati mumwaka amwaka cicita kuti awalo mweelwe wamali ajanwa inga munji kapati kuli baabo bavwuba nzuki. Mukuyungizya, nzuki zyilaa lubazu lupati mukubamba zyakulya zyantwabantu akaambo kakuti nzezyibikka bungu kuzyisyango zyiligwa abantu. Kuti naa kakunyina nzuki, azyalo zyakulya nozyatali kujanika pe, alimwi kuti naa kakunyina buci, buumi nobwatali kulweela mbobulweela.

Cibalo eeci cilombozuya kubamba ntaamu zyalo ziyakuyungizya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo kwiinda mukubelesya zyibelesyo ziyijanika mumwena muzyilawo kubikkilizya aluziyibo luliko kucita kuti zyilengwa-Leza kazyikwabililwa akubambililwa. Ciiyo eeci catondezya mbuli kuvwuba nzuki mbokukonzya kusumpula lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo alimwi akujana mali kuli basicilawo mumenzi kwiinda mukubelesya zyibelesyo ziyijanika mumwena mucilawo eeco, pele kumwi kakunyina kunyonyoona zysisaka-saka, cili ngemakatazayo mapati mubuvwubi bwanzuki. Mulimo naa pulojekiti ikulwaizya basicilawo kubelekela antoomwe, iyungizya mali ngobakonzya kujana basikutola lubazu, alimwi mikobo ilaswaanganyizyigwa mucisi akunze acisi kwiinda mubantu baboola kuula buci busambalwa. Mbubwena biyo, kutatipula naa kulima nyika kuyungizya butebuzi buzwa kubalimi mumikobo, akaambo kakuti bulongo bulasumpulwa kwiinda mumbolezi ili mumo (kwiinda munzila eeyi) nkaambo busani buli mubulongo bulabambililwa. Bantu mumasena aya tabacikonzyi kuula camutunzya wacikuwa alimwi tabajisi zyibelesyo zyakulimya nyika nokuba mali aakubbadela bantu kubalimina myuunda. Cintu ceelede kulangisyigwa muzyilawo zyamuminzi mbucete buli mujulu kapati alimwi akubula lusumpuko mumasena aya cakuti kulayandika kuyungizya mali ngobajana bantu azyakulya zyeede kujanika kuciindi coonse, kubikkilizya akubaa zyilengwa-Leza nzyobakonzya kubelesya kusumpula buponi bwabo. Mukucita boobu, mubandi usola kuleta kweendelena akati kalusumpuko mumikobo akuyandikana kwabweendelezi bweede kucita kuti zyintu zytuzingulukide kazyitolelela alimwi akutondezya mbuli lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo mbolukonzya kuzwidilizya ntaamu zyimbi akusumpula mbaakani zyalusumpuko zytolelela zyambunga ya United Nations muzyisi zyilaa buvwubi busyoonto zyili mbuli cisi ca Zambia.

### **Kubelesya:**

#### **Mulimo 1: Lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo**

Kwiinda mukubelesya twaambo kuzwa muciiyo eeci alimwi aluziyibo lumbi biyo lujatikizya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo, koingula mibuzyo itobela kweendelanya amukobo ngoolisalila:

- 1) Ino milimo nzi imwi ijatikizya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo njozyi mumukobo oyu?
- 2) Ino milimo nzi imwi icitwa mumukobo oyu yalo iletela mali akusumpula buponi?

- 3) Ino milimo nzi imwi itakonzyeki kutolelela icitwa mumikobo oyu ilelela mali akusumpula buponi?
- 4) Ino milimo nzi imbi ikonzya kuletela mali abuponi bubotu njokonzya kulombozoya?
- 5) Ino milimo nzi imwi ijatikizya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo njokonzya kulombozoya kumukobo oyu?
- 6) Ino ninzila nzi zyimwi milimo eeyi mboikonzya kubula butongo kuzyintu zytuzingulukide alimwi akuletela mpindu kubantu?
- 7) Ino milimo nzi ikonzya kugwasyilizya buponi bwakucikonzya kulijanina zyintu munzila yakweelanya mubukkale, kumwi kakubambililwa antela kukwabilila zyilengwa-Leza?
- 8) Bandika nzila milimo eeyi mboizyikonzya kuletela kweelanya. Ino ntwaambo nzi tumwi tujatikizya tunsiya-nsiya twabantu mumukobo twalo ntokonzya kuyeeyela ciindi nobamba makanze aamilimo yalusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo? Ino mbubuti milimo eeyi mboikonzya kugwasyilizya kucita kuti cakulya kacijanika kuciindi coonse?

### **Mulimo 2: Kusumpula luswaangano akati kabantu azyilengwa-Leza**

Kwiinda mukubelesya twaambo kuzwa muciiyo eeci alimwi aluzyibo lumbi biyo lujatikizya *kweezyeezya luswaangano lwabantu azyilengwa-Leza*, kobelesya mukobo ngoobelesya mumulimo 1 atala awa, alimwi koingula mibuzyo itobela:

- 1) Ino muunzila nzi bantu mumukobo oyo mbobaswaangene kuazyilengwa-Leza?
- 2) Ino mbubi nzi bumwi buliko kuluswaangano olu kumazuba asunu alimwi akumazuba azya kumbele calino-lino?
- 3) Ino mbubuti babelesi balanganya bukkale bwabantu mbobakonzya kutola lubazu mukusumpula luswaangano olu akati kabantu azyilengwa-Leza mumukobo oyu?

### **Mubufwaafwi:**

Ciiyo cijatikizya lusumpuko lutolelela mumikobo lujisi mbaakani yakucesya bunyonyausi bucitwa kuzyilengwa-Leza. Luswaangano

antela bujatane buliko akati kabantu azyilengwa-Leza mubunji bwazyiindi bulasoweka kwiinda mumafakitoli ayakwa alimwi abantu baboola kukkla mumadolopo. Bubebelesi bwakulanganya bukkale bwabantu mazuba asunu buleelede, akati kazyimwi zyintu, kusoleka kuswaanganya bantu mbobabelekela kuzyintu ziyazingulukide antela zyilengwa-Leza kweendelanya abuponi bwamuntu kuzwa kaindi alimwi abubotu bujanwa kuzwa kuluswaangano lwa bantu azyilengwa-Leza. Kwiinda mukucita boobu, bayakuyungizya kucikonzya kwabantu kubaa zyakulya ciindi coonse alimwi akubaa buvwubi butolelela, kusumpula kutolelela kwazyintu zytuzingulukide alimwi akusumpula luziyibo abukkale (kapati kubana), zyoonse zisumpulwa mucibeela antela cakumaninina kuti naa bantu bakkala mubulongwe azyilengwa-Leza.

Ciiyo cizwa kukulanganya bukkale bwabantu antela 'muntu ulijana akati kazyintu zymizingulukide antoomwe akweezyeezya luswaangano lwabantu azyilengwa-Leza kwalo kwaambisya bupati antela bubotu bwaluswaangano lutaanzi akati kamuntususu azyilengwa-Leza. Cilangisisya nzila zybuponi zyimbi zyalo zyikonzya kutolelela kucita kuti bunyonyausi bwazyintu zytuzingulukide bucesyegwe kumwi kakusumpulwa kubaa zyakulya amali ciindi coonse .Ciyanza ca Chitemene akuumpa malasya zyoonse zyiletela mali munzila yakufwambaana alimwi milimo eeyi ilakonzya kusumpula mbolezi mubulongo kwaciindi cisyoono. Pele, ziyianza eeyi zinyonyauna zyintu zytuzingulukide alimwi milimo eeyi iyandika kubelekwa abantu bazyandamene (pele batacijaniki kapati muzyilawo zyamuminzi akaambo kakulonga kwabakubusi baunka kuya kukkalila mumadolopo kuyandaula milimo iwvolwa mali alimwi akuvwambuka kwakazunda abulwazi kwasikalileke (HIV/Eedisi)) kakuli zyimbi ntaamu zisumpula kubaa zyilengwa-Leza zytolelela alimwi inga yabelekwa abana bakubusi abamacembele antela bamadaala balo bunji bwazyiindi mbobajanika kuti balakakilwa kulijanina ziyandika mubuumi alimwi mweelwe wabantu aba ngomunji kapati.

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## מגדירים אסטרטגיה לקיימות חברתית: לקחים ממאבקים סביבתיים קהילתיים

מאת: אריאלה צוויקל ועידית בליט - כהן

### אודות הכתבות:

אריאלה צוויקל MSW - מלמדת שיטות ומיומנויות תקשורת בעבודה קהילתית, בית הספר לעבודה סוציאלית ולרווחה חברתית ע"ש פאוול ברוואלד, האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים. מנהלת תחום קיימות חברתית בעיריית ירושלים. מחקרה לתואר שני התמקד בקהילות העוסקות במאבקים סביבתיים. מייסדת וחברת וועד מנהל במרכז לקהילה האפריקאית בירושלים (ע"ר), עמותה המסייעת לפליטים ולמבקשי מקלט.

ד"ר עידית בליט-כהן - ראשת תכניות מוסמך שוורץ ללימודים בגיל הרך וניהול ארגונים בחברה האזרחית; ראש המגמה לעבודה סוציאלית קהילתית, בבית הספר לעבודה סוציאלית ולרווחה חברתית ע"ש פאוול ברוואלד, האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים. מומחית בעבודה קהילתית, יועצת ומנחה בתחום של עבודה קהילתית. המחקר והפעילות שלה מתמקדים באוכלוסיות מודרות, זכויות אדם, שינוי חברתי וקהילה.

### מטרות השיעור:

- לבחון באופן ביקורתי את תפקידם של עובדים סוציאליים ועובדים סוציאליים קהילתיים בנושאי קיימות סביבתית בכלל ומאבקים סביבתיים מקומיים בפרט, בהתבסס על מחקר שבחן שלושה מאבקים סביבתיים בישראל;
- להציג כלי הערכה שימושי עבור מבני כוח מורכבים המאפיינים מאבקים סביבתיים;
- הגדרת אסטרטגיות פעולה קהילתיות, ותרגומן לטקטיקות יצירתיות, כאמצעי לשיפור הסיכויים להשגת הצלחה.

## מהלך השיעור:

קיימת תלות הדדית בין בני האדם לבין הטבע הפיזי - אדמה, אוויר, מים, החי והצומח - שעליו מסתמכים בני האדם למחייתם הגשמית.<sup>1</sup> אך בנוסף, ישנו קשר אחר – רגשי ורוחני – שאין להפריז בחשיבותו עבור התפתחות האדם, ואף הישרדותו.<sup>2</sup> בעוד השיח הדומיננטי סביב קיימות<sup>3</sup> מבוסס על שילוב בין גורמים חברתיים, סביבתיים וכלכליים, נקודת המבט של קיימות חברתית<sup>4</sup> "עוסקת באופן בו יחידים, קהילות וחברות חיים זה עם זה [...] ולוקחת בחשבון את המרחב הדרוש לכל אחד מהם ואת כדור הארץ כמכלול [...] היא משלבת תחומי ידע מסורתיים של מדיניות חברתית עם עקרונות כגון הגינות, צדק, בריאות, השתתפות, צרכים, הון חברתי, כלכלה, איכות הסביבה, ולאחרונה, גם עם מושגים כמו אושר, שלוה ואיכות חיים" (עמ' 4).<sup>5</sup>

לאור זאת, נראה מעט תמוה כי העבודה הסוציאלית, כמקצוע, נכנסה באיחור לתחום הסביבתי, מבחינת מחקר, הוראה ופרקטיקה.<sup>6,7</sup> אולם, יש לציין כי "קידום קהילות בנות קיימא ופיתוח רגיש לסביבה" (עמ' 4)<sup>8</sup> הוגדר ב-2012 כאחד מארבעת הנושאים המרכזיים באג'נדה הגלובלית לעבודה סוציאלית ולפיתוח חברתי. לפיכך, נראה כי יש צורך בגישה הוליסטית לעבודה סוציאלית, המקדמת פרקטיקה הרואה בחשיבותה של הסביבה, דואגת לאלו המושפעים ביותר לשינויים בה,<sup>9</sup> וחותרת לצדק סביבתי ולשוויון בתועלות ובנטל סביבתי, ללא הבדל דת, גזע, מוצא<sup>10</sup> או שיוך מגדרי.<sup>11</sup> גישה זו אף מתיישבת עם ערכי הליבה של העבודה הסוציאלית, כפי שהם משתקפים במאקרו פרקטיקה בעבודה סוציאלית (קראו עוד: "למה לעסוק בענייני מאקרו").<sup>12</sup>

במדינות רבות, מאבקים סביבתיים מקומיים נעשים נפוצים יותר ויותר, בעוד לחצי הפיתוח מאיימים על שוויון, בריאות הציבור ושמירה על בתי גידול טבעיים.<sup>13</sup> החל מפקחי הסביבה הקהילתיים בטאמיל נאדו שבהודו<sup>14</sup> ועד למג'י-המים בסטנדינג רוק, צפון דקוטה,<sup>15</sup> קהילות פגיעות, שמופלות לרעה<sup>16</sup> מבחינה סביבתית, מתארגנות למאבק באי-צדק סביבתי<sup>17</sup> מסוגים שונים. למרות שמאבקים סביבתיים מקומיים הפכו נפוצים יותר, מאבקים כאלו כמעט ולא נחקרו.<sup>13</sup> מאבקים אלה הם בדרך כלל עזים, מורכבים, מתמשכים, מתישים, וגוזלים משאבים רבים. פעילים קהילתיים המשתתפים במאבק כזה, מוצאים עצמם נלחמים נגד כוחות בעלי השפעה, חזקים ועשירים; תאגידים בינלאומיים, יזמים ואפילו ממשלות. לבעלי הכוח יש אינטרסים כלכליים משמעותיים על הכף, ולכן הם עשויים לשכור אנשי מקצוע בתשלום, כגון עורכי דין שיגישו תביעות השתקה (SLAPPS),<sup>18</sup> קמפיינרים שינהלו מסע דה – לגיטימציה נגד מאבק התושבים ויארגנו פעילויות "טיוח ירוק" או "גרין ווש".<sup>19</sup> לוביסטים שיפעלו כדי לחסום את ההתנגדות, או - כמו במקרים רבים - את כל אלו גם יחד. לעיתים קרובות, בעלי הכוח מוכנים לשלם הרבה כדי להשיג את מבוקשם.<sup>20</sup> לעומת זאת, הפעילים המתארגנים כדי להתנגד לאיומים סביבתיים הם בדרך כלל מתנדבים, שיש להם זמן ומשאבים מוגבלים להשקיע, כי הם עובדים במשרה מלאה ויש להם מחויבויות משפחתיות.<sup>13</sup> לכן, קל להבין כי הסיכויים במקרים כאלו הם לא לטובתם.

פערים אלה **בכוח** בין קהילות ויזמים דורשים התארגנות קהילתית והעצמה, כאמצעי לשמירה על זכויות של קהילות כאלו לסביבה בטוחה, נגישה ומקיימת. ככל שעבודה סוציאלית מעורבת יותר בתחומים של סביבה וקיימות חברתית, וככל שמאבקים סביבתיים הופכים נפוצים יותר, גובר הצורך להכשיר עובדים סוציאליים ולספק להם

מודלים ושיטות עבודה יחד עם כלים רלוונטיים, שימושיים ומתקדמים כדי לסייע להם לקחת חלק משמעותי במאבקים כאלו. כך יתאפשר להם לסייע לקהילות איתן הם עובדים להתארגן, ליצור נרטיב ומסר, להגדיר מטרות, לזהות שותפים, לתכנן ולהוציא לפועל אסטרטגיות וטקטיקות, וכדומה- ובכך להגדיל את הסיכויים להצליח. אמנם יש הרבה מה לומר על אסטרטגיות של התארגנות וגיוס בהקשר של מאבקים סביבתיים, פרק זה יתמקד בדוגמאות לאסטרטגיות וטקטיקות פעולה שנעשה בהן שימוש במאבקים סביבתיים אמיתיים (וגם כמה שלא נעשה בהם שימוש, ואולי חבל שכך), בהתבסס על מחקר שערכו כותבות המאמר בישראל בשנים 2014-2015.

מסגרת ההתייחסות שלנו היא **מודל הפעולה החברתית של רוטמן**<sup>21</sup> (Rothman), אשר שואף לחלוקה מחדש של כוח ומשאבים, השגת גישה למוקדי קבלת החלטות ושותפות בקביעת מדיניות ופרקטיקות מוסדיות. זוהי גישה לעומתית אשר משתמשת בטקטיקות של משא ומתן, פעולה ישירה ועימות. בשני העשורים האחרונים, תנועות חברתיות, כולל תנועות סביבתיות, המציאו מחדש את האסטרטגיות והטקטיקות שלהן, הרחיבו אותן והפכו אותן למתוחכמות יותר.<sup>21</sup> גישה זו תואמת לסיטואציות בהן אנשים מרגישים מאוימים על ידי עול קיים או עתיד, ומבקשים להתארגן כדי לצבור כוח, לדרוש שינוי וצדק.<sup>22</sup>

**אלינסקי** (Alinsky)<sup>23,24</sup> טען כי כוח מגיע מכסף או מאנשים. אלו שאין להם כסף (או שיש להם רק מעט ממנו), צריכים לסמוך על יכולתם לגייס כמות גדולה ככל האפשר של אנשים, כאמצעי לגיוס כוח.<sup>23</sup> מגייסים אנשים בעזרת פעולות כמו כתיבת עלונים, עריכת חוגי בית, מבצעי "הקש בדלת", רישות ("נטוורקינג"), חיבור לקבוצות דתיות ועוד- וכל זאת כדי לרתום את "כוח ההמון" כדי לפעיל לחץ, להשיג תשומת לב ולהפריע לסדר הקיים, המשרת את בעלי הכוח.<sup>25</sup> דרך נוספת להרחיב את מידת הכוח היא לייצר קואליציות עם ארגונים בעלי אינטרס דומה, השותפים לאג'נדה ומוכנים להשקיע משאבים בקידום המטרה.

