



Regional Cooperation Newsletter – East and South Africa Region

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Contents

1. A focus on Rwanda National protection strategy

In recent years Rwanda has managed to achieve a good level of economic growth. However there is still much to be done if the government's aspirations for poverty reduction are to be achieved. In 2006, almost 57 percent of the population still lived in poverty, while levels of inequality were on the rise. A number of categories of the population are particularly vulnerable to poverty including older people, those living with disabilities, young children, female-headed households, genocide survivors and the historically marginalized. Young people are a group that also needs support, given the difficulties many have in finding jobs due to low skill levels.

The Strategy defines social protection across two main dimensions:

- *As a Social Protection Sector, which essentially comprises the system of regular and predictable cash transfers that will provide income support to those living in poverty and vulnerable to falling into poverty;*
- *As a means of ensuring access to other public services-such as health and education - by enabling poor households to overcome the financial barriers that they may face.*

In addition the Strategy sets out a number of social development initiatives and complementary activities to social protection focused on helping poor households graduate out of poverty.

http://www.minaloc.gov.rw/fileadmin/documents/Minaloc_Documents/National_Social_Protection_Strategy.pdf

2. Looking at Uganda’s poverty eradication action plan for National sustainable development

The experience of Uganda presents a relatively good case for testing the principles of National Sustainable Development Strategy for confirming the importance and the challenges faced by countries struggling to develop and implement national sustainable development strategies. What is also clear is that the challenges have to be managed in an environment of good governance, political will and reasonable human and institutional capacities to assess the economic, social and environmental situation, and evolve a nationally owned and participatory strategic process for sustainable growth and development. What is also very clear is that effective partnerships with development partners are critical to keep this process moving.

<http://www.un.org/jsummit/html/calendar/meeting.docs/ugandapresentation1120.doc>.

IFAD has also worked very closely with the Uganda Government to enable the poor people of Uganda overcome poverty. The following link says it all.

<http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/Pf/factsheets/uganda.pdf>

3. A brief report of the International social work conference held in Bujumbura, Burundi on 16th – 18th March 2015

The opening Ceremony was held on 16th March 2015 at Hope Africa University in Bujumbura, Burundi. Sylvain Nzohabonayo – Hope Africa University Rector, welcomed ALL the delegates and declared the Conference opened officially.

Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul - IASSWA vice President, gave the key note speech in relation to the Theme of the Conference which was “**Social work and Community Development in Post-Conflict Societies**”. The Minister for Communication opened the conference and reiterated that

the Government of Burundi will Support the University and the newly formed Burundian National Association of Social Workers.

On 17th March 2015, the conference programme started with a walk from Tere Tampete grounds and headed to Bujumbura town to create awareness about the importance of Social work. The march ended at Royale Palace Hotel where the conference took place. Various Topics were discussed by different speakers as follows;

Prof. Helmut - “Professional Social Work: International Perspectives and their Relevance for African Context.

Prof. Helmut introduced himself as a Lecturer at Carinthian University of Applied Sciences in Australia. He started his speech by stating that it was an International day for Social Work which every Social Worker needed to celebrate. .

Prof. Helmut took through the delegates on the History of Social Work in African context. He noted that Social Work is not fully recognized in Africa and thus a lot had to be done to ensure that this profession is appreciated just like any other profession. He stated that peoples focus was majorly on poverty and inequality but could not think of social work as an agent of social change and transformation. He took the delegates through the functions of social work which were mainly Remedial, Prevalence and Transformative.

The second speaker was Dr. David Niyonzima - “Transcending the Socio-Political factors that affect Community Transformation. He majored on factors that affect community transformations. Issues like poverty, wars (he gave an example of HUTU and TUTSI ethnical war in Burundi) among other factors as what hinders community transformation in the society.

The third speaker was Dr. Twikirize – “Strengthening professional social work in East Africa: Evidence and challenges”. Dr. Twikirize took the delegates through various challenges facing the social work profession in East Africa. Through the PROSOWO project a Social work focusing on the East African region was published. From the presentation it was clear that social work profession is not recognized and appreciated and that people do not understand who is a

social worker is. In the African context, any person can work as a social worker! As a way forward Dr. Twikirize proposed the;

- Need to professionalize social work practice to accord it more recognition and enhance its contribution i.e.
 - legal framework for regulation of practice
 - Set education and training standards esp. with regard to curriculum and educators
 - Emphasis on indigenization/contextualization of social work education and practice
 - Strengthen local research capacity
- Increase engagement in policy practice and advocacy
- Need to have more vibrant national professional associations – for both practitioners and schools of social work – for a stronger, united voice.
- Strengthen regional and international networking through active participation in professional bodies and events e.g. ASSWA, IASSW, IFSW and ICSW
- Develop post graduate level training in social work
- To offer specialized training
- Develop research capacity
- Reduce attrition rate of social workers into other disciplines
- Embrace political activism and peace building
- Challenge injustice, socio and economic inequalities and oppression. Strengthen our position as a human rights profession

The fourth speaker was Prof. Vishanthie Sewpaul - “Gender, violence and the family in post-conflict societies.” Prof. Sewpaul noted that in African culture, there was high level of girl-child abuse as compared to boy-child abuse. She also noted that there are minimal chances of an educated woman being abused as she is financially stable. She noted that as we serve the community, we should encourage the girl child (women) to go to school which will give them knowledge and thus be able to serve their families and the community at large.

Recommendations of the Conference

- There is need to promote social and economic equity
- There is need to promote the dignity and worth of all peoples

- Recognition of the importance strengthening human relations
- Working towards environmental sustainability
- There is need to challenge all forms of exclusions, oppressions, marginalization, inequalities and poverty linked to social criteria such as race, class, gender, ethnicity and rural urban living.
- Mainstream gender and promote gender equality in all policies and in all spheres of practice

4. Understanding Social Protection in Zambia - Budget Perspective

An article prepared by the Zambian Platform for Social Protection which provides an analysis to budgetary allocations for Social Protection. The article gives an overview of allocations for different programmes on Social Protection as well an analysis on the same.

Read the article. <http://www.africacsp.org/component/content/article/40-newsflash/105>
-Understanding-social-protection-in-Zambia-budget-perspective

4. News and Events

- a) 5th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators Conference
 2nd to 4th September 2015 Cape Town, South Africa
 Website: <http://isci2015.org> Contact person: Katharine Hall
 The conference theme is: "From Welfare to Well-being: Child indicators in research, policy and practice." Researchers from across the world will discuss the latest research methods, findings and implications for policy and interventions.

Organized by: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, in partnership with the African Child Policy Forum, the UCT Poverty & Inequality Initiative and UNICEF
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 31st March 2015
- b) The International Conference on Law and Community Development, organized by the Planetary Scientific Research Centre will take place from 14th April to the 15th April 2015 at the Cresta Oasis Hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe. The conference will cover areas like Corporate Criminal Liability, Criminal Justice.
- c) The East Africa Symposium on Social Work and Welfare Development which will take place in Arusha Tanzania on 9th - 11th July 2015.
- d) The Pan Africa Joint Conference on 4th -7th October in New London South Africa.
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- e) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in Health Services: Implementing the New Care Act 2014: Revised Regulations and Guidance

Conference

17th to 17th June 2015
London, United Kingdom

Website: <http://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/safeguarding-vulnerable-adults-in-health-services>

Contact person: Kerry Tarrant

The conference will, through national updates and expert sessions help you and your organisation to improve adult safeguarding policy and practice in your service

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