



THE CHANGELOOMERS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER



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Don Bosco College, Itanagar,
Arunachal Pradesh, 791111



From the Desk of the Head of Department, Department of Social Work

Greetings to all our esteemed readers! We are thrilled to bring you the first edition of our newsletter, and this time, we shine a spotlight on collective efforts to transformative initiative that has been making waves within the hallowed halls of our Department of Social Work – **THE CHANGELOOMERS**.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the contributors who have dedicated their time and expertise to make this newsletter a reality. Your contributions have added depth and richness to the content, reflecting the diversity of our department's activities and achievements.

"The Changeloomers" is more than just a publication; it is a testament to our commitment to creating positive change and addressing social challenges. Through this platform, we aim to inspire, inform, and engage our community in meaningful discussions and actions.

I encourage each of you to explore the pages of "The Changeloomers" and discover the stories, insights, and innovations that our department has to offer. Let us continue to be changemakers and catalysts for social progress.

Thank you to everyone involved in bringing **"The Changeloomers"** to life. Your contributions are invaluable, and I am immensely proud of our collective achievements.

Warm regards,

Dr. Dominic Leo Thaikhoh
Head of Department
Department of Social Work

UTSAV-3.0 : Breaking Breaking: Shaping the Future

Dr. Dominic Leo Thaikho, Assistant Professor & HoD, Department of Social Work

As we step into the vibrant realm of the Department of Social Work's academic festival, UTSAV 3.0, we gather to explore a theme that resonates profoundly within the corridors of our discipline: Breaking Barriers: Shaping the Future. Aligned with the global narrative of World Social Work Day 2024, which echoes the theme "Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change," our exploration takes on an added dimension. In this convergence of breaking barriers and embracing the philosophy of Buen Vivir, we embark on a journey that not only envisions a future free from societal constraints but also fosters a collective ethos for transformative change. The pursuit of breaking barriers is not just a noble aspiration but in the realm of social work it is a fundamental commitment to creating a world that is inclusive, equitable, and just. This theme encapsulates the heart of social work, calling upon us to forge connections, dismantle barriers, and co-create a future that reflects the principles of shared well-being and sustainable harmony.



Historical Context of Social Work:

To understand the significance of breaking barriers in social work, it is crucial to delve into the historical roots of our discipline. Social work emerged as a response to the social ills and inequalities of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fueled by the industrial revolution and urbanization. Pioneers like Jane Addams and Mary Ellen Richmond dedicated themselves to addressing the pressing issues of poverty, child labour, and inadequate living conditions. Their work laid the foundation for a profession centred on breaking barriers to social justice.

In the ensuing decades, social work evolved to confront new challenges, from the civil rights movement to the fight for climate change and LGBTQ+ rights. The profession has continually adapted to the changing landscape, always committed to breaking down barriers that impede the well-being of individuals and communities. The academic festival becomes a platform to celebrate this rich history while exploring how contemporary social work can continue to shape the future by challenging entrenched barriers.



Breaking Barriers: Unveiling Challenges and Opportunities:

The theme "Breaking Barriers: Shaping the Future" invites us to confront the multifaceted challenges that persist in our societies and explore the dynamic

role of social work in dismantling these barriers. These challenges encompass a wide spectrum, including but not limited to economic inequality, systemic racism, casteism, tribalism, gender discrimination, environmental degradation, ethnic conflicts and mental health stigma. As we delve into these issues, we must recognize that breaking barriers is not a one-dimensional task but a multifaceted endeavour that requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach.

In the context of social work, breaking barriers extends beyond the traditional understanding of overcoming obstacles. It embodies the profession's commitment to social justice, advocacy, and empowerment. Social workers serve as catalysts for change, working to eliminate the root causes of societal challenges while promoting inclusivity, equality, and well-being for all individuals and communities. Aligning with the World Social Work Day theme "Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change," we see an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the interconnectedness between breaking barriers and holistic living. Buen Vivir, with its roots in indigenous wisdom, challenges us to move beyond conventional paradigms, embracing a vision that integrates cultural, spiritual, and ecological dimensions into our pursuits of social justice.

Buen Vivir: The Philosophical Tapestry:

Buen Vivir, translated as "good living" or "living well," is a concept deeply rooted in the wisdom of indigenous cultures, particularly from the Andean region of South America (Acosta et.al 2001, Solon 2014). It rejects the narrow pursuit of material wealth and emphasizes a holistic approach to life—one that is in harmony with nature, connected to community, and focused on shared well-being. This philosophical framework challenges us to consider alternative paradigms of development and well-being that prioritize interconnectedness over individualism (ibid).

