Social Innovation: Renewal of Social Work Practice and Policy

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Singapore has recognized that social stability and development are fundamental.

Singaporean social policy is innovative and distinctive.

Social work in Singapore is valued as an important function and professional role.
Part I

A Strategy for Social Innovation
Research and Policy:
Asset Building Starting from Birth
Child Development Accounts (CDAs)

Child Development Accounts are:
- Lifelong--begin at birth
- Inclusive--for all children
- Progressive--greater subsidies for poorest
- Purposeful--for social development and education

Singapore’s Asset Building for Children

Edusave Account for supplemental lessons and experiences (1993)

Baby Bonus subsidy at birth, and matched saving into Child Development Accounts (2001)

Post-Secondary Education Account matched savings (2005)

... The theme in Singapore is human capital development starting early in life.
Some Other Examples of CDAs: Beginning for Lifelong Accounts

- United Kingdom’s Child Trust Fund, 2005-10
- Korea’s Child Development Accounts
- Canada’s several CDA policies
- CDAs starting in Israel in 2017
- President Tsai in Taiwan proposed universal CDAs during campaign
- Mainland Chinese government and UNICEF considering a CDA demonstration
Asset-based Policy Meeting at Peking University in Beijing
Testing Child Development Accounts: Universal, Automatic Accounts at Birth
The SEED OK experiment finds that CDAs:

- Increase OK College Savings Plan account holding, savings, and assets (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*)

- Generate more positive parental outlooks and expectations (*Social Service Review*)

- Improve early social-emotional development of children (*JAMA Pediatrics*)
Evidence Matters: SEED OK Policy Influence in U.S. States and Cities

“I HAVE A DREAM” FOUNDATION

PROMISE INDIANA

Harold Alfond COLLEGE CHALLENGE

nevada college kickstart
Testifying in Rhode Island for CDAs
CDAs Adopted in St. Louis City and Proposed in Ferguson

FORWARD through FERGUSON
A PATH TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY
YouthSave: Asset Building in Developing Countries

- In Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, and Nepal
- Testing savings accounts, asset building, and youth development for low-income youth
- With Save the Children and other partners
- Multi-method, long-term research, with in-country research partners
Children in YouthSave in Ghana
Vision: Asset Building for Every Child

If evidence remains positive, the guiding vision is, some day, an account for every child on the planet. . .

To set the stage for lifelong asset building and financial capability.

During 21st century, social policies will become more global. CDAs could be among the first.
Native American participant in the American Dream Demonstration, with house purchased with her IDA funds.
Part II

A Strategy for Renewal of Social Work Practice and Policy:
“Grand Challenges in Social Work”
Identifying and Tackling Grand Challenges for Social Work


OVERVIEW

On August 8-10, 2012, a small group of social work faculty, donors, and leaders of national social work organizations gathered together at the IslandWood Conference Center on Bainbridge Island, Washington, to grapple with social work’s role in shaping a 21st-century society. The first day of the IslandWood roundtables focused on the Science of Social Work. The second day, conceptualized and led by Donna and Fenton from the University of Washington, moved from a general examination of social work science to a proposal (or ?forwarding a set of grand challenges to stimulate the field of social work [Hoffman, 2012]). “Grand Challenges” are highly novel, per-enlightening goals for science that address a pressing, complex, and seemingly intractable social, technological, or environmental problem. The need for such challenges is evident, yet a systematic approach to identify and develop them has not been adequately addressed. The need for a systematic approach is needed to move forward.

Roundtable participants reviewed the concepts and history of Grand Challenges and discussed possible approaches, benefits, and risks involved in the development of Grand Challenges for Social Work. A social work example—the National Academy of Engineering’s (NAE) “Grand Challenges” initiative—was presented and reviewed. The potential of social work’s “grand accomplishments” was noted, providing evidence of social work’s capacity to bring science and knowledge to bear on enduringly important societal challenges. Perception of the need for grand challenges is not new. The literature is replete with examples of grand challenges, and the literature on social work’s potential to address these challenges is extensive. It is time to move forward and develop the field.

By the end of the day, participants were in agreement: the creation of a grand challenge for social work could help galvanize the profession and stretch its imagination. The process of developing a grand challenge could capture the essence of the social work profession and its commitment to social justice. The process of creating and implementing a grand challenge could provide a model for other social service disciplines. Grand challenges can stimulate the growth of new knowledge and new fields of knowledge. Grand challenges can help to identify and define new research questions and new research directions. Grand challenges can help to bring together people from different disciplines and different organizations. Grand challenges can help to create new opportunities for social work education and training. Grand challenges can help to create new opportunities for social work practice and service. Grand challenges can help to create new opportunities for social work policy and advocacy. Grand challenges can help to create new opportunities for social work research and evaluation. Grand challenges can help to create new opportunities for social work leadership and management.
Grand Challenges for Social Work
Grand Challenges for Social Work

- Big, compelling and important
- Amenable to analysis, assessment, improvement
- Demonstrable progress in a decade
- Cross-sector interdisciplinary collaboration
- Significant innovation
Grand Challenges for Social Work

