
Environmental social work as a vehicle for the indigenization of Social Work

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Abstract

Recent worldwide events (Covid-19, wildfires, flooding, earthquakes, droughts) have proved that traditional social work practice and training find themselves at a crossroads with the realisation that the current social work as we have known it, no longer addresses the pressing need of our clientele, both from a practice point of view as well as from an educational point of view. The presenters believe that the relevance of social work on the African continent strongly depends on the ability to indigenize social work training, practice and the social work discourse. If we are to advance sustainable development goals as social workers the presenters believe that there needs to be a deeper understanding of the urgency of the climate emergency, and the existential threat that this poses to mankind, and to understand that a paradigm shift in social work is needed to begin to address this. It is believed that by combining Environmental Social Work and focusing on decolonizing indigenous knowledge and resilience, a useful contribution could be made to sustainability, social and environmental justice and human rights, which could offer a new model for social work practice and use.

Keywords: environment, social work, indigenization

