Towards Decent Work for All: A Holistic Human Rights Model

Gillian MacNaughton
University of Oxford

Diane F. Frey
London School of Economics
Decent Work?

ILO Definition (1999):

• “Work” broader than labor or employment

• “Decent” not just job creation but jobs of acceptable quality - freedom, equity, security and human dignity

• Four Pillars
  (1) Promoting Employment
  (2) Enhancing Social Protection
  (3) Promoting Social Dialogue
  (4) Realizing Rights at Work
# Social Justice and Human Rights Approaches

## Social Justice
- ILO Constitution
- Declaration of Philadelphia
- CLS Declaration
- Decent Work Agenda
- Declaration on Social Justice

## Human Rights
- UDHR
- ICCPR
- ICESCR
- Vienna Declaration
- Optional Protocol
A Holistic Human Rights Approach

1. Universality and inalienability
2. Interrelatedness, interdependence and indivisibility
3. Equality of rights
1. Universality and Inalienability

**Universality**: All people, everywhere in the world are entitled to human rights at all times.

**Inalienability**: People cannot voluntarily or involuntarily surrender their human rights.
2. Interdependency

Interrelated: All human rights are intricately connected to each other.

Interdependency:
(A) The realization of one right supports and reinforces realization of other rights.
(B) People are interdependent and so their rights are also interdependent.

Indivisibility: Human rights establish a holistic framework in which all rights reinforce each other.
3. Equality of Rights

All human rights have equal status as rights.

Human rights cannot be ranked in a hierarchical order.

All human rights are inherent to human dignity.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- 160 Countries
- Most comprehensive international treaty on work rights
- A holistic human rights framework
- General Comment 18: Right to Work
A Holistic Approach to Decent Work

**Strategies**

A. Defining decent work holistically
B. Recognizing interdependency
C. Applying human rights methods
D. Building coalitions
A. Defining decent work

- Work rights
  - Right to work
  - Conditions at work
  - Union rights
- Work-related rights
  - Family rights
  - Adequate standard of living
  - Social Security
- Beyond four core labour rights
  - Example: Overtime Maquilas in Honduras
B. Recognizing Interdependency

- Understand all rights are interdependent
- Consider human rights beyond the one right immediately relevant
- Ensure measures to enhance one right do not diminish enjoyment of other rights

Example: Child labour in Pakistan and women’s human rights
C. Applying Human Rights Methods

• Human rights impact assessment
  Example: assessing compliance with worker rights in mineral processing plants in the DRC

• Human rights-based budget analysis

• Human rights poverty reduction strategies
D. Building Coalitions

Holistic human rights approach helps to:

• Link rights
• Build coalitions

Example: Work rights and health rights
Conclusions

Original promise of a holistic approach:

• ILO Declaration of Philadelphia
• Universal Declaration of Human Rights