143 Authors

54 Universities

15 Organizations
## Grand Challenges for Social Work

| Ensure healthy development for all youth | Create social responses to a changing environment |
| Close the health gap | Harness technology for social good |
| Stop family violence | Promote smart decarceration |
| Advance long and productive lives | Reduce extreme economic inequality |
| Eradicate social isolation | Build financial capability for all |
| End homelessness | Achieve equal opportunity and justice |
Unleashing the Power of Prevention

The Coalition for Behavioral Health

Every day, across America, behavioral health problems in childhood and adolescence from anxiety to violence take a heavy toll on millions of lives. For decades, the approach to these problems has been to treat them only after they’ve been identified — if at all — and to engage in costly and oftentimes ineffective and counterproductive initiatives. It is time to change the conversation about behavioral health problems in the context of whole-life, whole-child development, child safety, child vulnerability, child suffering, and lifetime justice. Together, we stand at the threshold of a new age of prevention. The challenge now is to mobilize new resources, expertise, and commitments to unleash the power of prevention on a massive scale. We propose a grand challenge that will advance the policies, research, funding, and workforce preparation needed to prevent serious behavioral health problems among our young people — including those at risk of and recovery from behavioral health problems in the population by 20% from current levels through widespread policies and programs that will save trillions and save billions. Prevention is the best investment we can make, and it’s time to make it now.

The Need for Prevention Now

When it comes to giving young people a healthy start in life, our nation faces a very different challenge than it did just 30 years ago. As a result of successful efforts to combat infectious diseases and increase investments in child health, the greatest challenge today is that children are at risk for communicable and non-communicable disease and the behavioral health problems that are implicated in these diseases. Preventing health threats to young people requires us to focus on addressing both behavioral problems that contribute to a young person’s mental, physical, and emotional well-being. These include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, truancy, self-harm, injury, suicide, risky driving, alcohol, violence, and other serious behavioral, emotional, and cognitive problems. We must address these behavioral health problems and their consequences, such as dropout, violence, and suicide. We cannot afford to ignore these behavioral health problems in children and adolescents, for they contribute to a higher risk of chronic health problems and a higher risk of premature death, with significant impacts on rates of economic independence, morbidity, and mortality.
Grand Challenge:
Build Financial Capability for All

This GCSW team originates at Washington University.

Curriculum development for training social workers. Already developed and tested in the US.

Now planning to bring to Singapore, working with partners at NUS and Institute for Financial Literacy (MAS) on translation to the Singapore context.
Part III

A Strategy for Social Innovation Partnership: Next Age Institute
Next Age Institute is a collaboration between the National University of Singapore and the Washington University in St. Louis to examine social issues, set priorities, and design and test social innovations.
The changing context — ageing populations, globalization of markets, rising inequality, and shift to information age technologies — presents both challenges and opportunities for families, communities and societies, which the NAI will address.
At Next Age Institute, we aim to:

- Illuminate issues
- Create and test innovations
- Build capacity for voice and action
- Inform positive and lasting changes

... not only in Singapore and the United States, but also in other countries in Asia and around the world.
NAI Co-Director

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Examples of Next Age Institute Conferences, Workshops, Events

“Older Adults in Community” (SG, 2015)
“Fifty Years of Social Innovation” (SG, 2015)
“Rethinking Social Security” (SG, 2015)
“Housing Inclusion and Social Equity” (USA, 2015)
“Older Adults and Retirement Security” (AUS, 2016)
“Social Exclusion and Inclusion” (IND, 2016)
“Climate Change and Social Devel. (USA, 2016)
“International Volunteering” (SG, 2017, proposed)
“Asset Building from Birth” (SG, 2017, proposed)
Next Age Institute (NUS)

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Conclusion

Social Work and Social Policy in Singapore: Toward Innovation and Renewal over Next 50 Years
In first 50 years, going from impoverished and ill housed to one of world’s wealthiest nations.

... Among the most impressive examples of economic development in the modern era.
Singapore 2015: Public Housing
Singapore’s Social Development

During first 50 years, achieved housing stability, widespread asset holding, longevity, excellent education, and greatly improved ethnic/religious tolerance.

... In some respects, social development has made economic development possible.
The core social policy strategies are:

- Education
- Health care
- Housing security
- Asset building (more than income support)
- Personal and family responsibility
- Multi-racial living
Housing Estates Shape Community
Ethnic/Religious Groups Mix at Meals
Rising income inequality (as in US), but government subsidies growing at the bottom, and poverty is widely distributed across neighborhoods.

As a result, no area of Singapore looks like a “poor neighborhood,” when compared to other countries.
Singapore’s Social Policy: Summary

The Singapore state has promote *social innovation* to *promote individual and family stability and development.*

The long-term goals are:
1. Create stable households and communities
2. Maximize human capacities and skills
3. Build assets for development and security

And balance the budget for “generational fairness.”
Almost every society is facing rising income inequality, aging populations, effects of climate change, and other major challenges.

Will Singapore continue to be successful in social work and social policy innovation going forward?

What will make this possible?
Build on Singapore’s leadership: For example, host a global conference on “Asset Building Starting from Birth.”

Look for opportunities for innovation: Undertake a Singaporean “Grand Challenges in Social Work,” or something like it.

Grow international partnerships for social innovation, such as Next Age Institute.
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