



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA



RE-INVIGORATING SOCIAL WORK AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND PRACTICE FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UBUNTU IN THE SOCIAL WORLD TODAY: The Case of Rwanda

By:

Dr Charles KALINGANIRE

“Act locally and think globally”



“EDUCATION is
the most powerful weapon which
you can use to
change the world.”

NELSON MANDELA .

Structure of the presentation

- ▶ **Introduction**
- ▶ **Conceptualisation**
- ▶ **Social Work Education and Practice (SWEPE): Drawing on Ubuntu Philosophy**
- ▶ **Case Example: SWEPE in the aftermath of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda**
- ▶ **Rethinking SWEPE: Why and How**
- ▶ **Conclusions and Recommendations**
- ▶ **Assignment**

1. Introduction: The World we live in

THE WORLD = VILLAGE???

World Population:
Around 8 Billion
Various Resources
Different
Opportunities
Globalisation
Haves vs. Haves not
Wealthiest vs. Needy



- Various issues
- Various issues
- Poverty
- HIV/AIDS
- Refugees
- Child Welfare
- Safety and self-care
- Globalisation

SOCIO ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES !!!

1. Socioeconomic threats

- poverty
- infectious disease
- environmental degradation

2. Inter-state conflict

3. Internal conflict

- Civil war
- Genocide
- Other large-scale atrocities

4. Proliferation and possible use of weapons of mass destruction

- nuclear
- radiological
- chemical
- biological

5. Terrorism

6. Transnational organized crime

How do these cluster threats appear?



The Social World we want: “Leaving No One Behind”



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YES BUT???

Mfundo waUbuntu Annual Lecture
delivered on 12 December 2024

RESPONSE TO SOCIOECONOMIC THREATS

Social Work has a big Role to Play



Human Rights
Social Justice



UBUNTU
(Humanity)



UBUTWARI
(Heroism)
UBUMWE
(Unity)

COMPLEMENTARY VALUES

2. CONCEPTUALISATION

WHAT IS SOCIAL WORK?

Social work 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 diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.

What is Ubuntu?

UBUNTU is considered as an “African philosophy that places emphasis on ‘being self through others. It is a form of humanism which can be expressed in the phrases ‘I am because of who we all are’ and ubuntu ngumuntu ngabantu in Zulu language.

Ubuntu means generally “humanness” and expresses itself metaphorically as “people are people through people

What is Education?

According to Fresno Pacific University (2019), education is defined as “a gradual process which brings positive change in the human life and behavior. [It can also be] defined as a process of acquiring knowledge through study or imparting the knowledge by way of instruction or some other practical procedure.”

Education can be formal; non formal and informal

- ▶ **Formal:** refers to organised, institutionalised learning models.
- ▶ **Non formal:** refers to the learning from community groups (e.g. family) and other various organisations.
- ▶ **Informal:** refers to the everyday learning people experience throughout their lives.

