

Ausirys Alviz, MSW, LCSW

Doctor in Social Work Candidate - Human Rights Leadership

ABOUT ME



Humanitarian Trip In Guatemala (May 2023) Funded by Santander Grant through Monmouth University.

I am a Colombian-American and a Latine Social Worker. I am a first-generation migrant and student from Colombia.

Being an immigrant has shaped me to be considerate of multifaceted pieces in life. In education, diversity and representation are essential to me. Being in higher education, I realized my identity and experiences could be significant assets in professions like social work. Growing up multicultural and bilingual became a strength for me. Under the right mentors, I could see the value of being different and visible. I am now a doctorate student at the School of Social Work and an adjunct professor. I hold a Bachelor's and Master's from Rutgers University, and I am a culturally affirming trauma - focused therapist. I am a business owner and a proud daughter of an immigrant mother.

The DSW program here at Monmouth has been rewarding and has allowed me to expand my horizon into global human rights work and develop practical skills for making a difference in the world at a macro level. As part of my doctoral studies, I am working with A Better Life Guatemala, a nonprofit organization providing resources and support to Guatemalan communities in need. Particularly, I focus on working with an indigenous social worker and village here. Through this project, I want to make a tangible impact in supporting the existing social work in Guatemala. I also want to increase awareness and conversations around Central American post-colonization Humanitarian relief.

It is an honor to use my education and skills to make a difference in the world, and I am grateful for the opportunities that have brought me to this point in my journey.

DSW CAPSTONE

LITERATURE REVIEWS

- History of Guatemala
- Role of Colonization, neoliberalism, socioeconomic oppressions, and developments
- Poverty rates, social injustices, and indigenous rights

CASE STUDY

- Analysis of existing works in Guatemala
- Finding the Gaps in the Investigation of Guatemalan Human Rights.
- Understanding theoretical frameworks appropriate for the proposed model (social learning, social constructionism, etc.)

MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

- ArcGIS StoryMaps page
- ePortfolio with collection of works
- Development of online / paper presentations
- Potential developments with the use of Photovoice

ABSTRACT

My studies seek to understand how international social work collaborations can enhance indigenous human rights. In partnership with small non-profits like A Better Life Guatemala, there may be an opportunity to support the sustainability of marginalized Indigenous communities. By promoting decolonized designs of international partnership and culturally conscious collaboration models alongside **Guatemalan Indigenous Social Workers (ISW)**, social workers globally can more ethically practice internationally. Multifaceted complexities can be addressed in a contextualized way so that social workers can enhance self-determination in international humanitarian work. A model designed to bring presence to social workers in the process of allyship with indigenous communities would enhance social change justice and socio-eco-cultural sustainability as well. The project's significance highlights the potential of the social work profession to be global agents of change and collaborators of indigenous justice, contributing to the broader discourse on international relations and Indigenous support.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The Questions to develop this model have considered various angles, from inquiring about how systems in the global south represent indigenous communities to how international social work collaborations can help advance global humanitarian aid for indigenous populations through decolonized human rights-based frameworks, not just local rights-based work.

Working Question: How can social workers navigate the complexities of advocating alongside indigenous communities toward the evolution of sustainable indigenous rights?

RATIONALE AND IMPORTANCE

When considered at an international level and through indigenous rights or benchmarks set by entities such as the United Nations and the International Federation of Social Work, human rights emphasize the importance of **multicultural integrative approaches** to promote **sustainability**. Suppose social work professionals collectively become engaged in seeing their identified clients as global communities. In that case, we can more comprehensively advocate for the human right to equitably access equality as a united front. We may come closer to inherently showing curiosity and assistance in culturally sensitive ways **at global scales**. In getting involved globally, we expand the science of sociology and humane social work. We learn from indigenous communities to add existing perspectives to improve society and the planet. In advocating for tailored human rights programming, social work as a profession becomes diligent in enhancing self-determination, setting up the future version of the profession and communities for autonomous success.

By getting involved with international placements, internships, or becoming affiliated with small non-profits internationally, social workers can learn to think and problem-solve cross-generationally, cross-sectionally, and cross-collaboratively. In working with organizations like **A Better Life Guatemala (ABLG)**, operating in Guatemala, social work students or professionals can become multidimensionally involved in human rights. The opportunity to still do micro, mezzo, and macro social work internationally with indigenous populations is under-explored. Living in the United States provides unique opportunities to understand underlying issues that a lack of sustainability in other countries results in, for example, understanding how poverty and other determinants of health contribute to migrational patterns, the difference between various types of forced migration, and other traumatic displacements such as human trafficking.

Social Workers have an ethical responsibility to advocate and promote **service, social justice, dignity and worth of persons, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence** (NASW, 2021). We must look to form alliances with communities promoting these core values. In understanding the aftermath of post-colonization and post-war recovery, we can better understand the urgency of social workers' need to become more globally invested. Similar to many "developing" countries or existing global communities, Guatemala experiences high levels of poverty, malnutrition, low educational attainment, high rates of disease, and low medical care obtainment. For this reason, organizations like ABLG are essential in promoting human rights and equitable access to social services and health care.



ABLG provides this work, listening to communities and receiving interest from diverse professionals. ABLG promotes resources like beds for preventative care, free-to-low-cost medical care for communities in need, food, water filters for drinkable water, and education for adults, families, and children to strengthen existing protective factors. Without these basic needs met or supported, expecting or predicting sustainability would be impossible.



FUTURE DIRECTION

It would be further necessary to promote indigenous educational systems that honor the continued existence of long-standing culturally rich people who have long been disenfranchised. Such educational programs would see the need to not just acclimate all to a non-monolithic educational structure to the colonized Eurocentric education standards but to intentionally preserve indigenous languages, respect ecosystems as higher beings worthy of rights like humans are and implement community social learning models. **ABLG involvement has honored the suggestions and insights from my social work background and hired an indigenous social worker (Mari) to continue doing the great work they are doing and doing it right.**

