

Contemporary challenges to social work education in South Asia.

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Presentation Overview

- ▶ International context
- ▶ Context for Bhutan
- ▶ The landscape for social work education
- ▶ A specific focus on child abuse and domestic violence



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Social Work Education in Bhutan

- ▶ A bold beginning!
- ▶ A new course
- ▶ An international conference



Social work in an international context. Statement of 2014 Global Definition, SW.

- ▶ *Social work is a practice based profession and an academic discipline that facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and Indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing*

The Social Work Basics

- ▶ A course to meet international standards
 - * Introduction to counselling;
 - * Analysis of social policy;
 - * Introduction to Human Development;
 - * Introduction to Social Research.
 - * 2 placements

Fields of practice

- ▶ Social Workers work in the areas of mental health
- ▶ Community Work
- ▶ Working with young people
- ▶ Child protection and violence against women
- ▶ Aged care and disability

Translation to Bhutan context

- ▶ SW graduates with knowledge, skills and professional values will be guided by the wisdom of Jinpa- the act of generosity.
- ▶ Opening with a course on Bhutanese Society
- ▶ A course in Year 1: Buddhism and Social Work
- ▶ Environment and Sustainable Livelihood
- ▶ Community Health and Well Being
- ▶ Bodhichitta Mind and Social Work
- ▶ Dzongha for Communication



The wisdom of Jinpa: Acts of Generosity

- ▶ “With gentleness, overcome anger. With generosity, overcome meanness. With truth, overcome delusion.” — The Buddha, Verse 223, The Dhammapada
- ▶ “Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness.” —The Dalai Lama XIV
- ▶ “The Buddha said that no true spiritual life is possible without a generous heart. Generosity allies itself with an inner feeling of abundance—the feeling that we have enough to share.”



Bodhichitta Mind and Social Work

- ▶ “Enlightenment-mind”, is the mind that strives toward awakening, empathy, and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- ▶ Bodhicitta evolves from an understanding of compassion which at its centre is the awakening mind, and the intention to awaken to life in order to help others awaken to life (McLeod, 2018).

Gross National Happiness Index

- ▶ Responsiveness to non-material needs - spiritual, cultural, environmental - is critical to human wellbeing.
- ▶ Bhutan a world leader and others have now followed
- ▶ A central aspiration for the country
- ▶ Aligned with Sustainable Devt Goals



Focus on child abuse and domestic violence - a challenge

- ▶ Mapping Study, 2012 - Child Protection in Bhutan (Royal Govt of Bhutan) Identified the issues
- ▶ Identified particularly physical abuse of children
- ▶ Service system in early stages of development
- ▶ Infrastructure in early stages of development



VAW and Child Abuse: a data challenge

- ▶ The Study of Violence Against Children and Young People in Bhutan (2016)
 - *4-10 children 13-17 years experienced physical violence in the home
- ▶ National Survey Report on Violence Against Women and Girls (National Commission for Women and Children and UNDPP)
 - * a little of a quarter of Bhutanese women had experienced physical or sexual violence since age 15

Dr Kristin Diemer and Ugyen Tshomo will speak to the latest VAW Bhutan prevalence survey later in the conference

Developing the foundations: a challenge

- ▶ New legislation for protection of children and women from violence and abuse
- ▶ Standard Operating Procedures written and agreed
- ▶ Strengthening the small number of NGOs to respond to child abuse and also DV
- ▶ Developing the response - school counsellors, police as front line responders
- ▶ Development of services: front line desks; holistic service for women - the One Stop Centre.

