

## **SOCIAL WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN IMPROVING WELL-BEING FOR RESIDENTS OF NURSING HOMES IN MALAYSIA**

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### **Abstract**

The traditional role of social work includes but not limited to addressing issues of inequality, violence, substance abuse, isolation, discrimination and social well-being. The values and principles of the SDG are geared towards the creation of a cohesive and equitable society in a more transformative manner. In addressing social well-being, nursing homes are set up for people who do not need to be hospitalized but cannot be cared for at home. These people are supposed to be managed by professional and skilled nurses, doctors and social workers. As such, this study focuses on the services and advocacy of social workers to help nursing homes achieve an improved sense of well-being. To get relevant data, Google Scholar was used as a tool to access the major databases provided by Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Elsevier, Springer, Sage and others. The study found that the service and advocacy of social workers produce a significant impact on the individuals at nursing homes. The study contributes to knowledge by critically exploring and synthesizing the role of social work in response to welfare services to reduce inequality, enhance good health and wellbeing of the people in nursing homes as indicated in SDGs 3 and 10.

**Keywords:** SDG, well-being, nursing homes, social workers, equality, health care

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social workers need to work at the pace at which society is transforming to provide the needed support in empowerment and sustainable socio-economic development among the population. Social workers can ensure sustainable development and transformation by designing programmes beyond their usual interventions like crisis support, needs assessment and disaster relief program to include advocacy to highlight the pressing issues in society. The role of social worker in this case will go beyond anticipation, assessment, and addressing the psychosocial needs of the residents as well as liaising between their families and the nursing home. These programmes could be through strong social protection systems (Ife, 2016; Jayasooria, 2016; Staub-Bernasconi, 2016) to mitigate the effects of reduced capacity and allow the elderly to participate in the activities they value with minimal limitations thereby enhancing their well-being. The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires a strategic process involving several actors including social work to represent a step further toward achieving sustainable health care delivery and building harmonious society (Chams, & García-Blandón, 2019). In ensuring the wellbeing of this group of people, social workers could advocate for governments to roll out social assistance in the form of cash benefits for the vulnerable groups like women, children and older persons in society. Such intervention may alleviate poverty and the chronic undernutrition that put the elderly, who are mostly the inmate of nursing homes, at greater risk of dying from common infections or leads

to poor health conditions. These roles are crucial especially for social workers in order for them to give the best care to this group of population to better their lives. The practical roles are in relation to the health statuses such as general health, physical and functional status of inmates of these homes in the country. Generally, social work focuses on the needs and empowerment of the vulnerable, the oppressed and those living in poverty. As such, the researchers think that the training of social work professionals equips them with the requisite skills and knowledge to design programmes that help meet the basic human needs to enhance the well-being of all. Hák, Janoušková, and Moldan, (2016) opine, that some of the proposed SDGs and their targets are only laid policy framework without thorough expert follow up, thus the role of social workers may include operationalization of those indicators. Invariably, social workers value their roles in offering services to the vulnerable groups like mentally challenged, older people, economically disadvantaged, children and people who are medically frail in society. It is observed that the prolonged life expectancy in Malaysia and anticipated problems that may arise as a result of old age and the resultant chronic diseases due to ill-health and economic burden, makes it imperative for social work to model on the SDGs.

