

UBUNTU AND NEEDED TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE EVOLUTION OF IFSW'S ETHICAL PRINCIPLES STATEMENTS

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Abstract:

This article explores the need for transformational changes in the ethical principles of the social work profession, particularly in light of the emerging influence of the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The authors argue that the current ethical principles of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) are still largely grounded in the pre-20th century worldview of Western science, which prioritizes individualism and a divided view of reality. The authors propose that social work should embrace a more holistic, interconnected, and relationship-centered approach, as reflected in Ubuntu and other Indigenous philosophies. The article outlines specific areas where the ethical principles should be updated, including the recognition of human rights and responsibilities, the right to co-determination, the promotion of participatory empowerment, and the emphasis on social and economic justice. The authors also suggest that social work should align itself more closely with the Earth Charter and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, while embracing a regenerative and restorative approach to development. The proposed changes aim to transform social work into a truly global profession that is better equipped to address the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Keywords: *Ubuntu, Ethical Principles of Social Work, IFSW.*

Introduction

This article represents the collaborative work between a retired social work professor and a former student almost 30 years after their professor-student days. Our reunion as colleagues culminated in a dialogue-encouragement presentation to IFSW's co-facilitated Co-building a New Eco-social World: Leaving No One Behind, Global People's Summit (Ramsay and Choma, 2022). The need to consider transformational paradigm changes in social work was addressed in the 1999 Special Edition of the Indian Journal of Social Work (Ramsay, 1999). From a student perspective, the need for transformational change was recognized as early as 1996 during a Canadian social work student's practicum experience testing practical applications of chaos theory and indigenous

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farming collectives in Kerala, India (Choma, 1996). Transformational changes in social work, similar to those needed in other disciplines, are not without push back resistance. The need to transform Western science, especially pre-20th century, perspectives in social work are addressed through the views of Thomas Kuhn in *Scientific Revolution* (1970) and his warnings that as any dominant paradigm reaches its limits, its replacement (or needed shrinkage to make room for others to exist) will likely occur only through a “revolutionary” process. Although desired or hoped for, there would be no guarantee of a smooth and orderly evolutionary transition to a new one.

If needed transformational changes did not occur, our concern for social work at the end of the 20th century was the risk that the discipline could become what one of IFSW’s past presidents, Gayle Gilchrist James, worried about as long ago as 1980 in asking “Do you want the profession to continue or do you want it to be known as an intriguing cultural oddity that arose early in the 20th Century, flourished, and died of causes unknown in the last decade of that same century?” (James, 1980). Our transformational change concerns are founded on her question and continue to this day.

In 2003, Ramsay wrote in *Research and Social Work Practice* about specific ontological worldview changes that called for social work dialogue on a global scale. He repeated the call for global-level dialogue at the reclaiming civil society focus of IFSW’s 2004 Congress in Australia, noting the likely impact and need for further transformational changes to the newly updated *Ethical Principles Statement*. A similar call was made at IFSW’s co-facilitated *Global People’s Summit* in 2022 (Ramsay and Choma, 2022). Their presentation focused on ethical principles transformations that IFSW and IASSW had missed in approving their new *Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles* in 2018. We are now almost at the quarter century mark of the 21st century. The negative impacts of colonialism and pre-20th century Western science, and the rise of Indigenous worldviews are now in the forefront of social work becoming a global profession. However, the ontology-based dialogue that was called for as early as 2003 has yet to materialize on a global scale. The worldview and continued ethical principles transformational changes needed to manifest the reality of *Global Social Work* are still mostly resisted and/or rhetorical in expression.

The one difference is that others, especially IFSW, are now calling for significant transformational changes prompted by the recent overwhelming support for African’s Ubuntu ancient wisdom and philosophy as a recognized foundation for advances in international social

work. Yet, this prompting from social work's international organization is still just a beginning. The transformational change process is waiting to be actioned in a revolutionary way for social workers to fully participate in the processes of reclaiming civil society, collaborating with and beyond the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and advancing the global leadership that IFSW had as a major partner in the 2022 *Global People's Summit*.

Since IFSW transformed from its 1976 global *Code of Ethics* to its new *Ethical Principles Statement* in 1994, it was updated in 2004, further updated and jointly approved by IFSW and IASSW as a new *Global Social Work Ethical Principles Statement* in 2018. These statements will be used to highlight proposed changes that need urgent dialogue, and further transformational change to strengthen the process of becoming a Global Social Work profession. The proposed, and dialogue-facilitated, changes are premised on 20th century and early 21st century breakthroughs in quantum science and the re-emergence of significant Indigenous ways of knowing (science) from diverse regions and ancient cultures around the world. These breakthroughs and re-emergences foster a deeper understanding of the limits inherent in the linear, precisely predictable and quantitative view of reality that has defined and legitimized the colonizing and exploitive dominant canopy of Western (pre-20th century) science for several centuries.

