

Questions for the ACSW Candidates

Question 2 - **Could you speak to what is: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People? Why is this important in Social Work?**

Responses:

Baiju Vareed

United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People, adopted by UN general assembly in 2007 upheld the rights of Indigenous communities to maintain and strengthen their culture, language, institutions and traditions. Canada was one of the four countries that voted against the declaration, but adopted it in 2016. I believe social workers need to be aware of the rights of Indigenous communities, and provide services as per the cultural contexts of each communities. It starts from an understanding that 'one size does not fit all' in social work, and conscious attempt enhance cultural competency as a social worker.

Cardinal Fomradas

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was made in 2007. 144 countries voted in favor. 4 countries voted against the declarations, sadly Canada was one of these 4. In 2016 Canada had revoked its objection to the declaration. The declaration identifies the rights of all Indigenous Peoples both individually and collectively in multiple domains such as: culture, identity, health, employment and others. The declaration also prohibits discrimination. This declaration is important to Social Work because Social Work believes and affirms the right of self determination of all peoples, as individuals, and as a collective. This declaration gives Social Workers "guidelines" as such in their approach when working with Indigenous Peoples in terms of accepting their world view and culture and to work with Indigenous Peoples within their framework, instead of trying to get them to "change their ways of doing and knowing" as was the case with colonialism.

Carla Bertsch

In 2007, almost the entire international community, Canada being one of four countries to oppose it, adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Disturbingly, it took us nearly 10 years to fully support the declaration. The declaration recognizes the basic human rights, rights to self-determination, language, equity, and land, in addition to others, for Indigenous peoples.

16 of the 94 calls to action are directly related to the UN declaration. As noted above, the social work profession is deeply rooted in anti-oppressive, social justice work and advocacy, and we need to be active in providing Indigenous peoples the space to lead and control their lives and futures.

Both the UN declaration and the TRC report should be followed, to allow insider knowledge to lead practice and to help social workers never repeat mistakes made under the guise of knowing best, again.

Connie Hesjedal

UNDRIP was adapted by the General Assembly in September 2007 and acts as a “universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous people of the world”. UNDRIP, also expands on existing human rights standards and the fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples. UNDRIP is important in Social Work practice, as it relates to our own practice of advocacy, social justice, and pursuit for equitable practices, funding, health, and systems.

Rick Guthrie

The Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples. It affirms that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right

of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such,

This was adopted in 2007 by the UN, 144 nations voted to adopt, 4 voted against (unfortunately, Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand), 11 obtained

Once again, it is important to Social work because this embrace Social Work course values of Respect for inherent Dignity and worth of persons, Pursuit of Justice, and ongoing Service to Humanity.

Jody-Lee Farrah

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is a document that describes the individual and collective rights of indigenous people around the world. It is intended to guide relationships between indigenous people and state/government, the United Nations and other international organizations. In 2016, the Canadian government announced its full support of the declaration. This is important in Social Work as the Declaration has been instituted in Canadian government, it calls upon the government to review and change federal law and policy impacting indigenous people, to repeal unjust and discriminatory approaches. It's important for leaders, law makers and government to move forward in collaborative, respectful ways that support decolonization and reconciliation. Social workers often work in social policy development and advocate for social policy change that promotes dignity and respect for human rights. Acknowledging and understanding Canada's acceptance of the declaration will help social workers advocate for change.

Katie Borek

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is meant to set a standard for the dignity and wellbeing for Indigenous Peoples around the world; Canada did not join the declaration until 2016 even though the Declaration was originated by the UN in 2007. This is important for social work as mentioned above it is part of our Code to ensure all people are treated fairly and not discriminated against, also it identifies the gaps and the slow movement of our government on the issue of the treatment of Aboriginal peoples. Social workers as



advocates and agents of change need to work together to ensure the treatment of Aboriginal Peoples is appropriate and respectful and we are doing all we can to protect those who have been made vulnerable by the systems we have created.