The SDGs are the new universal set of goals, targets and indicators expanded on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Sachs, 2012). The MDGs as first global development partnership framework between developed and developing nations were agreed by Heads of State during the Millennium Summit in 2000 (McArthur, 2014; Le Blanc, 2015; Bebbington, & Unerman, 2018). In pursuance of sustainability, the United Nations (UN) conducted the largest consultation programme to get opinion on the composition of the SDGs to establish post-2015 goals which was an outcome of the Rio+20 summit in 2012 dubbed the “Future We Want” (UN, 2012; Sachs, 2012; Hák et al., 2016). The final draft from the working group drawn from 70 countries presented 17 suggestions (which later became the targets and goals) was submitted to the UN general assembly in 2015 (Bebbington, & Unerman, 2018). The SDGs were officially adopted at a UN summit in New York in September and supposed to be applicable from January 2016 until 2030 as the deadline for its implementation and/or realization. As such, the member countries of the UNs are expected to frame their agendas and policies based on these new set of goals. The SDGs focus on transforming the world through poverty eradication, peace, prosperity and opportunities among others for all. It deals with issues and concerns pertaining to human rights, the economy and the environment in an inclusive development agenda (Hashim, & Azman Firdaus, 2019; Wynton Pillai Thomas et al., 2020). In the broader sense, the SDGs are to ensure that the financial, economic and political systems of nations across the globe guarantee the human rights of all without discrimination. In lieu of the SDGs, social workers are required to act beyond their usual roles to practically ensure social justice to foster long term shift in values and principles that equitably integrate vulnerable people into the main stream society. According to Rodriquez (2011), social workers feel accomplished when their clients, for that matter, residents successfully transitioned from life at home to life in residential care. The values and functions of SDGs are already within the confines of social work which may shape and transform the well-being of the vulnerable in society. There are several ways by which the role of social work is prompted by the SDGs in connection with human rights and well-being of the marginalized in society. The response of social work to the well-being of these homes and the implementation of the SDGs may include targeting, reporting, evaluating and advancing how to operate within these contexts. As indicated, addressing the needs of the marginalize based on the possibilities that are opened up by the SDGs will likely engage social workers to focus on a variety of issues at different levels. As part of the goals, ending extreme suffering by 2030 is of much interest to social work as it involves improved care of the old and elderly in nursing homes.

The UN reports in 2019 indicated that elderly population is increasing worldwide and that the percentage will increase from 9% to 16% by year 2050 (United Nations, 2020). In Malaysia, the aging population is becoming eminent as the number of elderly increased from 2.12 million in 2018 to 2.21 million in 2019 (Safian et al., 2021). The situation is crucial and needs special facility like nursing home to care for the well-being of those who cannot be cared for at home. Grabowski (2020) nursing homes care for two main groups like the beneficiaries of Medicare or who stay for short periods to rehabilitate after surgeries or illnesses, and Medicaid beneficiaries, or long-term residents who are unable to live independently. Studies show that nursing homes are designed to house people who are elderly and unable to take care of themselves properly. Therefore, there are institutions that provide activities of daily living, psychological and personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy as well as residence care (Ree, & Wiig, 2019; Abd Aziz, Hasbollah, Yaziz, & Ibrahim, 2017). The fact that the population of elderly Malaysians is expected to increase from 7.5% in 2020 to 15% by 2040 (Shuhairi et al., 2017; Safian et al., 2021) makes the role of social workers in nursing home in the country more crucial. Since nursing home entails long term care system, (Kenrick et al., 2010) qualified staff with skills in decision making with regards to planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting are required for effective management. As indicated, the well-being of the residents of these homes include staying healthy, getting around, seeing, hearing, and communicating which are associated with quality of life, and level of dependency (Talarska et al., 2018; Safian et al., 2021). Safian et al. (2021) indicated that essential socio-economic, emotional and health services, and lifesaving interventions are essential and should be provided by qualified professionals like doctor, nurses and social workers for the improvement in caring for the inmates. However, Tabatabaei et al. (2017) found that there is inadequate evidence of study on the quality of life of elderly Malay residents in Malaysian' residential homes.