The 1999 article closed with warnings from a leading 20th century chaos theorist that continued support, explicitly or implicitly, for Western science's machine metaphor view of reality will preclude the kind of transformational changes needed to embrace the chaotic, robustness and diversity of complex systems (Kellert, 1993). Our economic, political and social systems will be allowed to continue believing "men are presumed to be more rational than women, therefore women may be subordinated" (p.157). Those in power and other positions of influence will continue to believe "humans are purposive while natural processes are presumably not, therefore nature may be subordinated" (p.157) allowing the subjugation and destruction of our natural environment to occur without regard for the deep ecological interconnectedness between all living organisms. And, as Kellert pointed out "the domination of nature shares much in common with an analysis of the domination of women and colonized peoples" (p. 157). From a history of social work perspective, the belief that social work is uniquely a relationship-centeredness discipline will continue to be largely rhetoric-based instead of practice-based. Instead of continuing emergence in the 21st century as a leading-edge profession, social work will begin to slip away as an increasingly

irrelevant and outdated contributor toward non-discriminatory human well-being, peaceful co-existence among people and nations, and the pursuit of economic and social justice for all.

The Ethical Principles changes in 2004 were supported by the meaning of Civil Society in a global context and fundamental value changes that were outlined in the UN-initiated *Earth Charter*, including recommendations from the UN Panel on UN-Civil Society relations. They were primarily based on 20th century advances in scientific worldviews. Our call for urgent dialogue relating to both the 2004 and the 2018 statements is influenced by Wahl's 2017 call to go beyond SDGs toward regenerative development goals, IFSW's article on the potential impact of Ubuntu on social work perspectives (Mayaka and Truell, 2021) and the corollary impacts of several ancient ways of knowing and Indigenous sciences discussed in Lent's, *Patterning Instincts* (2017) and *Web of Meaning* (2021).

In 2004, one of the Civil society views was a “set of institutions, organizations and behavior situated between the state, the business world, and the family” (London School of Economics, 2004). The Ethical Principles transformations focused on this view and its many forms of organizational social participation, including social work organizations, as both members of and advocates for civil society participation in global well-being. The influence of the *Earth Charter* emerged out of the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit and subsequent work by the Earth Charter Commission with representatives from the five regions of the world (Earth Charter Commission, 2000). It was founded on the goal of fostering a globally interconnected network of “respect for nature, universal human rights, economic and social justice, and a culture of peace”. The Charter specifically recognized the role of Civil Society in an urgently needed process to find common ground in the midst of global diversity. It called for fundamental value changes that would ground humans to a universal responsibility to one another, the greater community of life, and to future generations. The full text of the Charter and related information is available at <http://www.earthcharter.org/>. In 2002, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, convened a globally representative panel as part of a priority to reform UN-Civil Society relations. The panel report called for major paradigm (transformational) shifts in how the UN dialogues with Civil Society organizations and facilitates a network of dialogue between these organizations, the corporate world, local and central governments (Cardoso, 2004). For the UN to become more of “networked-UN”, four transformational shifts were specified for it to become outward-looking (engage with

multiple constituencies networks and put more emphasis on convening and facilitating often conflicting parties to tackle problems, and to put issues, not institutions, at the centre); recognize a plurality of constituencies (more than governments need to be in dialogue); connect the local with the global (foster two-way connections so local helps with global and global helps with local); strengthen democracy to include deeper accountability of institutions to the global public. In this article, we include IFSW's policy paper on SDGs, its Ubuntu publication, and Daniel Wahl's call to go beyond sustainable development toward restorative and regenerative development.

Social Work and UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) Context

The Global Civic Society spotlight report of 2019 demonstrated that, despite the great hopes for the UN SDGs' transformational power, five years after the adoption most countries are still off-track with the achievement of their set goals. IFSW's policy paper affirmed and continues to support the UN SDGs, recognizing their momentum and the opportunities they create to foster social, economic and ecological transformational change globally. The IFSW policy elaborated their support:

Sustainability - Social workers understand sustainability as patterns and policies that establish long-term solutions for the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem, including humans and Nature, for current and future generations. In its policy paper on *Globalization and the Environment*, IFSW calls "[...] to develop environmental responsibility and care for the environment in social work practice and management today and for future generations, to work with other professionals ... to develop advocacy skills and strategies to work towards a healthier environment and to ensure that environmental issues gain increased presence in social work education."

Development - Profit for a minor amount of people on the shoulder of the majority of people, is a negative sign of economic-only driven development. IFSW supports development as a dynamic all-inclusive process of change, within a person, groups or society pursuing/seeking wellbeing for both people and planet. It asserts that social workers' actions are driven by principles of social justice, human rights and holistic and sustainable development to reach freedom and wellbeing. The words 'development' and 'transformation' are closely linked; while development is process-oriented, the aim of transformation is a complete change to an unprecedented situation/circumstance. Social work approaches primarily create goals in a participatory manner

from the bottom-up (community and people-driven) including the knowledge and needs from people (leave no one behind).