בבואנו להגדיר אסטרטגיות וטקטיקות, ראשית עלינו להבחין בהבדלים בין השניים. בובו, קנדל ומקס<sup>22</sup> (Bobo, Kendall & Max) מציינים שאסטרטגיה נחוצה רק אם המטרה היא לגרום למישהו – כגון מקבל החלטות או נבחר ציבור- לעשות משהו שאין ברצונו לעשות. ולא- כל מה שצריך זוהי **תכנית**<sup>26</sup> בלבד. לפיכך, אסטרטגיה היא תכנית המשלבת ניתוח של מבני כוח ויחסים, המכוונת להביא לכך שמקבל- החלטות יפעל לטובת מטרה מסוימת. טקטיקות, מאידך, הן צעדים נפרדים ומוגדרים המשמשים למימוש אסטרטגיה. טקטיקות אינן עומדות בפני עצמן, אלא ראוי שיוגדרו בהקשר ויובנו כאמצעי למימוש אסטרטגיה נבחרת.<sup>22</sup> טקטיקות שונות עשויות להיות שימושיות בשלבים שונים של מאבק סביבתי. ההיקף והאינטנסיביות עשויים להשתנות עם הזמן, ולהגיע לשיא כאשר צץ איום או הזדמנות חדשה שבכוחם להשפיע על מדיניות.<sup>27</sup> הגדרה של אסטרטגיה מתבססת על הערכת הכוחות בשני צדי המשוואה, היחסים ביניהם ונכונותם לשתף פעולה.<sup>28</sup>

כאשר יחסי הכוחות בין הצדדים שקולים, וישנה נכונות לשתף פעולה, יתכן שניתן להגיע להסכמות על ידי **משא ומתן** או **דיאלוג**. הסתייגות לשתף פעולה עשויה להצריך משא ומתן, **שימוע ציבורי** או **מפגש שיח בין אישי ציבור לקהילה**. טקטיקה שיכולה להיות שימושית במשא ומתן היא הצגה של **עצומה** עליה חתמו אנשים רבים ככל האפשר- יתכן ופעולה זו תשכנע את בעל הכוח לשנות את דעתו. גישה זו הוכיחה את עצמה כמוצלחת

כשנעשה בה שימוש כדי לשכנע עסק לשנות את התנהגותו על ידי החתמה המונית על עצומה של לקוחות קיימים ועתידיים.<sup>29</sup> **לחץ כלכלי ונסיגת משקיעים** פועלים בצורה דומה. אם ישנה תקשורת מעטה בין הצדדים, אך מידה דומה של כוח, קהילה עשויה להצליח לעשות שימוש במערכת המשפט כדי להגיש **תביעה משפטית** (כל עוד יש לקהילה את המשאבים הדרושים לשם כך). אם יש לצד הקהילה מקבלי החלטות, יתכן שאפשר לעודד אותם לקדם **שינוי מדיניות** או אפילו **חקיקה חדשה** לטובת האינטרס של הקהילה.

תוכלו להיעזר בטבלה הבאה הבנויה כסקאלה או רצף, כאשר צד אחד מסמן פערים גדולים בכוח בין הקהילה לבין בעל הכוח ("המטרה"), והשני מסמל כוח רב של הקהילה-בכסף, או בהשפעה פוליטית. בהיעדר הנ"ל, יהיה נכון לבחור בטקטיקות הדורשות משאב שאפשר לגייס, וזהו המשאב האנושי.

יחסי הכוחות			
כוח גדול יותר בידי הקהילה	כוח שווה, תקשורת טובה וכנונות לשתף פעולה	פערים גדולים בכוח בין הקהילה לבין המטרה	
חקיקה, שינוי מדיניות, תביעה משפטית, לחץ כלכלי	משא ומתן, דיאלוג, חינוך, יידוע, שיתוף פעולה	מחאה, שימוע ציבורי, שיח עם מקבלי החלטות, עצומות, פניה למשקיעים, חרם, אי-ציות אזרחי, נְשִׁבִית נְשִׁבֵת (Sit-in), התנגדות לא אלימה= אסטרטגיה מתעמתת	<b>טקטיקות פעולה</b>

למרבה הצער, מטבעם, רוב המאבקים הסביבתיים הקהילתיים מאופיינים בפערים גדולים ביחסי הכוח והיעדר תקשורת בין הצדדים השונים. לכן, לרוב, נדרשת במצבים אלו **אסטרטגיה של עימות**.<sup>25</sup> בתואם לאסטרטגיות של עימות, טקטיקות של כוח שואפות לשנות את יחסי הכוחות על ידי אמירה ברורה כי משהו אינו כשורה.<sup>30</sup>

כידוע, מילים ושפה יכולות לטמון בחובן משמעויות חברתיות, תרבותיות ופוליטיות כבדות משקל.<sup>31</sup> לכן, **שיום** (naming) היא טקטיקה נוספת שעשויה להיות שימושית במאבקים סביבתיים. שיום מאפשר לתת למקום זהות, כזו שאנשים יכולים להזדהות איתה, להתאחד סביבה ולהגן עליה, ועשוי לסייע ליצור סמל משמעותי עבור אנשים. פעמים רבות, מקום טבעי, יפיפה ולא מופר, לא יזכה לשם עד שמתחולל סביבו מאבק. הראשון להטביע שם, הוא זה הקובע את המשמעות. אם שם וסמל נצריבים בתודעה הציבורית והופכים שגורים בפי כל, זה מאפשר לעצב את האופן שבו המקום נתפס, וכן האם וכיצד הוא נשמר. במקרים מסוימים, פרקטיקה זו שימשה אף למהלכים לקביעת זכויות חוקיות לאתר טבע, כפי שקרה בניו-זילנד, שם נהר וואנגאנווי, הנחשב לאב קדמון של המאורים הילידים, קיבל הכרה אנושית **משל היה ישות חיה**.<sup>32</sup> וכך גם נהרות הגנגס והיאמונה ביבשת הודו, שזכו **להכרה שווה לזכויות האדם**.<sup>33</sup>

**פעולה ישירה** עושה שימוש אסטרטגי בצעדים אפקטיביים כדי לעודד מקבל החלטות לעשות דבר מה עבור הציבור אשר אין ברצונם לעשות. **פעולה ישירה**<sup>34</sup> היא פעולה

קולקטיבית ששמה לה למטרה מוגדרת להשיג דרישה מסוימת. פעולה ישירה כוללת: חרמות, שביתות, שביתות-רעב, שביתות-שבת, אי-ציות (מרד) אזרחי, גרפיטי, כתיבת שירי מחאה, הפגנות, שימועים ציבוריים ועוד.<sup>35</sup> ליריבים בעלי הכוח של קהילות במאבקים סביבתיים- כגון טייקונים, מקבלי החלטות, יזמים ותאגידים- ישנה גישה ישירה למדיה, לפוליטיקאים ולקובעי דעת קהל. כפועל יוצא, לפעולה ישירה יש תפקיד חשוב בשינוי כללי המשחק, בהפרעה לסטטוס-קוו ולהפניה של זרקור לסיטואציה שעד עכשיו היה נוח להתעלם ממנה.

עלינו לזכור ששילוב בין אלמנטים יצירתיים, סמליים, נועזים, הומוריסטיים, סאטיריים ומגוחכים יכולים להשיג השפעה מרחיקת לכת כשמדובר בפעולה ישירה (וזה יכול לעשות את כל ההבדל בין עוד מחאה מחושבת היטב שאף אחד לא שמע עליה, לבין אייטם בשעת צפיית שיא או פוסט ויראלי). בספרו, דה-לוקה (DeLuca)<sup>36</sup> מביא מספר דוגמאות לפעולה ישירה במאבקים סביבתיים מקומיים. באחד מהן, במחוז אלגאני שבמדינת ניו-יורק, שישה אזרחים וותיקים, המבוגר שבהם בן 86, אחזו בשלט עליו היה כתוב "סבים נלחמים על העתיד", ואזקו את עצמם לגשר במחאה על הכוונה למקם אתר פסולת רדיואקטיבית באזור. הם נעצרו על ידי המשטרה מקומית והואשמו בהפרת סדר. זה היה יום חג לתקשורת, וגם לקמפיין. פעולה ישירה יצירתית שימשה גם קבוצה של אזרחים שהתנגדה להקמת מכרה בקנטאקי: הם הקימו דוכן "לימונדה" בבירת המדינה ומכרו דגימות של מים מזהמים; הם תלו שלטי "מבוקשים" עם תמונותיהם של נציגי ציבור שלא הסכימו להיפגש איתם; בשימוע ציבורי בנושא זיהום עופרת במי השתייה, הגישו קפה למקבלי ההחלטות והציעו להם בחירה בין 3 אפשרויות: "נטול קפאין, עם עופרת, או נטול עופרת", כאמצעי להמחיש את הבעיה באופן מעורר מחשבה. בכלליות, ניתן לומר שבאשר אנשים צעירים מצטרפים לקבוצות כאלו, לעיתים קרובות הם מביאים איתם רעיונות, אומץ וגישה חברתית שמקבלת מעשי קונדס, שמאפשרים שימוש בטקטיקות יצירתיות יותר.<sup>37</sup>

קבוצה זו של טקטיקות כוללת גם **טקטיקות הסחה**, המשמשות להשגת יתרון בחזית בלתי צפויה או להעמיס על היריב חזיתות רבות בו-זמנית.<sup>29</sup> באופן דומה, **טקטיקות הפרעה**, יכולות להיות שימושיות עבור מי שאין לו כלים להשפיע על המערכת הפוליטית.<sup>38</sup> מאבקים סביבתיים עושים שימוש בטקטיקות הפרעה כשהם חוסמים רחובות, מונעים גישה מטרקטורים, כובלים מפגינים למכוונות, מארגנים שביתות, כשהם מתנחלים על עצים המיועדים לכריתה, כשהם נוקטים באי-ציות אזרחי פסיבי או מארגנים הפגנות. חשוב לציין שכל הפעולות הללו הן לא-אלימות באופיין. סוג אחר, קיצוני ואלים יותר של הפרעה הוא **אקוטאז' (Ecotage)**, כלומר, חבלה מכוונת במכוונות המשמשות לפגיעה במערכות אקולוגיות. פעולות אלו הן לרוב בלתי-חוקיות, והלגיטימיות שלהן נתונה לוויכוח. דוגמאות אחרות של טקטיקות הפרעה כוללות **קמפיין מיילים** בו קבוצה גדולה של אנשים בלתי-נלאים מתגייסת כדי לשלוח כמות גדולה של פניות דואר אלקטרוני בזמן מוגדר; שימוש במספר של אנשים כדי לגרום **להפרעה בעבודה הסדירה** באמצעות חציית כביש באיטיות הלך ושוב; **קמפיין טלפוני** (והיום, לא פחות, שימוש בהודעות טקסט); **דרישת מידע** על פי חוק חופש המידע; **התפרצות** לכינוס או ישיבה עם טי-שרטים ושלטים, ועוד פעולות יצירתיות ובלתי צפויות. אף כי פעולות אלו אינן מביאות לרוב לשינוי מידי, שימוש מושכל בטקטיקות הפרעה יכולים לגרום לנושא להדהד

בתודעה של תומכים פוטנציאליים, לבנות תמיכה הדרגתית ולעיתים קרובות השיגו שינוי משמעותי במדיניות סביבתית.<sup>34</sup> באופן טיפוסי, סוג כזה של פעולות היה משמעותי כאשר ארגון סביבתי אקטיביסטי וגדול הוציא אותו לפועל. ארגון גרינפיס (Greenpeace) הוא דוגמה אחת לארגון שנקט באסטרטגיות של פעולה ישירה, מתעמתת ולא-אלימה מאז 1971.<sup>39</sup> לצד זה, ישנן דוגמאות רבות לקבוצות קטנות שעשו שימוש באמצעים דומים במאבקים סביבתיים.<sup>13,27,34,37,40,41</sup>

מרכיב נוסף וחשוב ביותר בכל אסטרטגיה מתעמתת היא השימוש במדיה. בנוסף לפעילות במדיה המסורתית, שני העשורים האחרונים מאופיינים בעלייה באקטיביזם דיגיטלי. כלים דיגיטליים, על יישומיהם השונים, מאופיינים בהתפתחות בלתי פוסקת; טלפונים חכמים, באופן ספציפי, משנים את הדרך שבה מידע נוצר, נאסף ומופץ. זוהי נקודת תפנית שמאפשרת שימוש בכלים וטקטיקות ייחודיות במאבקים סביבתיים.<sup>42</sup> בו בעת, מדיה חברתית מציעה למאבקים סביבתיים מגוון רחב של דרכים לעקוף את המדיה המסורתית, עם דרכים חדשות להפיץ מידע, לחשוף עוולות, לעדכן עוקבים ולגייס תמיכה.<sup>43</sup> אם בעבר, רק מרד אלים הביא למהפכות, ללא ספק, כיום המדיה החברתית הפכה לכלי משמעותי ביותר, העושה שימוש בטקסט, דימויים ("אימג'ים") וקטעי וידאו עוצמתיים כדי להציף נושאים ולשנות את השיח הציבורי. דימוי מצוין ומדויק יכול לשמש כ"פצצת תודעה" - דימוי חזותי שמשנה את תפיסת הציבור לגבי נושא מסוים, כשהוא "מתפוצץ" לתוך התודעה הציבורית. את אלו אפשר לייצר באמצעות אירועי דימוי (Image events), הפגנות מתוכננות עבור הפצה במדיה-אירועים שמביאים דימוי חזותי של פעולה, שלעיתים מהווה כלי שכנוע משמעותי יותר מאשר הפעולה עצמה.<sup>34</sup> כמה דוגמאות לאירועים כאלו כוללים את קמפיין הקוטב של גרינפיס, שיצר את האדם הווירטואלי- אותו רישום מפורסם של ליאונרדו דה וינצ'י של האדם המושלם - בעודו נמס.<sup>44</sup> או כאשר ארגון Earth First! השתמשו בסרט שחור באורך 90 מטרים כדי ליצור "סדק" בסכר גלן קניון.<sup>45</sup> ועוד הרבה רגעים אייקוניים<sup>46</sup> במאבק נגד העברת צינור הנפט שהתרחש לאחרונה בסטנדינג רוק, צפון דקוטה.

אף על פי שלכלים דיגיטליים ישנו חלק חשוב בגישור על פערי כוח בין פעילים סביבתיים קהילתיים וירביהם, הספרות המחקרית בנושא חלוקה בנוגע לשאלה האם אנו עדים ליצירה של מרחב או פלטפורמה חדשה לאקו-אקטיביזם. עם כלים כאלו, יש דרכים חדשות להרחיב את מעגלי התמיכה כך שיכללו תפקידים כמו מטיפים, מפיצי מידע וקמפיינרים. לצד ביקורת על השתתפות מסוג זה, הקרויה לעיתים בלעג "קליקטיביזם",<sup>47</sup> או "סלאקטיביזם"<sup>48</sup> (כלומר אקטיביזם לעצלנים), חוקרים מסוימים טוענים כי כלים דיגיטליים אכן מגדילים את רצף האקטיביזם, ושלעיתים קרובות אקטיביזם דיגיטלי עובר התמרה והופך לאקטיביזם בעולם הגשמי.<sup>42,49</sup>

כפי שהראינו, קיים מנעד רחב של טקטיקות שניתן ליישם כדי להוציא לפועל אסטרטגיות במאבקים סביבתיים. האתגר הוא לעשות שימוש באלו מתוכן שיהיו אפקטיביות ביותר להשגת המטרות של המאבק שלכם. כמצופה, חלקן קשות יותר לביצוע, ומתבססות על משאבים או על קהל גדול מאד. ואולם, במחקר שלנו, מצאנו כי טקטיקות רבות נשכחו, נזנחו או שפשוט לא נעשה בהן שימוש. יתכן שזה נובע מהיעדר תכנון, מחסור באנרגיה או יצירתיות. אך לדעתנו, ייתכן כי פשוט היו חסרים להם רעיונות והשראה. אנחנו מקוות כי השיעור הזה ייתן להם את שני אלו.



## יישום:

**הוראות:** קראו את תיאורי המקרה הבאים והשלימו את התרגילים בהמשך. את התרגילים אפשר לבצע באופן עצמאי, כחלק משיבת צוות, בכיתה או עם הקהילה. אפשר להשתמש בתרגילים בנפרד או בשילוב עם תרגילים אחרים. שימו לב, בנוסף לשימוש במקרים המובאים כאן (למען התרגיל, חלק מההתפתחויות במציאות לא הוזכרו), באפשרותכם לשלב מקרים שאתם מכירים מהקהילה, מהתקשורת, סרטים או סרטונים. ראו הערות סיכום לרעיונות נוספים.

## תיאורי מקרה:

**1. המאבק נגד הקמת מכרה פוספט באתר "שדה בריר" סמוך לערד:**  
בשנת 1980 התגלה כי העיר [ערד](#)<sup>50</sup> שוכנת על מרבץ עצום של [פוספט](#)<sup>51</sup> – המשמש בתעשייה כימית, בחקלאות ובתעשיית המזון. תכנית לכרייתו בשני אתרים הוגשה ונדחתה בעקבות מאבק התושבים והתנגדות העיר. בשנת 2004 הגישה חברת רותם-אֶמְפֶּרְט, חברה-בת של "כימיקלים לישראל", תכנית לכריית פוספטים באתר "שדה בריר": 13,000 דונם בשטח המוניציפאלי של ערד, קילומטרים ספורים מהעיר ומהעיירה הבדואית כְּסִיפָה ופחות מקילומטר מהיישוב הבדואי אל-פּוֹרְעָה. המכרה צפוי להניב לחברה הפרטית רווחים של עשרות-מיליארדי שקלים. עם גילוייה, תושבי ערד שהתנגדו לתכנית התארגנו ופעלו באמצעים ציבוריים, תקשורתיים, פוליטיים, משפטיים ומקצועיים כדי למנוע את מימושה, מחשש לפגיעה בבריאותם, בכלכלת העיר ובתדמיתה. אחרי שפעלו במשך שנים כוועד-פעולה, בשנת 2011 הקימו את עמותת "רוצים לחיות בלי מכרות." במשך השנים, ההחלטה נדחתה שוב ושוב בשל פערים בין חוות-דעת מקצועיות של משרדי ממשלה, התערבות גורמים פוליטיים (כולל ראש הממשלה), והליכים משפטיים. תסקיר השפעה בריאותית מצא כי המכרה מסוכן וכי זיהום האוויר שיגרום יביא לתמותה של שבעה אנשים בכל שנה. דוח של המשרד להגנת הסביבה קבע שהמכרה יגרום לעליה בתחלואת מחלות לב וריאה בקרב תושבי ערד.

## 2. המאבק לשמירה על עמק הצבאים בירושלים:

"עמק הצבאים" הוא שטח פתוח הנמצא בדרום-מערב ירושלים, בין השכונות קטמונים, גבעת מרדכי ובית וגן, ומהווה ריאה ירוקה יחידה באזור. בעבר פעלו בו מטעי הקיבוצים מעלה-החמישה וקרית-ענבים, שחכרו את השטח ואז זנחו אותו. עם הזמן, [ערד הצבאים](#) [הארוצישראלים](#)<sup>52</sup>, מין אנדמי ששכן במקום, מצא עצמו לכוד בין הכבישים המהירים לשכונות המגורים, ובעקבות פגיעות בו, הצטמצם לפרטים בודדים. באמצע שנות ה-90 החוברים הגישו תכנית להקמת שכונת מגורים, שטח מסחרי ואזור תעשייה. עיריית ירושלים דאז בקשה לקדם את התכנית לאישור. קבוצת תושבים נלחמה בתכנית הבניה, שהייתה עתידה לפגוע באיכות חייהם, להחריב את העמק, ולמנוע את גישת הציבור למעט שיוותר ממנו. בראשית שנות ה-2000 הוקם "ועד הפעולה למען עמק הצבאים." חברו אליהם החברה להגנת הטבע, "הקשת המזרחית", "סגור קהילתי" ואחרים, ויחד הם נאבקו על העמק, ניהלו קמפיין ציבורי והגישו התנגדויות רבות לתכנית. בזמנו, העירייה העבירה את ההכרעה לוועדה המחוזית לתכנון ובניה.