In a broader sense, the paper aimed at advancing the role of social worker in the pursuit of the UNSDGs in achieving quality of life and an improved care for nursing homes up to the year 2030. The researchers think that the two proposed goals, thus SDG 3 on good health and well-being, and SDG 10 on inequality, provide critical connections, and linked with the role of social workers. In order to achieve these objectives, the SDGs are discussed from social work perspective to explain the quality of life of residents of nursing homes and how they could be enhanced by social workers. This paper is categorized as SDGs in Malaysia, the relationship between SDGs and social work in Malaysia. It specifically explains the source of the SDGs, outlines some of the goals.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This narrative study focused on articles available in English and Malaysian Language Bahasa Malaysia. Researchers adopted secondary data analysis approach. Data were taken from journal articles published in areas of nursing homes and social work. The search was done using Google scholar. This narrative literature review examines the key role of social work in caring for residents of nursing homes as prescribed in the SDGs. As such, the roles and outcomes of social work identified and highlighted in relation to the implementation and attainment of SDG 3 (good health and well-being) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

The qualitative data analysis technique is adopted to assess issues on the role of social workers in ensuring the well-being of residents of nursing homes. Extensive and relevant literature was gathered from articles on the latest development in relation to social workers and nursing homes. Therefore, the source of data for the current study is extracts from the secondary data that shed lights on how residents of nursing homes could be served by social

workers through services and advocacy to improve their lives. The search involved reading to identify reports that related to the roles and advocacy of social workers for the benefit of nursing homes. A sample of articles were collected to refine the information and to generate representative themes on issues about the roles and advocacy of social workers.

Both authors consulted with each other throughout the analysis of the articles. The authors also discussed and reviewed each other's portion of the paper and what they found to support validity and reliability of the analysis. The researchers settled on descriptive themes as most appropriate to respond to the research question to describe recent contribution of social workers in supporting the lives of residents of nursing homes in Malaysia. The data collected through multiple sources and varied interpretation was analyzed in line with the research objectives. This involved reading and re-reading articles to pick consistent information to support the objectives of the review. The main themes were generated from the data after several readings and analysis. These themes were based on the appearance in the secondary data and information obtained from the literature.

The limitation of the study is the fact that it is based on online articles and not that of social workers' voices or personal narratives or face-to-face presentation of testimonies for that matter it is not based on intense empirical techniques. Besides, it is important to note that since the analysis was based on thematic analysis, it is possible the work did not fully capture all the essential nuances within the available literature on complex concept like SDGs and the role of social worker. Therefore, the basic features of the study are to offer a glimpse of the role of social workers in the service to humanity in relation to SDG 3 and SDG10 rather than seek generalization.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sustainable Development Goals in Malaysia**

SDGs has taken over MDGs since 2015. For a clearer picture on SDG1 to 17, listed below all 17 SDGs that was initiated by UNs for 15 years of agenda starting year 2016 until 2030.

SDG 1 No Poverty	SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
SDG 2 Zero Hunger	SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being	SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
SDG 4 Quality Education	SDG 13 Climate Action
SDG 5 Gender Equality	SDG 14 Life Below Water
SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	SDG 15 Life on Land
SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy	SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution
SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals
SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development is to end poverty and other deprivations. The strategies are improving health and education, reduce inequality and economic growth, while for climate change are to preserve the oceans and forests. Some countries in Asia, Malaysia included, have taken initiatives to implement and monitor the SDGs at sub-national

(state, district, local) levels (Rahman et al., 2020). In ensuring UNSDGs slogan Leave No One Behind (LNOB), makes it important to identify local needs, engaging local stakeholders, and address the needs of marginalized groups (Rahman et al., 2020). SDG agenda has been there since 2016, there has not been much awareness on the agenda. Research by Ghazi et al., (2020) among the medical students at a private university in Malaysia stated that 77.8% have heard about SDG and 74.4% are positive that SDG will be achieved by 2030. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has hit the world in late 2019 which would probably slow down the process in achieving SDGs by the year 2030. Lim et al., (2021) doubt about Malaysia's progress in SDG as he questioned whether political leaders are willing to go against their stream, gradually allowing participatory practices to prevail and finally abandoning capitalist politics and adopting ecological democracy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made Malaysia to focus more on SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being.