Bottom-up and top down - Social workers understand that the combination of their bottom-up approach along with the UN SDGs more top-down approach represents the great potential to bridge the gaps between governmental regulatory efforts (i.e. policy papers, global agendas) and practice (i.e. daily work with people and civil societies, operational implementation).

To sum up - IFSW's goals should be aligned with the UN SDGs because of their value for a global transformation to a just and fair world with the vision of 'leaving no one behind'. Social workers facilitate and foster partnerships within communities and between various partners, at local, national and international levels, to translate UN SDGs in various ways (social, economic and ecological) and designing together a new knowledge of sustainable solutions for the implementation action.

Beyond Social Work and the UN SDGs

Wahl makes the argument that sustainability is not enough: we need regenerative cultures. He claims the word "sustainability" is inadequate, as it does not tell us what we are actually trying to sustain. ... the underlying pattern of health, resilience and adaptability that maintain this planet in a condition where life as a whole can flourish. ... A regenerative human culture is healthy, resilient and adaptable; ... The concept of resilience is closely related to health, as it describes the ability to recover basic vital functions and bounce back ... When we aim for sustainability from a systemic perspective, we are trying to sustain the pattern that connects and strengthens the whole system. ... Complexity science can teach us that as participants in a complex dynamic eco-psycho-social-spiritual system that is subject to certain biophysical limits, our goal has to be appropriate participation, not prediction and control ... The best way to learn how to participate appropriately is to pay more attention to systemic relationships and interactions, to aim to support the resilience and health of the whole system, ... Aiming to design for systemic health may not save us from unexpected side-effects and uncertainty, but it offers a trial-and-error path towards a regenerative culture. We urgently need a Hippocratic Oath for design, technology and planning: do no harm! ... This way we can move more swiftly from the unsustainable 'business as usual' to restorative and regenerative innovations that will support the transition towards a regenerative culture. ...

In addition to the called for transformational changes and arguments of Wahl and others, there is supportive evidence from contemporary and ancient ways of knowing. African Ubuntu, Quantum science, Indigenous science/ways of knowing, Indian Vedanta, Chinese Qi are emerging and converging to just-in-time awareness that the dominant canopy of Western (pre-20th) science needs to shrink in size to allow a collaborative and co-existence presence with other surfacing and resurfacing ways of knowing. It is these perspectives that call for global-level dialogue and the need to further advance transformational changes in the 2018 *Global Social Work Ethical Principles Statement*. The call for a deeper ontological worldviews dialogue is outlined below:

Transformational Change Dialogue Needed to Go Beyond SDGs to Restorative and Regenerative Goals

Worldviews: Most of the transformational changes that are needed in the ontology of social work and its practices call the profession to shrink the canopy and, in most cases, let go of the dominant views contained in Western (pre-20th century) science that guided the early 20th century emergence of social work largely in Europe and North America. Western science, at the time, was dominated by a “divided whole” worldview that held that all things exist as separate entities, independent in space and time. From his work on wholeness, David Bohm, a well-respected but less well-known 20th century physicist, documented the pervasiveness of the divided whole view, which had emerged throughout the Western world over several centuries, to mean that the “the whole of reality is actually constituted of nothing but ‘atomic building blocks’, all working together more or less mechanically” (Bohm, 1983, p. 8). The legacy of this view prevailed throughout the 20th century and continues at least into the first quarter of this century despite new developments and advances in the sciences that greatly limit Western science’s pre-20th century view of reality. Nonetheless, much of the world remains preoccupied with separateness, binary opposites/dualities and the need for exclusionary classifications of people (race, nationality, family, professions, and so on), which precludes members in these different groups from working together for the common good. IFSW’s article on Ubuntu underscores this as “Ubuntu and other African, Eastern and Indigenous philosophies were either not recognised or negatively judged by Western societies and actively suppressed (Nwosimiri, 2017). Immanuel Kant, who was one of the leading and most influential philosophers of the Enlightenment period, concluded through his scientific and philosophical analysis that African people were incapable of developing philosophy because of

their inferiority to White people (McCormick, 2019). Hume and Hegel held similar views (Nwosimiri, 2017). Such cultural-genocidal racist views are, therefore, now written into many of the baseline layers of Western thought which we as social workers are now obligated to challenge (IFSW, 2018; Staffen and Arhakyan, 2017). Ubuntu meaning *"I am because we are"* is an ancient and elegant African expression of Buckminster Fuller's co-existence or concave-convex presence of Self and Other. Can't have one without the other. For Self to be, there must be Awareness. For awareness to be, there must be Otherness. No Otherness, no Awareness, no Self (Fuller, 1975).