### 3. המאבק להצלת עמק ססגון בצפון בקעת תמנע:

בשנת 1995 הופקדה תכנית מתאר ל**בקעת תמנע**,<sup>53</sup> שקבעה כי אזור מלונאות יוקם בצפונה. דרום בקעת תמנע משמש למכרות נחושת ומרכז לפארק בתשלום. הצפון, בין גבעת ססגון להר מכרות, נותר עד כה טבעי, בלתי פגוע ונגיש לציבור. מצויים בו הרי אבן-חול נדירים, והוא מהווה חלק משמורת הרי אילת שבו עובר שביל ישראל. בשנת 2005 אושרה תכנית להקים בעמק את מתחם הנופש הגדול בישראל – החורג במאות אחוזים מההיתר – במרחק 25 דקות נסיעה **מאילת**.<sup>54</sup> בשנת 2007 התבררה התכנית לחבר **קיבוץ סמר**,<sup>55</sup> שפרסם כתבה על הנושא בעיתון המקומי, הכין מצגת, פתח תא דואר אלקטרוני, אתר ועצומה אינטרנטית. בעקבות כך, הצטרפו אליו תושבים נוספים ונוצר "הוועד להצלת עמק ססגון", שיזם והוביל במשך שנים, יחד עם אנשי מקצוע ונציגי ארגונים, מאבק שכלל גיוס תמיכה רחבה, תקשורת, לובי, אמצעים משפטיים ועוד. למרות זאת, התכנית אושרה, בניגוד לחוות הדעת הסביבתית, ובהמשך הוגש ערר נגדה. בסופו של דבר אושרה התכנית, בגודלה המקורי (הקטן משמעותית מזו שתכנן היזם) ודרשה מהיזם להכין תכנית חדשה.

#### תרגיל 1.

דמינו כי אתם חיים באחת הקהילות האלו, המנסות להתארגן ולדרוש שינוי, או כי הינך עובד/ת סוציאלי/ת/קהילתי/ת הפועלת בקהילה זו. תכננו אסטרטגיה לקידום המאבק הסביבתי בעזרת טבלת האסטרטגיות (ר' נספח 1).

#### תרגיל 2.

התחלקו לקבוצות קטנות (2-3 משתתפים בכל קבוצה). בחרו אסטרטגיה אחת (ר' נספח 1) במאבק הסביבתי ותכננו כיצד תוציאו אותה לפועל עם טקטיקה ספציפית (כגון: הפגנה, קמפיין מדיה/ מדיה חברתית, הודעה לעיתונות, שימוע ציבורי וכו'). בתום התרגיל, כל קבוצה יכולה להציג למליאה את התוצרים שלה ולהסביר את הבחירות שלה.

#### תרגיל 3.

השתמשו באחד מהמקרים המובאים כאן, או הביאו מקרה אחר שאתם מכירים. נהלו דיון קבוצתי סביב השאלות הבאות:

- מה הם נושאי הליבה שקהילות אלו מתמודדות איתם? התייחסו להיבטים שונים של קיימות חברתית. הקפידו לכלול השלכות על כלל המערכות האקולוגיות, ולא רק על בני אדם (לדוגמא: איך הסוגיות הללו משפיעות על החי והצומח).
- האם יש דרך אחרת לספר את הסיפור שלהם? נקודות מבט אחרות?
- אילו פרספקטיבות מוסיפה גישת הקיימות החברתית למקרה הזה?
- כיצד היית פועלת/ת לו היית עובד/ת סוציאלי/ת או עובד/ת קהילתי/ת בקהילה זו? איזה תפקיד היית לוקח/ת לעצמך, ואילו מיומנויות ידרשו לך לפי דעתך?
- אילו אתגרים יתעוררו לדעתך, וכיצד תתמודד/י עימם?

- כיצד היית עוזר לקהילה לגייס כוח?
- האם יש טקטיקות שתסרב/י להשתמש בהן? אילו? היכן את/ה מותח/ת את הגבול, ומדוע?
- אילו שיתופי פעולה ואילו קואליציות יכולות להיווצר? מה הוא האינטרס המשותף?
- כיצד מאקרו פרקטיקה קשורה למקרה זה?
- אילו משאבים דרושים להצלחת המאבק? כיצד הייתם מגייסים ומנהלים את המשאבים הללו?
- אילו שינויי מדיניות ניתן להציע בהתבסס על המקרה הזה?

### **נספח 1: טבלת תכנון אסטרטגי במאבקים סביבתיים**

**הערה:** חלק א של הטבלה בתרגיל הזה הוא אדפטציה של טבלת האסטרטגיה של אקדמיית מידווסט<sup>22</sup> (Midwest Academy) וגרסה מעודכנת שלה משנת 2017. את אלו שילבנו עם רעיונות מהמודל של פרימן (Freeman) לחלופות אסטרטגיות בארגוני שינוי חברתי.<sup>56</sup> חלק ב של הטבלה מבוסס על ניסיוננו בשטח ועל המחקר שבבסיס פרק זה.

באופן אידאלי, בזמן מילוי הטבלה, שני חלקי הטבלה יונחו זה לצד זה, ועותק נוסף- ריק - של הטבלה המלאה ישמש את הקבוצה כדי למלא את המידע הרלוונטי עבור המקרה שאותו בחרה הקבוצה לנתח.

זכרו: היו ספציפיים ככל האפשר! אם תשתמשו בהצהרות כלליות, יהיה קשה לעקוב ולהשתמש בכלי הזה! ולכן, כשאתם משיבים על השאלות, תמיד ציינו מי? כמה? מתי? היכן?

# טבלה לתכנון אסטרטגי בקהילה לקראת מאבק סביבתי

בעיה: בעיה היא תחום הרחב המעסיק אותנו				
סוגיה: נושא שדורש התייחסות ושינוי*				
חלק א: קבלת החלטות כללית				
<p><b>טקטיקות</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● כיצד תראו את הכוח שלכם למקבל ההחלטות (מ"ה) כך שיתכנס לקדם את המטרה שלכם?</li> </ul> <p>טקטיקות אלו יכולות להתמקד בחינוך, העלאת מודעות, בניית הארגון, או הפגנת כוח ישירות מול מקבל ההחלטות: קמפיין מכתבים/ טלפונים/ דואר אלקטרוני עצומות טקטיקות מדיה חברתית פגישות קבוצתיות עם מ"ה אירועי מדיה הפגנות ומחאה אי-ציות אזרחי פורום ציבורי קמפיין שילוט חוצות פגישות ידוע ציבורי דרישת מידע מתוקף חוז שביחות, שביחות שבת מפגשים עם נבחר ציבור הפרעה "פצצות תודעה" תביעה משפטית שינוי חקיקה חרם פעולה ישירה לא אלימה לחץ כלכלי הנעת משקיעים מהשקעה "הוצאה מהארון" וחשיפת מניעים כבילה לעצום/ מכונות אקוטאד'  </p>	<p><b>המטרה: מקבל ההחלטות</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● הדמות שיש לה את הכוח לתת לכם את מה שאתם רוצים! מי הם?</li> </ul> <p>נבחר ציבור, ממונים, עובדי תאגיד? מי מצביע עבורם? מי קונה מהם? האם יש לכם כוח אלקטרוני או צרכני מולם? נקודות לחץ? האם יש להם אינטרס אישי בעניין? האם הם מכירים באופן אישי משהו שמושפע מהעניין?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>למה שיתגידו כן?</b></li> </ul> <p>מקבל ההחלטות אם הם מסרבים לבקשתכם? נתחו את הכוח שלכם מול אותה הדמות, כדי שתוכלו להשתמש בה באופן אסטרטגי. תמיד בחרו אדם ספציפי, עם שם, לא מדיניות או מוסד!</p>	<p><b>האנשים שלכם, הכוח שלכם: ציבור התומכים</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>למי אכפת מהנושא הזה?</b></li> </ul> <p>מי מושפע באופן ישיר ביותר מהנושא הזה? מי עוד יכול להיות בעל ברית בעניין? אהדים שכולים לספק תמיכה ומשאבים? איזה כוח יש להם על מקבל ההחלטות? האם וכיצד הם יכולים להשפיע עליהם? האם, היכן וכיצד הם מאורגנים? כיצד באפשרותכם להגיע אליהם? מדוע שציטרפו? מה ישגו אם נצליח? אילו סיכונים הם נוטלים? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>מתנגדים?</b></li> </ul> <p>מה המניע והאינטרסים שלהם? מה המשאבים שלהם? האם אפשר לנטרל או להפריד ביניהם ולשכנע את חלקם? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>סיכונים:</b></li> </ul> <p>מה יש לכם להפסיד מפעולות אלו? מה התרחיש הגרוע ביותר? כיצד מצמצמים את הסיכון שיתרחש? כיצד מתמודדים איתו, במקרה הגרוע ביותר?</p> </p></p>	<p><b>משאבים העומדים לרשותכם, צרכים ארגוניים</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>אילו משאבים עומדים לרשותכם כעת?</b></li> </ul> <p><i>חשבו על מוחשיים ולא מוחשיים!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>משאבים ייחודיים:</b></li> </ul> <p>ידע ייחודי, מומחיות, גישה לרשתות מידע ותקשורת, גישה למקבלי החלטות, מעמד. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>משאבים מוסדיים:</b></li> </ul> <p>זכויות, וועדות, אינסטנציות גבוהות יותר (בוועדות, בתי משפט), נציב תלונות הציבור, חוק חופש המידע, משרדים ממסלוליים, וכו'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>משאבים מבוססים על אנשים:</b></li> </ul> <p>מחויבות ומסירות (של מי?), כמה אנשים? אנשי מקצוע בשכר? מתנדבים? קשרים בתקשורת? עוקבים במדיה חברתית? כמה זמן (ולש מי?) מקום להיפגש, ציוד, משרדי, מכונת צילום וכו'? כסף? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ארגונים שותפים/ מארחים?</b></li> </ul> <p>אפשר ליצור קואליציה עם ארגון, או להשתמש בו כארגון מארח (במקרה שהארגון שלכם לא יכול לענות על כל צרכיכם). מה המניעים שלהם להצטרף ולקחת חלק במאבק? מה יש לכם להציע להם?</p> <p><i>חשבו על כיסוי תקשורתי, קרדיט, אומץ, מוניטין, כוח אנושי!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>כיצד משאבים אלו מנוהלים?</b></li> </ul> <p>מי אחראי על כל אחד מהם? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>איך פעולה זו תשפיע על הארגון שלכם?</b></li> </ul> <p>האם תצטרכו עוד משתתפים? כמה? עוד תקציב? כמה? מנהיגים חדשים? מי? איזה השפעות יהיו לפעולות אלו על הארגון? איך תושפע התודעה הציבורית וחזות הארגון? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>בעיות פנימיות, חסימים שאתם צופים להיתקל בהם?</b></li> </ul> <p>(כגון ערכים, ניסיון קודם, מעגלי תמיכה, ציפיות, יחסים עם קהיל היעד). כיצד אפשר להימנע/ להתגבר עליהם?</p> </p></p></p></p></p>	<p><b>מטרות קצרות וארוכות טווח</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>מטרות ארוכות טווח</b></li> </ul> <p>מה ברצונכם להשיג בסוף (לדוגמא: שינוי מדיניות, חוק חדש).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>מטרות לטווח בינוני</b></li> </ul> <p>מה המטרה שלכם כרגע (לדוגמא: הכרעה בפגישה קרובה).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>מטרות לטווח קצר</b></li> </ul> <p>צעד לקראת מטרות הביניים (לדוגמא: לשכנע את נציג הציבור כחן להצביע בעד שינוי המדיניות).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>מטרות אישיות של חברי הקבוצה</b></li> </ul> <p>תכלול עמדות בתוך הארגון, מיומנויות שברצונם לפתח, מלכים שהיית רוצה לקחת בהם חלק במהלך המאבק.</p> <p><b>**</b></p> <p><i>מטרות הינו שינויים אמתיים ומוחשיים בחייהם של אנשים!</i></p>

<p><b>השאה וכוחות</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>האם יש מנהיג, דמות ציבורית, אקטיביסט/ית מנוסה או מומחה שתוכלו לפנות אליו/ה לתמיכה, ייעוץ או סיוע מוחות?</li> </ul> <p>האם הוא/היא יסכימו להצטרף אליכם ולהיות חלק ממעגל התמיכה שלכם לאורך זמן?</p> <p><b>מחשבות, הערות, תובנות והשאה</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>למיים מניסיונם של אחרים</b></li> </ul> <p>האם אתם מכירים מישהו שיהיה מעורב בעבר במאבק סביבתי? (עדיף אחד מוצלח, אף כי יש הרבה מה ללמוד גם מאלו שלא הצליחו).</p>	<p><b>חלוקת תפקידים/ משמות, מבני קבלת החלטות</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>מי עושה מה?</b></li> </ul> <p>עבור כל נושא הגדירו תפקיד (גבר, מתעד, דוברת) והגדירו מי ממלא כל משימה.</p> <p>קחו בחשבון כישורים, ניסיון, זמן פנוי ופניות, תפקידים מקצועיים לעומת אקטיביסטים וכו'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>כיצד מחליטים מה?</b></li> </ul> <p>זונו על צורת קבלת ההחלטות. אילו החלטות דורשות הכרעה קבוצתית ואילו, בכל אחד מן התפקידים הם באחריות נושא/ת התפקוד (לדוגמה: החלטות כלכליות, הוצאות – מגובה מסוים? – הוספת חברים לקבוצה, מפגשים עם ארגונים אחרים, הפעלות בתקשורת ועוד).</p> </p>	<p><b>לוח זמנים</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>תאריכי עוגן והדדמוניות לפעולה</b></li> </ul> <p>כגון תאריך אחרון להגשת התנגדות לתכנית מתאר, ביקור של מקבל החלטות בשכונה; תאריך יעד לתחילת בניה/ הרס; שימוש בבית משפט וכו'.</p> <p>עבור כל הדדמונות, נסו לגזור זמנים אחרה ולסמן על לוח שנה את הפעולות הנדרשות מראש כדי להתכונן (באפשרותכם להבין תרשים גאנט<sup>27</sup> או סוג אחר של כלי לתכנון).</p>	<p><b>קהל יעד, מסרים, נרטיבים, קוד אתי</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>עבור כל קטטיקה, הדירו קהל יעד, נרטיב, ומסר מרכזי</b></li> </ul> <p>בהתבסס על קהל היעד, וכתלות במדויק, המסר צריך להיות מותאם: ארוך/קצר; פשוט/ מורכב; לוחמני/ פייסי</p> <p><i>תמיד תהיו מוכנים ומזומנים להצמם את המסר ל"סאונד בייט" קצר וקולע. הווי עקביים ככל האפשר במסרים שלכם!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>קהל רגע לחשוב...</b></li> </ul> <p>איזה סוג של המפויין/ מאבק ברצונכם להוביל? מה תהיה הדרך המיטבית עבור השגת המטרה ותסייע לכם להצליח בנווח הארוך? אילו מסרים אתם מרגישים בנוח/ לא בנוח לעמוד מאחוריהם? כיצד המדיום הנבחר ישפיע על המסר? מה הם הרווחים והמחירים של כנות מול חוסר-כנות? שמירה על אמינות לעומת אבודה? להיות הגון לעומת "להסיר את הכפפות?" (שאלו את עצמכם- האם יהיה אפשר להחזיר אותם?). אילו פעולות יביאו איתן בנשה ואילו גאוה? האם אתם רוצים להוות דוגמה לאחרים? איזו מן דוגמה? אילו שיקולים אתיים צריך לקחת בחשבון, ואילו קווים אדומים יש? מתי, אם בכלל, תהיו מוכנים לחצותם?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>שאלות/ מידע חסר שאלות פתוחות בשלב זה</b></li> </ul> <p>הקפידו לצוות חר/ה מהקבוצה כאחראית/על השגת המידע בכל נושא</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>תחומי מומחיות רלוונטיים לנושא</b></li> </ul> <p>סביבתי, אקולוגי משפטי כלכלי קהילתי ארגוני מדיה מדיניות פיתוח משאבים רפואה (איזה תחומים?) בריאות הציבור</p> <p><i>אם מישהו מחברי הקבוצה הוא מומחה באחד התחומים הללו, הוסיפו אותו לרשימת המשאבים שלכם</i></p>
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\* לקריאה נוספת, ראו: Bobo, Kendall, & Max, "Choosing an Issue", pg. 23-28, 2001.

\*\* המטרה שהבצפה של נושאים אלו באופן יזום היא כדי לסייע לשים את הקלפים על השולחן, עם הדדמונות לכל אחד לומר כיצד הוא היו רוצה להיתרם ולהתפתח אישית ומקצועית בתהליך. יהיה זה תמים לחשוב שאנשים, כולל אקטיביסטים/ים שלוחות/ים חלק במאבק, הם נטולי אגו, אג'נדה ושאיפות אישיות. יכול להיות מועיל לנהל שיחה פתוחה וכנה על זה מראש.

**טבלה לתכנון אסטרטגי בקהילה לקראת מאבק סביבתי  
(טבלה ריקה זו יש להניח ליד הטבלה לדוגמה. היא תשמש אתכם כדי למלא את  
הנתונים הרלוונטיים למאבק שלכם)**

בעיה:				
סוגיה:				
חלק א: קבלת החלטות כללית				
<p><b>טקטיקות</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● כיצד תראו את הכוח שלכם למקבל ההחלטות (מ"ה) כך שישכיחם לקדם את המטרה שלכם?</li> </ul>	<p>המטרה: מקבל ההחלטות</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● הדמות שיש לה את הכוח לתת לכם את מה שאתם רוצים!</li> <li>● מי הם?</li> <li>● למה שיגידו בן?</li> </ul>	<p>האנשים שלכם, הכוח שלכם: ציבור התומכים</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● למי אכפת מהנושא הזה?</li> <li>● מתנגדים?</li> <li>● סיכונים:</li> </ul>	<p>משאבים העומדים לרשותכם, צרכים ארגוניים</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● אילו משאבים עומדים לרשותכם כעת?</li> <li>● משאבים ייחודיים:</li> <li>● משאבים מוסדיים:</li> <li>● משאבים מבוססים על אנשים:</li> <li>● משאבים חומריים:</li> <li>● ארגונים שותפים/ מארחים?</li> <li>● כיצד משאבים אלו מנוהלים?</li> <li>● איך פעולה זו משפיע על הארגון שלכם?</li> <li>● בעיות פנימיות, חסמים שאתם צופים להיתקל בהם?</li> </ul>	<p>מטרות קצרות וארוכות טווח</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● מטרות ארוכות טווח</li> <li>● מטרות לטווח בינוני</li> <li>● מטרות טווח קצר</li> <li>● מטרות אישיות של חברי הקבוצה</li> </ul>



## סיכום

השיעור הזה תוכנן ונכתב כדי לסייע לפעילים קהילתיים ועובדים סוציאליים/ עובדים קהילתיים וסטודנטים להבין לעומק קיימות חברתית דרך סיפורים של מאבקים סביבתיים קהילתיים וכדי להתאמן בתכנון אסטרטגיה כדי להתמודד איתם. אנו מקווים שפרק זה תורם לארגז הכלים ולתפיסה הנדרשת לאקטיביסטים ועובדים קהילתיים המעורבים במאבקים אלו. ישנם עוד סיפורים רבים על מאבקים סביבתיים מקומיים, ותיאורי המקרה שהוצגו מעלה יכולים להציע הכוונה והשראה עבור אלו שהלכו בעקבותיהם, בדרך להפוך את העולם הזה למקום טוב יותר עבור כל מי ששוכן בו היום, ואלו שיבואו בעתיד. הנה עוד מספר דוגמאות:

- [The Seventh Generation: Youth at the Heart of the Standing Rock Protests](#)<sup>58</sup>
- Community activist mobilize to defend their communities against mining operations and their impact on their life and environment, in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Lesotho. [“We Are Activists: Reflecting on our struggles in mining communities”](#)<sup>59</sup>
- The story of South Central Farm in Los Angeles, California. [“The Garden \(2008\)”](#)<sup>60</sup>
- The case of the city on Flint, Michigan and its’ fight for clean water. [“Murky Waters of Flint. How a whole city was poisoned”](#)<sup>61</sup>
- The story of indigenous groups facing corporations planning to build dams along the Amazon River. [“Brazil - in the shadow of the mega-dams”](#)<sup>62</sup>

## מקורות

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# **Envejecimiento y Sostenibilidad**

Por Lola Casal-Sanchez

## **Biografía de la autora**

Lola Casal-Sánchez tiene Máster en Trabajo Social por la Universidad de Nueva York. Es fundadora y Directora General de AGEvida, consultoría social especializada en envejecimiento, diversidad e interculturalidad, trabajando con adultos mayores inmigrantes y de minorías étnicas. Desde 2016 es presidenta de ENIEC, Red Europea de Cuidados Interculturales a Personas Mayores y Secretaria Honoraria de la Federación Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales en la región de Europa. Actualmente colabora como técnico de gestión para la Secretaría General de la Federación Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales. E-mail: [casal.sanchez.lola@gmail.com](mailto:casal.sanchez.lola@gmail.com)

## **Resultados del aprendizaje:**

1. Conocer el impacto del cambio climático en las personas mayores.
2. Tomar conciencia de lo importante de capacitar y desarrollar habilidades en las personas mayores para avanzar hacia la sostenibilidad ambiental y social.
3. Identificar prácticas y estrategias de trabajo social que reconozcan el papel de las personas mayores como agentes para mantener el valor del conocimiento ecológico tradicional.

