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Social work education in Indonesia: challenges and reforms

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The social work profession in Indonesia has not yet become a desirable occupation that parents would like their children to take up, as opposed to a doctor or an engineer. This is partly because the profession is not widely known yet in Indonesia. Why is this the case? It is a relatively new development in Indonesia, which began around the late 1950s when the Ministry of Social Affairs commenced to recruit social workers as its employees. Furthermore, the term 'social worker' is not considered attractive as an occupation. In Indonesia, social work philosophy is 'helping people to help themselves'. The concept of a 'helping profession' is not regarded as based on science and knowledge, because in the daily life of Indonesian society 'helping others' is common, because the general nature of Indonesian society is still in a close relationship, so they tend not to feel the need for a 'helping profession'. Research conducted by the Asian Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE) revealed that in the country many people do not know about the profession of social work. For those people, volunteers are social workers (Sasaki 2013).

This condition is a major challenge that must be faced by social work / social welfare education in Indonesia. How can we make efforts to make social work widely known, and social work become a desired profession? This chapter will discuss the debates around social work, which incorporate challenges encountered and the efforts made for social work development.

Debates and contextual analysis

Who is a social worker?

In Indonesia there are still debates around social work. Firstly, according to the general public and volunteers, anyone who works in the field of social welfare is called a 'social worker'. Especially in the field, they feel that it is non-professional social workers who mainly assist them in dealing with their problems. In contrast, social workers take the view that not everybody who works in the field of social welfare is a social worker; some of them

are professional social workers, while others are volunteers. For this latter group, social workers are those who have graduated from a bachelor or 'Diploma 4' program in social welfare.

Misperception about the profession of social workers in Indonesian society is one of the main factors that make the profession less attractive, because to them helping can be done by everyone, without specific education. Thus, a 'helping profession' is not considered as a profession; especially in this society, helping/social support can be obtained from the extended family and neighbours. In order to affirm that the social worker is a professional, the association of social workers in Indonesia is called the Indonesian Association of Professional Social Workers (IPSPI). The society's views on the profession of social work cause the professional social workers to encourage and facilitate the issuance of Law No. 11/2009 on Social Welfare. According to this law, someone who has not graduated from a school of social welfare cannot be called a professional social worker; they are called welfare workers (tenaga kesejahteraan sosial) and volunteers. The stipulation of Law No. 13/2011 on the poorest of the poor, and Law No. 11/2012 concerning the child judicial system, demonstrate the growing recognition of social work as a profession in Indonesia. In line with the establishment of the Asean Social Work Consortium in Manila (the Philippines), the Indonesian Social Work Consortium was founded in 2011.

Social work reform in Indonesia began especially with the issuance of the Law on Social Welfare No 11/2009, which recognised the 'professional social worker' as a graduate of a social work school. This law clearly distinguishes the role from the 'volunteer' and 'welfare worker' who may come from other disciplines. This Act was reinforced by the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No.108/2009 on the Certification of Professional Social Workers and Welfare Workers, as well as the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No.107/2009 on Accreditation of Social Welfare Institutions.

To improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture requires the accreditation of the delivering university, as well as undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs once every five years. This is conducted by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education. Especially for departments of social welfare, accreditation is the process of monitoring the program and assuring the quality of graduates.

In line with these social work reforms, the Indonesian Association of Social Work / Social Welfare Education (IPPSI), which is an organisation consisting of 37 Indonesian schools to develop social work/social welfare education in Indonesia, formulated a standardised national curriculum. It consists of 19 core courses (57 credits) that must be taken by students of the bachelor level. Overall they must pass 144 credits to earn a bachelor's degree. Within the remaining 87 credits, there is an ample space for school members to design courses in accordance with the features of curriculum at the respective universities, incorporating the strengths of the school, as well as the local culture and the existing human resources.

The Ministry of Education requires that to be a lecturer in a Bachelor program, one must minimally hold a master's degree. In addition, to teach in the master's program, one must have obtained a PhD degree. Currently in Indonesia there are two schools – University of Indonesia and University of Padjadjaran – that have programs from a bachelor to doctorate. Besides an academic degree, a faculty member requires a number of credits for his/her promotion namely, in teaching, research/scholarly work, community services, and supporting aspects such as involvement in committees and organisations both on campus and off campus. For lecturers of a department of social welfare, the community service ac-

tivities enrich their practice experiences and skills, which are very important for teaching. As social work is an applied science, the schools invite practitioner guest lecturers to teach. In formulating the national core courses to standardise social work education in the country, IPPSI refers to the needs of local and national levels, as well as the global curriculum standard. The curriculum also incorporates the rules on the competence-based curriculum established by the Higher Education section of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The competences consists of: the foundation of personality; mastery of knowledge and skills; ability to work; attitudes and behaviours in the work according to the level of expertise as well as the understanding of the 'rules' of the society.