Building on his own work and that of others, Bohm's understanding of "undivided wholeness" reflects a worldview that all 'entities' are relational. This is a view that is much more suited to social work than a divided whole worldview. IFSW received supporting evidence from "more than 300 social work events promoting Ubuntu from across the world. The wide embrace of Ubuntu by global social work clearly reflects the profession's interest in enriching its own principles with the Indigenous values centred on interconnection and reciprocity."

The challenge ahead for social work is to make these worldview transformations in order to move it beyond its historical, often unwitting, ties to mechanist metaphors and the high social value placed on independence. Making this kind of transformation would help the profession reinforce its commitment to wholism, multidimensional perspectives, and a corresponding understanding of synergy: "the behaviors of whole systems are unpredicted by the behavior of their parts taken separately [and the behavior of parts working together to achieve something neither could achieve on their own]" (Fuller, 1975, p. 13). In this context, the concept of empowering others would be understood as a two-way benefit and better described as a co-empowering exchange.

Individual-collective value: Social work's value foundation that the individual is the primary concern of all societies is linked to the divided wholeness view. This implies that global social work is primarily individual-centred. The Ubuntu article reinforces this view in pointing out that "the suppression of African, Eastern and most Indigenous philosophies has resulted in the global presumption that recognises 'individual merit', rather than frameworks that use a holistic perspective ..." Although interdependence, inherent in an undivided whole view, is understood, there is little advocacy for individual interdependence as an equally important concern of society that would ground social work to an interdependent-centred value that corresponds to the entity-

relationship and corresponding tensegrity (compression-tension) structures of physical and anatomical whole systems. Transformation in this direction would allow 20th century discoveries of the deep and reciprocal interconnectedness between “individual freedom and collective need” (Briggs and Peat, 1989, p. 165) to inform a transformational change to the profession’s value base. Individuality at its roots would be understood to be “a cooperative venture”, allowing the individual-collective to become the primary concern of all societies. Not doing this kind of change or not recognizing the long-held Ubuntu values in social work’s ethical principles will continue to deny open dialogue on the limits of the pre-20th century Western science that largely influenced the emerging profession of social work in the late 19th century. Bringing Ubuntu concepts into social work prominence can “expand our understanding of the profession’s principles, focusing them on human relationships (relationship-centered), making them more wholistic, not just to the individual but also to what every individual needs: A community that cares for them.” So too can the holistic philosophy of the Vedanta, which was formulated in India nearly 3000 years ago. A great theme of the Vedanta was the “oneness of everything” (Jitatmandanda, 1993, p. 65) and the belief that separation was the root of all misery. In the spirit of this oneness, Jitatmandanda showed how the post-19th century science quantum paradigm is “pointing more and more to a holistic universe where matter, energy and consciousness are connected together in one inseparable background.” Ancient China too held that “existence was an all-pervasive energy force they called *qi* (pronounced “chee”)", in which the “one word was used to refer to breath, a creature’s life force and the underlying energy animating the entire world” (Lent, 2017, p. 180). And, in South America the concept of *Sumac Kawsay* or *Buen Vivir*, its Spanish name, is rooted in the cosmovision (worldview) that describes a way of doing things that is community-centric, ecologically-balanced and culturally-sensitive (Gudynas, 2013). In English, *Buen Vivir* loosely translates "good living" or "well living", but not to the western notions of individual wellbeing or welfare. *Buen Vivir* is not about the individual, but the individual in the social context of their community.

Co-determination: The strongly held value of self-determination in social work flows from a divided whole view that all things/individuals exist independently in space and time. This supports the literal interpretation of an individual’s rights to make choices and decisions independent of the impact (positive or negative) that this right may have on others. However, the literal interpretation of this value is not supported in social work; there is usually a responsibility

caveat that does not allow this right to infringe on the rights of others. This caveat opens the door for co-determination to become social work's new strongly held value that flows out of an undivided whole worldview. This significant transformation is recognized in Ubuntu and IFSW's position that a "global paradigm shift is required to recognise the synergy of people's self-determining together ... and reflection on Ubuntu concepts that terms such as 'Co and 'Self Determination' that advance their potential replacement for 'self-determination'".

Person-in-Environment Network: Person-in-environment is widely understood within the profession as the descriptor for its domain/area of practice. Although the central focus of social work is identified as the interaction between person-environment situations, the entity-relationship structure required for this focus is not clearly linked to the individual-collective primacy of an undivided whole worldview. Just as the UN-Civil Society panel sees the importance of paradigm shifts to a "networked-UN" and the authors' suggestions of a possible name change to United Nations Network (UNN), social work needs to consider the importance of a "networked-PIE" to reflect the deep complexity of the person-in-environment domain as a whole system structure and possible name change to Person-Environment Network (PEN).