3. SWEP: Drawing on UBUNTU Philosophy

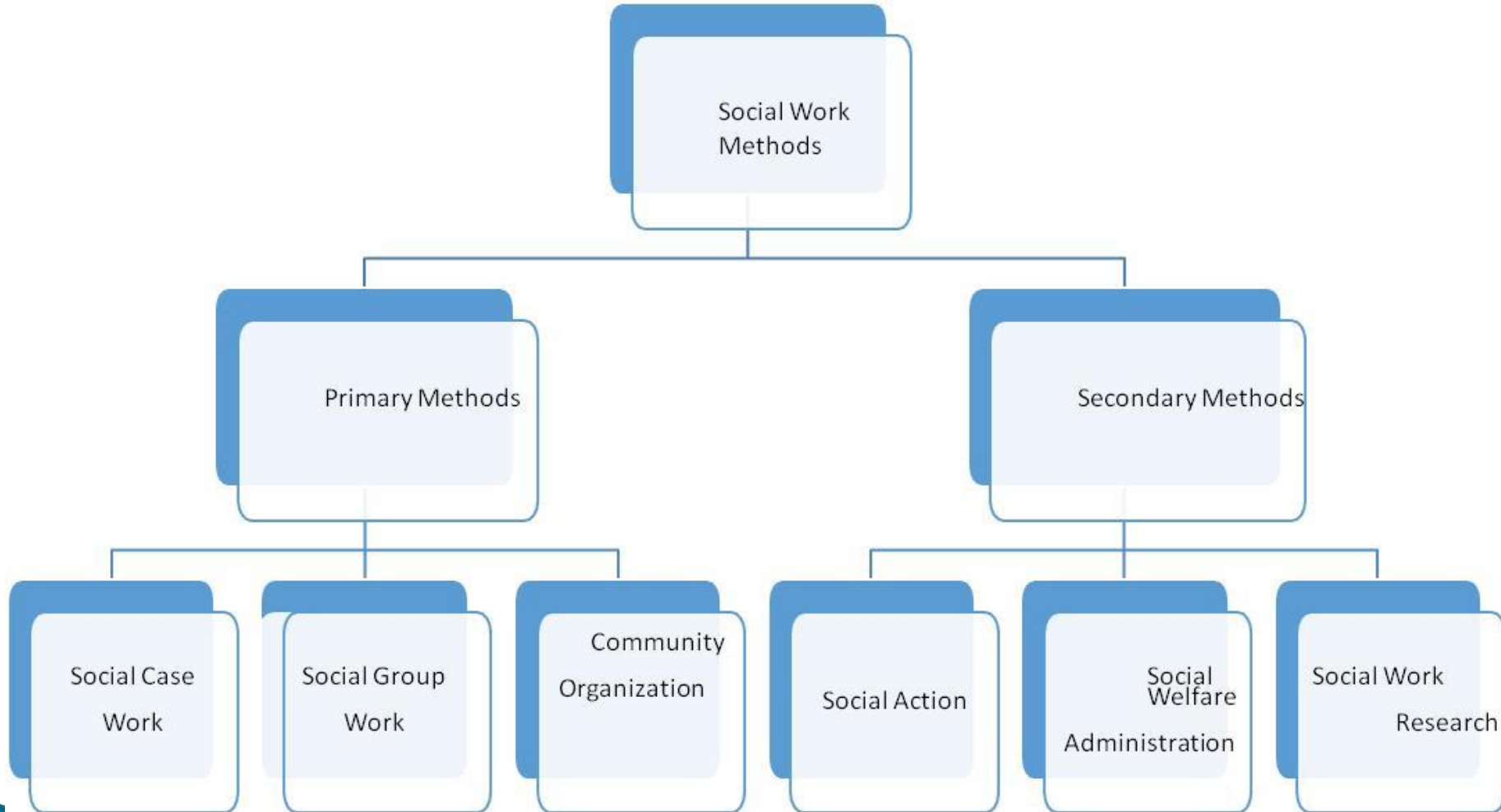
- ▶ From classical to Competence and Student-Based Education

TEACHER-CENTRED	LEARNER-CENTRED
Subject-Mattered Centre	Learner-Centred
Teacher-Dominated	Interactive
“Banking” Approach	Constructivist
Disciplinary	Integrated
Individualistic	Collaborative
Indirect-Guided	Direct