Most of the elements in the 'Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training', which are formulated by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (see www.iassw-aiets.org), have been adopted in the core curriculum of social welfare education, such as courses on Sociology for Social Workers and Psychology for Social Workers, which in the Indonesian core curriculum are put together to be one course called 'Social Work/Welfare Theories'. The other courses taken from the Global Standards are: Human Behavior and Social Environment, Ethics and Human Rights in Social Work, Human Service Management, Social Planning and Policy Analysis, Social Work Research, Supervision and two Practicum. For the course on social work methods, IPPSI made changes. If previously there was only one course on Social Work Methods, in the formulation of new core curriculum, which adopts the Global Standards, the method course has added the courses/subjects as follows: Social Work Practice with Individuals and Family, Social Work Practice with Groups, and Social Work with Organisations and Community. So altogether there are four courses on intervention methods (Sewpaul & Jones 2004). This is a more appropriate design, as the essence of social work is helping clients to deal with their problems; therefore, the intervention methods must be a major feature. Similarly, a course on Social Work Practice in Multicultural Society, which had not previously been included in the national curriculum, at present has become a core course in accordance with global standards. As the core courses, they are compulsory for social work students all over Indonesia.

In the core curriculum, students must minimally undertake two placements. The first is 'a concurrent placement' (two days a week), the second is 'a block placement' (four days a week). In preparation for placement, there is a briefing for students to review skills that so far have been taught in class. Placement is a very important component in social work education because through placements the students can practice to develop themselves in the application of theories, values and skills for helping clients.

Based on the above description, it is obvious that social work practice – the same as other professions – is based on theories, values/ethics and skills, which cannot be undertaken by those without social work or social welfare education.

Social work or social welfare?

The second debate concerns whether to use the term 'social work' or 'social welfare'. In Indonesia, the school name is 'Department of Social Welfare Science', although in daily English translation people call it 'Department of Social Welfare'. In general, all over the world the school's name is 'Social Work School' or 'Social Work Department', although there are some schools, such as the University of California, Berkeley, and in South Korea that use the name 'School of Social Welfare'.

Figure 7.1 This photo was taken by Dina Hidayat, a student who is doing her placement with an agency dealing with child trafficking. In a trafficking prevention program, together with the agency's staff, the student makes a banner, which is installed in one of the villages, where many trafficking cases occur. This banner states 'Come on, together we protect our village from human trafficking, free-sex and child sexual exploitation'. This banner is part of the prevention program.

Those who tend to use the term 'social welfare' argue that this is more appropriate because it is regarded to be a broader term than 'social work' and more suitable for developing countries. 'Social welfare' also includes 'intervention' against governments, both at local and national levels; for example, through advocacy on government policies. This intervention is required to achieve people's wellbeing. This is highlighted, for example, in the curriculum of the Department of Social Welfare at the University of Indonesia and also reflected in its vision, mission and objectives (Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia 2009). Furthermore, social workers should be concerned with the impact of global policies on human lives and the disadvantaged and carry out concrete actions for dealing with those. This means that the government is also a 'client' who needs to be helped/changed for the society's best interests. Those who are likely to use the term 'social work' state that social work is also broad, as it includes micro, mezzo and macro levels. These three levels are described in Kirst-Ashman (1993).

However, referring to the thoughts of Midgley (1995) on social development, it appears that social welfare is wider than social work because it includes social work, social policy/administration and social development. Based on observations, it seems that to some extent the development of social work / social welfare in Indonesia is related to development theories, such as modernisation and dependency theories. During the 1960s or early 1970s when the modernisation theory began to be widely applied in many de-

veloping countries, including Indonesia, social workers in the country tended to develop clinical social work, similar to that in the West (developed countries). Based on this theory, developing countries should imitate the West in order to be developed countries (Foster-Carter 1986: Roxborough 1979). Everything that comes from the West was seen to be good. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the time casework and group work, which are both widely used in Western countries, were also frequently employed in developing countries, including Indonesia.

Nevertheless, when the dependency theory was introduced in the 1970s, there was a view that relations with the West can create dependency and underdevelopment as occurred in Latin America. As a result, there was emerging awareness in developing countries that they did not need to imitate the West (Foster-Carter 1986). In regard to social work, there was a slight change in trends: in developing countries, community development started becoming popular. Khinduka, for example, states that for developing countries, where massive poverty is a major problem, community development is more appropriate (Khinduka 1971). Although casework and group work are still relevant, apparently these methods are not quite suitable. Moreover, social planning and policy also became very important. Their role at a state level (not only at the program level) is critical to the welfare of citizens.