IFSW's 2018 *Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles* needs further, global-level dialogue and updating for Ubuntu and social work perspectives to be fully compatible in concert with a deliberate canopy shrinking of Western science's pre-20th century worldviews and allowance for greater emergence of 20th century science influences in co-partnerships. The changes would help social work remove the dangers of Kellert's warnings prevailing for another entire century, enable the profession to advance beyond the dominant influence of the divided whole worldview, and make needed transformational value changes to its ethical principles. In doing so, social work would be more closely aligned with those in the *Earth Charter* and provide a stronger foundation for its local and global-minded practitioner members to take up leadership roles in a new UN-Civil Society network, and for its transformation to being a Global Social Work profession and or known as a design science-profession (Ramsay, 1990). The following ethical principles changes are proposed to bring Ubuntu and social work perspectives into 21st century alignment:

Ubuntu Supported Transformational Changes Applied to IFSW's Ethical Principles (2004, 2018)

The Global Social Work Ethical Principles Statement of is one example of a current policy that despite its recent advances continues to be grounded in a large part to Western science's pre-20th century worldview. Jointly approved by IFSW and IASSW it was to be used globally as the navigational system for all social work policy, teaching and practice. However, Ubuntu as a *Global Agenda* theme now advances the opportunity for the profession to urgently update the 2018 statement to clearly accommodate other global philosophies that extend our understanding of social work's ontological worldview and ethical principles.

Note: Underlined = revision changes to the 2004 updated or the 2018 jointly approved texts.

Blue = restated changes that could have been made in the 2004 update and proposed as needed changes in the 2018 statement.

Added = proposed additional changes in keeping with Earth Charter and the Earth Charter Commission

IFSW	IFSW Ethical Principles (2004)	IFSW/IASSW Ethical Principles (2018)
Updated/New	Human Rights and Human Dignity Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people and the rights that follow from this. Social workers should uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being.	Recognition of the Inherent Dignity of Humanity Social workers recognize and respect the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings in attitude, word, and deed. We respect all persons, but we challenge beliefs and actions of those persons who devalue or stigmatize themselves or other persons. Promoting Human Rights Social workers embrace and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights of all human beings. Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth, dignity of all people and the individual and social /civil rights that follow from this. Social workers often work with people to find an appropriate balance between competing human rights.
Problem	Focus on divided whole individuality; missing the co-	Still focused on divided whole individuality; missing the co-existence and complementarity of

	existence and complementarity of rights and responsibilities; does not reflect a fundamental change away from individual-centred values	rights and responsibilities; does not explicitly reflect a fundamental change away from individual-centred values in favor of Ubuntu and other Indigenous bodies of thought that recognises the responsibility of each human to act for the rights of all others. Ancient and traditional Chinese values had the same word for “to care for” and “to govern” and saw the rights and responsibilities of power [as so] inextricably linked that they were/are one and the same thing.
Revisions	Human Rights and Human Responsibilities Social work is based on respect for the inherent rights and responsibilities of all people one to the other, to the greater community of life and to future generations	Promoting Wholistic Rights and Human Responsibilities Social workers embrace and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights <u>and responsibilities</u> of all human beings. Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth, dignity of all people and the individual and social /civil rights that follow from this. Social workers often work with people to find an appropriate <u>robust equilibrium</u> between competing human rights <u>and responsibilities of all people one to the other, to the greater community of life and to future generations.</u>
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Focus on undivided whole interdependence; incorporates the complementarity of rights and responsibilities; entity-relationship centred defense of human integrity and regeneration for the future; reflects fundamental change to include network-centred values	Focus on undivided whole interdependence; incorporates the complementarity of rights and responsibilities; entity-relationship centred defense of human integrity and regeneration for the future; reflects fundamental change to include network-centred values and integration of Indigenous wisdoms and science of co-existing rights and responsibilities. Ubuntu support: Ubuntu as a philosophy is based on generic life values of justice, responsibility, equality, collectiveness, relatedness, reciprocity, love, respect, helpfulness, community, caring, dependability, sharing, trust, integrity, unselfishness and social change. It emphasises that people’s identities are continuously developing in the context of their reciprocal relationships with others, and thereby, through supporting and nurturing others, one’s own identity and life quality are enhanced. Human rights are often thought of as a tool in social work to emphasise each individual’s right to a secure life. This concept is not necessarily problematic within Ubuntu but does not represent a full framework of understanding how rights are applied in the social context nor does a Western view of human rights emphasise the responsibilities of all community members to one another as a