## **Lectura:**

La población del mundo está envejeciendo. En 2017, el 13% de la población tendrá 60 años o más años y se estima que cada año esta tasa aumente un 3%. En algunos continentes como Europa, este porcentaje alcanza el 25%, y la ONU estima que en el 2030 habrá menos niños menores de 10 años que personas mayores de 60 años. En 2050, se espera que todas las regiones, a excepción de África, tengan casi una cuarta parte o más de sus poblaciones mayores de 60 años, lo que supondrá más de 2.100 millones de personas.<sup>1</sup>

Estas cifras muestran que no podemos dejar una cuarta parte de la población mundial fuera de las estrategias de desarrollo sostenible y ambiental y debemos involucrar la participación activa de los adultos mayores. Sus experiencias y el papel que desempeñan en sus familias y comunidades pueden proporcionar información vital sobre cuestiones tales como la evaluación de riesgos y gestión en desastres, la identificación de vulnerabilidades y fortalezas de una comunidad y la relación entre factores socioambientales. Las estrategias de mitigación y adaptación climáticas deben incluir a los adultos mayores a fin de maximizar estas capacidades, además de abordar sus derechos y situaciones de vulnerabilidad.<sup>2</sup>

El cambio climático, los desastres y las emergencias afectan a todos, pero tienen riesgos específicos para los adultos mayores, que son más vulnerables a los efectos de las temperaturas extremas, al tener un riesgo de mortalidad significativamente mayor en condiciones climáticas extremas tener potencialmente, una menor capacidad de movilización en situaciones de eminente amenaza de un desastres. Además, son más susceptibles a los efectos del estrés en el suministro de alimentos y agua. De hecho, en Estados Unidos algunos estudios muestran que las personas mayores de 85 años tienen más probabilidades de sufrir efectos negativos en la salud a consecuencia del cambio climático, debido a su fragilidad y su deterioro físico.<sup>3</sup>

Los efectos potenciales del cambio climático en los adultos mayores se pueden abordar considerando las tres dimensiones del desarrollo sostenible: social, económico y ambiental.

La dimensión social se relaciona con la estructura de sexo / género y con el fenómeno demográfico: aumento de la población, homogeneización cultural, vulnerabilidad de las culturas minoritarias, desertificación de las áreas rurales; cambios sociales en las estructuras en familias y comunidades.<sup>4</sup> En este sentido, podemos afirmar que los posibles efectos en adultos mayores incluyen:

- Feminización del envejecimiento;
- Discriminación por edad y sexo, principalmente en el caso de las mujeres;
- Menor calidad de vida en la población femenina;

- Barreras a la participación social en la vida de la comunidad.

Si nos referimos a la dimensión económica, los principales aspectos se relacionan con la globalización, el detrimento de la economía social en oposición al aumento de la economía especulativa; un mayor enfoque en la tecnología y una disminución en el trabajo artesanal, así como una reubicación de los asentamientos productivos y la especialización de áreas por sectores productivos o actividades.<sup>5</sup> Algunos riesgos para el envejecimiento son:

- Pérdida de poder adquisitivo;
- Prejubilación, desempleo prematuro o alargamiento de la vida laboral más allá de las capacidades de la persona;
- Sobrecarga en las responsabilidades de apoyo económico de la familia;
- Dificultades para acceder al sistema de salud.

Con respecto a la dimensión ambiental y el hábitat, necesitamos hablar sobre cómo se ocupa el suelo (por ejemplo, industrial, comercial, residencial, etc.), qué tipo de actividades se desarrollan (por ejemplo, culturales, educativas, religiosas, de ocio, etc.), y cómo se gestionan los recursos (p. ej., transporte público, recolección de residuos y materiales reciclables, desvío de agua, etc.).

También necesitamos hablar sobre la deforestación global; pérdida de biodiversidad; degradación de la calidad del aire; agotamiento de los recursos alimenticios; pérdida de paisajes tradicionales; costas deterioradas y áreas urbanas; planificación territorial y planificación urbana que no tienen en cuenta el envejecimiento de la estructura demográfica de la sociedad; productos más tóxicos en nuestras casas<sup>4</sup> Todas estas circunstancias ponen en riesgo a los adultos mayores porque:

- La salud ambiental está empeorando;
- Disminución de la calidad, cantidad y accesibilidad de los recursos naturales;
- Aumento de los movimientos de migración humana hacia las áreas urbanas y costeras;



- Desertificación de áreas rurales;
- Pérdida de costumbres y actividades tradicionales.

La vulnerabilidad de los adultos mayores relacionada con la degradación ambiental y el cambio climático se relaciona con su sensibilidad a los cambios de calidad en el medio ambiente. Su salud física, psicológica y emocional se ve afectada por el suministro insuficiente de agua y alimentos, la mala calidad del aire, la pérdida de conexiones al lugar y la pérdida de redes sociales y familiares. Hay una pérdida de recursos y oportunidades para el envejecimiento activo, particularmente en los hábitats rurales, así como una devaluación del conocimiento tradicional en nuestra cultura tecnológica actual. Los adultos mayores se enfrentan a dificultades específicas para la movilidad dentro de su hábitat o entre diferentes hábitats, en la vida cotidiana y especialmente en procesos migratorios forzados debido a la degradación ambiental, los desastres ambientales y el cambio climático.

Los trabajadores sociales debemos tener en cuenta las tres dimensiones de la sostenibilidad, así como los factores que se cruzan, como son la edad o el género, cuando desarrollamos estrategias inclusivas basadas en la comunidad y el medio ambiente. Las personas viven más tiempo, lo que significa que tienen más tiempo para invertir en sí mismos así como en sus comunidades, y son agentes activos que contribuyen a desarrollar políticas e iniciativas que impactan en el bienestar de toda la comunidad.

Los trabajadores sociales debemos interactuar con los adultos mayores para ayudarlos a aprovechar sus conocimientos y recursos, así como desarrollar nuevas estrategias sostenibles para funcionar bien en la sociedad. Es necesario que involucremos a todos los grupos de la sociedad en la educación ambiental y rompamos el mito de que solo los niños son el grupo objetivo para la educación ambiental. La educación ambiental puede ayudar a los adultos mayores a tomar conciencia del estado actual del medio ambiente y su evolución (del pasado al futuro), las medidas que deben tomarse para promover la sostenibilidad y la posición ética y el potencial de acción de cada persona frente a esta realidad.

Los profesionales también debemos trabajar para mejorar las estructuras de participación social para que los adultos mayores puedan ser parte activa del desarrollo de estrategias para lograr comunidades y entornos sostenibles. Los adultos mayores tienen una sabiduría (por ejemplo,

información, conocimiento, experiencia, etc.) que, vistos bajo el prisma crítico de la sostenibilidad, nuestra sociedad no debe ignorar. Además, los adultos mayores pueden actuar como un puente intergeneracional, entre escenarios pasados y futuros, a través del intercambio con otros grupos de edad para crear una visión conjunta con el fin de construir el presente y el futuro de comunidades y entornos sostenibles. La educación ambiental puede convertir a los adultos mayores en educadores formales y / o informales con gran capacidad para influir en sus áreas más directas y cercanas (familiares, amigos, organizaciones cívicas, grupos religiosos, centros de personas mayores, etc.).

A medida que los adultos mayores contribuyen a la sostenibilidad de sus comunidades y entornos también se benefician, ya que contribuyen a su propia capacidad para disfrutar del envejecimiento activo en dichas comunidades. Los trabajadores sociales intervienen y contribuyen al envejecimiento activo a través de la promoción del desarrollo personal y la participación activa en la vida comunitaria, así como fomentando la intergeneracionalidad como enfoque de trabajo, no solo en la educación ambiental, sino también en la educación continua. Asimismo, se necesitan adultos mayores para promover y compartir conocimientos y experiencias que no podemos dejar pasar, especialmente en lo que respecta a la agricultura tradicional, las plantas medicinales y la flora nativa.

Como dijo Fijjrot Ckat "Vivir de forma sostenible significa reconocer que somos parte inseparable de la red de la vida, de las comunidades humanas y no humanas, y que mejorar la dignidad y la sostenibilidad de cualquiera de ellas mejorará a todas las demás (p.4).<sup>6</sup>

### **Ejercicio Práctico:**

**Instrucciones:** Por favor, lee los siguientes casos de estudio y usa como idea base que el desarrollo de estrategias sostenibles y ambientales debe involucrar la participación activa de adultos mayores. Luego, responde a la/s pregunta/s que siguen a cada ejercicio.

### **Ejercicio 1: Celebraciones intergeneracionales del Día Verde / Día de la Tierra**

1-Imagina que vives en una comunidad con dos escuelas primarias, un

centro de cuidado diurno, un hogar de convalecencia y un centro de servicios sociales. Va a ser la celebración del Día Verde / Día de la Tierra y el/la trabajador/a social del centro de servicios sociales tiene una reunión con sus colegas de las organizaciones mencionadas para planificar la celebración.

Los objetivos de esta celebración son fortalecer los lazos intergeneracionales, recuperar el conocimiento popular / tradicional, promover buenas prácticas ambientales, promover la colaboración y la cooperación entre los ciudadanos y apoyar la inclusión social de todos. En base a estas ideas, desarrolla una propuesta para lograr estos objetivos.

2-Ahora, piensa en formas en las que podrías trasladar estas iniciativas a tu comunidad. ¿Enumera que agentes ya están trabajando en tales celebraciones comunitarias? ¿Cómo podrías involucrarte como trabajador/a social en las actuaciones que se realizan en tu comunidad? ¿Qué socios e individuos de la comunidad necesitarías para asegurarse de que estén involucrados?

### **Ejercicio 2: Aprendiendo sobre la sostenibilidad de adultos mayores**

Los adultos mayores tienen información de primera mano (objetiva y subjetiva) sobre el estado del medio ambiente y su evolución. Por favor, analiza con tus compañeros cómo estas circunstancias pueden ayudar a comprender la situación climática y ambiental actual. Piensa en cómo su conocimiento y su experiencia de vivir en una sociedad más sencilla -en relación con los aspectos tecnológicos, socioeconómicos- y más cercana a la naturaleza, puede contribuir a lograr comunidades sostenibles y ambientales.

### **Respuestas sugeridas**

#### **Ejercicio 1. Actividades intergeneracionales del Día Verde / Día de la Tierra**

Esta lectura y ejercicios posteriores están diseñados para ayudar a los y las estudiantes a comprender que la sostenibilidad económica y la sostenibilidad social no se pueden lograr sin la participación de todos los grupos sociales. Cada persona y cada grupo tienen experiencias que pueden agregar valor a nuestras sociedades, el papel de los trabajadores sociales es movilizar las capacidades y contribuciones de cada individuo para enriquecer y agregar valor social para lograr comunidades sostenibles. Socios: Cualquier agente local puede participar en el trabajo comunitario. Administración pública, asociaciones de vecinos, bibliotecas públicas, asociaciones de jubilados, organizaciones de defensa de animales, etc.

Algunas actividades sugeridas:

- **Plantar árboles** en grupos donde participen mayores y estudiantes. Mientras los jóvenes plantan los árboles, los adultos mayores pueden explicar historias sobre qué tipo de vegetación había en el vecindario antes, cómo se debe cuidar la vegetación, cómo se plantaba o cultivaba cuando eran jóvenes, etc.
- **Crear juntos un invernadero.** En el centro de día, centro social, se puede construir un pequeño invernadero que pueden cultivar y mantener de forma conjunta personas mayores y jóvenes
- **Reciclaje:** para algunos adultos mayores, entender las cajas de reciclaje puede resultar difícil. Los jóvenes pueden explicar qué contenedor corresponde a cada material.
- **Cocinar juntos.** En una residencia o en centros de servicios sociales, las personas mayores pueden contar historias sobre cómo cocinaban cuando eran jóvenes, qué tipo de productos se consumían, dónde se compraban, etc. Si es posible, se puede cocinar una comida tradicional.
- **Lavar ropa.** El uso de productos de limpieza naturales como el vinagre, el jugo de limón, el polvo de talco, etc. son más amigables con el medio ambiente que los productos químicos. Se puede organizar una sesión pequeña donde las personas mayores enseñen estos trucos a los jóvenes

### **Ejercicio 2: Aprendiendo sobre la sostenibilidad de adultos mayores**

Compartir experiencias sobre cómo solía ser la vida con menos tecnología y discutir si se podrían recuperar prácticas, hábitos o patrones de consumo utilizados por adultos mayores para mejorar el cuidado de nuestro medio ambiente. Por ejemplo,

Prácticas de adultos mayores	Prácticas actuales de jóvenes
Comprar en mercados y consumir productos frescos	Comprar en supermercados productos que duran semanas
Lavar la ropa y los platos a mano	Usar lavadoras y lavavajillas con media carga
Usar productos naturales para	Uso de productos químicos para

quitar manchas: vinagre, jugo limón, polvos de talco, etc.	limpiar
Usar bolsas de tela para comprar el pan, o una caja para los huevos, llevar las bolsas para comprar	Comprar todo en bolsas de plástico
Guardar los productos en envases naturales	Envolver los productos en plástico, papel de aluminio.
Trabajo con herramientas manuales	Utilizar productos eléctricos o que utilizan baterías – cepillos eléctricos, máquinas de afeitar, etc.

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## Περιβαλλοντική Βιωσιμότητα μέσω Διεπιστημονικών Συνεργασιών σε Κοινοτικές Παρεμβάσεις

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### **Βιογραφία Συγγραφέων:**

Ο **Πάρλαλης Κ. Σταύρος**, PhD, είναι Επίκουρος Καθηγητής Κοινωνικής Εργασίας, στο Τμήμα Ψυχολογίας και Κοινωνικής Εργασίας, του Πανεπιστημίου Frederick, στην Κύπρο. Έχει εκδώσει μία μονογραφία και έχει επιμεληθεί την έκδοση ενός βιβλίου. Επιπλέον, έχει δημοσιεύσει δεκαπέντε άρθρα σε διεθνή περιοδικά και δέκα κεφάλαια σε βιβλία. Έχει συμμετάσχει σε πολλά ερευνητικά προγράμματα χρηματοδοτούμενα από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, ενώ είναι η πρώτη φορά που συμμετέχει σε έργα LIFE τα οποία αφορούν στην περιβαλλοντική βιωσιμότητα και στα οποία αναφέρεται το παρόν κεφάλαιο.

Ο **Κουνναμάς Κωνσταντίνος**, PhD, είναι Βιολόγος Διατήρησης και μέλος της Μονάδας Διατήρησης της Φύσης του Πανεπιστημίου Frederick, στην Κύπρο. Έχει συμμετάσχει σε πολυάριθμες επιστημονικές διασκέψεις, σεμινάρια και ομάδες εργασίας που ασχολούνται με θέματα περιβάλλοντος, περιβαλλοντικής εκπαίδευσης και νεολαίας. Έχει επίσης συμμετάσχει σε πολυάριθμα ερευνητικά προγράμματα με επίκεντρο την περιβαλλοντική εκπαίδευση, τη διατήρηση της βιοποικιλότητας και τη διαχείριση φυσικών πόρων στην Κύπρο, χρηματοδοτούμενων από διάφορους οργανισμούς, όπως η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή (προγράμματα ERASMUS, LIFE), η κυπριακή κυβέρνηση, το Ίδρυμα Προώθησης Έρευνας Κύπρου κλπ.

Ο **Ανδρέου Μάριος**, PhD, είναι Βιολόγος Διατήρησης και εργάζεται ως μεταδιδακτορικός ερευνητής στη Μονάδα Διατήρησης της Φύσης του Πανεπιστημίου Frederick, στην Κύπρο. Τα ερευνητικά του ενδιαφέροντα

επικεντρώνονται στις πτυχές της βιοποικιλότητας και της βιολογίας διατήρησης, καθώς και στη φυσιολογία φυτών και την οικοφυσιολογία των σπερμάτων. Στη σύντομη επαγγελματική του καριέρα, έχει συμμετάσχει σε πολλά έργα LIFE, στην εκπόνηση σημαντικού αριθμού περιβαλλοντικών μελετών, μελετών εκτίμησης επιπτώσεων στο περιβάλλον, σχέδια παρακολούθησης και διαχείρισης, καθώς και στη χαρτογράφηση φυτικών ειδών και τύπων οικοτόπων.

**Ο Ηλιάδης Νικόλας-Γιώργος**, PhD, είναι μεταδιδακτορικός ερευνητής στη Μονάδα Διατήρησης της Φύσης του Πανεπιστημίου Frederick, στην Κύπρο. Ασχολείται εκτενώς με την περιβαλλοντική επιστήμη και ιδιαίτερα με την πληθυσμιακή γενετική και τη βιολογία διατήρησης. Έχει δημοσιεύσει σε διεθνή περιοδικά και κεφάλαια σε βιβλία, ενώ συμμετείχε σε πολυάριθμα διεθνή επιστημονικά συνέδρια. Έχει επίσης συμμετάσχει σε πολλά ερευνητικά προγράμματα, χρηματοδοτούμενα από Ευρωπαϊκούς και εθνικούς πόρους, σχετικά με την αειφόρο διαχείριση και διατήρηση των άγριων πληθυσμών και του περιβάλλοντος.