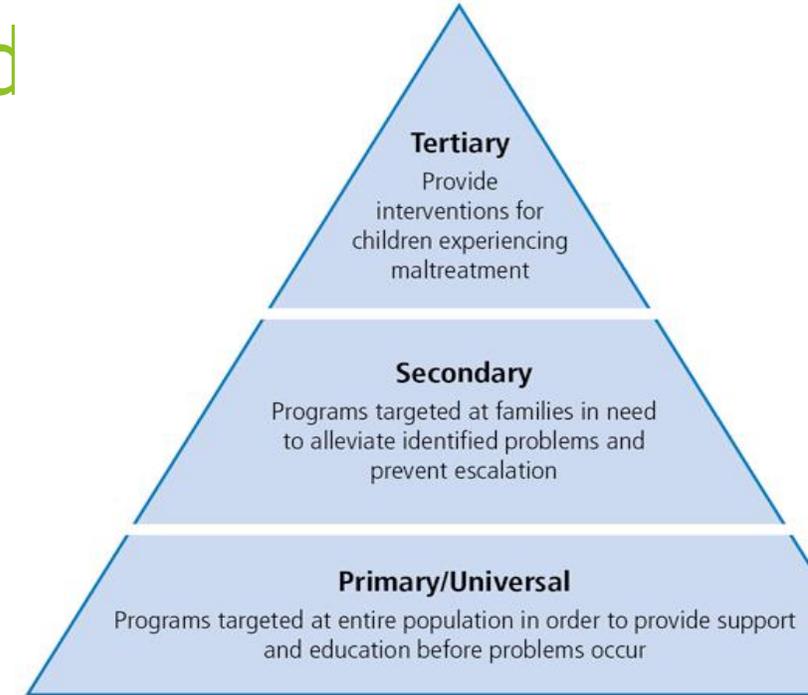
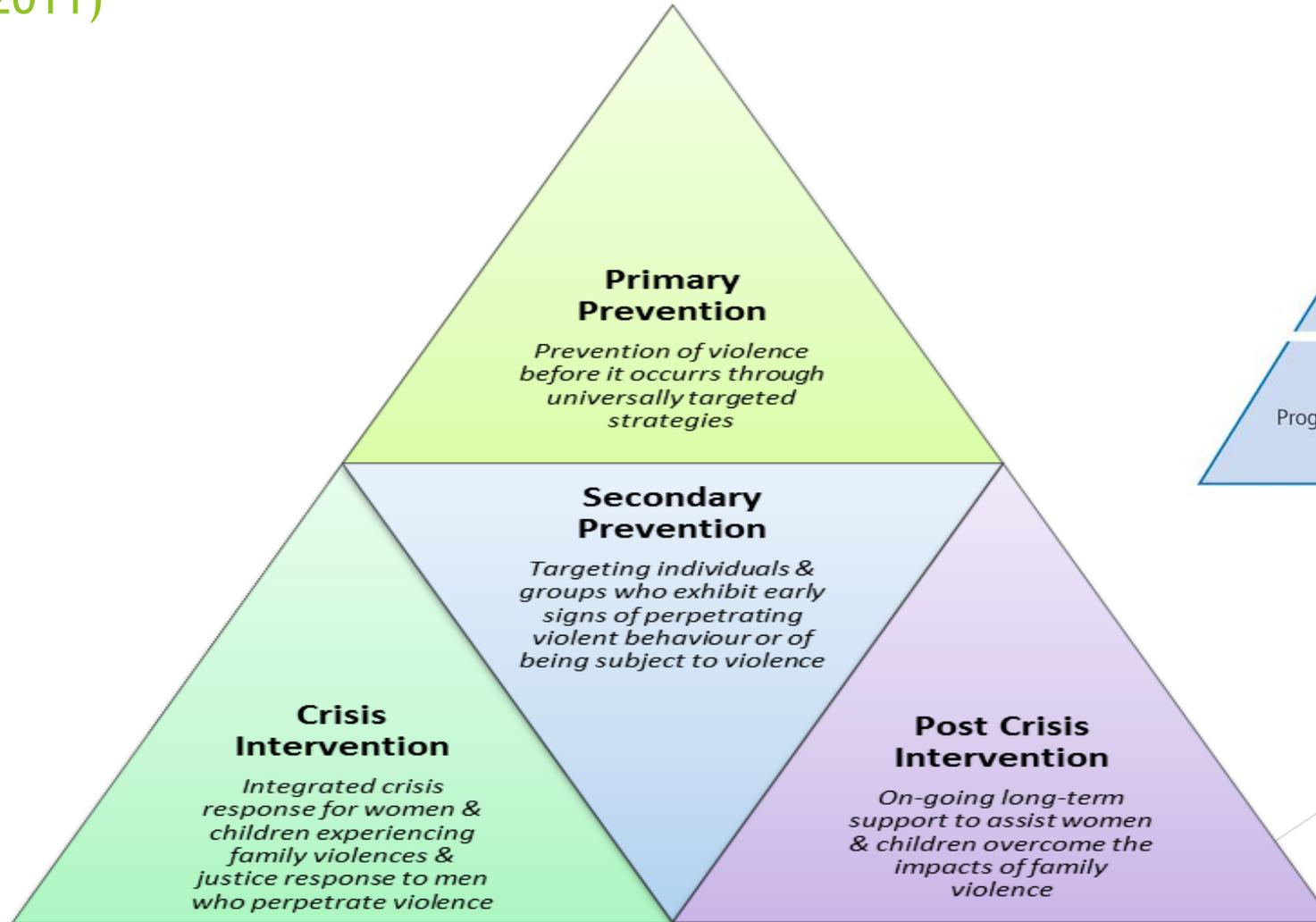


