



2009

Human Rights and Social Justice in a Global Perspective: An Introduction to International Social Work. Susan C. Mapp. Reviewed by Jani Nairruti.

Nairruti Jani
University of Texas, Arlington

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jani, Nairruti (2009) "*Human Rights and Social Justice in a Global Perspective: An Introduction to International Social Work.* Susan C. Mapp. Reviewed by Jani Nairruti," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 4 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol36/iss4/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



BOOK REVIEWS

Susan C. Mapp (Ed.), *Human Rights and Social Justice in a Global Perspective: An Introduction to International Social Work*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2007. \$32.95 paperback.

This exemplary book introducing human rights and its implications to the social work profession serves as an introductory textbook for international social work. With increasing economic and social adversities in the world, the rights of many impoverished and vulnerable people have been sacrificed. At a time when social work is faced with tough challenges, understanding human rights and its relevance to professional practice provides a platform for service delivery and research. In her book, Mapp discusses current violations of human rights such as violence against women, war and conflict, forced labor, inadequate healthcare and the conscription of children as soldiers. She draws a landscape of 'human rights' realities for students as well as social work practitioners. A thorough understanding and commitment to human rights in social work will not only enhance practice responses to these issues, but also facilitate research in the area, creating a stronger knowledge base in social work to deal with these problems.

In the first part of the book, Mapp explains the concepts of development and human rights in relation to social work. Having built a theoretical foundation for social work in light of human rights, she focuses on some universal and yet largely invisible problems in social work literature. The universal declaration of human rights states that no one should be held in slavery and servitude. However, slavery still exists in the form of forced labor often emerging out of unfavorable economic and social circumstances. The way slavery now exists is often

ignored and needs the attention of social workers, particularly those involved in policy studies and macro practice. In this section of the book, she elucidates the veiled realities of 'human trafficking,' 'illegal immigration and domestic servitude,' 'sexual slavery,' as well as the exploitation of private citizens. The book then goes on to describe the increasing exploitation of child labor in the Global South drawing attention to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights on the Child* to show how social workers can help to address the problem within a human rights context. Having discussed children's rights and social work, the book deals with the challenge of war and conflict, which is a highly topical issue. Conflict not only impacts the mental and physical health of the affected population but also leaves long lasting scars of socio-economic oppression. The issues of displacement and refugees and the lack of services to meet the needs and basic rights of this population requires great attention from the social work professional community. Mapp succinctly depicts the role of social workers in building knowledge as well as services for refugees and internally displaced people.

The concluding chapters of the book deal with often debated issues in social work. The author provides a thorough account of HIV-AIDs, and efforts to curb the spread of this disease. She also gives attention to the ever increasing numbers of women contracting the HIV virus. She discusses issues impacting women today, such as family violence, female genital cutting, dowry deaths and honor killings. In spite of human rights instruments such as the Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), violence against women continues.

The author calls on social workers to take action to respond to these issues and to commit themselves to a human rights approach in social work practice. A helpful feature of this book is its last part where the author gives factual information about the resources social workers can use to contribute positively to change the lives of those vulnerable sections of society who are as yet not effectively protected by human rights law. This book is not only important for social workers but an excellent read for anyone interested in current affairs and for those in related fields such as law, public policy and social administration.

Nairruti Jani, University of Texas at Arlington