#### **Μαθησιακά αποτελέσματα:**

1. Να κατανοήσουν την ανάπτυξη συνεργασίας μεταξύ διαφόρων φορέων και επαγγελματιών, σε τοπικό επίπεδο.
2. Να προσδιορίσουν τη δυναμική της συνεργασίας με μια ποικιλία κοινοτικών ομάδων και τα οφέλη από την ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής των πολιτών.
3. Να παρουσιαστούν διάφορες μέθοδοι και στρατηγικές μέσω των οποίων η κοινωνική εργασία προωθεί κοινοτικές παρεμβάσεις που απευθύνονται σε περιβαλλοντικά έργα.

#### **Μάθημα:**

Η προστασία του περιβάλλοντος αποτελεί ένα από τα σημαντικότερα ζητήματα του αιώνα μας.<sup>1</sup> Στο υψηλότερο πολιτικό επίπεδο, οι ηγέτες του κόσμου σχεδιάζουν τις πολιτικές τους προς αυτόν τον στόχο, ενώ πολλές πολιτικές προωθούνται επίσης σε χαμηλότερο επίπεδο, στην τοπική κοινότητα.<sup>2-3</sup> Οι τοπικές κοινότητες καλούνται ολοένα και περισσότερο να αξιολογούν τους κινδύνους, τα οφέλη και το κόστος της προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος και, ειδικότερα, να λάβουν δύσκολες αποφάσεις για να θυσιάσουν την τοπική περιβαλλοντική ποιότητα και τις οικολογικές αξίες (όπως άγρια ζωή, φυσικό περιβάλλον, κλπ.) με σκοπό την βελτίωση της τοπικής ποιότητας της οικονομίας. Η κοινωνική εργασία αναγνωρίζει ότι «η υγεία και η ευημερία των ανθρώπων κλονίζεται εξαιτίας των ανισοτήτων

και του μη βιώσιμου περιβάλλοντος, που σχετίζονται με την αλλαγή του κλίματος, τους ρύπους, τον πόλεμο, τις φυσικές καταστροφές και τη βία...»<sup>4</sup>. Ως εκ τούτου, οι κοινωνικοί λειτουργοί πρέπει να προωθήσουν την οικοδόμηση ικανοτήτων στην κοινότητα, ανταποκρινόμενοι στις περιβαλλοντικές προκλήσεις και τις ανθρώπινες ή φυσικές καταστροφές. Επιπλέον, η ανθρώπινη ευημερία έχει αποδειχθεί ότι συνδέεται άμεσα με τα άθικτα οικοσυστήματα και τη διατήρηση της βιοποικιλότητας των πτηνών.<sup>5</sup> Σε αυτό το κεφάλαιο, οι συγγραφείς περιγράφουν τη μεθοδολογία που χρησιμοποίησαν οι συνεργαζόμενοι φορείς κατά την υλοποίηση δύο έργων που έλαβαν χρηματοδότηση από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και συγκεκριμένα μέσα στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος LIFE (βλ. παρακάτω για περιγραφή). Για την υλοποίηση των δύο έργων, δημιουργήθηκε μια καλά οργανωμένη κοινοπραξία που περιελάμβανε δημόσιες αρχές, περιβαλλοντικές ΜΚΟ και ακαδημαϊκούς οργανισμούς. Ακαδημαϊκοί του Τμήματος Ψυχολογίας και Κοινωνικής Εργασίας και το προσωπικό της Μονάδας Διατήρησης της Φύσης του Πανεπιστημίου Frederick (Κύπρος) συνεργάστηκαν για την υλοποίηση των ακόλουθων δύο έργων:

- A) *Βελτίωση των πεδινών δασικών βιοτόπων για τα πουλιά στην Κύπρο (ακρωνύμιο LIFE-FORBIRDS)*
- B) *Ολιστική διαχείριση του οικοτόπου προτεραιότητας 9590\* στην περιοχή του Δικτύου Natura 2000 Κοιλιάδα Κέδρων-Κάμπος (ακρωνύμιο LIFE-KEDROS)*

Το έργο «Βελτίωση των πεδινών δασικών βιοτόπων για τα πουλιά στην Κύπρο» ([LIFE-FORBIRDS](#)) υλοποιήθηκε εντός τριών Ζωνών Ειδικής Προστασίας (ΖΕΠ) του δικτύου Natura 2000, δηλαδή: Κάβο Γκρέκο, Κόσιη - Παλλουρόκαμπος και Σταυροβούνι - Ποταμός Παναγίας Σταζούσας. Οι περιοχές αυτές γειτονεύουν με πολλές αγροτικές περιοχές. Το έργο LIFE-FORBIRDS είχε τρεις κύριους στόχους: i) να εφαρμόσει μέτρα διατήρησης / διαχείρισης που θα βελτίωναν ουσιαστικά τις οικολογικές συνθήκες για επιλεγμένα είδη πτηνών που περιλαμβάνονται στο Παράρτημα I της Οδηγίας για τα Πτηνά και απαντούν στις πιο πάνω περιοχές Natura 2000, ii) να επιδείξει στους Κύπριους δασοκόμους και άλλους ενδιαφερόμενους τα οφέλη της υιοθέτησης μιας πιο ολιστικής προσέγγισης διαχείρισης των δασών που θα ανταποκρίνεται στις ανάγκες των πτηνών που κατοικούν ή επισκέπτονται το δάσος και iii) να συμβάλει στην ενίσχυση της ευαισθητοποίησης του κοινού σχετικά με την ανάγκη διατήρησης των άγριων πτηνών και την καταπολέμηση της εγκληματικότητας των πτηνών



εντός του ευρύτερου χώρου του έργου. Το έργο ξεκίνησε την 1<sup>η</sup> Οκτωβρίου 2014 και ολοκληρώθηκε την 31<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου 2017.

Το δεύτερο έργο με τίτλο «Ολιστική διαχείριση του οικοτόπου προτεραιότητας 9590\* στην περιοχή του Δικτύου Natura 2000 Κοιλάδα Κέδρων-Κάμπος» (LIFE-KEDROS)<sup>6</sup> υλοποιείται σε Τόπο Κοινοτικής Σημασίας (TKΣ) του δικτύου Natura 2000, δηλαδή την «Κοιλάδα Κέδρων – Κάμπος», τη μοναδική περιοχή στον κόσμο όπου εμφανίζεται ο οικοτόπος προτεραιότητας 9590\* «Δάση *Cedrus brevifolia*» (βλ. Εικόνες 1 και 2). Το έργο LIFE-KEDROS στοχεύει στην εξασφάλιση της βραχυπρόθεσμης και μακροπρόθεσμης διατήρησης του οικοτόπου προτεραιότητας 9590\* σε καλή κατάσταση διατήρησης. Ο στόχος του έργου θα επιτευχθεί με την υιοθέτηση συγκεκριμένων δράσεων διατήρησης, τόσο εντός (*in situ*) όσο



και εκτός (*ex situ*) της φυσικής εξάπλωσης του οικοτόπου. Το έργο ξεκίνησε την 1<sup>η</sup> Σεπτεμβρίου 2016 και αναμένεται να ολοκληρωθεί την 31<sup>η</sup> Αυγούστου 2020.

Εικόνες 1 και 2: Ο τύπος οικοτόπου 9590\*.

Και τα δύο έργα σχεδιάστηκαν ακολουθώντας την προσέγγιση της «Προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος με την εμπλοκή της Κοινότητας» (Community-Based Environmental Protection)<sup>7</sup>. Αυτή η προσέγγιση αφορά σε μια ολοκληρωμένη προσέγγιση, η οποία βασίζεται στον χώρο και στη συμμετοχική προσέγγιση για την διαχείριση του περιβάλλοντος και η οποία διαρκώς συνυπολογίζει περιβαλλοντικές, κοινωνικές και οικονομικές ανησυχίες.<sup>7</sup> Στοχεύει να δώσει φωνή στα μέλη της κοινότητας αναφορικά με τις αποφάσεις που αφορούν στην προστασία των τοπικών οικολογικών πηγών. Επιπρόσθετα, η περιβαλλοντική εκπαίδευση με την εμπλοκή της Κοινότητας θεωρήθηκε ως ένα αναπόσπαστο μέρος αυτής της προσέγγισης, προκειμένου να συμβάλλει «στη δημιουργία υποδομών για αλλαγές οι οποίες να είναι βιώσιμες, δίκαιες και ενδυναμωτικές».<sup>8</sup> Η

προσέγγιση αυτή και στα δύο έργα επιτεύχθηκε μέσα από την υιοθέτηση των ακόλουθων τριών πυλώνων: 1) δημιουργία διεπιστημονικής συνεργασίας μεταξύ οργανισμών, 2) πρακτικές εφαρμογές κοινωνικής εργασίας (εργασία με ομάδες στην κοινότητα, τοπικές πηγές εξουσίας και συμμετοχή των πολιτών), και 3) δημιουργία ενημερωτικών εκστρατειών. Αυτοί οι πυλώνες επεξηγούνται περαιτέρω στη συνέχεια.

### **Δημιουργία διεπιστημονικής συνεργασίας μεταξύ οργανισμών**

Η επιτυχημένη υλοποίηση των συγκεκριμένων έργων βασίστηκε σε μια πολύ ισχυρή κοινοπραξία, με την συμμετοχή δι-επιστημονικής ομάδας από διαφορετικούς οργανισμούς, μέσα από την οποία αναπτύχθηκε συνεργασία ανάμεσα σε εταίρους με γνώσεις σε περιβαλλοντικά ζητήματα καθώς και την εξειδίκευση ενός πανεπιστημίου σε θέματα ευαισθητοποίησης (**Πανεπιστήμιο Frederick** – Μονάδα Διατήρησης της Φύσης (NCU)), την εμπλοκή της εθνικής αρχής που είναι υπεύθυνη για την διαχείριση της Κρατικής Δασικής Γης (**Τμήμα Δασών** – Υπουργείο Γεωργίας, Αγροτικής Ανπατυξης και Περιβάλλοντος, Συντονιστής του Έργου), την αρμόδια αρχή για την διαχείριση της πανίδας στην Κύπρο (**Υπηρεσία Θήρας και Πανίδας** – Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών) και την εκτεταμένη εμπειρία μιας Μη Κυβερνητικής Οργάνωσης (ΜΚΟ) και Μη-Κερδοσκοπικής Οργάνωσης στην Κύπρο σχετικά με την προστασία του περιβάλλοντος και την βιοποικιλότητα (**Φιλοδασικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου**). Η δι-επιστημονική συνεργασία επιτρέπει στους εταίρους να δημιουργήσουν κάτι νέο, αφού τους επιτρέπει να σκεφθούν πέρα από (παραδοσιακά) όρια και προωθεί τη συνεργασία μεταξύ διαφορετικών ακαδημαϊκών ειδικοτήτων, καθώς παρουσιάζονται νέες ανάγκες και νέα αντικείμενα ενδιαφέροντος. Είναι αναγκαίο να γίνει κατανοητή η δυνατότητα της συνεργασίας μεταξύ διαφορετικών οργανισμών και μεταξύ επαγγελματιών και να αναγνωριστεί πως μπορούν να συνεισφέρουν προς την ανάπτυξη περισσότερων ευκαιριών για πιο αποτελεσματική συνεργασία. Επίσης, η κοινοπραξία των έργων κατάφερε να εμπλέξει συγκεκριμένες ομάδες εταίρων στην διαδικασία υλοποίησης των έργων, οι οποίοι είχαν την ευκαιρία να εκφράσουν τις απόψεις τους για συγκεκριμένες δράσεις του έργου. Τέτοιοι εταίροι ήταν οι εξής: τοπική αυτοδιοίκηση, επαγγελματικές ενώσεις, η Ομοσπονδία Περιβαλλοντικών Οργανώσεων (Federation of Environmental Organisations), η Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Κυνηγιού, μικρές και μεσαίου μεγέθους επιχειρήσεις (SMEs), φορείς χάραξης πολιτικής στο δίκτυο Natura 2000, κτλ. Επιπρόσθετα, τα έργα εστιάστηκαν στην ενημέρωση ειδικά στοχευμένων ομάδων ενδιαφέροντος σχετικά με τα αποτελέσματα τους καθώς και να

ενθαρρύνουν την εμπλοκή τους στα έργα. Τέτοιες ομάδες ενδιαφέροντος ήταν οι εξής: ντόπιοι πληθυσμοί, γενικός πληθυσμός, τουριστικοί οδηγοί, μέλη οικολογικών ΜΚΟ, κτλ.

Τα διαφορετικά επιστημονικά πεδία του προσωπικού που συμμετείχαν στα δύο προαναφερθέντα έργα, καθώς και οι διαφορετικές προσεγγίσεις και προοπτικές τους χρησιμοποιήθηκαν προς όφελος των έργων και των στόχων τους. Ωστόσο, σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις οι διαδικασίες λήψης αποφάσεων εμπεριείχαν την διαβούλευση με αρκετούς εταίρους, είτε με κατοίκους των τριγύρω περιοχών ή με άτομα που συμμετέχουν σε σχετικές ΜΚΟ, σχετικές αρχές ή επιστημονικές ομάδες. Μέσα από αυτή τη προσέγγιση η κοινοπραξία του έργου είχε ως στόχο να εξακριβώσει τις απόψεις όλων εκείνων που επηρεάζονταν από τα έργα, άμεσα ή έμμεσα ενδιαφερόμενους φορείς, μέσα από την υλοποίηση συγκεκριμένων μέτρων διατήρησης ή διαχείρισης του περιβάλλοντος. Ο απώτερος στόχος ήταν η αποδοχή των δράσεων του έργου από τους ενδιαφερόμενους φορείς και, σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, η εμπλοκή τους στην υλοποίηση σε επιλεγμένες δράσεις. Επιπρόσθετα, η διαβούλευση με ενδιαφερόμενους φορείς εφοδίασε την κοινοπραξία του έργου με πολύτιμη γνώση, καθώς είτε διαβιούν μέσα ή κοντά στις περιοχές που υλοποιείται το έργο ή η επαγγελματική τους εξειδίκευση είναι ταυτόσημη με τις δράσεις του έργου.

### **Πρακτικές εφαρμογές κοινοτικής εργασίας (εργασία με ομάδες στην κοινότητα, τοπικές πηγές εξουσίας και συμμετοχή των πολιτών)**

Και τα δύο έργα υιοθέτησαν την στάση ότι οι τοπικές κοινότητες και οι κάτοικοι των περιοχών πρέπει να συνεισφέρουν και να συμμετέχουν στη διαδικασία λήψης αποφάσεων σχετικά με την διατήρηση του περιβάλλοντος.<sup>9-12</sup> Τέτοιες προοπτικές εξασφαλίζουν την προστασία και την βιώσιμη διαχείριση των προστατευόμενων περιοχών, αφού λαμβάνονται σοβαρά υπόψη οι ανάγκες των κατοίκων της περιοχής. Κάτι τέτοιο είναι σύμφωνο με τις αρχές της κοινωνικής εργασίας, όπως είναι η ενσωμάτωση και ο αυτο-καθορισμός. Επομένως, η εμπλοκή των κατοίκων και των τοπικών αρχών βοήθησε την ομάδα του έργου να φτάσει σε συγκεκριμένα τμήματα του πληθυσμού στις στοχευμένες περιοχές και να συλλέξει σημαντικές πληροφορίες που σχετίζονται με την περιοχή, εξασφαλίζοντας με τον τρόπο αυτό τοπική γνώση και συμμετοχή των κατοίκων στις δράσεις του έργου. Καθώς τα έργα κοινωνικής εργασίας στην κοινότητα εστιάζουν πρωτίστως στην αλλαγή της συμπεριφοράς του κάθε ανθρώπου ξεχωριστά, οι παρεμβάσεις σε τοπικό επίπεδο χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για να υπάρξει εμπλοκή της κοινότητας (π.χ. μέσα από

συμβουλευτικές επιτροπές/επιτροπές εταίρων ή κοινοτικούς συνασπισμούς), να βοηθήσουν στην εξατομίκευση των παρεμβάσεων σε ειδικά στοχευμένες ομάδες ή στην προσαρμογή προγραμμάτων στα χαρακτηριστικά της κοινότητας. Επίσης, αποφασίστηκε ότι θα μπορούσαν να υλοποιηθούν παρεμβάσεις σε διαφορετικά επίπεδα, περιλαμβάνοντας εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα ή άλλες στρατηγικές που να περιλαμβάνουν άτομα, οικογένειες, κοινωνικά δίκτυα, οργανισμούς και δημόσιες υπηρεσίες. Για αυτό το σκοπό, ο ρόλος των κοινωνικών λειτουργών ήταν η υιοθέτηση διάφορων μεθόδων προκειμένου να εμπλέξουν κατοίκους στα έργα, να τους ενημερώσουν για τα έργα και να τους καταστήσουν ικανούς να έχουν φωνή στα έργα. Συνολικά, ο ρόλος των κοινωνικών λειτουργών θα μπορούσε να συνοψιστεί στα εξής: α) “συνήγορος” (διεκδικώντας τα δικαιώματα των άλλων και εργαζόμενος για την κατάκτηση των αναγκών πόρων), β) “εκπαιδευτής” (διδασκαλία του κόσμου σχετικά με τους πόρους και πως να αναπτύξουν συγκεκριμένες δεξιότητες), γ) “μεσολαβητής” (συγκεντρώνοντας ομάδες ατόμων/επαγγελματιών για διαφορετικούς στόχους, όπως η κοινοτική ανάπτυξη), δ) “οργανωτής” (εμπλεκόμενος σε διάφορα επίπεδα κοινοτικής οργάνωσης και δράσης), και ε) “μεσίτης” (κάνοντας παραπομπές για να συνδέσουν την κοινότητα με τους απαραίτητους πόρους). Τέλος, οι μέθοδοι που υιοθετήθηκαν μπορούν να συνοψιστούν στα ακόλουθα:

- Σύσταση **Επιτροπής Ενδιαφερομένων Φορέων**, με σκοπό την ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής του κοινού σε πρωτοβουλίες διατήρησης, παρέχοντας στο έργο την απαραίτητη υποστήριξη και δέσμευση, καθώς και πληροφορίες για την αντιμετώπιση των εξωτερικών, πολιτικών, διοικητικών και διαχειριστικών ζητημάτων που ενδεχομένως να προκύψουν.
- Υλοποίηση **εκπαιδευτικών εκδηλώσεων** για ομάδες εθελοντών σε θέματα δασικών πυρκαγιών, οι οποίες παρέιχαν πληροφορίες και γνώσεις σχετικά με μέτρα πρόληψης πυρκαγιών και πυρόσβεσης.
- Διοργάνωση **τοπικών εργαστηρίων**, στα οποία οι κάτοικοι των χωριών που γειτνιάζουν με τις περιοχές του έργου ενημερώθηκαν σχετικά με τις απειλές για τη φύση / περιβάλλον, τα μέτρα διαχείρισης και τις δράσεις διατήρησης που εφαρμόστηκαν κατά την υλοποίηση του έργου.
- Διοργάνωση **εκπαιδευτικών εκδρομών** μαθητών (στις περιοχές υλοποίησης του έργου) σε συμφωνία με τα τοπικά σχολεία και το Υπουργείο Παιδείας & Πολιτισμού.