		mechanism for realising each person's human rights.
	This means:	
Updated/ New	Right to self-determination Social workers should respect and promote people's rights to make their own choices and decisions, irrespective of their values and life choices, provided this does not threaten the rights and legitimate interests of others.	Promoting the Right to Self-Determination Social workers respect and promote people's rights to make their own choices and decisions, provided this does not threaten the rights and legitimate interests of others.
Problem	Primary focus on divided whole independence; secondary focus on interdependent responsibilities.	Primary focus is still on divided whole independence; secondary focus on interdependent responsibilities.
Revisions	Right to co-determination Social workers should respect and promote people's rights to make their own choices and decisions provided there is acknowledged affirmation that these rights increase their responsibilities to promote the common good and do no harm to the rights of others.	Promoting the Right to <u>Co</u>-Determination Social workers respect and promote people's rights to make their own choices and decisions, provided there is acknowledged affirmation that these rights increase their responsibilities to promote the common good and do no harm to the rights and legitimate interests of others.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Primary focus on undivided whole interdependence of rights and responsibilities; acknowledges the deep and reciprocal interconnectedness between "individual freedom and collective need."	Primary focus on undivided whole interdependence of rights and responsibilities; acknowledges the deep and reciprocal interconnectedness between "individual freedom and collective need." Ubuntu support: In a Western perspective, it may be interpreted as the individual's right to self-determination but in a context of indigeneity, it may be understood as the right of the nation to self-determine its future. Within the Agenda theme Ubuntu, a global paradigm shift is required to recognise the synergy of people self-determining together.
Updated/ New	Right to participation Social workers should promote the full involvement and participation of people using their services in ways that enable them to be empowered in all aspects of	Promoting the Right to Participation Social workers work toward building the self-esteem and capabilities of people, promoting their full involvement and participation in all aspects of decisions and actions that affect their lives.

	decisions and actions affecting their lives.	
Problem	Does not openly acknowledge the civil society and participatory democracy significance of this empowerment	Does not openly acknowledge the civil society and participatory democracy significance of this empowerment. Only acknowledges the self-esteem (performance) side of self-worth. Misses the co-existence of S-E with self-acceptance (S-A) in holistic self-worth (S-W)
Revisions	Right to participation Social workers should promote the full involvement and participation of people using their services <u>and the services of others</u> in ways that enable <u>participatory empowerment</u> in all aspects of decisions and actions affecting their living situation.	Promoting the Right to Participation Social workers work toward building the <u>co-existent self-acceptance and</u> self-esteem capabilities of people, promoting their full involvement and participation <u>using their service and the services of others</u> in ways that enable <u>participatory empowerment</u> in all aspects of decisions and actions <u>affecting</u> their lives.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Openly acknowledges the principle of participatory democracy by a profession that considers itself aligned with and part of local, regional, national and global civil societies.	Openly acknowledges the principle of participatory democracy and co-existence of self-acceptance and self-esteem by a profession that considers itself aligned with and part of local, regional, national and global civil societies. Ubuntu support: Rights, however, are not understood as the central focus as they are in some Western contexts. In Ubuntu practice, the emphasis is on one's responsibility to ensuring the wellbeing of others. For example, Ubuntu imparts to us that we see our neighbour's child as our own, and their success is our success too.
Updated/ New	Treating each person as a whole Social workers should be concerned with the whole person, within the family, community and societal and natural environments, and should seek to recognize all aspects of a person's life.	Treating People as Whole Persons Social workers recognize the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of people's lives and understand and treat all people as whole persons. Such recognition is used to formulate wholistic assessments and interventions with the full participation of people, organizations, and communities with whom social workers engage.
Problem	<i>Focus on entity-centred wholeness within environmental contexts; divided whole entities connected to other whole entities.</i>	<i>Focus on entity-centred wholeness, not on relationship-centred wholeness within environmental contexts; divided whole entities connected to other whole entities.</i>
Revisions	Treating each person in the context of wholeness Social workers should be concerned with <u>whole living systems – individuals in relationships with</u> family,	<u>Treating People as Whole Persons in the context of whole living systems</u> Social workers recognize the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual <u>interrelationship</u> dimensions of people's lives and understand and treat all people as whole persons <u>in whole living</u>

	community, society and natural environments – and should seek to recognize all aspects <u>of these interconnected systems</u> .	<u>system environments</u> . Such recognition is used to formulate <u>wholistic</u> assessments and interventions with the full participation of people, organizations, communities, <u>their influencing validators, and natural environments</u> with whom social workers engage.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Focus on relationship-centred wholeness of person and environment entities; undivided whole networks of person-in-environment entities and interconnections; visualized through minimum whole entity (4) -relationship (6) structures.	Focus on relationship-centred wholeness of person and environment entities; undivided whole networks of person-in-environment entities and interconnections; visualized through minimum whole entity (4) -relationship (6) structures. Ubuntu support: The concept of environmental justice is interwoven into Ubuntu practice as each person is regarded as being responsible for the reciprocal interrelationships they have with the environment around them. ... In Ubuntu, the custom is that each person and community will leave a place in a better condition than they found it.
Updated/ New	Identifying and developing strengths Social workers should focus on the strengths of all individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their empowerment.	Not included in 2018 statement
Problem	Focus on entity-centred empowerment.	Empowerment focus is absent
Revisions/Additions	Identifying and developing <u>regenerative</u> strengths Social workers should focus on the <u>interconnected</u> strengths of individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their <u>co-empowerment of renewable and supportive networks</u> .	Identifying and developing ‘Mutual Empowerment or Combined and Self-Empowerment. Social workers should focus on the <u>interconnected</u> strengths of individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their <u>co-empowerment of renewable and supportive networks</u> .
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Focus on relationship-centred empowerment; acknowledges the synergy and reciprocal nature of relationships that lead to co-empowering outcomes.	Focus on relationship-centred empowerment; acknowledges the synergy and reciprocal nature of relationships that lead to co-empowering outcomes; and the multidirectional relationships which are required that enable people to move from feeling powerless to having influence in their lives. Ubuntu support: The word ‘empowerment’ has been broadly rejected, which explicitly emphasises that one person cannot empower another ... To expand more fully the learnings from Ubuntu and other Indigenous bodies of thought, a way of