From the literature review research, most of the articles on SDGs in Malaysia are focusing most on SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being followed by SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 13 Climate Action, and SDG 15 Life on Land. Indeed, good health and well-being in Malaysia are in need to be focused at this current time as COVID-19 has affected our mental health tremendously through locked up at home for the longest time, retrenchment, financial crisis, abuse and many more. Most of the SDGs research articles found are related to science. SDG 12, SDG 16 and SDG 17 are not adequately covered in Malaysia. However, researchers could not find any article on SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities. Is it because Malaysia is a diverse country or inequality is not pervasive enough to demand action? Refer Table 1 below for Articles of Sustainable Development Goals in Malaysia.

Table 1: Articles on Sustainable Development Goals in Malaysia

Articles on SDGs in Malaysia	Sustainable Development Goals																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
(Rashid et al, 2020)		/	/			/	/		/				/	/		/	
(Wynton Pillai Thomas et al., 2020)		/				/				/		/				/	
(Sukeri & Sayuti, 2020)			/														
(Daud, Wan Hanafi, & Othman, 2020)		/						/									
(Hashim & Azman Firdaus, 2019)				/													
(Mahmud, 2019)			/														
(Vaziri et al., 2019)		/															

In Malaysia, it is important to look at SDG 4 for issues such as lack of quality higher education services, unskilled human resources, poor supply of instructional materials, lack of research expertise, and inadequate access to education for some disadvantaged communities (Hashim & Azman Firdaus, 2019). Wynton Pillai Thomas et al., (2020) stated that SDG 2, SDG 6, SDG 11, SDG 13 and SDG 15 are integrated in international school's curriculum as an initiative to nurture the sustainable society and to promote Malaysia as a country with a proper platform of sustainability conscious citizens. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009; p. 6) stated that despite the resources that is available in wealthier country, "many young people leave school with no useful qualifications and some choose to drop out since what is taught is irrelevant to their lives". "Education is key in achieving all SDGs where aspects of education is in relationship with gender equality (SDG 5), climate change (SDG 13) focusing on linkages monitoring and professional capacity development, including through partnerships (SDG 17)" (UNESCO, 2020; p.312). This indeed shows that by focusing more in quality of education more goals in SDG can be achieved. Though Malaysia is a developing country, education should still be emphasized.

COVID-19 would make Malaysian government spend a lot for the citizens. However, according to Yun and Yusoff (2015), education and health expenditure do not have significant effects on the country's economic growth. In relation to that, Malaysian government do subsidize government hospitals. Hospitals in Malaysia become crowded and health resources are scarce because Malaysians, rich or poor, take advantage of the inexpensive healthcare services in public hospitals (Sukeri & Sayuti, 2020). Vulnerable groups affected the most to access the care (Sukeri & Sayuti, 2020). More hospitals, facilities and hospital staff are needed to address these issues. Malaysian government should look at SDGs action that is related to address on good health and well-being issues in Malaysia.

Vaziri et al., (2019) research related to SDG 1 in Peninsular Malaysia on poverty stated that more roads are in need throughout Peninsular so that it is accessible to remote places and efficient ways to commute back and forth who live far away from their jobs. Besides, fertile lands too are not accessible to everyone (Vaziri et al., 2019). Other than that, Daud, Wan Hanafi, and Othman, (2020) helped the poor in Malaysia through business model in microcredit and social business ventures which can be mapped to SDG 1 and SDG 8.

Jayasooria (2016) in his article related to SDG stated that in Malaysia there is a total neglect in the environmental and sustainability concerns although human rights activities, development workers and environmentalist especially those working with indigenous people have been in the forefront of community development and social justice approaches.

### **Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work**

Social work is indeed very much related to human rights. It is through involvement with various human rights campaigns and supporting human rights initiatives, through national, regional and global social work bodies, and through social workers' role as activities (Ife, 2016). As stated by Ife (2016) in Australia, social worker is also looking at indigenous for social justice and human rights besides areas such as domestic violence, child protection, disability rights, age discrimination, women's rights, mental health rights, and, LGBTIQ rights.