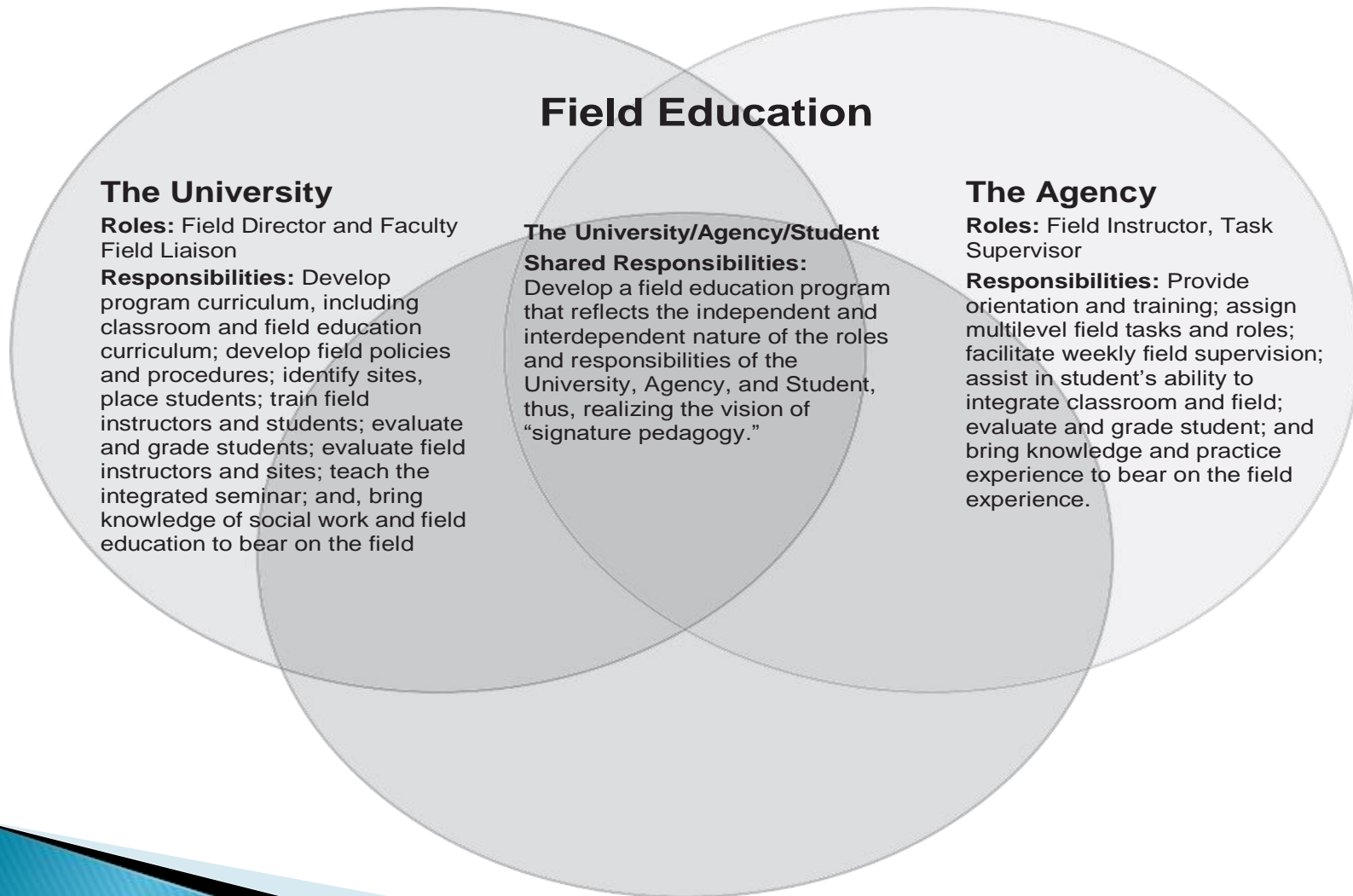
▶ Reference to the 21st Century Skills:

Learning and Innovation "The 4 C's"	Digital Literacy	Career and Life
Critical thinking & problem solving	Information literacy	Flexibility & adaptability
Creativity and innovation	Media Literacy	Initiative & self-direction
Communication	ICT Literacy	Social & cross-cultural interaction
Collaboration		Productivity & Accountability
		Leadership & responsibility

► In-class Implementation of UBUNTU through **Primary and Secondary Social Work**



► Field Placement: Concrete ways of Implementation of UBUNTU



4. Case Example: SWEP in the aftermath of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

▶ Genesis of SWEP in Rwanda

In Rwanda, the social work was officially established as an academic discipline in the direct aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Since this time, the profession has been evolving and growing, drawing on a hybrid model that combines both the Western model of practice and indigenous ways of solving problems.