		advancing this understanding could be to talk of ‘Mutual Empowerment’ or ‘Combined and Self-Empowerment’. The suppression of African, Eastern and most Indigenous philosophies has resulted in the global presumption that recognises ‘individual merit’, rather than frameworks that use a holistic perspective, such as Ubuntu. When an Ubuntu practising social worker is confronted with a problem, she does not seek to analyse it into components or parts, but rather she will ask in what larger context the problem resides. Individual identity and contributions are not denied but are seen as part of the whole. A successful individual is defined as someone that is committed to supporting others with integrity.
Updated/New	Social Justice	Promoting Social Justice
	Social workers have a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work.	Social workers have a responsibility to engage people in achieving social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work. This means:
Problem	<i>Focus on social justice as an independent entity</i>	<i>Focus is still on social justice as an independent entity</i>
Revisions	Social and Economic Justice	<u>Promoting Social and Economic Justice</u>
	Social workers have a responsibility to promote social <u>and economic</u> justice, in relation to society generally <u>and to those they serve specifically</u> .	Social workers have a responsibility to engage people in achieving social <u>and economic</u> justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people <u>they serve specifically</u> . <u>In doing so, they align with Indigenous models of restorative justice that help repair the dignity and humanity of all involved.</u>
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Co-existence and complementarity of social and economic justice interdependence is recognized	Co-existence and complementarity of social and economic justice interdependence is recognized. Ubuntu support: Ubuntu as it is advanced by social workers considers social protection as a living participatory platform in which the community itself is the primary form that provides care and advances development. Based on past traditional learnings, the progression of knowledge includes ongoing communal evaluation of current social concerns, risk analysis of future social crises and that all members of the communities are essential actors in the prevention of harm. Social justice can be considered in the light of Ubuntu. The stressing of ‘we’ and conciliation is fundamental in the traditional African context rather

		than the Western notion that can emphasise ‘us and them’ as well as punishment for wrongdoing. ... No system is perfect, but the Ubuntu approach creates the opportunity for reflection in many situations in social work practice. We can ask, does the imprisonment of an offender cause the person who has suffered loss or indignity to feel that she or he has achieved a sense of social justice? In our experience, we often find the answer to be no. Indigenous models of restorative justice however have enabled an injustice to be translated into repairing the dignity and humanity of all involved.
	This means:	This means:
Updated/ New	Challenging negative discrimination Social workers have a responsibility to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin color or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs	Challenging Discrimination and Institutional Oppression Social workers challenge discrimination, which includes but is not limited to age, capacity, civil status, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, nationality (or lack thereof), opinions, other physical characteristics, physical or mental abilities, political beliefs, poverty, race, relationship status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, or family structure.
Problem	N/A	N/A
Revisions	Challenging negative discrimination Social workers have a responsibility to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of <u>human diversity characteristics or classifications</u> gender, sex, of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, <u>gender, sex</u>, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin color or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs	Challenging Discrimination and Institutional Oppression Social workers challenge discrimination on the <u>basis of human diversity characteristics/ classifications or subjugation</u>, which includes but is not limited to age, capacity, civil status, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, nationality (or lack thereof), opinions, other physical characteristics, physical or mental abilities, political beliefs, poverty, race, <u>skin color</u>, relationship status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, or family structure.
Added 2004 and 2018	Promoting well-being- Social workers have a responsibility to promote the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of minorities and the rights of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources.	Promoting well-being- Social workers have a responsibility to promote the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of minorities and the rights of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources.