International Federation of Social Workers (2017) stated that as a human rights profession, social work is well-equipped in contributing substantially in SDGs. SDG goals

and target are on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership (United Nations, 2016). SDGs also emphasized at the issues such as ageing, civil society, cooperatives, disability, employment, family, indigenous peoples, poverty, social inclusion and youth (United Nations, 2016). IFSW (2017) also stated that the emergence of eco social work, green social work, or ecological social work has shown a new paradigm rather than just focusing on the human. Though IFSW emphasizes on SDGs, social work association in South East Asia under IFSW such as Singapore Association of Social Workers, Indonesian Social Worker Association, Thailand Association of Social Workers, Philippine Association of Social Workers, and Vietnam Association for Vocational – Educational Training and Social Work Profession, were not really into SDGs. Jayasooria (2016) in his article stated that IFSW social work and social development practitioners are not normally involved in global, macroeconomic decision.

Social work in Malaysia is looking forward in achieving SDGs. Denison Jayasooria a Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW) member had participated in World Social Work Day programme in 2017, presented a video messages titled SDGs, Social Work and Addressing Inequities (MASW, 2017). Jayasooria (2016) also added that social workers in Malaysia were not very active in SDGs and therefore the role are played by national, regional and international organizations.

## **RESULTS**

Certain steps are considered in efforts by social workers to discharge their roles in addressing specified needs in order to improve residents' lives. As a profession guided by principles and ethics, social workers employ ethical considerations in discharging their responsibilities to realize the well-being and quality of life of the population. They carry out certain primary duties to ensure the smooth running of a home to ensure the well-being of the resident of nursing home in Malaysia as shown in the themes generated below. The broader themes include social workers contributing to regulate and enforce rules and policies, promote and protect residential rights and well-being, establish community and facility-based programme, collaborate with state agencies and organizations as well as prevent and address resident abuse to provide welfare services. Invariably, it is a trite knowledge that provision of proper care for residents will translate into quality life.

### **Regulation and enforcement of policies**

Social workers can employ and enforce rules and regulations as a primary approach to improve the quality of care and life in nursing homes. Regulation and policies on quality of care, resident assessment, residents' rights and quality of life (Grabowski, 2020) are possible if social workers ensure performance standards at nursing homes are maintained. For instance, this is possible if social workers could add their voice to suggestions of restructuring of the health care system in Malaysia to continue to empower the elderly people to enhance knowledge, attitudes and skills to improve quality of life (Slatyer et al., 2015; Tabatabaei et al., 2017). Besides, what makes it doable is that recent study shows that health social workers provide services in varied environments and in various roles like in design, delivery, and evaluation of care. They as well serve as linkages across both governmental and non-organizational levels to improve health care for individuals (Browne 2019). Social workers may also need to advocate, when necessary, a piece of legislation on affordability of care as well as transparency and accountability, act against abuse of residents at nursing homes. These are all in line with the SDGs addressing the needs of people as social workers' emphasis that no one is left behind. The failure to comply with rules and regulations at

nursing homes could be detrimental to the smooth management and ensuring proper care for the residents. Sofian et al., (2021) suggest that policies designed should include preventive measures to ensure sustainable care delivery to the elderly to promote healthy ageing and a good quality of life. As such, social workers ought to be able to maintain strong oversight and enforcement processes of policies that govern rules and regulations at these facilities to empower the residents. Studies indicate that empowerment allows the individuals to gain better control over their lives as they are able to do things for themselves (Tabatabaei et al., 2017; Abdoli et al., 2011). With regard to policy and planning role, Chams, and García-Blandón (2019) entreat social workers to be committed in enforcing regulations to ensure consistent reporting of health issues and disclosure, distributing responsibilities equally among care givers and setting specific timeline to be applied in the nursing home. According to Ruth, Wachman, and Marshall, (2019), social workers promote health and well-being in child welfare, housing, school social work, veterans and military services and forensic social work.