In connection with the debate over social work or social welfare, Indonesian social work practitioners and educators have decided to accommodate both; for example, for education associations, it is expressed as the Indonesian Association of Social Work / Social Welfare Education. In general, the direction of education is moving toward both social work and social welfare. For example, some universities such as the School of Social Welfare (under the Ministry of Social Affairs) and the University of Padjadjaran focus on learning and strengthening the practice of social work. Widuri School of Social and Political Sciences emphasises more clinical social work, while the University of Indonesia, for example, gives more focus on social welfare as learning objectives. With this broader scope, this university offers competence in the field of social development for its students.

Is social welfare a science/discipline?

The third debate concerns if it is right to use the name 'Department of Social Welfare Science'? Is social welfare a science/discipline? Some say that it is not a science; social welfare is a field, and social work is a profession. However, there are also those who regard social welfare a science, specifically social science, with reference to Zastrow (2004). He states that social welfare is 'both an institution and an academic discipline'. As a discipline, social welfare is based on knowledge and theories, and there are also linkages with other disciplines such as health.

Social work / social welfare education in Indonesia emphasises three aspects: knowledge, values/attitudes and skills. Related to the knowledge aspect, social work is eclectic, so students must learn about many theories from various disciplines like politics, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, health and so on. Certainly, beside these, the students learn about social work / welfare theories, such as critical theory, empowerment theory, organisational theory, behavioural theory, etc. At some schools, the students also learn the development theories, such as modernisation theory, dependency theory, world system theory and globalisation.

Figure 7.2 This photo shows the living conditions of the poor in a slum area. In rural areas there are even more people living in severely disadvantaged conditions. Social workers must help these people to help themselves. Photo by Novi Kartika.

IPPSI claims that, through undergraduate education, the graduates have developed general competence, namely as empowerment agents, problem solvers, social welfare analysts and agents of change. Theories, values/ethics and skills are three important aspects underlying the competencies to be achieved. Thus, social work / social welfare is 'science' and 'art'. Theory and knowledge represent 'science', whereas the application of the theory requiring values and skills represents 'art'.

In Indonesia, nearly all social welfare science departments are administered within universities, specifically under the umbrella of faculties of social and political sciences, except for schools such as the School of Social Welfare in Bandung. Being under the Ministry of Social Affairs is beneficial because the ministry can facilitate its human resource development; on the other hand, the school is bound by an obligation to educate primarily for future Ministry of Social Affairs employees – although the students are not absolutely bound to be its employees – so to some extent the school is expected to make attempts to fulfil the ministry's needs for example, in terms of certain practice areas. Thus, students are prepared to apply their knowledge directly and are ready to work. However, most social welfare schools are under the university; consequently, as a department, social welfare is a science. At the beginning of the establishment of the Social Welfare Department, the Minister of Education asserted that if we wanted to be under the university/faculty, it should be as a science, the same as nursing science, international relations science, etc.; if not, it should be placed outside the university. This is one of the most important decisions made by the founders, which is still in operation today.

As a science, there are linkages with other professions such as health professions. For example, there are similarities in the university-compulsory courses to be undertaken by social welfare students and students of other faculties. Additionally, the university-level service is a multidisciplinary activity, which involves students from all faculties, including the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (Department of Social Welfare being part of this), Faculty of Public Health or Faculty of Medicine. With such cooperation, social welfare and medical students carry out a program together, applying their respective science and approaches. Furthermore, many students of the Social Welfare Department carry out placements in health settings. It is expected that in medical case management, psycho-social aspects of the patients are also considered in diagnosis.

Based on data from IPPSI, schools of social welfare can be distinguished based on their administering ministry. There are at least three ministries, namely, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Religion. The schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture can be classified into state and private universities. The difference of ministry affects the curriculum applied in each school, especially for courses beyond the core curriculum. For example, at the universities under the Ministry of Religion, there is an emphasis on an Islamic-based curriculum that corresponds to the core business of the Ministry of Religion which is Islamic religious education, in addition to the compulsory courses for Indonesian universities in all disciplines. Consequently, there are many courses that must be taken by the students which affect the space for enhancing social work core skills.

