

## **The relevance of indigenous knowledge systems in social work education and practice in Zimbabwe: A human rights perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are central to communities in Africa. They shape, influence, and define the behaviour of societies. Most communities in Zimbabwe have consistently recognised the human rights of individuals. Understanding how IKS can influence social work theory and practice to uphold human rights is important. Human rights are an inherent part of the social work profession. The article explores the views of social work educators in Zimbabwe on the intersection of IKS and human rights in social work education and practice. Data were qualitatively collected from ten purposefully selected social work educators using an instrumental case study design. Evidence from the participants shows four essential aspects, which are, the relevance of indigenous knowledge systems in social work education and practice in Zimbabwe, the role of indigenous knowledge systems in the application of human rights in social work in Zimbabwe, ways to utilise IKS best to uphold human rights; the challenges faced by educators in utilising indigenous knowledge systems in social work in Zimbabwe. The article concludes that IKS upholds human rights perspectives in social work theory and practice. The article recommends that IKS, informed by a human rights perspective, be integrated into social work education and practice in Zimbabwe and practised at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, education, human rights, indigenous knowledge systems, social work, Zimbabwe