### **Advocate for the rights and well-being of residents**

The researchers analyze themes that examine the relationships between SDGs and social work and its role in facilitating welfare activity in line with sustainable development. The social workers could design an enhanced website or create a vibrant website, if there is none, (de Saxe Zerden, et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2015) to enable families and the general public to explore information about health and safety, quality of care, evidence of qualify staff, and other topics like rules and regulation at the facility. Steps could be designed for additional information about resident satisfaction testimonies, staff present on site and availability of accommodation to admit new residents or members of the general public. Studies found empowerment of residents in making decisions, in group activities, abilities to meet their own needs, and meaningful engagement improve quality of life in nursing homes (Mandič, & Hrast, 2014; Bayulken, & Huisingh, 2015; Tabatabaei et al., 2017). In pursuit of enforcing rules and regulations, the need to mobilized the necessary resources (both material and human) becomes very crucial for service providers, especially social workers. Relatively, human resources are very important since skillful and knowledgeable staffs are needed to identify issues concerning quality health care gaps in the nursing homes. Recent studies indicate that social workers are trained in designing evidence-based interventions on how to build rapport and enhancing engagement, care coordination and management, and brief treatment (Ross, Zerden, Ruth, Zelnick, & Cederbaum, 2020; Ross & Zerden, 2020; de Saxe Zerden et al., 2018). The designed interventions and engagement will prevent disconnection between residents and families' expectation of care at the nursing homes that is geared towards quality healthcare improvement efforts and evidence-based care for older people. The familiarity with evidence-based and team-based approaches to healthcare support and some welfare systems that contextualizes people, especially the elderly, in their environments (Ross et al., 2020; Schuetz, Mann, & Everett, 2010). Previous studies revealed that one activity of daily life and one instrumental activity of daily living like shopping and housekeeping which involve 1 million and 2.5 million elderlies requires professional assistance (Safian et al., 2021).

### **Establish community-based program**

This theme explores the overlaps between social work values/principles, SDGs and how these might allow the profession to contribute to the achievement of enhance wellbeing for all, particularly the vulnerable in society. Social work's involvement in health care delivery and intensive collaboration is not new thus social workers work in a broad range of health and health care roles (Ruth & Marshall, 2017). As professional social workers, they

consider concepts like community solidarity, social cohesion, social interaction and social networks, to enhance bonding within communities and particularly nursing home to ensure the wellbeing of the residents (Neves et al., 2019) They create community solidarity and bonding through deliberate designed programmes that encourage visitations, communal meals and group activities. According to Kruk et al. (2018), high-quality health systems is needed to optimise health care in each given context by consistently delivering care that improves or maintains the health of residents which is valued and trusted by the public and by responding to changing needs of the people. The role of social empowerment through direct involvement and participation of residents through these special designed programmes could improve and contribute to their emotional and health status thus translate to their well-being. In suggesting policy direction for programmes, it is important for social workers to identify the factors associated with the need for assistance or support of the various communities of a multiracial society like Malaysia. For instance, the supportive environment and improvement in healthcare systems (Grabowski, 2020; Ross, & de Saxe Zerden, 2020; Safian et al. 2021) led to longevity of the current population hence increasing the elderly population with its profound implications on lives of the people. McDonough and Davitt (2011) think that social work can make unique professional contributions to older persons and the late-life family through initiatives, guidelines and intervention programmes. Besides, they should be prepared to handle the long-term care needs of an aging population. In support of this assertion, Ruth et al., (2019) indicated that social work always expands its roles in public health remit by engaging in case finding, early intervention and harm reduction programmes thereby enhancing wellbeing of the residents.