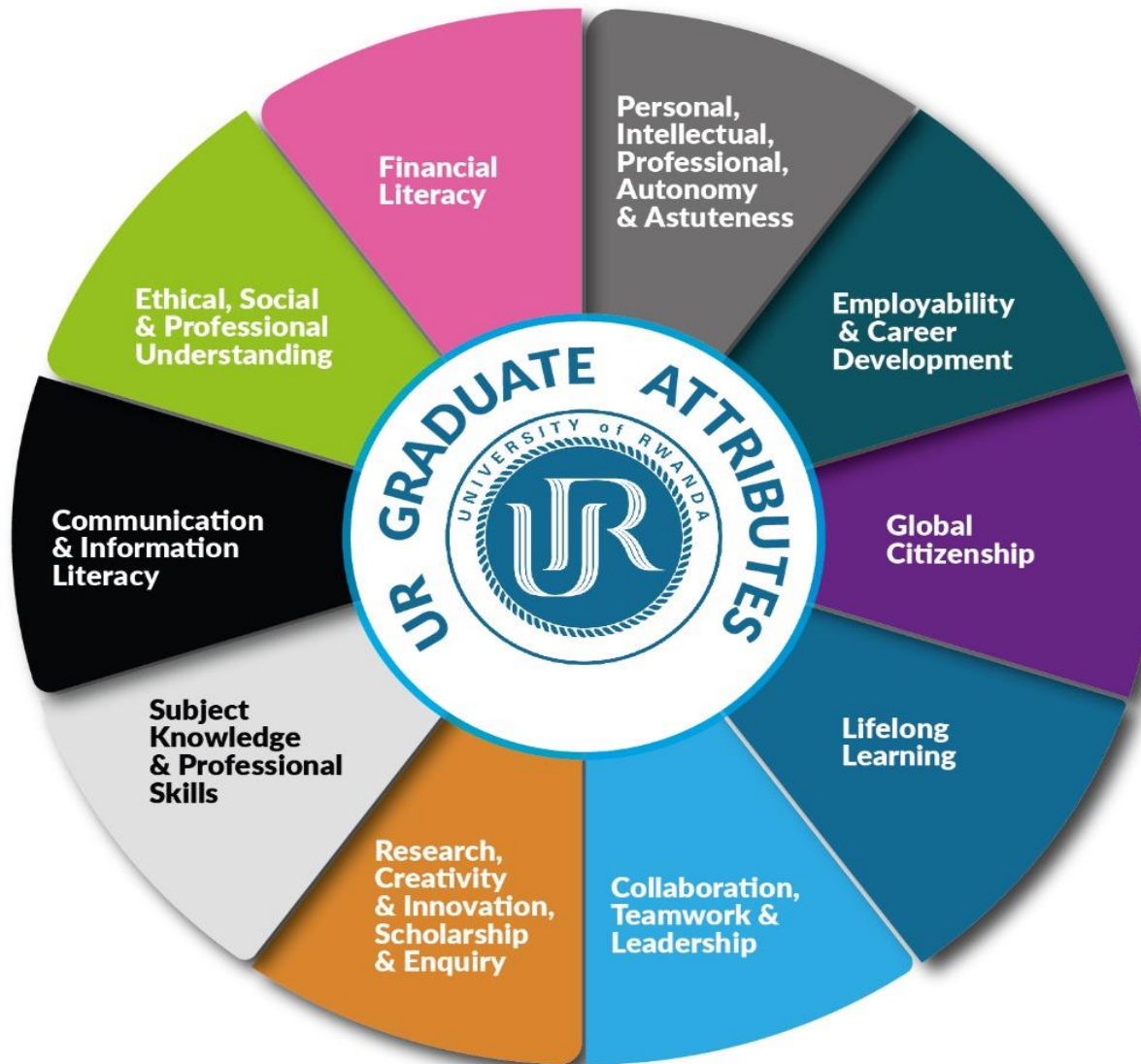
▶ Social Work Teaching in the Framework of Home-Grown Initiatives/Solutions (HGS):

Home Grown Initiatives (HGI) are Rwanda's 'trade mark' solutions built on the Rwandan history and culture. These policies are a direct response to economic and social challenges and contribute to fulfill the developmental vision of Rwanda. The most extensive and transformative HGIs include Umuganda, Gacaca, Abunzi, Imihigo, Ubudehe, Itorero & Ingando, Umushyikirano, Umwiherero and Girinka. (RGB, 2014)

▶ Key HGS that spurred Socio-Economic Development:

GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE	ECONOMY	SOCIAL WELFARE
<p><u>Gacaca</u> (Traditional conflict resolution)</p>	<p><u>Umuganda</u> (Community work)</p>	<p><u>Ubudehe</u> (Participatory socio-economic development program)</p>
<p><u>Abunzi</u> (Mediation and reconciliation committees)</p>	<p><u>Imihigo</u> (Performance contracts)</p>	<p><u>Girinka</u> (One Cow per Poor Family)</p>
<p><u>Inama y'Igihugu y'Umushyikirano</u> (National Dialogue Council)</p>	<p><u>Itorero/Ingando</u> (National Civic Education Programme)</p>	

► Reference to UR Graduate Attributes



Attribute 1	Personal, Intellectual , Professional Autonomy and Astuteness
Attribute 2	Employability and Career Development
Attribute 3	Global Citizenship
Attribute 4	Lifelong Learning
Attribute 5	Collaboration, Teamwork and Leadership
Attribute 6	Research, Creativity and Innovation Scholarship and Enquiry
Attribute 7	Subject Knowledge and Professional Skills
Attribute 8	Communication and Information Literacy
Attribute 9	Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding

▶ Resorting to Participatory Methodologies

In social Sciences, particularly in Social Work:

1) In class:

- a) **Intergroup debates: Group presenter vs Discussant group**
- b) **Moving debates**
- c) **Storry telling and/or experience sharing**
- d) **Situation analysis**

2) In the field:

- a) Meetings
- b) Field visits / Professional practice
- c) Community work ‘Umuganda’
- d) Joint supervision (Field instructor & Academic supervisor)
- e) Weekly interim presentations during the professional practices period

3) Other mechanisms

- a) Use of new technologies: social media (group watsapp; emails; SMS)
- b) Talks at Radio Salus (University Radio)
- c) Campaigns e.g March, advocacy (World Social Work Day), students and staff exchange with other universities

▶ From the Remedial to Developmental Social Work

To rebuild the social fabric, really from the ashes, the government of Rwanda devised the people and community-centred approaches.

The Rwandan proverb “Ak’imuhana kaza imvura ihise” (It is better to be self-reliant because assistance from outside is unreliable and unpredictable) was considered a guiding principle.

Privilege was given to collective action

Conducive socio-political environment,
leadership and adequate governance offer space
for suitable social work interventions

This connotes ‘developmental social work’

5. Rethinking SWEP: Why and How to incorporate the UBUNTU philosophy?

- ▶ To **correct what has been wrong**: avoiding the usurpation of the profession by sister disciplines.
- ▶ To observe strictly the original vision of the profession to **‘Help people help themselves’**.
- ▶ To be real social change agents (Agents of Socialisation): Educators; Mobilisers; Influencers wherever we are (formal; non formal and informal actions)

➤ Striving to mitigate all forms of adversities and acting towards the achievement of the SDGs

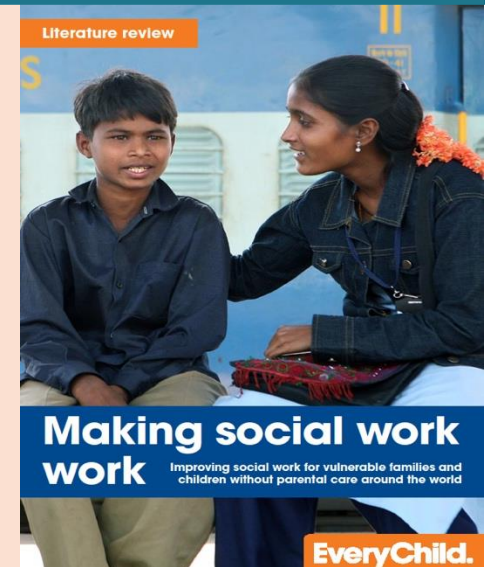
Worldwide SDGs



Solving Process, “making social work work” and promoting the Collective ownership of their concerns

Social workers have a responsibility to help people to:

- Help themselves**
- Create change in their lives**
- Recognize their strengths**
- Reach out to their own resources**