Ubuntu supported transformation Change	<i>Includes the complementarity of challenge and promotion</i>	<i>Includes the complementarity of challenge and promotion</i>
Updated/New	Recognizing diversity Social workers should recognize and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies in which they practice, taking account of individual, family, group and community differences.	Respect for Diversity Social workers work toward strengthening inclusive communities that respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies, taking account of individual, family, group, and community differences.
Problem	<i>Focus on entity-centered strength of their differences</i>	<i>Focus is still on entity-centered strength of their differences</i>
Revisions	Recognizing diversity Social workers should recognize and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies in which they practice, taking <u>into account the inter-connective strengths of</u> individual, family, group and community differences	Respect for Diversity Social workers work toward strengthening inclusive communities that respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies, taking into account <u>the inter-connective strengths of</u> individual, family, group, and community differences.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Includes entity and relationship value of recognizing diversity	Includes entity and relationship value of recognizing diversity. Ubuntu support ‘I grow-up with Ubuntu, but in my social work education the focus was on Western models of individualization, so my practice of Ubuntu as a social worker has been covert, and I thought not of interest to the profession.’ This is a typical comment made by social workers across the African region.
Updated/New	Distributing resources equitably Social workers should ensure that resources at their disposal are distributed fairly, according to need.	Access to Equitable Resources Social workers advocate and work toward access and the equitable distribution of resources and wealth.
Problem	<i>Acknowledges service delivery, but not advocacy responsibilities</i>	<i>Problem has been removed by acknowledging service delivery and advocacy responsibilities</i>
Revisions	Distributing resources equitably Social workers should ensure that resources at their disposal are distributed fairly, according to need, and advocate that economic activities and institutions at all levels should promote human	Access to Equitable Resources Social workers advocate and work toward access and the equitable distribution of resources and wealth toward sustainable and regenerative living for all humanity and their environments without harm or disadvantage to anyone.

	development in an equitable and sustainable manner.	
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	<i>Includes advocacy responsibilities</i>	<i>Absent before, now includes advocacy and regenerative responsibilities</i>
Updated/New	Challenging unjust policies and practices Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where people are living in poverty, where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful.	Challenging Unjust Policies and Practices Social workers work to bring to the attention of their employers, policymakers, politicians, and the public situations in which policies and resources are inadequate or in which policies and practices are oppressive, unfair, or harmful. In doing so, social workers must not be penalized. Social workers must be aware of situations that might threaten their own safety and security, and they must make judicious choices in such circumstances. Social workers are not compelled to act when it would put themselves at risk.
Problem	<i>Acknowledges individual-centred responsibilities</i>	
Revisions	Challenging unjust policies and practices Social workers have a duty to <u>inform</u> their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public <u>of specific</u> situations where people are living in poverty, where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful, <u>and be advocates for gender equality and equity, universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity, and the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.</u>	Challenging Unjust Policies and Practices Social workers work to <u>inform and</u> bring to the attention of their employers, policymakers, politicians, and the public situations in which <u>specific</u> policies and resources are inadequate or in which policies and practices are oppressive, unfair, or harmful, <u>and be advocates for gender equality and equity, universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity, and the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.</u> In doing so, social workers must not be penalized. Social workers must be aware of situations that might threaten their own safety and security, and they must make judicious choices in such circumstances. Social workers are not compelled to act when it would put themselves at risk.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Includes individual and collective responsibilities	Includes individual and collective responsibilities
New	Working in solidarity Social workers have an obligation to challenge social conditions that	Building Solidarity

	contribute to social exclusion, stigmatization or subjugation, and to work towards an inclusive society.	Social workers actively work in communities and with their colleagues, within and outside of the profession, to build networks of solidarity to work toward transformational change and inclusive and responsible societies.
Problem	<i>Tied to entity-center assumptions of 'building block' strength</i>	<i>Still tied to 'building block' strength</i>
Revisions	Working in <u>networks</u> Social workers have an obligation to challenge social <u>and economic</u> conditions that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatization or subjugation, and to work towards <u>participatory inclusivity within an United Nations Network of civil, business and state partnerships.</u>	Co-creating Networked Togetherness Social workers actively work in communities and with their colleagues, within and outside of the profession, <u>to co-create tensional strength</u> networks to work toward transformational change and <u>participatory inclusivity within an United Nations Network of civil, business and state partnership</u> societies.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Tied to entity-relationship knowledge of network strength	Tied to entity-relationship knowledge of tensegrity principles of tensional strength
Added	<i>Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace</i> Social workers have a responsibility to promote democratic institutions, nonviolent practices and peace.	<i>Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace</i> Social workers have a responsibility to promote democratic institutions, nonviolent practices and peace.
	This means:	This means:
	Supporting civil society Social workers have an obligation to engage in civil society actions at local, regional and global levels, and to promote participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.	Supporting civil society Social workers have an obligation to engage in civil society actions at local, regional and global levels, and to promote participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.
	Rights to freedom Social workers have an obligation to support the protection of rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent.	Rights to freedom Social workers have an obligation to support the protection of rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent.
	Mutual understanding Social workers have an obligation to promote mutual understanding, diverse networking and peaceful cooperation among all peoples.	Mutual understanding Social workers have an obligation to promote mutual understanding, diverse networking and peaceful cooperation among all peoples.
Ubuntu supported transformation Change	Tied to the regeneration of undivided wholeness and the individual-collective as the primary concern of all societies.	Tied to the regeneration of undivided wholeness and the individual-collective as the primary concern of all societies.

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