- Διοργάνωση **διαγωνισμού μεταξύ των μαθητών** (στις περιοχές που γειτνιάζουν με τις περιοχές υλοποίησης του έργου), με επίκεντρο τα περιβαλλοντικά θέματα του έργου (δηλαδή, την παρακολούθηση των πτηνών).
- Διανομή ενημερωτικού υλικού και υλικού προώθησης με σκοπό την αύξηση της ευαισθητοποίησης των τοπικών κοινοτήτων σχετικά με θέματα διατήρησης της φύσης.
- Δημιουργία ομάδων εστίασης με τους κατοίκους των κοινοτήτων που βρίσκονται κοντά στις περιοχές υλοποίησης των έργων, προκειμένου να καταγραφούν οι απόψεις τους σχετικά με τον κοινωνικοοικονομικό αντίκτυπο του έργου.

### **Εκστρατείες Ευαισθητοποίησης**

Ο τελευταίος πυλώνας των έργων ήταν οι εκστρατείες ευαισθητοποίησης. Στόχος των εκστρατειών ήταν να γνωστοποιηθούν τα αποτελέσματα του έργου σε ένα ευρύ κοινό και όχι μόνο στους υπεύθυνους χάραξης πολιτικής και στους κατοίκους των περιοχών που γειτνιάζουν (όπως προαναφέρθηκε). Προκειμένου να προσεγγιστεί το ευρύτερο κοινό, χρησιμοποιήθηκαν διάφορες μέθοδοι για την ευαισθητοποίηση και την ενημέρωση του κόσμου ως προς τη σημασία και των δύο έργων. Αυτές οι μέθοδοι συνοψίζονται ως εξής:

- **Δύο πινακίδες στον αυτοκινητόδρομο.** Οι διαφημιστικές πινακίδες τοποθετήθηκαν στον κεντρικό αυτοκινητόδρομο που συνέδεε τις περιοχές μελέτης, στοχεύοντας τόσο τον τοπικό πληθυσμό, όσο και σε άλλους χρήστες της ευρύτερης περιοχής (τουρίστες, κ.λπ.). Οι διαφημιστικές πινακίδες επικεντρώθηκαν στην προώθηση μικρών και σύντομων εκφράσεων [«Σπάσε την παράδοση!» (δηλαδή την παράνομη παγίδευση άγριων πουλιών) και «Άσε τα να πετάξουν» (δηλαδή να σταματήσουν τη μαζική παγίδευση με χρήση παράνομων μεθόδων)], ακολουθούμενη από απλά σχέδια (βλ. Εικόνες 3 και 4). Αξιοσημείωτο είναι ότι και οι δύο διαφημιστικές πινακίδες σχολιάστηκαν και συζητήθηκαν από την τοπική κοινωνία και τα τοπικά ΜΜΕ.



Εικόνα 3: “Σπάσε την παράδοση!” Εικόνα 4: “Άσε τα να πετάξουν”

- **Παραγωγή δύο τηλεοπτικών σποτ** και προβολή τους σε δημόσιους τηλεοπτικούς σταθμούς, ετησίως, κατά τη διάρκεια της κυνηγετικής περιόδου. Σκοπός των τηλεοπτικών σποτ ήταν να αυξηθεί η ευαισθητοποίηση σχετικά με τη σημασία της άγριας ζωής και να επισημανθούν οι καταστροφικές επιπτώσεις που μπορεί να έχει η παράνομη θήρευση και παγίδευση πτηνών στην πτηνοπανίδα. Τα τηλεοπτικά σποτ «Life for Birds»<sup>13</sup>, παρόλο που ήταν μικρής διάρκειας (περίπου 30 δευτερόλεπτα το καθένα), παρουσίαζαν τα βασικά θέματα που αντιμετώπιζε το έργο με τρόπο που ο μέσος θεατής θα ενδιαφερόταν να συνεχίσει να παρακολουθεί το σποτ. Οι δημόσιοι τηλεοπτικοί σταθμοί, που έχουν περίπου 12-14% μερίδιο ακροατηρίου<sup>14</sup> κατά τη διάρκεια της κυνηγετικής περιόδου, πρόβαλαν τα σποτ με σκοπό να αυξήσουν την ευαισθητοποίηση των κυνηγών σχετικά με τη σημασία διατήρησης της βιοποικιλότητας.
- **Προβολή των σποτ σε κινηματογραφικές αίθουσες.** Οι κινηματογραφικές αίθουσες αποτελούν χώρους τους οποίους επισκέπτονται πολλοί άνθρωποι και στους οποίους παρακολουθούν μόνο μία οθόνη, χωρίς την ευκαιρία να πάνε σε άλλο πρόγραμμα (όπως στην περίπτωση των τηλεοπτικών σταθμών). Τα σποτ που παρήχθησαν για προβολή στην τηλεόραση χρησιμοποιήθηκαν επίσης στις κινηματογραφικές αίθουσες.
- **Δημιουργία ενημερωτικού φυλλαδίου** και παράδοση από πόρτα σε πόρτα σε κοινότητες κοντά στις περιοχές μελέτης, ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί ότι όλοι οι ντόπιοι έλαβαν γνώση για την υλοποίηση των έργων. Το φυλλάδιο ενημέρωνε τους πολίτες για τους στόχους των έργων και αύξησε την ευαισθητοποίηση τους σχετικά με τα

θέματα διατήρησης της βιοποικιλότητας. Η δραστηριότητα αυτή απευθυνόταν στους ανθρώπους που ήταν πιο πιθανό να επηρεαστούν ή / και να επηρεαστούν από το έργο, ώστε να μπορούν να ενημερωθούν σχετικά με τους στόχους των έργων.

### **Συμπέρασμα:**

Το κεφάλαιο αυτό εξέτασε τον τρόπο με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιήθηκε η προσέγγιση "Προστασία του περιβάλλοντος με την εμπλοκή της Κοινότητας" σε δύο έργα στην Κύπρο. Η μελέτη κοινωνικοοικονομικών επιπτώσεων του πρώτου έργου αποκάλυψε ότι οι ντόπιοι γνωρίζουν τα πιο σημαντικά περιβαλλοντικά ζητήματα που αφορούν στην κοινότητά τους. Αυτό είναι ένα αναμενόμενο αποτέλεσμα, καθώς κατά τη διάρκεια υλοποίησης των έργων έλαβαν χώρα πολλές δραστηριότητες ευαισθητοποίησης (π.χ. εκπαιδευτικές δραστηριότητες, εργαστήρια, εκπαιδευτικές εκδρομές, ομάδες εστίασης). Εντούτοις, διαπιστώθηκε ότι δεν υπάρχει ισχυρή κοινοτική δέσμευση και, αντίστοιχα, καμία περιβαλλοντική στρατηγική / στρατηγικές με βάση την κοινότητα σχετικά με τον τρόπο αντιμετώπισης αυτών των περιβαλλοντικών ζητημάτων. Το αποτέλεσμα αυτό βασίζεται στο γεγονός ότι οι κοινωνικοί λειτουργοί δεν συμμετείχαν σε όλες τις δράσεις και σε όλη τη διάρκεια υλοποίησης του έργου. Επιπρόσθετα, οι συγκεκριμένες τοπικές αρχές στην περιοχή μελέτης δεν απασχολούν τους δικούς τους κοινωνικούς λειτουργούς. Εν κατακλείδι, πρέπει να τονιστεί ότι οι τοπικές αρχές πρέπει να τοποθετήσουν τις κοινωνικές παρεμβάσεις που συντονίζονται από κοινωνικούς λειτουργούς στο επίκεντρο των δραστηριοτήτων τους, προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί η κοινοτική δέσμευση και η ισχυρή συμμετοχή των πολιτών σε πολυάριθμα περιβαλλοντικά ζητήματα. Επίσης, τα μελλοντικά έργα θα πρέπει να προωθήσουν τη στενότερη συνεργασία μεταξύ των τοπικών αρχών, με στόχο τη βελτίωση της τοπικής οικονομικής και περιβαλλοντικής ποιότητας.

## Εφαρμογή

### Άσκηση 1: Σχεδιασμός προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος με την εμπλοκή της Κοινότητας

Σκεφτείτε την κοινότητά σας ή μια κοινότητα στην οποία εργάζεστε. Εργαστείτε με ακόμα ένα άτομο ή σε μεγαλύτερες ομάδες για να απαντήσετε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις και να αναπτύξετε ένα σχέδιο.

- 1) Ποια είναι τα περιβαλλοντικά ζητήματα που αντιμετωπίζει η κοινότητα;
- 2) Πώς επηρεάζει τους κατοίκους;
- 3) Πώς επηρεάζει τα είδη άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας;
- 4) Ποιος εργάζεται σε αυτά τα θέματα;
- 5) Πώς μπορούν οι κοινωνικοί λειτουργοί να διαδραματίσουν κάποιο ρόλο σε αυτό;
- 6) Πώς θα μπορούσατε να εφαρμόσετε την προσέγγιση «Προστασία του περιβάλλοντος με την εμπλοκή της Κοινότητας»;

### Άσκηση 2: World Café.

Το World Café<sup>15</sup> είναι μια πολύ διαδεδομένη μέθοδος για τη δημιουργία διαδραστικής μαθησιακής συζήτησης γύρω από θέματα/προβληματισμούς που έχουν ιδιαίτερη σημασία ή αξία μεταξύ συγκεκριμένων ομάδων ανθρώπων. Το World Café παρέχει μια αλληλεπίδραση μεταξύ των συμμετεχόντων, μέσα από την ανταλλαγή εμπειριών ή γνώσεων, συμβάλλοντας έτσι στη δημιουργία νέων ιδεών και εγκαθίδρυσης ενός δίαυλου επικοινωνίας και διαλόγου μεταξύ των συμμετεχόντων. Η άσκηση αυτή, δηλαδή η δημιουργία πλατφόρμας μαθησιακής συζήτησης (όπως παρουσιάζεται εδώ) μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί με πολύ εποικοδομητικό τρόπο για όλα τα εμπλεκόμενα μέρη.

Αρχικά, ο συντονιστής (ηγέτης) θα πρέπει να δημιουργήσει τρεις «κύριες ομάδες» (π.χ. να διαχωρίσει τους συμμετέχοντες σε τρεις ηλικιακές κατηγορίες), αποτελούμενες από 2-3 άτομα η κάθε μια: η πρώτη ομάδα θα μπορούσε να επικεντρωθεί στους νέους, η δεύτερη ομάδα στους μεσήλικες και η τρίτη στους ηλικιωμένους. Οι υπόλοιποι συμμετέχοντες θα χωριστούν σε τρεις «ομάδες παικτών» (το μέγεθος κάθε ομάδας εξαρτάται από τον συνολικό αριθμό των συμμετεχόντων) και θα είναι αυτοί που κινούνται γύρω από τα τραπέζια τύπου café (café-style).

Μετά τη δημιουργία αυτών των ομάδων, οι «κύριες ομάδες» θα καθίσουν



σε τραπέζια τύπου café. Ο συντονιστής θα πρέπει να διευκρινίσει το πλαίσιο της συζήτησης (café) και να διατυπώσει την ερώτηση: *Ποιες μεθόδους θα μπορούσατε να προσδιορίσετε και να χρησιμοποιήσετε για να παρακινήσετε και να ενισχύσετε τη συμμετοχή των ανθρώπων σε περιβαλλοντικά έργα;* Στη συνέχεια, το café-τραπέζι επιλέγει έναν «οικοδεσπότη» (κεντρικό συντονιστή) ο οποίος με τη σειρά του επιλέγει έναν χρονομετρητή και έναν κύριο συγγραφέα.

- Η ερώτηση που διατυπώθηκε καταγράφεται στην κορυφή μιας σελίδας χαρτιού στο κέντρο του τραπέζιου. Σε κάθε γύρο συνομιλίας, οι «ομάδες παικτών» μετακινούνται σε διαφορετικό τραπέζι, αναπτύσσοντας διάλογο για το θέμα διάρκειας 15-20 λεπτών. Στη συνέχεια, οι «κύριες ομάδες» παραμένουν στο τραπέζι και οι «ομάδες παικτών» κινούνται σε άλλο τραπέζι. Στον 2<sup>ο</sup> γύρο, η «κυρίως ομάδα» εξηγεί εν συντομία στα νέα μέλη του τραπέζιου τα κύρια σημεία και τις ιδέες που αναπτύχθηκαν στο πρώτο café, και τα νέα μέλη αναπτύσσουν περαιτέρω το θέμα. Αυτός ο γύρος θα διαρκέσει επίσης 15-20 λεπτά. Τέλος, η ίδια πρακτική επαναλαμβάνεται για τρίτη φορά. Τελικά, η κάθε «κύρια ομάδα» θα καταλήξει σε ορισμένα συμπεράσματα, τα οποία θα παρουσιαστούν με την ολοκλήρωση και του 3<sup>ου</sup> γύρου, σε ολόκληρη την ομάδα.

### **Άσκηση 3: Ανταλλαγή ιδεών και Συζήτηση.**

Η ανταλλαγή ιδεών και η συζήτηση είναι δύο από τις πιο παραγωγικές μεθόδους μάθησης. Η ψυχαγωγία είναι ένας τρόπος να εισαχθεί ένα νέο θέμα, να ενθαρρυνθεί η δημιουργικότητα και να αναπτυχθούν πολλές ιδέες πολύ γρήγορα. Μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί για την επίλυση συγκεκριμένου προβλήματος ή για την απάντηση σε μια συγκεκριμένη ερώτηση<sup>16</sup>. Επίσης διάφοροι μελετητές αποδέχονται ότι η ανταλλαγή ιδεών μεταξύ ομάδων μπορεί να ενισχύσει τη γνωστική διέγερση και την παραγωγή ιδεών<sup>16</sup>. Η υιοθέτηση μιας διαδικασίας συζήτησης (διαλόγου) μπορεί να είναι πολύ παραγωγική μέθοδος, δεδομένου ότι θα μπορούσε να αναπτυχθεί ένας διάλογος μεταξύ των συμμετεχόντων (π.χ. μαθητών) και να χρησιμοποιηθούν επιχειρήματα. Ο σχεδιασμός μιας συζήτησης χαρακτηρίζεται συνήθως από έναν συντονιστή (π.χ. τον αρχηγό / εκπαιδευτή) ο οποίος καθορίζει τα αποτελέσματα<sup>18</sup>. Η άσκηση που παρουσιάζεται πιο κάτω συνδυάζει τον προβληματισμό και τη συζήτηση με έναν πολύ παραγωγικό τρόπο.

### **Βήμα 1: Ο συντονιστής κατανέμει τους συμμετέχοντες σε δύο ομάδες.**

*Σημείωση:* Η συζήτηση θα πρέπει να συμπεριλαμβάνει αναφορά σε διάφορες πηγές ενέργειας: ενέργεια από ορυκτά καύσιμα, ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας και πυρηνική ενέργεια. Όλες οι μορφές παραγωγής ενέργειας έχουν πλεονεκτήματα και μειονεκτήματα: πρέπει να είμαστε σε θέση να υπερασπιστούμε την κάθε μορφή ενέργειας, ασχέτως των μειονεκτημάτων της, καθώς (ασχέτως αυτών των μειονεκτημάτων), η κάθε μορφή ενέργειας θα μπορούσε να είναι πιο συμφέρουσα από άλλες. Από την άποψη αυτή, οι συμμετέχοντες πρέπει να εργαστούν σε δύο ομάδες: (1) όσοι είναι υπέρμαχοι της επένδυσης σε αυτές τις δύο μορφές κοινοτικών πηγών ανανεώσιμης ενέργειας (2) όσοι αντιτίθενται σε τέτοιες επενδύσεις. Και οι δύο ομάδες θα πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να υποστηρίξουν τις θέσεις τους.

### **Βήμα 2: Ο συντονιστής διαβάξει τότε την ακόλουθη δήλωση:**

*«Η τοπική αρχή αποφασίζει να δημιουργήσει δύο πάρκα από ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας εντός των ορίων της κοινότητάς σας: ένα αιολικό πάρκο και ένα φωτοβολταϊκό πάρκο.»* Συζητήστε τα πλεονεκτήματα και τις αδυναμίες αυτών των μορφών παραγωγής ενέργειας και να συγκρίνετε με τις εναλλακτικές μορφές παραγωγής ενέργειας που χρησιμοποιούνται σήμερα στην κοινότητά σας.

**Βήμα 3:** Μετά την ακρόαση της παραπάνω δήλωσης, οι δύο ομάδες θα διαθέσουν λίγο χρόνο να προβληματιστούν γύρω από τα επιχειρήματά τους, πριν από τη συζήτηση. Οι δύο ομάδες θα έχουν 15 λεπτά για να προετοιμαστούν, ενώ στο χρονικό αυτό διάστημα θα πρέπει να εκλέξουν έναν ομιλητή (ανά ομάδα) για να εκπροσωπήσει την ομάδα τους στη συζήτηση μεταξύ των ομάδων. Ο συντονιστής είναι ο πρόεδρος, ο οποίος διεξάγει και ελέγχει τη συζήτηση. Κάθε τοποθέτηση περιορίζεται στα πέντε (5) λεπτά. Για να απαντηθεί στο θέμα που παρουσιάστηκε παραπάνω, μπορεί να είναι χρήσιμο να εξετάσουμε τα "υπέρ" και τα "κατά" της χρήσης ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας.