### **Collaboration among state agencies and organizations**

Social workers could focus in assessing government comprehensive list of federal standards in clinical and personal care policies in determining the quality of nursing home care. Grabowski, (2020) regulatory reform might encompass increased enforcement and standards consistent with what residents and their family members want from nursing homes. With this role, they would be informing the state policy makers of potential levers to improve health care and well-being and thereby reducing inequality. The need to urge state and non-state agencies, public and private organizations adopt the UNSDGs as a benchmark by which they evaluate their activities, strategies and organisational outcomes (Hashim, & Azman Firdaus, 2019; Wynton Pillai Thomas et al., 2020). It is observed that the SDGs offer a pathway for countries to mobilize efforts to end poverty, enhance living standards and well-being in order to secure equitable livelihoods for all people. Even though, the goals and targets are important indicators of success but activities that directly or indirectly support the delivery of the SDGs remain unclear (Sullivan, Thomas, Rosano 2017; Jayasooria, 2016). In this vein, social work serve as a double edge sword thus by operationalising these indicators and seeing to it they are put into use by designing welfare programmes in collaboration with state departments and non-state actors for the wellbeing of all, particularly nursing homes. The social workers could also carry out intermittent on-site survey or recommend the state department and agencies to conduct on-site survey to interview the residents and staff, examine the facilities as well as review the medical care records to determine if they meet best standards and practice (de Saxe Zerden, et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2015). Such surveys would have been unearthing the deficiencies health care-related issues, life-safety and harm or abuse to residents after the evaluation of existing quality standards in the facility or nursing home and thereby designing measures that may contribute to the wellbeing of residents. Previous studies indicated that nursing home care in certain areas might have improved possibly due to stronger government enforcement, market-based quality improvement efforts such as public reporting among other factors (Mor, 2011; Li, 2015). The principles of social work can

facilitate the integration of sustainability into nursing homes health care and welfare. They have the potential to design some breakthrough programmes in consultation with other stakeholders in order to support and deliver sustainable good healthcare and well-being. The social work ethics and principles could be shared, reviewed or set care-based and quality of life based on residential policies in consultations with key stakeholders. With this, they should be able to fulfill government requirements for social service documentation and policy delivery.

### **Prevent and address resident abuse**

The abuse perpetrated against residents of nursing home cut across all manner of societies thus poor or rich, developing or developed. For instance, studies revealed that one in three or more of deaths in most high-income nations occur in nursing homes (Broad et al., 2013; Pivodic et al., 2016). In certain situation service providers need to use restraint in order to maintain sanity in the home, even though (de Saxe Zerden, et al., 2018; Maker, & McSherry, 2019) physical restraints in nursing homes among elderly people may result in negative physical, psychological and social consequences on residents and family. In corroboration, recent studies indicate that restraint may be rationalized on the basis of preventing harm to self or others, nonetheless, there are adverse consequences that necessitate the minimization, if not elimination, of their use (Pivodic et al., 2020; Maker, & McSherry, 2019). In this regard, social workers could design guidelines that discourages use of physical restraint and suggest alternative practices or interventions that may lessen situations that demand use of restraint like severity of anger, depression, social isolation on residents. Where physical restraint is inevitable, the situation can be alternatively dealt with when social workers remind colleagues the need for quick referral on a special admission to a psychiatric hospital as situations are getting out of control. Empirical evidence suggests that social workers' commitment in demonstrating ethical and professional behavior, advancing human rights and socioeconomic and environmental justice, using both practice-informed research and research-informed practice, engaging diversity and difference, and engaging in policy practice are crucial (Ross et al., 2020; Bern-Klug, & Beaulieu, 2020; Browne, 2019; de Saxe Zerden et al., 2018).

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that nursing home are often unable to complete needed nursing care due to inadequate time or human resources like professionals like doctors, nurses and of course trained social workers. The paper aimed at look at the role of social work in pursuit of the health and well-being of residents of nursing homes in relation to the SDGs 3 and 10. The problems with most nursing homes relates to difficulty in walking or mobility that are associated with old age and people under those facilities. Most recent study by Safian et al. (2021) found difficult financial statuses, hearing difficulties, and severe limitations in daily activity were associated with a higher likelihood of people needing assistance. And that, daily activities such as an inability to feed, stand without support, or walk for 15 minutes without stopping were significantly associated with the need for assistance. It is trite knowledge that people without any of these problems or difficulty tend to be physically active and have least risk of disability. Social workers are trained to offer their skills and knowledge to support people's coping process in emotional and distress situations. As indicated by Ross et al. (2020) social work professional competencies training utilises a competency-based approach that is structured around engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation across individual, group and community systems, in this case nursing home. Practically, social workers by training are equip to help people, especially in facilities like nursing homes to identify and

build on their natural resilience through access to information and emotional support through special designed programmes or activities.