At its core, Buen Vivir calls for a reevaluation of our relationship with nature, a celebration of cultural diversity, and a commitment to collective well-being. The theme resonates with the social work profession's core values, as it encourages us to engage with communities in a way that goes beyond conventional service delivery. It prompts us to ask not only how we can address the immediate needs of individuals but also how we can contribute to the creation of environments where communities thrive.

Breaking Barriers through the Lens of Buen Vivir:

1. **Community Empowerment and Participation:** Buen Vivir places a strong emphasis on community empowerment and participation in decision-making processes. Social work, in breaking barriers, can adopt approaches that prioritize the voices and agency of communities. This may involve community-based participatory research, empowerment-focused interventions, and strategies that facilitate the active involvement of community members in shaping their futures.
The academic festival can showcase successful examples of community-driven initiatives where social workers have played a pivotal role in breaking down barriers to participation. Through presentations, panel discussions, and workshops, participants can explore how social work practice can shift from a top-down approach to a collaborative, community-centred model
2. **Cultural Competence and Diversity:** Buen Vivir celebrates cultural diversity and recognizes the importance of understanding and respecting different worldviews. Social work, in breaking barriers related to cultural misunderstandings and discrimination, must prioritize cultural competence. This involves acknowledging the unique strengths and perspectives

of diverse communities and incorporating cultural humility into professional practice.

The festival can feature sessions that delve into the integration of cultural competence in social work education and practice. Cultural competence workshops, intercultural dialogues, and storytelling sessions can create spaces for reflection and learning, fostering an environment where cultural diversity is not only acknowledged but embraced as a source of strength

3. Environmental Justice and Sustainability: In alignment with the ecological dimensions of Buen Vivir, social work can play a crucial role in breaking barriers related to environmental justice and sustainability. This involves advocating for policies that address the impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering an ecological consciousness within the profession.

Workshops and presentations on environmental justice within social work can explore how the profession can actively contribute to breaking down barriers that hinder the well-being of communities affected by environmental challenges. By integrating environmental sustainability into social work education and practice, we pave the way for a future where the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems is recognized and respected

4. Collaborative Partnerships for Transformative Change: Buen Vivir encourages collaborative, interconnected relationships within and between communities. Social work, as a collaborative profession, can break barriers by forming partnerships that transcend traditional boundaries. The festival becomes an opportune moment to highlight successful collaborations between social workers, community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Through interactive sessions and case studies, the festival can showcase how collaborative partnerships have led to transformative change in various social contexts. This exploration not only demonstrates the potential for breaking barriers through collaboration but also offers insights into the challenges and successes of such endeavours

5. Wellness and Mental Health: Buen Vivir recognizes the integral relationship between mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and the overall health of communities. Social work, in breaking barriers related to mental health stigma and access to services, must adopt a holistic approach that addresses the multifaceted dimensions of well-being.

The festival can host discussions and workshops on innovative approaches to mental health within the context of Buen Vivir. Topics such as community-based mental health interventions, the integration of traditional healing practices, and destigmatizing mental health issues can be explored. By adopting a holistic perspective on wellness, social work contributes to breaking barriers that hinder the full potential of individuals and communities.

Conclusion:

As we navigate the theme “Breaking Barriers: Shaping the Future” within the framework of Buen Vivir, UTSAV: the academic festival becomes a space of convergence—an intersection of theoretical exploration, practical application, and visionary thinking. The themes of breaking barriers and embracing Buen Vivir are not disparate; they are intertwined, forming a rich tapestry that invites us to reimagine the future of social work.

The UTSAV serves as a catalyst for dialogue, reflection, and collaborative learning. It is a call to action, urging social work practitioners, educators, and students to explore innovative ways of breaking barriers, fostering community well-being, and contributing to transformative change. Through dynamic presentations, interactive workshops, and engaging discussions, participants can

delve into the complexities of contemporary challenges while drawing inspiration from the holistic principles of Buen Vivir.

Together, let us embark on this journey of breaking barriers and embracing Buen Vivir—a journey that goes beyond the confines of academic discourse to inform the transformative practices and collective ethos of social work. As we shape a shared future, may our endeavours be guided by the spirit of interconnectedness, sustainability, and shared well-being. In this convergence of breaking barriers and Buen Vivir, we find the compass that directs us toward a future where transformative change is not just an aspiration but a lived reality.