Σημεία υπέρ του Αιολικού Πάρκου	Σημεία κατά του Αιολικού Πάρκου
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια είναι μια οικονομική μορφή παραγωγής ενέργειας που μειώνει τόσο το κόστος λειτουργίας όσο και την περιβαλλοντική ζημιά.</li> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια αποτελεί μια βιώσιμη εναλλακτική λύση έναντι της ενέργειας από ορυκτά καύσιμα και της πυρηνικής ενέργειας.</li> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια παρέχει σταθερότητα των τιμών μακροπρόθεσμα: ο άνεμος θα είναι μαζί μας για όλη τη διάρκεια.</li> <li>- Με την παραγωγή αιολικής ενέργειας δεν προκύπτουν εκπομπές διοξειδίου του άνθρακα ή θείου, οπότε το αιολικό πάρκο δεν συμβάλλει στην υπερθέρμανση του πλανήτη.</li> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια αποτελεί «καθαρή» λύση.</li> <li>- Δεν απαιτείται καύσιμο: ελεύθερη ενέργεια.</li> <li>- Χαμηλό κόστος συντήρησης.</li> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια στην ξηρά κοστίζει περίπου £0,03 (3 αγγλικές πέννες) ανά kWh, ενώ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Η αιολική ενέργεια είναι αναξιόπιστη και παρέχει μόνο μια παράτυπη πηγή τροφοδοσίας - και μάλιστα μόνο σε ορισμένες χώρες.</li> <li>- Οι ανεμογεννήτριες αποτελούν απειλή για την άγρια ζωή.</li> <li>- Η οικονομική υποστήριξη που απαιτείται για την περαιτέρω ανάπτυξη της αιολικής τεχνολογίας θα μπορούσε να αναπτυχθεί καλύτερα σε πιο σταθερές διαδικασίες, όπως η γεωθερμία και η πυρηνική ενέργεια.</li> <li>- Η παραγωγή εξαρτάται εξ' ολοκλήρου από την ταχύτητα του ανέμου: όταν δεν υπάρχει αέρας δεν υπάρχει παραγωγή ενέργειας.</li> <li>- Η ανάγκη ύπαρξης συμβατικών σταθμών παραγωγής ενέργειας παραμένει, λόγω του ότι δεν υπάρχει συνέχεια άνεμος.</li> <li>- Μπορεί να έχει περιορισμένη εφαρμογή λόγω της έλλειψης κατάλληλων θέσεων.</li> <li>- Τραυματισμός ειδών της πτηνοπανίδας (πουλιά) λόγω της περιστροφής των πτερυγίων της ανεμογεννήτριας.</li> <li>- Κακή αισθητική στο χώρο.</li> <li>- Ανάγκη για την εγκατάσταση μεγάλου αριθμού</li> </ul>

η υπεράκτια αιολική ενέργεια κοστίζει £ 0,05 ανά kwh.	ανεμογεννητριών, καθώς μόνο μικρή ποσότητα ενέργειας παράγεται από το κάθε μια, άρα τέτοιο πάρκο χαρακτηρίζεται από υψηλό κόστος εγκατάστασης.
<b>Σημεία υπέρ του Φωτοβολταϊκού πάρκου</b>	<b>Σημεία κατά του Φωτοβολταϊκού πάρκου</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Δεν υπάρχουν εκπομπές διοξειδίου του άνθρακα ή θείου, επομένως η εκμετάλλευση ηλιακών συλλεκτών δεν συμβάλλει στην υπερθέρμανση του πλανήτη.</li> <li>- Αποτελεί μια «καθαρή» λύση.</li> <li>- Δεν απαιτείται καύσιμο: είναι μια ελεύθερη ενέργεια.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Μεγάλο κόστος εγκατάστασης του πάρκου.</li> <li>- Αποτελεσματική λειτουργία στις χώρες του ισημερινού όπου δεν παρατηρούνται πολλές συννεφιασμένες μέρες.</li> <li>- Δεν είναι ιδιαίτερα αποτελεσματική.</li> </ul>

### Περίληψη

Οι πληροφορίες που παρουσιάζονται παρακάτω θα μπορούσαν να χρησιμοποιηθούν για να υποστηρίξουν τα επιχειρήματα των συμμετεχόντων στη συζήτηση.

### Δεδομένα/ στοιχεία που μπορούν να υποστηρίξουν τα επιχειρήματα των συμμετεχόντων:

Οι ενδιαφερόμενοι μπορούν επίσης να επισκεφθούν τα ακόλουθα άρθρα και ιστοσελίδες:

1. [Efficiency and effectiveness of promotion systems for electricity generation from renewable energy sources – Lessons from EU countries](#)<sup>19</sup>
2. [Fostering the use of renewable energies in the European Union: the race between feed-in tariffs and green certificates](#)<sup>20</sup>
3. [Renewable Energy Pros and Cons](#)<sup>21</sup>
4. [The Real Pros and Cons of Renewable Energy Sources](#)<sup>22</sup>

## 5. [The Pros and Cons of 4 Common Alternative Energy Sources](#) <sup>23</sup>

### Ευχαριστίες

Ειδικές ευχαριστίες στον κ. Τάκη Τσιντίδη, Διευθυντή του Τμήματος Δασών, για την πολύτιμη συνεισφορά του.

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## Vaimse tervise edendamine: keskkonnaga seotus kui lahenduste ja inspiratsiooni allikas

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## Õpiväljundid:

1. Õppida tundma, kuidas inimese kontakt loodusega aitab hoida vaimset tervist.
2. Saada ülevaade, kuidas personaalse taastumise käsitlus on seotud looduskeskkonna elamusliku mõjuga (*affective nature atmospheres*)
3. Ära tunda, kuidas sotsiaalne kaasatus, inimeste heaolu ning neid ümbritseva keskkonna nimel tehtav koosloome on kontseptsioonid, mis ühendavad sotsiaaltöötajaid, sotsiaalteenuste kasutajaid ning ökokülade võrgustiku inimesi.
4. Õppida märkama, kuidas deinstitutionaliseeritud inimesed saavad rikastada oma kogukondi.

## Peatüki ülevaade

Peatükis tuleb juttu looduskeskkonnast kui meid ümbritsevast väga väärtuslikust ja samas vahel äraunustatud abiallikast vaimse tervise hoidmisel ja igapäevase funktsioneerimise toetamisel.

Kontakt loodusega ja looduses viibimine aitab kaasa emotsionaalsele ja kognitiivsele taastumisele. Inimesed, kes elavad pikaajalise vaimse tervise olukorraga ja on keskendunud personaalse taastumise protsessile, leiavad, et looduskeskkond võib pakkuda tuge.

Peatükis kirjeldatakse, kuidas loodust väärtustavad inimesed, nt ökokogukondadest, pööravad tähelepanu sotsiaalsele kaasatusele ja on seeläbi sotsiaaltöötajatele head koostööpartnerid. Koosloome kaudu saavad sotsiaaltöötajad ja loodust väärtustavad inimesed luua uusi säilienõtteid ning kestlikke lahendusi. Samuti mõelda, kuidas deinstitutionaliseerimise protsessi läbivatel inimestel aidata leida looduskeskkonnaga kontakti uues kodukohas.

## Vaimne tervis, heaolu ja looduskeskkonnas viibimise kasu inimesele

Vaimset tervist on defineeritud kui "heaolu seisundit, kus inimene suudab realiseerida oma potentsiaali, tulla toime stressiga, töötada produktiivselt ja viljakalt ning anda omapoolne panus kogukonna heaks" ([http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/))<sup>1</sup>.

Antud peatükis vaatleme vaimset tervist avaramas tähenduses, eesmärgiga pidada silmas igat ühiskonnaliiget ja samas pöörame erilist tähelepanu nende inimeste vaimsele tervisele, kellel on psüühikahäire ja/või intellektipuue. Meie igapäevaste igapäevastes tegevustes ning pere, töö või kogukonnaga seotud rollides on üsna suuresti sõltuv vaimsest tervisest. Kontakt loodusega on üks võimalus, kuidas end hoida ja koguda positiivseid emotsioone.

Positiivne interaktsioon loodusega pakub inimesele psühholoogilist heaolu, kuid ka kognitiivset ja sotsiaalset kasu<sup>2-4</sup>.

Uurimused näitavad, et inimesele kasutoov kontakt loodusega võib varieeruda otsesest interaktsioonist (näiteks füüsiline looduses viibimine) kaudse interaktsioonini (looduse vaatlemine läbi akna või siseruumides olevate looduselementide vaatamine: nt potis kasvavad taimed, akvaarium). Näiteks võivad sellised looduses viibimised – nagu metsas jalutamine – pakkuda visuaalset, auditiivset ja lõhnastiimulit; need toovad esile positiivseid emotsioone, soodustavad jõuvarude taastumist ja tõstavad vitaalsust<sup>5</sup>.

Cox'i jt (2017) hiljutine uurimus näitas ilmekalt, et inimestel, kes veedavad aega väljas ja roheluses, on vähem depressiooni, ärevust ja stressi<sup>4</sup>. Jaapanis läbi viidud uurimus näitas, et lühikesed, isegi 15 minutit kestvad jalutuskäigud metsas kutsuvad esile mitmeid psühholoogilisi efekte, nagu meeleolu paranemine, positiivse emotsiooni tugevnemine ja subjektiivne vitaalsuse tunne<sup>6</sup>.

Loodusega seotud kogemused kutsuvad esile positiivseid emotsioone ja leevendavad stressi. Just sel põhjusel otsustavad inimesed külastada taastava mõjuga paiku, mis on kas (1) suured metsad, väikesed metsatukad, kauni vaatega paigad, niidud, jõgede või järvede äärsed paigad, sood ja rabad, linnamäed, suured kivid; (2) linnakeskkonda rajatud rohealad ning (3) rannikutele rajatud rannaalad ning sadamad<sup>7</sup>.

Looduse kasulikku mõju on uuritud veel haiglas viibivate patsientide seas (Ulrich, Lunden, Eltinge, 1993).

Ulrich'i jt uurimus näitas, et patsiendid, kelle palatiaknast paistsid puud, paranesid pärast operatsiooni kiiremini, neil oli vähem kaebuseid ödedele ning neil esines vähem operatsioonijärgseid komplikatsioone<sup>9</sup>.

Sotsiaaltöötajatel ja sotsiaalvaldkonna spetsialistidel tasub pöörata tähelepanu looduses viibimise taastavale mõjule, väärtustada seda ning näha selles võimalust leevendada stressi, saada positiivseid emotsioone ja inspiratsiooni.

Foto 1: Narusson, 2018. "Image while I Write."



*Isiklik lugu: inspiratsioon loodusest*

*Sotsiaaltöö teemadel kirjutades või õppetööks ette valmistades püüan leida võimaluse, et viibida looduses. Nii ka seda teksti kirjutades. Olen kogenud, et looduses mõtted selginevad. Nähes suuri vabu pindu, nt suured järved, pikad põllud või mäe otsast kaugele paistev silmapiir, muutuvad vabamaks ja avarduvad ka mõtete jadad. Loodus inspireerib kirjutamise ettevalmistamise ja kirjutamiseks mõtete kogumise protsessis või kirjutamises tekkinud tupikseisust väljatulemist.*

### **Vaimne tervis, personaalne taastumine ja kokkupuuted keskkonnaga**

Konventsionaalsed arusaamad vaimse tervise, haiguse ja taastumise kohta on viimastel kümnenditel oluliselt muutunud. Uus käsitus taastumisest vaimse tervise kontekstis näeb taastumist kui inimese positiivse identiteedi kujunemise ja kogukonnas ning ühiskonnas edukalt funktsioneerimise saavutamise protsessi pärast haiguse laastava mõju kogemist<sup>10</sup>. Personaalse taastumise protsess on märksa sügavam kui psüühikahäire enese ravimine<sup>10</sup>.

Siinkohal on oluline vahet teha, et kliiniline taastumiskäsitus, vana ja traditsiooniline kontseptsioon, keskendub vaimse tervise sümptomitele ehk haigusest taastumisele (tulemusena oodatakse sümptomite remissiooni, "normaalseks saamist") ning uuenduslik personaalse taastumise

kontseptsioon keskendub taastumisele koos haigusega<sup>11,12</sup>. Personaalne taastumine tähendab “elada rahuldust pakkuvat, lootusrikast, oma panust andvat elu, isegi siis, kui haigusega kaasnevad piirangud ära ei kao” (lk 15)<sup>13</sup>. Kliinilise taastumise ja personaalse taastumise fookused on erinevad. Personaalset taastumist mõistetakse ühelt poolt kui protsessi või kontiiniumit ja teiselt poolt kui protsessi, mis on subjektiivselt defineeritud inimese enda poolt, kes kogeb vaimse tervise raskuseid. Seetõttu personaalne taastumine võib tähendada erinevaid asju erinevatele inimestele, kuigi on olemas kindlad kattuvad elemendid (mille kaudu saab personaalset taastumist kirjeldada). Uue kontseptsiooni kaudu tutvustatakse uusi väärtuseid ja uut arusaama taastumisest - *tervis haiguse sees* (ingl. k. *health in illness*). Inimesed, kellel on psüühikahäirega elamise kogemus, võivad elada tervet, produktiivset elu, vaatamata sellele, et haigussümptomid kestavad ja nõuavad jätkuvalt tähelepanu. Personaalsele taastumisele orienteerumine on tähendanud, et tegevuste fookus on liikunud viiele taastumise protsessi domeenile (elemendile), mis omakorda on tuletatud taastumisteemaliste uurimuste tulemuste sünteesi kaudu. Seda nimetatakse CHIME raamistikuks (ingl. k. *Connectedness – Hope and optimism – Identity – Meaning and purpose in life – Empowerment*)<sup>16</sup>. CHIME käsitlus ja raamistik võimaldab mitmekülgset ja nüansirikalt kirjeldada taastumise protsessi ja annab ülevaate, millistele protsessidele, aspektidele ja rollidele on oluline keskenduda inimese tulevikku silmas pidades<sup>14</sup>.

Personaalse taastumise CHIME käsitluse juurde kuuluvatel seotuse (ingl. k. *connectedness*) ja lootuse (ingl. k. *hope*) elementidel on seoseid eelpool kirjeldatud looduskeskkonnaga, mis kutsub esile positiivseid emotsioone (ingl. k. *affective nature atmosphere*). Personaalse taastumise protsessi juurde kuulub suhete loomine ja kontaktid ümbritsevaga<sup>16</sup>. Inimese kontaktid pere, kaaslaste, kogukonna ja ka keskkonnaga (sh looduskeskkonnaga) on võtmetähtsusega ja seejuures on toodud välja, et taastumine algab siis, kui inimene leiab kellegi või millegi, millega ta suudab suhestuda. Seotus soodustab taastumist<sup>14</sup>.

Duff'i (2016) uurimusest tuli selgelt esile, kuidas psüühikahäire kogemusega inimesed võivad leida keskkonnast tuge ja taastumist toetavat seotust<sup>14</sup>. Duff kasutab mõistet *affective atmospheres*, mille all ta peab silmas, et inimene omistab teatud keskkonnale afektiivse tähenduse oma tunnetest ajendatult, st atmosfäär ei kuulu keskkonnale ega subjektile, vaid on subjekti ja objekti vahel (ingl. k. *in-between subject and object*)<sup>14</sup>. Bissell ütleb, et

elamuslikud atmosfäärid (ingl. k. *affective atmospheres*) inspireerivad, suunavad või kutsuvad esile eripärase kogemuse<sup>17</sup>.

Lootus on personaalse taastumise protsessi üks kesksemaid elemente. Bird jt rõhutavad, et lootus on suhte kaudu esile kutsutud saavutus (ingl. k. *relational achievement*), mitte ainult sisemine seisund<sup>19</sup>. Duff'i uurimus näitas, et looduse atmosfäärid ja keskkonnad võivad mõjutada inimeste kogemusi sel määral, et nad kogeavad transformatiivset tunnete struktuuri modifitseerumist<sup>14</sup>. Taolist muutust esile kutsuvat mõju kogetakse värskes õhus olles, tunnetades valguse muutumist (päikesetõus, päikeseloojang), tuult, liiva, loodusveekogude veetunnuseid, looduses olevaid lõhnu, eraldumist võimaldavates paikades, aedades, metsas, rohelistes paikades linnas või pargipingil istudes<sup>14</sup>. Psüühikahäirega inimesed on märganud, et teadveloleku oskuste kasutamine – värske õhu hingamine, loodusliku valguse käes olemine ja ümbritseva keskkonna rahulik jälgimine – mõjub positiivselt ja võimaldab lõõgastuda, aitab leida lootust ning parandada meeleolu<sup>14</sup>. Need kogemused omakorda aitavad meenutada eelmisi külastusi loodusesse või positiivset mõju avaldanud mälestusi<sup>14</sup>. Rohelised paigad ja elamusi pakkuvad atmosfäärid on hea mõjuga emotsionaalsele ja füsioloogilisele seisundile; on taastava efektiga ning aitavad kaasa personaalse taastumise protsessile<sup>14</sup>.

### **„Oma koht“ ja looduskeskkond**

Üks viis, kuidas inimesed isikliku taastumise protsessis end aidata saavad, on luua ja kasutada nn oma kohta. Kui vaimne tervis on tasakaalust väljas ja inimene tunneb end ebatavaliselt, ohustatult, kurvana, üksi, segaduses, siis tal võib olla abi „oma kohast“<sup>19</sup>. Nn oma koht on paik, mis on inimese enda valitud, võimaldab eraldatust, on turvaline. Ta saab olla seal üksi, keegi ei nõua midagi, ei ohusta ega võta inimeselt üle kontrolli selle paiga üle (ingl. k. *nobody else can ever take over control of this space*)<sup>19</sup>. Taoline turvapaik, „oma koht“, saab olla looduses või loodusega seotud.

Siinkohal tuleb tutvustamisele kolm viisi loodusega seotud „oma koha“ kasutamisest. Need on (1) vahetu viibimine enda jaoks turvalises ja looduslikult kaunis kohas, (2) mõttes „oma kohta“ minemine (ingl. k. *psychological space*) ja (3) kunstniku loodud looduspildi kaudu loodusega kontaktis olemine.

Enda jaoks meeldivast, tuttavast, turvalisest looduslikult kaunist kohast on võimalik luua enda jaoks „oma koht“, kuhu aeg-ajalt minna, et rahuneda, saada tagasi head emotsioonid, tunda end vabalt ja iseendana, ning

ammutada jõudu. Kõigile ei pruugi sobida „oma koht“ looduses, kuid paljudele on see abiks. Kui juba selline „ruum“ on olemas ja paigast on tekkinud mälestused, siis võib vahel olla olukordi, kus füüsiliselt ei ole võimalik sinna minna, kuid on võimalik kasutada mälu pilte ja külastada seda mõtteis. Sel juhul saab seda nimetada „psühholoogiline ruum“ (ingl. k. *psychological space*). Võib kasutada ka fotosid ja videosid paigast, mis aitavad hõlpsasti mõtetes siseneda „oma kohta“. Üks võimalus on leida kunstnike tehtud loodusmaalide seast visuaale, mis aitavad justkui siseneda sellesse turvalisse alasse, kus keegi ei ohusta. Kunst võib kiirendada taastumise protsessi (ingl. k. *Art can speed the healing process*) ja aitab liikuda eemale haigusega seotud emotsioonidest<sup>21</sup>. Nanda jt jõudsid järeldusele, et visuaalsete kujundite vaatamine avaldab tervisele mõju ning positiivsed, rahustavad, loodust kujutavad maalid on erilise teraapilise mõjuga<sup>22</sup>.



Maal 2: Mägi, Konrad. „Pühajärv“<sup>23</sup>

Lõpetuseks – metsad, järved, jõed, sood, pargid, aiad, rannad ja sarnased looduslikud paigad; ning tegevused – nagu värsket õhu teadlik hingamine, pargipingil istumine, päikesevõtmine – võimaldavad psüühikahäirega inimesel tunda end emotsionaalselt (ingl. k. *changes affective state*), füüsiliselt (ingl. k. *relax*) ja vaimselt (ingl. k. *finding hope*) paremini (Duff 2016).

Näide: Jonase lugu, 31-aastane noormees, kellel on autism ja raske intellektipuu.

Kell on 11 hommikul, majas on vaikne, minu majakaaslased võtavad osa töötoast või askeldavad väljas. Ma olen oma toas, kuulan raadiot ja mängin traadijupiga. Ma tunnen ennast rahulikuna ja olen lõdvestunud. Tänapäevane köögitoimikond valmistab lõunasööki. Ma juba tunnen toidulõhna. Järsku hakkavad üksteise järel sisse tulema minu majakaaslased. On teepausi aeg. Just äsja valitsenud mõnusest vaikusest pole enam jälgegi. Inimesed ajavad juttu, on kuulda kolistamist toolide ja tassidega. Esialgu õnnestub mul jääda rahulikuks, ma võtan osa teepausist ja laua ääres seistes laulan ühte laulu. Järsku tekitab minus hirmu kellegi liikumine minu lähedal. See muudab mind närviliseks, ma hakkamini väga kõvasti röökima ja karjuma. Üks tugiisikutest proovib mind maha rahustada sel viisil, et paneb mu toas muusika mängima, kuid mu pea ähvardab endiselt lõhkeda ning ma jätkan hüsteerilist röökimist. Seejärel teeb ta ettepaneku minna metsa jalutama. Esialgu pole ma sellest sugugi vaimustatud, aga ma panen ennast siiski riidesse ning me läheme koos välja. Viie minuti pärast oleme metsas täiesti omaette. Ma ei näe enam meie maja ning ma vaevalt kuulen veel külast kostvaid hääli. Niipea kui ma olen jõudnud metsa ja jätkanud oma jalutuskäiku, on mul juba meelest läinud minu hüsteeriline käitumine majas. Ma tunnen, kuidas keha lõdvestub.