We, social workers in Rwanda:
“We are counsellors, community facilitators, educators, advocates and policy influencers. We work both with individuals and whole communities as the nation needs to work together to overcome the challenges.”
(A Lecturer of Social Work, 2019)

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

- Need of Emancipatory Education: Strengthening and contextualising curricula; promoting student-competent-centered approaches (SCCA) to shape ‘Global Citizens)
- Firm collaboration between junior and senior social work professionals
- Decent learning environment
- Paradigm shift from remedial to developmental perspectives
- Overall, striving for the shaping of strong Social Service Workforce (SSW)

- ▶ Social workers may, without endangering their expertise, work closely with well selected wise people who will be in constant contact with the people in need and report regularly to them.
- ▶ Refining the social work curriculum and elaborating a well-thought Field Manual
- ▶ Reinforcing synergies with Welfare agencies, administrative instances, local communities and social work bodies.
- ▶ Well equipping students with adequate theories but fitting these with practice in different settings: Documenting the local/indigenous practices.

ASSIGNMENT

- ❑ The social work practitioners are well positioned to ‘help PIN help themselves; create change in their lives; recognise their strengths and reach out to their own resources’.
- ❑ However, they may be cognizant of their limitations to replace people they work with, particularly the PIN and to respond to the latter’s solicitations wherever and whenever necessary. They cannot always reach physically every person in need within his/her environment though this is comforting. They may partner with different stakeholders particularly from the Social Welfare Workforce (SWW) including particularly **Intermediary Social Work Actors (ISWAs)**, usually called **Para-Professionals**.

➔ Social workers may use participatory, synthesised and integrated methodologies. Here the PAR should be privileged and indigenous practices/Home Grown Initiatives (HGI) promoted in the perspective of making people aware of their responsibility in the problem-solving process.

Ak'imuhana kaza invura ihise: It is better to be self-reliant because assistance from outside is unreliable and unpredictable

❑ To help adequately people in need (PIN) requires to work with them in their respective settings where all concerned actors may strive for the betterment of all PINs who may have access to the benefits of the existing systems.

➔ Social workers may be well equipped (from university already) to be able to handle different kinds of adversities at different levels and to adapt to the ever changing world: emphasising **emancipatory education**.

➔ Embracing and putting in action the principle of **“Leaving none behind”**.

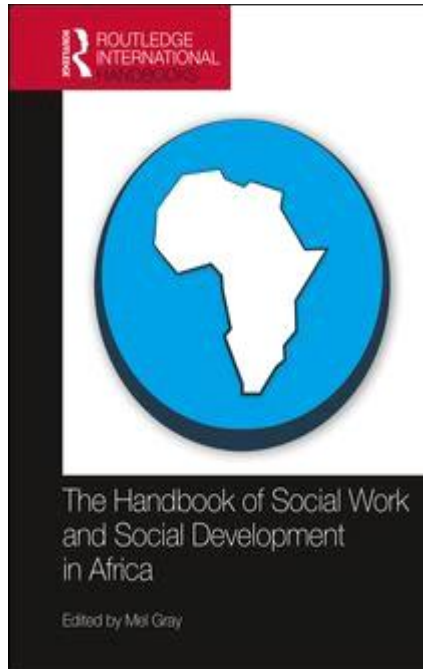
- ➔ Social workers may challenge common sense approaches and use interpretive approaches.
- ➔ Contributing always to the building of a decent society: playing directly or indirectly an influential role and establishing a bridge between local policy implementers and policy makers in order to fix every time emerging shortcomings.
- ➔ Drawing on prevailing social capital within the settings under consideration.

What is asked to the PSW and the SWW on the whole is “Not to do extraordinary things but to act extraordinarily well”

ASSIGNMENT

**OUR ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
TOWARD THE END OF THIS
YEAR AND THE WORLD
SOCIAL WORK DAY IN
MARCH 2025??**

Book chapter



Social work practice in Rwanda

The challenge of adapting Western models to fit local contexts

Authored by: [Charles Kalinganire](#) , [So’Nia L. Gilkey](#) , [Laura J. Haas](#)

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THANKS!

MERCI!

MURAKOZE!