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Transforming Society: The Collective Power of Women in Shaping Our Shared Future

Ms. Decem S Mitkong, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work

“There is no force more powerful than a woman determined to rise” -W.E.B.Dubois

In the grand tapestry of human existence, women have played multifaceted roles, contributing immeasurably to the development and progress of societies across the globe. As we stand on the precipice of a new era, it is imperative to recognize and celebrate the transformative potential that women hold in shaping our collective future. By acknowledging the importance of gender equality and promoting the active involvement of women in various spheres, we pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious future.

Historically, women have been instrumental in shaping the social fabric of communities. From nurturing families to engaging in community-building activities, women have long been the silent architects of societal structures. As we progress into the 21st century, the role of women is evolving beyond traditional boundaries, with an increasing number of women pursuing higher education and professional careers. This shift is not merely about individual empowerment but extends to the broader transformation of societal norms and expectations.



Education emerges as a cornerstone in the empowerment of women and subsequently in societal transformation. The pursuit of knowledge equips women with the skills and confidence needed to navigate complex challenges and contribute meaningfully to various fields. By investing in women’s education, societies not only harness untapped intellectual potential but also promote a culture of equality that permeates through generations.

Moreover, the inclusion of women in leadership positions has a profound impact on shaping societal norms and policies. Women leaders bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table, fostering a more comprehensive and holistic approach to decision-making. As women rise to influential positions in politics, business, and other sectors, they become catalysts

for change, dismantling outdated structures and challenging systemic inequalities. The very presence of women in leadership positions acts as a beacon, inspiring future generations to aspire to roles previously deemed unattainable.

In addition to professional spheres, women contribute significantly to the cultural and social dynamics of a society. Through art, literature, and activism, women have been at the forefront of challenging societal norms and advocating for change. The amplification of women's voices in these realms not only sparks crucial conversations but also fosters a sense of unity and solidarity, emphasizing that the future we share is one that demands collective action and understanding.

The transformative power of women in society extends beyond individual achievements; it encompasses the ability to reshape narratives and challenge ingrained stereotypes. As more women break free from the shackles of societal expectations, they pave the way for a more inclusive and accepting future. By challenging preconceived notions of gender roles and dismantling stereotypes, women contribute to the creation of a society that values individuals for their abilities rather than conforming to traditional expectations.

Furthermore, the economic impact of women's contributions cannot be overstated. As women enter and excel in various professional fields, they contribute to economic growth and diversification. Studies consistently show that gender-diverse workplaces are more innovative and productive, highlighting the tangible benefits of a balanced workforce. Societies that recognize and harness the economic potential of women not only thrive but also set the stage for a future where prosperity is shared equitably among all members.

In the realm of technology, women are increasingly making significant strides, shaping the digital landscape and influencing the direction of innovation. As the world becomes more interconnected, the involvement of women in technology becomes crucial for addressing complex global challenges. By fostering an environment that encourages and supports women in technology, societies ensure that advancements benefit from diverse perspectives, ultimately shaping a future that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all.

Nevertheless, the transformative power of women in society is not fully realized without addressing the persisting challenges of gender inequality. Despite progress, women still face barriers in accessing education, healthcare, and equal opportunities. Gender-based violence and discrimination persist, hindering the full participation of women in societal development. To truly harness the potential of women in shaping our shared future, it is imperative to dismantle these barriers and create an environment where women can thrive without fear or prejudice.

The transformation of society by women is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires collective effort and commitment. The contributions of women across various spheres, from education and leadership to culture and technology, are pivotal in shaping a future that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. By fostering an environment that values and supports women, societies not only unlock untapped potential but also pave the way for a future where the shared journey is marked by progress, equality, and unity. The transformation of society by women is not just a possibility; it is an inevitability that holds the key to a brighter and more harmonious future for all.

Gays and lesbians have rights and emotions, too: The case of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ms. Tage Sumpi (Alumni, Batch 2021)

Arunachal Pradesh is a state in north-eastern India, known for its beautiful mountains, valleys, and diverse culture. However, the state's LGBTQIA++ community faces significant challenges, including discrimination, stigma, and lack of legal protections.

In India, being a gay person is a criminal offence under section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, so most of the LGBTQIA++ people have no protection under the law. This leaves them very vulnerable to be exploited or become victims of hate crimes. In Arunachal, these hate crimes are quite common.

LGBTQIA++ members have been assaulted, called things like “You are an insult to humankind” and some go so far as to even ostracize them from their own families and cut all ties with them.