### **Sotsiaalse kaasatuse, koosloome ning heaolu edendamine inimese ja looduse interaktsioonis**

Sotsiaalvaldkonna praktikud, arendajad ja ökokogukondade inimesed võivad ja saavad tegutseda koos, et tugevdada kogukonna ja keskkonna kestlikkust, otsides samal ajal sotsiaalse kaasatuse edendamise võimalusi. Peatüki järgmises osas anname ülevaate koosloome näidetest projektis [Social Inclusion in the Baltic Sea Region through Eco-villages and Communities project \(SIBREC\)](#).<sup>24</sup>

Selleks, et olemasolevat keskkonda paremaks muuta, tuleb uurida, millised keskkonnas peituvad lahendused aitavad meid ebasoodsast olukorrast välja. Mike Slade ütleb, et argielu probleemidele tuleb lahendusi otsida argielust (ingl. k. *everyday solutions to everyday problems*) ja õppida tuleks nendest lahendustest, mis on juba ühiskonnas olemas<sup>16</sup>. Kaasavama ühiskonna saavutamiseks tuleb leida koostöövõimalusi erinevate valdkondade esindajatega. SIBREC projekti partneriteks olid ökokogukondade ja üleminekukogukondade esindajad. Ökokogukond<sup>25</sup> on teadlikult rajatud keskkond, mis pöörab tähelepanu kestlikkuse neljale dimensioonile: sotsiaalne, kultuuriline, ökoloogiline ja majanduslik keskkond. Üleminekukogukond<sup>26</sup> lähtub oma tegevuses põhimõttest, et ressursid on

piiratud. Seega tuleb luua võimalusi säilienõtkuse toetamiseks, edendada sotsiaalset kaasatust ja õiglust, rohujuuretasandi lahendusi, erialade ja valdkondade vahelist koostööd ning sünergiat, vt <https://transitionnetwork.org><sup>26</sup>

Koosloome on inspireeriv koostegutsemise protsess, kus osapooled on võrdsetes ja retsiprooksetes suhetes, mis võimaldab üksteiselt õppida ja koostöös luua probleemolukordadele uusi lahendusi. SIBREC projektis me kogesime, kuivõrd oluline on olla teadlik koosloome elementidest, mis on kirjeldatud Slade jt ning New Economic Foundation'i<sup>27</sup> poolt, näiteks (1) oma barjääride madalale laskmine, et tuua üksteisele lähemale professionaalid, teenuste korraldajad ja kogukonnaliikmed, (2) märgata kõiki inimesi kui panustajaid ja millegi väärtusliku andjaid ja (3) luua lahendused, mis toetuvad inimeste olemasolevatele võimetele.

Järgnev SIBREC projekti tegevuste ülevaade demonstreerib innovatiivset ja "kastist väljas" mõtlemist ning näitab, millised lahendused juba eksisteerivad erinevates kogukondades, sh ökokogukondades, mis edendavad jätkusuutlikke elustiilivalikuid ja tervist, sh vaimset tervist. SIBREC projekt pakkus sotsiaaltöötajatele võimalust märgata, peegeldada ja tutvustada, millised on eri kogukondade vahelised koostöövõimalused, suurendamaks ühiskonnas marginaalses positsioonis inimeste kaasatust, ehk teisisõnu, kuidas „toetada kestlikke kogukondi ja säästvat looduskasutust“. Projekt hõlmas paljusid erinevaid programme, mis ei keskendunud üksnes sotsiaalsele kaasatusele, vaid näitas võimalusi, kuidas saada kasu nii tervisele üldiselt kui ka vaimsele tervisele aianduse, metsahoolduse ja loomadega seotud teraapiliste tegevuste abil. Järgnevas osas on projektitegevuste ülevaade.

### **Aiandus ja metsa eest hoolitsemine pakub häid koostöövõimalusi**

Hea näide koostööst sotsiaalvaldkonna ja aianduse haridusspetsialistide vahel on Maarja Küla<sup>29</sup> lahendus. Maarja Küla teeb tihedat koostööd Räpina Aianduskooliga<sup>28</sup>. Toimetulekukooli õppekava lõpetajad saavad õppida aiandust, et tulevikus selles valdkonnas tööd leida. Väärtuslik on koostöö ka selle tõttu, et nii on õnnestunud täiendada kutsealade nimistut: kutseregistrisse on lisandunud abiaedniku teise taseme kutsestandard, mis hõlmab istutaja ja aiakultuuride hooldaja kutset. Seega on mõju ühiskonnale mitmekülgne: koostöö annab inimestele võimalusi haridust omandada ja tööd leida, samas võib aiandus olla tulevikus ka huvialaks; teisalt on kooli ja Maarja Küla koostöö kaudu mitmekesistatud kutsealade maastikku<sup>30</sup>.



Rootsis Södertäljes on sotsiaalne ettevõtte *Södertälje Vegetables & Social inclusion*, mis teeb koostööd sotsiaalvaldkonna spetsialistidega. See initsiatiiv kasutab koosloome mudelit ning pakub võimalust sotsiaalvaldkonna inimeste vahendusel immigrandidele ja pagulastele Rootsi ühiskonda lõimimisel teha tööd või tööharjutust aiamaal. Inimesed õpivad (nt tühermaale) põldu rajama, peenraid tegema, taimi istutama ja hooldama, nii nagu see on kombeks Põhjamaades. Nii aitab töö ka kohalikku kultuuri tundma õppida. Aiatööde kõrval on tähtsal kohal sotsialiseerumine: väga oluliseks peetakse kohvipause, kus kõik põllul tegutsejad tulevad kokku, suhtlevad, õpivad üksteist tundma, õpivad keelt, jagavad muresid ja rõõme. Kõiki julgustatakse kohvipausidel osalema, kuigi alguses võib see olla immigrandidele väga raske. Selliste tööelu juurde kuuluvate traditsioonidega harjumist peetakse Rootsi ühiskonda sisseelamisel väga oluliseks. Kasvatatud aiasaadused müüakse ja saadud tulust makstakse töötasu.<sup>30</sup>

Järgnev näide pärineb Venemaalt, kus organisatsioon Resource viib läbi algatust *Forest School*. Ettevõtmise raames korraldatakse käitumisprobleemidega noorukitele, kel on juba olnud kokkupuuteid õiguskaitseorganitega, rehabiliteerivaid tegevusi ühes tugevate traditsioonidega külas (Bereznjuk). Noorukeile selgitatakse, kuidas toimib metsa ökosüsteem, nad istutavad puid ja hoolitsevad metsa eest. Õpetatakse ka seda, kuidas külainimesed hoiavad häid suhteid ja oma ümbrust. Selle juurde kuuluvad õhtused laulud-mängud, saun ja käsitöö.<sup>30</sup>

### **Teraapia loomadega**

Kesk-Eestis asuv Hobukooli Park on hea näide, kuidas rehabilitatsioonis ära kasutada looduse võimalusi. Pargis on hobused, eeslid ja väikeloomad. Seal tegeldakse ratsutamis- ja loomateraapiaga, mis mõjutavad inimese tervist ja emotsionaalset seisundit, arendavad nii verbaalset kui mitteverbaalset suhtlemist, võimet tulla toime probleemsete või konfliktiolukordadega. Sealne tegevus aitab kasvatada usaldust enda ja ümbritsevate vastu. Hobukooli Pargis tehakse teraapiat looduskeskkonnas. Rahulikud loomad mõjuvad oma liikumise ja tegevusega inimestele positiivselt. Hobuteraapiast saavad osa nii lapsed, kellel on psüühikahäire, kui ka hooldusteenusel viibivad inimesed. Suurt tähelepanu pööratakse olulistele argielu oskustele ja oma oskuste ning loovuse avastamisele. Nii said lapsed ja noored paar suve tagasi laagris olles kaasa lüüa savist ja taaskasutatud materjalidest bussiootepaviljoni ehitusel. Projekt „Bussiootekoda” sai aasta lõpul tiitli „Järvemaa hea algatus 2016”. Pargis viiakse õpilastele ja õpetajatele läbi kogemusõppepäevi ning koolidele on valmistatud

õppevahendeid keskkonnasäästliku eluviisi tutvustamiseks<sup>30</sup>.

### **Ümbritseva keskkonna ja kogukonna rikastamine koostöös deinstitutionaliseeritud inimestega**

Üks ala, kus sotsiaaltöötajad saavad sotsiaalset kaasatust edendada, on deinstitutionaliseeritud inimeste toetamine nende uutes kogukondades ja suhete loomine kogukonna inimestega. Deinstitutionaliseerimise protsessi käigus liiguvad mõned psüühikahäire ja intellektipuudega inimesed elama maapiirkonnast linnakeskkonda. Järgnev osa peatükist näitab võimalusi, kuidas saab aiandusoskuseid uues, linnakeskkonnas rakendada ja seeläbi anda oma panus koosloomesse, ühtlasi nii enda kui teiste kogukonnaliikmete heaolusse.

Deinstitutionaliseerimise protsessiga kaasneb olukord, kus psüühikahäire ja intellektipuudega inimesed tulevad suletud institutsioonidest välja ja asuvad elama kogukondadesse, kus nad saavad osaleda kogukonnaelus. Nad võivad asuda elama oma pereliikmete juurde; elada grupikodus või elada mitmekesi koos linnakorteris, saades tugiisiku abi; elada omaette korteris, saades tugiisiku abi; või elada täiesti iseseisvalt. Uues elukohas tuleb inimestel õppida suhestuma uue keskkonnaga ja selles vajavad deinstitutionaliseeritud inimesed tuge. Üks viis on toetada nende osalust ümbritseva keskkonna eest hoolitsemisel ja soodustada nende osalemist kogukonna aedade tegevustes.

### **Näide: tegevusjuhendaja Laurise isiklik kogemus, kelle tööks on intellektipuudega noorte täiskasvanute toetamine nende igapäevaelus ning kes oma vabal ajal võtab aktiivselt osa keskkonna jätkusuutliku arengu liikumisest.**

Ma elan ja töotan Tartus. Ma olen tegevusjuhendaja ühes kogukonnas, kus elab viis intellektipuudega inimest. Oma vabal ajal võtan ma aktiivselt osa meie linna keskkonna jätkusuutliku arengu liikumisest. Näiteks tegutsen ma Aleksandri kogukonna aias. Minu eesmärgiks on saada kogemusi permakultuuri erinevate tehnikate kohta, mida aias kasutatakse. On väga inspireeriv ja mõnus töötada aias koos sarnaselt mõtlevate inimestega.

Eile olin ma kogukonna majas tööl. Samal päeval aga toimusid kogukonna aias talgud. Ma otsustasin kutsuda talgutele ka selle kogukonna elanikud. Kõik olid ideest vaimustatud ja olid valmis tulema koos minuga. Koos paljude teiste inimestega tegime ära suure hulga tööd ning tulemuseks oli palju kaunim aed. Minu jaoks isiklikult oli väga loomulik olla selles aias, ning samuti koos inimestega, kellel on intellektipuu. Neil polnud mingit

probleemi võtta osa ühistest tegevustest ning mina ei tundnud, et ma olen tegevusjuhendaja rollis, nagu on tavaliselt siis, kui ma olen koos nendega kodus. Ma olin neile piisavalt lähedal, et neid vajadusel toetada või suunata, aga ma võtsin osa aiatööst nii nagu kõik teisedki. Mul ei tekkinud kordagi tunnet, nagu oleksin töö. Ma lihtsalt veetsin oma aega koos teistega.

### **Väljavõte päevikust, mis kuulub Helenale, 30-aastasele naisterahvale, kellel on intellektipuu ja autism.**

Täna on laupäev ning mul on vaba päev. Sel päeval me tavaliselt koristame kõik koos oma elumaja. Kuid tänane päev oli teistsugune, sest me läksime üheskoos Tartus tegutsevasse Aleksandri kogukonna aeda. Päev otsa me korjasime maha visatud prügi ning samuti tegime valmis mõned peenrad ravimtaimede ja köögivilja jaoks. Tehtud töö tähistamiseks sõime õhtul pitsat ja ajasime lõkke ümber juttu. Mulle väga meeldib seal käia, kuna sinna tuleb kokku palju erinevaid inimesi. Mulle väga meeldib teiste inimestega tuttavaks saada ning mind tohutult huvitab, kuidas nad elavad ning mida nad teevad.

Kui ma olen kodus, siis ma väga ei naudi oma vabu päevi, sest ma tahan kogu aeg midagi teha. Ma muutun üsna kergesti rahutuks. Aga kogukonna aia puhul meeldib mulle see, et saan olla värske õhu käes, aidata korrastada aeda ning samal ajal leida endale uusi sõpru.

### **Tulevikusuunad**

Sotsiaaltöötajad saavad edendada kogukondade ja keskkonna kestlikkust, toetades inimeste vaimset tervist ja heaolu ning aidates luua kontakte loodusega. Seda saab teha, julgustades inimesi kasutama positiivseid emotsioone esilekutsuvaid looduskeskkondi oma taastumise toetamiseks. Kui praegune elamisviis ei ole jätkusuutlik meie või meie klientide tervise, keskkonna ja rahakoti jaoks, siis tasub oma senise mõtlemise stambist loobuda ja vaadata, millised lahendused on eri kogukondades, sh ökokogukondades, juba olemas. Lõpetuseks, sotsiaaltöötajad saavad aidata kogukondadel märgata, kuidas pakkuda insitutsioonidest kogukonda elama asunud inimestele vastastikku rikastavaid kogemusi.

### **Tegevus**

#### **Ülesanne 1: koosloome ja sotsiaalne kaasatus:**

#### **kogukonna arendamise võimalus ja keskkonna kestlikkuse lahendused**

1) Kirjelda koosloome näiteid, mille läbi on tõusnud indiviidi ja kogukonna heaolu Sinu kogukonnas/piirkonnas/külas.

2) Analüüsi ühte keskkonna aspekti oma kogukonnas ja koosta plaan, kuidas olukorda muuta. Kuidas Sa saaksid arvestada sotsiaalse kaasatuse aspekti selle lahenduse juures? Milliseid koosloome võimalusi Sa näed lähemas tulevikus? Mõtle, kas on võimalik kaasata inimesi, kes elavad ökokogukondades, tegelevad kogukonnaaedadega, tegelevad kestliku kogukonna teemadega?

## **Ülesanne 2: märgata ja edendada personaalset taastumist looduskeskkonnaga kontaktide kaudu.**

Eesmärk: märgata ja mõista, kui palju kontakte psüühikahäire ja intellektipuudega inimestel on ümbritseva looduskeskkonnaga (värskes õhus viibimine, parkides, aedades liikumine) ja kuidas rikastada nende kontakte looduskeskkonnaga, kui selle järgi on vajadust.

Instruktsioon:

1) Vali kahe allpool oleva võimaluse seast üks või kombineeri andmekogumist.

a) küsi inimeselt nõusolekut ja kasutades varjutamise andmekogumeetodit "varjuta" teda teatud aeg (nt 4, 8 või 12 tundi) ning kaardista, kui palju inimene viibib looduses või paikades, kus on looduse elemente. Küsi selgitavaid küsimusi, nt mida konkreetses paigas viibimine inimesele tähendab.

b) palu inimesel pidada päevikut, et märkida üles, kui palju ja millised kontaktid tal on looduskeskkonnaga. Kasuta selleks allpool olevat vormi.

2) Järgnevalt, analüüsi, kuidas inimese emotsioonid ja enesetunne on muutunud afektiivse kontakti kaudu looduskeskkonnaga.

**Andmekogumise vorm:**

<b>Interaktsioon loodusega/afektiivse keskkonnaga</b>	<b>Vaatlus ja reflektatsioon</b>
<b>Otsene interaktsioon (füüsiline looduses viibimine):</b>  ((näide: 1) metsas, metsatukas, looduskaunis kohas, niidul, jõe, järve või mere ääres viibimine)  ((2) linnakeskkonda rajatud rohealal viibimine)  ((3) veekogu ääres viibimine (nt rannas, sadamas))	
<b>Kaudne interaktsioon:</b>  (näide: looduse vaatamine aknast või taimede, loomade vaatamine siseruumides, loodusmaalide vaatamine)	
<b>Emotsioonid, mis tulenevad kokkupuutest afektiivse looduskeskkonnaga</b>	<b>Vaatlus ja reflektatsioon</b>
<b>Positiivsed tulemused:</b>  (näide: meeleolu on paranenud, stress on vähenenud, vitaalsus on paranenud, taastumise tunne)	
<b>Negatiivsed tulemused:</b>  (näide: putukad hammustasid, müra häiris, ilm tegi ärevaks ja häiris)	

3) Arutle kogutud andmete üle. Arutelu võid viia läbi paaris või grupis. Pea silmas, et diskussioon sisaldab järgnevaid aspekte:

a) inimese kokkupuuted looduskeskkonnaga ja mida kokkupuuted inimesele tähendavad.

b) kuidas need kokkupuuted aitavad kaasa personaalsele taastumisele?

c) millise mõne uue võimaluse arendamine aitab inimestel panustada oma kogukonda ja piirkonna keskkonda ning samal ajal aitab kaasa personaalsele taastumisele?

### **Kokkuvõte**

Looduskeskkonnad – nagu aiad, pargid, järve ja jõe ääred, kui kõigile avatud paigad – võivad toetada kaasatuse väärtuste edendamist (nt avatus ja juurdepääs, kultuuriliste jm erinevuste sallivus). Looduslikud paigad on avatud ja juurdepääsetavad erinevatele ühiskonna- ja kogukonnaliikmetele ning annavad võimaluse veeta oma jõuvarude taastamise seisukohalt kvaliteetsega, samas ei pea selleks kulutama palju raha. Nagu Duff oma artiklis välja toob, siis sotsiaaltöötajad, vaimse tervise spetsialistid ja vaimse tervise teenuste pakkujad peaksid võtma jõulisema positsiooni, et kaasa rääkida afektsete keskkondade kujundamisel ning rõhutada, et looduskeskkond meie ümber on oluline veel sel põhjusel, et aitab kaasa positiivsete emotsioonide esiletulemisele, personaalsele taastumisele ja üldisele vitaalsuse tõusule.

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## Join the Green/EcoSocial Work Collaborative Network

The editors also want to offer an invitation all social workers to join the growing virtual, global Collaborative Network on this third Global Agenda theme. The Green/EcoSocial Work Network is an international, collaborative network for sharing ideas, resources, asking questions, and building solidarity around ways to address sustainability and ecological justice issues within our profession. To join, please contact the group's administrator: Meredith C. F. Powers at [MCFPowers@UNCG.edu](mailto:MCFPowers@UNCG.edu)

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