**Social Work in Sierra Leone**

*Introduction:* Explore the rich history and contemporary landscape of social work in Sierra Leone, from its pre-colonial roots to post-independence developments. This dynamic journey has been marked by resilience, adaptation, and a commitment to social justice.

*Pre-Colonial Foundations:* In pre-colonial Sierra Leone, indigenous communities thrived on traditional systems of social welfare. With strong communal bonds and collective responsibility, elders and leaders played pivotal roles in addressing community needs, fostering cohesion, and ensuring overall well-being.

*Colonial Disruptions:* The arrival of European colonizers in the 15th century brought about significant changes. British colonial administrators introduced Western models of social welfare, often neglecting the cultural context. Despite challenges, indigenous communities maintained traditional values, adapting to socio-economic shifts and resisting colonial dominance.

*Post-Colonial Era:* Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961, leading to the emergence of formal social work education. The Social Work program at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, established in 2011, reflects a commitment to social justice, community empowerment, and human rights. Currently, Social Work is being offered as an Education program at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in Freetown, Milton Margai Technical University in Freetown, University of Makeni in the Bombali District, Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology in Makeni, Bombali District, Njala University, Bo District and Eastern Technical University in Kenema. The Social Work program is being offered at Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor’s level. Plans are on for postgraduate levels to begin contingent on the approval of Tertiary Education Commission.

*Contemporary Challenges and Progress:* Social work in Sierra Leone faces challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, bureaucratic barriers, and COVID-19-related strains. The legacy of colonialism continues to impact social policies, perpetuating inequalities. However, there are opportunities for growth, including increased investment in education, partnerships with government agencies, and advocacy for vulnerable populations.

*Building Resilience and Inclusivity:* Despite challenges, social workers in Sierra Leone play a crucial role in addressing historical legacies, promoting community empowerment, and collaborating with stakeholders. By leveraging their expertise, networks, and grassroots connections, social workers drive positive change, contributing to a more equitable, resilient, and inclusive society.

*Conclusion:* The practice of social work in Sierra Leone, with its roots in indigenous systems and adaptation to historical shifts, embodies a commitment to justice and community well-being. Despite challenges, ongoing efforts and opportunities for growth position social work as a vital force in shaping Sierra Leone's future.

*References:*

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