

Building a New Perspective on Social Workers

March 19 is celebrated as World Social Work Day. This year's commemoration raised the theme “*Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change*”, which is rooted in the global agenda. It emphasizes the need for the social work profession to adopt innovative and community-based approaches, based on indigenous wisdom and harmonious coexistence with nature.

According to Social Workers Law 14/2019, social workers are those who have the knowledge, skills and practical values of social work and have received a “certificate of competency”. Competency certification is an essential prerequisite for practicing this profession.

The law defines social work as planned, integrated, continuous and supervised professional assistance to prevent social dysfunction, as well as restoring and improving the social functions of individuals,

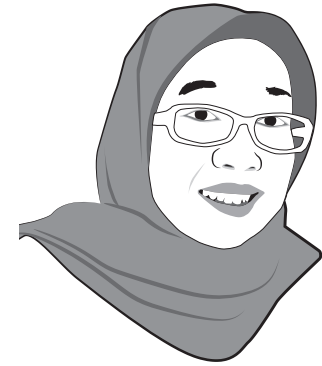
families, groups and communities.

Referring to Social Workers Law 14/2019, the assistance given by social workers includes professional work that is systemized and planned. However, in practice, many people think that social work is an activity that helps people for free (pro bono) without expecting incentives as compensation for the services provided. Although almost everyone can perform social work, one needs to obtain a number of competencies from special educational institutions before one can embark on this profession.

Furthermore, in other contexts, social workers can be key players in implementing economic progress and development, such as in assisting in ensuring community welfare in remote regions like indigenous communities. Social workers also have an important role to play in connecting the needs of indigenous

people living with limited resources. They can perform their function as assessors who identify the potential and other aspects of indigenous communities to encourage them to use resources to improve their welfare.

In terms of building an economic ecosystem for indigenous communities, social workers can carry out their role as facilitators by encouraging members of the community to get involved and participate in utilizing the resources available. The role of this facilitator is not only to encourage community members but also other parties, particularly the government and private sector, to improve the welfare of indigenous communities and disadvantaged regions. Hence, involving social workers in indigenous communities can be a meaningful way to increase equitable development in Indonesia.



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