In an effort to address global problems, sustainable development has become a strategic objective for governments and global community since the launch of the UN SDGs in 2015. Muñoz-Torres et al. (2018) main sustainability principles are associated to the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development are consistent with the works done by Wass et al. (2011), who highlighted sustainability principles as sustainable development influenced values and reflects the needs of society, the equity principle among people, and sustainable development process submitted to change. Apart from the core function of social work in anticipating, assessing and addressing the psychological and social needs of residence, they have always liaised with the family members of inmates and the nursing home to facilitate proper and effective care delivery. The link between the role of social worker and SDGs is considered since the key roles have direct impact on achieving of the UN's SDGs in nursing home (Chams, & García-Blandón, 2019). The two proposed goals (3 - health and well-being and 10 - reducing inequality) provide critical connections among the other goals and make the SDGs more linked to social work functions. These two presented links every target of the SDGs to all the goals. Such engagement by the skillful social workers especially in unpleasant situations, engaging distraught residents and in identifying the resilience of the family and residents are refreshing. (Chams, & García-Blandón, 2019; Daud et al., 2020; Jayasooria, 2016; Rahman, et al., 2020). Recent studies suggest practical role of social workers as compassionate engagement of their clients and families (Bern-Klug, & Beaulieu, 2020; Browne, 2019); Ross et al., 2020) through active listening, crisis management, anger de-escalation, situation stabilization, emotion processing, problem solving, decision making support, boundary setting assistance, advance care planning, transitions of care discussion, validation of family connectedness, role playing, role affirmation, clarifying, reflecting, interpreting, reassuring and meaning making as acquired during social work training (Bern-Klug & Beaulieu 2020)

The researchers opine that social workers play a substantive role in advocating for policies and actions at all levels to contributes towards the achievements of the SDGs since the two share similar values. It is observed that the MDGs somehow failed to recognize the root causes of poverty, overlooked gender inequality, the holistic nature of development and also silent over human rights which necessitated the crafting of SDGs that share same core value with social work. Social workers played advocacy role in recognizing strengths and capacities of their clients, provide needed direct services to clients and the family to serve as an example for emulation. The activities and needed services at nursing homes involve mental health and well-being like staying healthy, getting around, seeing, hearing, and communicating which are associated with quality of life, level of dependency, risk of falls and the need for assistance (Talarska et al., 2018; Safian et al., 2021). The researchers think that practical role of social service providers is the maintenance of balanced life and provision of intervention to stabilize the physical and emotional needs of the elderly in the nursing homes. The successful integration of residents, social workers' knowledge and skill in managing human services like shelter, food, medical care, intensive support services are carefully designed to meet the daily needs of nursing homes (Palmer 2010). Social workers craft activities and programmes to empower the residents with the public support and assistance as a result of their advocacy for the public and family members to encourage residents to move on with their daily lives, take charge of their lives and build a sense of value and self-worth. Thompson (2011) indicated that empowered individuals are able to make their own decisions, solve their problems with less support and in meeting their daily needs. They are able to move

on with their lives with or without the support from professional social workers, as sign of improved well-being.

## CONCLUSION

The study specifically focuses on the role of social worker in ensuring the well-being of residents of nursing homes. Thus, by looking at social workers' response at a practical level through advocacy in supporting residents of nursing homes. There is a pressing need for social workers to ensure that several of their duties are run cohesively before certain goals could be achieved within the nursing home. They ought to get involved in both designing and implementation of programmes that provide an improved quality of life for the inmates of these homes. Suggestively, the role and advocacy informed by principle of social work in responding to the needs of residents of nursing homes is significant in the advancement of their well-being.

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