Challenges and efforts for development

In Indonesia, most books used for teaching originally come from the West and are in English. Therefore, the Bridging Professional Social Work foundation helps to publish some books in the Indonesian language and also does translation. This foundation, which is led by Professor Martha Haffey, gives great support for the development of Indonesian social work, both educational and professional. This foundation took some initiatives, such as establishing a Social Work Practice Resource Centre. The other international organisations, Save the Children and UNICEF, also support the enhancement of the social work profession, especially the establishment of social work systems in relation to child welfare. These organisations, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, conducted research on Quality of Child Care in Children's Social Institutions (Martin, Florence and Sudrajat 2007) which triggered the emergence of awareness about the importance of building a system of social work. The research findings confirm that child protection services cannot be implemented properly in the absence of professional social workers. In this case, all components of social work from policy, education, quality of graduates, to the mandates for social work practice, are incorporated in the system. Moreover, because it is realised that the development of the social work profession relies heavily on education, Save the Children provides IPPSI with great support.

Nowadays nearly all educational institutions think about internationalisation, including schools of social welfare. The Education Act also encourages collaboration with international institutions. To implement this, the universities in Indonesia established a dual degree program with universities abroad that includes collaboration over student/staff exchange and research. However, despite the emphasis on internationalisation, social wel-

fare education programs encourage and provide great opportunities to the local cultural dimensions. For example, in a course on poverty, the students learn about national (government policy) and global aspects which to some extent worsen poverty; they learn the theories of poverty that derive from the West, but local factors are also discussed, in terms of both local cultural values and local government policy; for example, discussing the lives of an ethnic group in Borneo Island. One of their agricultural products is bananas. The people have a value/belief that they cannot cut the clump of banana trees; if they do, it will lead to a big problem for their family members, such as illness or death. Yet according to modern agricultural science, in a grove of trees there should not be too many banana trunks. If there are too many, then the fruit will be small and poorly produced. Therefore, some of them have to be cut down to only about 3–4 trees. Because they have such beliefs, their banana products are undervalued because they are below market quality standard. This affects their economic conditions.

Through the discussion of cultural factors, it is expected that when the students graduate and become social workers, they may be more sensitive and understanding of local culture, both positive and negative. The social worker is a change agent. Thus, if there are cultural factors that need to be changed, social workers can do it with sensitivity and empathy. The culturally relevant education is also explored by Gray and Coates (2008).

Social work education institutions bear a moral responsibility to make the profession become well-recognised and respected and to prevent their graduates being unemployed. Therefore, they conduct continuous promotion initiatives, create an attractive curriculum design and ensure that the Schools produce high quality graduates. To achieve the expected quality, the Schools make efforts to meet the standards of higher education in accordance with the requirements established by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education. Moreover, IPPSI as an umbrella of Indonesian schools of social work / social welfare, facilitates the implementation of a core curriculum as a national standard for social work/social welfare education. This curriculum also includes the Global Standard established by IASSW and IFSW. However, the national standard does not stand alone; this needs to be in line with the standards of practice set by the Indonesian Association of Professional Social Workers and the National Board for Profession Certification (BNSP). This agency is in charge of certifying all professions in Indonesia. Furthermore, the implementation of a practicum for most schools remains a problem. This relates to the low hours available for practicum, the limited number of supervisors and the lack of practice carried out by the lecturers of social work / social welfare schools. As a result, integration of theory and practice that should be transferred between the school supervisor (lecturer) and field supervisor can not take place optimally. Looking ahead, this condition is certainly a challenge considering the more complex global issues that increasingly demand competent graduates. Global challenges will be bigger within the ASEAN community by 2015. The job market for Indonesian social workers will be more competitive than from other ASEAN countries. Social work leaders in Indonesia have to make more significant efforts to improve the quality of practice and the work of the lecturer/supervisor. IPPSI has already held training on practicum and supervision. There are clearly more training events/workshops required on practicum and supervision, as well as the micro, mezzo and macro skills, because when we talk about competition in the job market, the mastery of skills plays an important role. This condition needs to be anticipated even though there is data that in 2013 there were 139,000 social workers needed, while at present approximately 15,000 people are available.

