

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY 2024

organised by

The Department of Social Work (UG)
St. Edmund's College
Shillong
19th March 2024

IM-PALEI: HA KNUP KI JINGKYLLA BAD KA LAWEI (Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change)

Introduction

The Department of Social Work (UG) since its inception in 2007 have adopted multiple approaches, strategies, techniques, methods etc. in working with numerous communities across the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. While making substantial progress for more than 15 years of existence, the challenges of incorporating innovative ideas to bridge the gap towards optimal accomplishments are few and far. Such challenges occur due to the lack of understanding the context of indigeneity among the populace in the community. In its experience, the department has gain insights into this indigeneity over the years. The indigenous wisdom of Khasi communities in rural communities still prevail, and in this pretext it is significant for the profession of social work to learn through dialogical participation with the aim to develop systematic innovative approaches from the good and effective practices of these communes.



World Social Work Day 2024

World Social Work Day 2024 took place on the 19th of March with the adopted theme - '**Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change**', which is rooted in the Global Agenda **emphasising the need for social workers to adopt innovative, community-led approaches that are grounded in indigenous wisdom and harmonious coexistence with nature.** As Sang-Mok Suh, International Council on Social Welfare, President, reiterates - *“This theme encapsulates the essence of what social work stands for. It serves as a reminder that to bring about meaningful change, we must embrace community-driven initiatives that are grounded in indigenous wisdom and harmonious coexistence with nature. It’s a call for unity, collaboration, and transformative action.”*

In consonance with the thematic area eventfully, the Department of Social Work (UG) organized and conducted a 1-day interactive dialogue through shared experiences applying participatory tools and methods with members of '**Ka Kynhun ki Nongrep harud Wah Umngot**' (an indigenous group of farmers from 6 villages on the banks of River Umngot) along with the teachers and students from the department to deliberate on the intricacies of indigenous means and practices of this indigenous group who have been instrumental in the protection and conservation of the river recently. Its accomplishment is deeply rooted on then ancestral heritage it possesses and transpires inherently.

Objectives

1. To explore the indigenous practices of community led approaches.
2. To provide a platform for the student social workers for exposure in the subject.
3. To compile and organize data for a systematic understanding of Buen Vivir (good living)
4. To gain deeper insights on indigenous social work practices.

Date: 19th March, 2024

Participating Villages: Umsawar, Pashang, Mawsir, Mawdulop, Ksanrangi & Mynsang

Program: 19th March 2024

S. No.	Time	Village/Venue	No. of Students	Activity
1	8 am	College	42 +2 teachers	Departure from College
2.	10 am	Umsawar	7	

	onwards	Pashang	7	Interviews, Focus Group Discussion and Participatory Appraisals
		Mawsir	7	
		Mawdulop	7	
		Mysang	7	
		Ksan Rngi	7	
3.	5 pm	Mawsir	42 + 2 teachers	Valedictory
4.	7 pm	Mawsir to college	42 + 2 teachers	Return journey

Activities

The key to achieving efficient information is through participatory approaches, whereby the target groups are involved in the hands-on acquisition of knowledge. Thereby, by using similar approaches, the Student Social Workers were equipped with sufficient intensive training before they were to carry out their activities.

The activities that were conducted in the different villages were executed in such a way that the locals themselves were accomplishing the tasks for themselves and by themselves; the students were merely facilitators. Participatory techniques were used to appraise the subject concerned and 3 major tools were used, they are -

1) Infographic Analytical Tree



2) Riverine visual representation



3) Storytelling circles



Major Learning Outcomes

The execution of the above mentioned activities highlighted various outcomes that fulfil the students' aim of the visit, that is, to gather insight on the community led approach. The learnings gathered throughout are mentioned below:

- 1) The seed (sense of ownership, resistance towards the construction of the dam, sense of ownership towards the inherited resources) that spreads the roots of awareness towards the neighboring villages.
- 2) The obstacles that were met.
- 3) The success of the self-led organization through the participation of the residents
- 4) Their recognition of the need for sustenance through their livelihood which utilizes the natural resources sustainably.
- 5) The unnumerable resources which they are able to acquire from nature itself.
- 6) Folktales and stories from the different villages.
- 7) The significance of intervention by the Dorbar or local administrative council.

Conclusion

The event closed with a valedictory session where questions, comments and most importantly an insightful discussion took place where views were shared and reflected by students and the community. Overall, the event enhanced the consciousness of the existing indigenous knowledge system and practices held wisely by the participants of the day. The elders present in the valedictory shared anecdotal and episodic narratives on what led ‘Ka Kynhun ki Nongrep harud Wah Umngot’ to initiate a movement driven by their determination to safeguard and preserve the bedrock of their livelihood with a clear vision for what is best for well-being of their existence and how to sustain it for the generations to follow.

Convenor & Facilitator: Randolph V. Langstieh

