# Social Work and Human Rights

## Advancing social justice through rights based practice

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# Examples of CSC programs that reflect CSC's Approach in Adopting and implementation of RBA

- Open Door (Information and Referral)
- Improving Housing Conditions of Very Poor Families
- Supportive Education
- Work with the Elderly
- Work with Disabled Children
- Mobile Center

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# Rights-Based Community Practice through CSC Experience (1999-2019)

Adopting RBA to Community Practice: The Experience of CSC- A case Study

- What is a RBA?

- Rights-Based Social Work (RBSW) & Rights-Based Community Practice (*RBCP)*

- Success in adopting and implementing RBA

# Human Rights-Based Social Work (RBSW)

- RBSW *is a framework that integrates human rights values and principles in social work practice both in its means and ends*

- Combining human rights and social work through a human rights perspective of social work may be the most significant combination between human rights and human services

- Adopting a human rights-based practice may be the appropriate way to honor the link between human rights and social work

# Major interventions and principles of RBSW

- **Empowerment:** moving from a condition of relative powerlessness to relative power

- **Participation**: facilitating citizen participation to the maximum possible level… through offering opportunities and confronting the barriers impeding this participation

- **Challenging oppression**: The oppressed and marginalized are considered the constituencies of social workers.

- **Strengths perspective**: focuses on the strengths of an individual or a group and in the environment

- **Feminist practice**: human rights abuse represented by patriarchism is a broad base for the relationship between feminism and social work

- **Non-violence**: Non-violence rests on rejecting violent means to achieve goals in the struggle for freedom and justice

# Rights-Based Community Practice (RBCP)

*RBCP is a practice that aims at having the human rights of the targeted communities and their members realized; exercised by them, respected by state and non-state actors, enjoyed by communities in meeting their needs, and enforced in the practice of relevant accountable agencies. This practice is done through means that respect human rights leading to human rights realization as ends. These means ensure that the rights to participation of the communities, the groups and the individuals are respected and their participation is promoted in a way that, through both its process and outcomes, (cont…)*

# RBCP (cont'd)

*empowers them to be capable of helping themselves facing their problems and overcoming the obstacles that impede practicing the rights they are entitled to. RBCP does not work only on solving problems of individuals, groups, communities, but is committed to make changes in policies and regulations that create them towards more just ones. It also empowers (educates) involved community workers and volunteers to be more effective professionally and more committed to human rights values and principles. It aims also at creating an organizational environment that is human rights friendly in the organizations that are involved in the practice.*

# Success in adopting and implementing RBA

- success in adopting and implementing RBA is conditioned by a number of factors.

- CSC experience suggests the following factors:

  ○ opportunity,

  ○ professionality,

  ○ commitment,

  ○ RBAing the practice, and

  ○ sustainability

# Success in adopting and implementing RBA:
# Opportunity

- opportunity means that an organization is needed by the community because it can respond to certain needs of the community, or in the community, in a way that is accepted by the community and that can promote community's willingness to cooperate with the organization and activate this willingness.

# Success in adopting and implementing RBA:
# Professionality

- an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically-based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice

- professionality can be seen on a continuum that runs between restricted professionality and extended professionality; restricted represents narrow perspective of the day-to-day practicalities, extended represents a wide vision of what the profession involves.

## Success in adopting and implementing RBA:
# commitment

- is about the presence of a team of community workers and volunteers who are committed to human rights values and principles as guiding and motivating perspective of their practice,

- knowing *why* they came to SW as a career or as a field of voluntarism and *why* they practice in addition to knowing what they are doing and how they do it,

- A state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action, & the strength of the feeling of <u>responsibility</u> towards the <u>mission</u> of the organization

# Success in adopting and implementing RBA:
# RBAing the practice

essential elements are needed to give the organization an RBA identity:

- empowering participation

- cultural relativism

- rights – needs

- Accountability

- solidarity.

# RBAing 1- empowering participation

- the ability to work with those *who* constitute the organization constituents in a way that promote their participation and empower them. This applies to all constituents: benefiting individuals, groups and communities, volunteers and staff members, although it should mainly target the beneficiaries.

# RBAing 2- Practice context and cultural relativism

○ Social worker is to be fully informed not only about the case with which he/she is dealing but also about broader political, historical, social and cultural contexts in which social work practice is taking place

○ universal human rights are important, but also to work towards culturally appropriate ways in which they can be realised in different cultural contexts

# RBAing 3 -rights & needs relation

There is no question about the essentiality of needs to human rights-based practice, but it should be added that social workers should work towards making people aware of the rights-nature of their needs and insist on their right to define these needs and accordingly seek social workers help to meet these needs, as rights they are entitled to.

# RBAing 4 - Accountability

- holding duty-bearer/s accountable for realizing human rights of individuals and groups is an important characteristic of RBA

- requires clearly determining the duty bearer to be held accountable and requires clarity of legislations, regulations and policies that delineate the rights and the ways to realize them

# RBAing 5 - Solidarity

- solidarity & Community Building

- *community building* refers to activities and policies that support and foster positive connections among individuals, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, and geographic and functional communities

- Solidarity implies not only understanding and empathy towards humankind's pain and suffering, but also identifying and taking a stand with the sufferers and their cause

# Success in adopting and implementing RBA:
# Sustainability

- sustainability of an approach by an organization can be defined as the ability acquired and held by the organization over time to initiate and implement the adopted approach. This requires a process in which the approach is continuously refined in order to evolve through a spiral path: adoption$\rightarrow$ interpretation$\rightarrow$ implementation$\rightarrow$ feedback $\rightarrow$ new level of adoption

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# THANK YOU

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