Yes, things are changing, but is it changing fast enough to save all the future hate crimes that will take place if nothing is done?

People need to be more open-minded and accepting, and they need to teach their children to be the same

Despite these challenges, the LGBTQIA++ community in Arunachal Pradesh is growing more visible and asserting their rights. In recent years, there has been an Increase in the number of LGBTQIA++ organizations and support groups in the state. These groups are working to raise awareness of LGBTQIA++ issues, provide support to LGBTQIA++ people, and advocate for their rights.



Some of the key issues facing the LGBTQIA++ community in Arunachal Pradesh include:

- **Discrimination:** LGBTQIA++ people in Arunachal Pradesh often face discrimination from their families, friends, and communities. This can lead to social isolation, bullying, and violence.
- **Stigma:** There is a lot of stigma associated with being LGBTQIA++ in Arunachal Pradesh. This stigma can prevent LGBTQIA++ people from coming out to their families and friends, and from accessing essential services.
- **Lack of legal protections:** Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code criminalizes same-sex sexual activity. This law makes LGBTQIA++ people vulnerable to arrest and prosecution.

Despite these challenges, there are also signs of progress. In 2022, the Arunachal Pradesh Queer Station was founded. This is the state's first LGBTQIA++ support group. The group has organized several events, including Pride celebrations and awareness workshops.

In the same year, the Arunachal Pradesh Literature Festival featured a poetry recitation event by members and allies of the LGBTQIA++ community. This was the first time that such a platform had been provided to the community in the state.

These are just a few examples of the progress that is being made in Arunachal Pradesh to advance the rights of the LGBTQIA++ community. However, there is still much work to be done. It is important to continue to raise awareness of LGBTQIA++ issues, challenge stigma, and advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA++ people in Arunachal Pradesh.

Here are some ways to support/Aware the People About LGBTQIA++ community in Arunachal Pradesh:

- Educate yourself and others about LGBTQIA++ issues.
- Challenge stigma and discrimination against LGBTQIA++ people.
- Support LGBTQIA++ organizations and support groups in the state.
- Advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA++ people in Arunachal Pradesh.
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By working together, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society for all LGBTQIA++ people in Arunachal Pradesh.

“Pride is for Everyone Who Believes in Equality.”



Beyond the Spotlight: A Personal Account of Beauty Pageants

Ms. Jumsi Lida, (2nd Semester, Bachelor of Social Work)

I participated in the beauty pageant in my hometown after my 1st Semester University Examination. As a first-semester student in the Bachelor of Social Work program participating in such events was an unexpected yet transformative experience that taught me valuable lessons about self-confidence, personal growth, diversity, and the importance of representation. Entering the beauty pageant as a new student was initially daunting. I was still adjusting to college life, navigating new classes, and meeting fellow students. However, the opportunity presented itself, and I decided to step out of my comfort zone and embrace the challenge.

Preparing for the pageant required dedication and discipline. It was also a journey of self-discovery



and personal growth. We had many practical sessions such as rehearsals, grooming sessions, and public speaking practice. I had to work on my confidence, public speaking skills, and overall presentation. This process pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me the importance of perseverance and resilience. I learned to embrace my strengths while acknowledging areas for improvement, fostering a mindset of continuous self-improvement.

The pageant itself was a whirlwind of emotions, from nervousness during rehearsals to excitement on the main stage. Walking the runway and showcasing my talents felt empowering, and I gained a newfound appreciation for the artistry and effort behind such events. Besides, there was a sense of camaraderie among the contestants. Despite being competitors, we supported and encouraged each other throughout the process. This sense of solidarity reinforced the idea that competition can coexist with cooperation and mutual respect.

During the pageant, I had the opportunity to interact with a diverse audience, including fellow students, different professionals, and community members. These interactions allowed me to showcase not only my talents but also my passion for social issues. I used the platform to raise awareness about topics such as girl's child education, polygamous marriage, mental health, social justice, and environmental sustainability, aligning my advocacy work with the principles of social work and reinforcing the idea that positive change can be achieved through collective action and advocacy.

One of the key takeaways from my participation in the beauty pageant was the emphasis on inner beauty and self-confidence. While external appearance is often highlighted in such competitions, the pageant also focuses on personality, intelligence, and passion for making a difference. This holistic approach to beauty resonated with my values as a social work student, emphasizing the importance of inner strength and authenticity.