From the period 2010–2013 several initiatives have been undertaken by the Indonesian Association of Social Work/Social Welfare Education to develop social work and overcome the challenges faced by social work education in Indonesia. The activities include:

- National Workshop on Core Competence of Social Work and Definition of Social Work
- National Workshop on Core Curriculum; Seminar with APASWE on Development of Social Work Education: Indonesia and Asia Pacific Perspectives
- National Workshop on the Guidelines of Core Curriculum Contents
- Training on practicum; Seminar with IASSW on Social Work Education in Indonesia: Indigenous and International Perspectives
- The International Conference on Social Welfare in the ASEAN Region, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the other social work leaders
- The Indonesian Social Work Consortium (IPPSI is one of the leaders of this consortium) in collaboration with the International Consortium for Social Development-Asia Pacific, held an International conference: 'Envisioning New Social Development Strategies Beyond Millennium Development Goals'
- National Workshop on the Competencies of Postgraduate Students of Social Work / Social Welfare Science and Learning Outline for Practicum
- National Workshop on finalisation of Learning Outline / Lesson Plan for Practicum 1 and Practicum 2
- Social work supervision training for lecturers of social work / social welfare schools
- Workshop on Piloting of Core Curriculum of Social Work / Social Welfare Education.

To implement the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No. 108/2009 on the Certification of Professional Social Workers and Welfare Workers, as well as the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No. 107/2009 on Accreditation of Social Welfare Institutions, the process of social worker certification and social welfare institutions accreditation has been achieved. The accreditation of the institutions not only helps to improve their quality, but also enables the process of making social workers a profession that is widely recognised, because employing social workers at the institutions is a key feature in their achieving an A-grade in accreditation.

The other progress identified is the accommodation of human rights perspectives in social work / social welfare education. In economic globalisation, where individualism, greed and wealth are important aspects in human life, the idea of human rights provides an alternative moral reference. Human rights are very important for those who work in the human services in general and for social workers in particular. Social work is the profession of human rights; human rights pose many issues and dilemmas faced by social workers, which can be seen in a new perspective.

Human rights provide a moral basis for social work practice, both at the micro-level with clients, as well as community development and policy advocacy. Human rights have developed over three generations (Ife 2001, 24–42):

1. First generation of human rights: civil and political rights. This includes the right to vote, the right to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, the right to equal treatment before the law, citizenship rights, privacy rights, right to disagree, the right to freedom of religion, the right to participate in society, the right to be treated with dignity, the right to security, freedom from discrimination, intimidation, torture and coercion.

2. Second generation of human rights includes social, economic and cultural rights. It is the right of individuals or groups to receive various social services in order to realise their full potential as human beings. The rights include the right to work, the right to adequate wages, the right to housing, the right to adequate food and clothing, the right to education, the right to adequate health care, and the right to social security. Based on the second generation of human rights, apparently poverty is a violation of human rights.

3. Third generation of human rights includes new rights which are meaningful when linked to the collective level. It is the rights of communities, populations, or nations, not individuals, although individuals can also obtain benefit from the realisation of these rights.

The rights include the right to economic development, the right to benefit from world trade and economic growth, the right to live in a cohesive and harmonious society, environmental rights (for example, breathing with no air pollution, rights to water, etc.). So, if the global free-trade policy causes misery to people, it would be considered a human rights violation.

The National Association of Social Workers (US) (see www.socialworkers.org/) states that human rights are basic knowledge and a foundation of social work theory.

Social work intervention which is based on human rights incorporates:

- the rejection of oppression for example, of policies that cause misery for the poor, gender inequality, etc.
- empowerment to overcome unjust structures. It is important to understand the experiences of marginalised groups
- the practice of cultural competency and sensitivity: cultural understanding, non-discrimination
- feminist practice: concern with unjust structures. All humans have the right to be free from oppression and discrimination.

Based on the above description, it seems that the implications for education should be as follows:

1. educational process: inclusive, non-discriminatory, open to various opinions (Millam 2011).
2. The curriculum should include, among others:

- critical theory
- advocacy
- gender, feminist perspective
- developing network skills (government and non-government organisations)
- poverty issues
- methods to increase social awareness
- cultural understanding and tolerance and cross-cultural sensitivity (Devore 1986; Bhatti-Sinclair 2011).

All the efforts above have begun to show positive results, which gives the impression of a growing appreciation toward the profession. However, although this successful scenario occurs at the University of Indonesia and although people suggest that one school cannot represent all school members of IPPSI, we still face challenges such as those related

to society's recognition of the social work profession. Based on a survey conducted by the Department of Social Welfare, University of Indonesia, in 2010/2011 and another survey implemented by the university in 2010, the research findings demonstrate that on average the waiting length for graduates to get jobs is between 2.4 and 3 months. The Indonesian social work leaders and activists continuously work hand in hand and their struggle will continue.

Conclusions

Indonesian social work is currently still facing challenges which must be dealt with in more effective ways, otherwise it will become a serious threat for social work development in the country. The challenges stretch from basic to the complex ones. So far there have been many efforts to address the issues and make a positive impact.

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