Resources are limited: a challenge

- ▶ Opportunities lie in ‘doing things differently’
- ▶ Not repeating the mistakes of ‘the West’
- ▶ Providing limited resources where they make the most difference
- ▶ Attention to the sources of social problems, not only responding to the symptoms

Family Violence Intervention Pyramid

(Desmond 2011)



Inverting the pyramid: a challenge and opportunity

- ▶ Focusing on schools and monasteries
- ▶ Training on protecting children arranged for all teachers and all monasteries
- ▶ The media also ‘signed up’ to take responsibility for changing attitudes and CP education
- ▶ Understanding and challenging cultural attitudes



Respecting the rights of women and children to live in peace

- ▶ Respecting women and ceasing violence towards women
- ▶ A shift in attitudes towards beating children changing between generations and between rural and urban populations
 - ▶ *Ideas about children's rights are filtering through. Increasingly parents do other things - they consult and they work out non-violent ways of parenting. (Informant UNICEF Country Report)*

No institutions for children

- ▶ *We are trying to prevent, as far as possible the institutionalisation of children. So we are not looking at establishing children's homes. That is not something we want for Bhutan. There is a lot of evidence that says this is not the right response... We are looking at foster care. And we have kinship care - uncles, aunties, grandparents, this is not something that is new. It has always been happening... It has always been there. We are just formalising the system. This is the kind of alternative care we are thinking about. (Informant UNICEF informant)*

Challenges for SW education

- ▶ Highlighting the need for community development
- ▶ Supporting the person in the context of relationships, community and culture
- ▶ Alignment with the country's culture and social development



The opportunities as great as the challenges

- ▶ The alignment of International SW principles
- ▶ The alignment with the social context of the country
- ▶ The alignment with the spiritual values of the country



References

- ▶ Connolly, M. (2017), UNICEF *Review of child protection in Bhutan: Country Report*
- ▶ Ouyporn Khuankaew (2007) Buddhism and Violence Against Women in *Violence against women in contemporary world religions : roots and cures* Daniel C. Maguire and Sa'diyya Shaikh Pilgrim Press Cleveland
- ▶ Royal Government of Bhutan (2012) *Child Protection in Bhutan: Mapping and Assessment Report, and National Plan of Action*. Thimpu, Royal Government of Bhutan.

The path to the cessation of women's suffering

- ▶ *Gender-based violence is not a result of the previous life karma of an individual; it is the manifestation of the long-term accumulation of collective ignorance rooted in the socialization and internalization of patriarchy by women, men, communities and society...it is because of past and present ignorance practiced by people individually and collectively. Therefore it is crucial that we make sure that we do not commit violence to ourselves and others and that we prevent others from committing violence to themselves and others. (Ouyporn Khuankaew, p186)*