Moreover, my experience in the beauty pageant sparked discussions within the social work community about the intersection of beauty standards and social justice. It encouraged dialogue about inclusivity, diversity, and the need for representation in all aspects of society.

In conclusion, my experience as a Bachelor of Social Work student participating in a beauty pageant was a transformative journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and advocacy. It challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, embrace diversity, and use my voice for positive change. It also challenged stereotypes and fostered inclusivity and positive change through representation. This experience has shaped my perspective as a social work student and reinforced the importance of holistic approaches to beauty and empowerment.

Rural Camp, 2024

Mr. Telesphore Topno, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work

The Social work Department of Don Bosco College, Itanagar makes serious efforts to make the curriculum more skill based and practical. Rural camp is the part of the curriculum for the students. It gives them an opportunity to get rural exposure, rural life style, to understand rural realities like education status, health status, occupation status, social and political status of the village. This report is an attempt, to pen down all the memorable moments and observations that were made. It is in no way sufficient to explain the real impact of the experience.

A week-long Rural Camp was held for the students of Social Work (BSW IV & VI Semester) from DBC-Itanagar under the theme “Shared Future for Transformative Change” from 6th to 15th February, 2024 at Dokum Village under Kamle district of Arunachal Pradesh for the IV and VI semester. The students were accompanied by two of the faculties of the department.

Objectives of the Rural Camp:

- To provide exposure of realities of life in rural and semi-rural areas
- To understand the rural social system, its culture, and livelihood patterns
- To understand the geographical, economic and political features, needs and problems of rural Community
- To observe living conditions, housing, water supply and other amenities in rural areas
- To sharpen the Skills of rapport formation, situational analysis and awareness generation
- To experience group-living and develop attitudes conducive for effective team work
- Acquire Skills in planning, organizing, implementing the camp
- To develop an understanding of group dynamics and power structures in a rural Community

The students were divided into three groups even before the rural camp began. Also, different committees were made- Core committee, documentation committee, finance committee, travel & accommodation committee, discipline & medical committee, food committee and cultural committee. Each committee had their specific responsibilities.

Activities Conducted During the Rural Camp

The trainees were engaged in number of activities during their 10 days of stay at Dokum. On the first day they had the official inauguration of the Rural Camp in the presence of the GPC, headman of the village and others. The following were the major activities undertaken by the trainees:

1. Transect walk
2. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
3. Street play on the theme “Loss of Culture is loss of Identity”
4. Session with SHG members on health and hygiene
5. Session with elders(men) on mental health
6. Home visits
7. Visit to the farm to help the community members in their work
8. Rally cum Poster Display under the theme “Cleanliness”
9. Social initiative(facilitated mass cleanliness drive)

Learning and outcome

Rural Camp is one of the important pedagogical dimensions in Social Work and as such this provided

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the students' opportunities to experience the reality i.e. rural life, socio-eco-politico-cultural life, analyzed rural dynamics, and observe the functioning of local self-government and its power dynamics. The students got an experience of group living in and with the community, sharing their life and participating with them. They also applied social work methods into practice. This Rural Camp created opportunities for every student to develop a sense of team work. It helped them to break from self-circle or self-centred thinking created by them. They also learned to take responsibilities, gain management skills, gain skills in planning, organizing programs in the community and develop skills necessary to become competent social workers.

Conclusion

Thus the social work trainee of the department of social work from Don Bosco College, Itanagar had a useful and needful experience through the social rural camp at Kale village. The camp was well organized with benevolent guidance and help of the faculty members and the management of the college. The involvement of the trainees was also very good and well appreciated. The support of the GPC also played vital part in the success of the camp. The social work trainees thank the principal of the college, the head of the social work department and others staff members who made this social rural camp as valuable learning experience in their career.

Annexure

Annexure 1: Press Release in Shillong Times

Friday, March 15, 2024

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DBC students undergo rural camp

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JOLLANG, 15 Feb: Fourth and 6th semester social work department students of the Don Bosco College here completed a 10-day rural camp, themed 'Shared future for transformative change' at Dokum village in Kamle district from 6-15 February.

The students, who were accompanied by two faculty members of the department, engaged in a number of activities during their stay at Dokum, including interacting with the GPC, the headman, and other villagers.

They also took part in a "transect walk; a participatory rural appraisal street play on the theme 'Loss of culture is loss of identity'; a session with SHG members on health and hygiene; a session with the village elders on mental health; a visit to a farm to help the community members in their work; a rally-cum-poster display under the theme 'cleanliness'; and a cleanliness drive," the college informed in a release.