



What We Need to Make Us More Humane

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Technology has made us more connected, but has it made us more humane?

We live in societies where lives, actions, behaviors, and wants are more transparent than ever. In communities around the world, there is greater access to government-kept data than there was just a few decades ago. Elected officials are largely held to greater accountability because their positions, private lives, and voting records are regularly exposed on social media. Social media has made us all more aware of corruption, unfair playing rules, and harmful practices of governments, businesses, and people. Technology has enhanced our knowledge of marginalized people worldwide, as well as the depths and range of oppression and cruelty humans impinge on other humans. We also know more than ever about the consequences of our human actions on the natural world and the concurrent effects this has on humanity. We know that our current behaviors lead to an unsustainable world.

What has been the value of this increased knowledge? Has it changed our behaviors, attitudes, or actions toward others? Has it helped us understand that every human right violated in any part of the world is a threat to the human rights of us all?

Almost eight decades ago, the exposure of the atrocities humans committed against one another brought the world together. We created the United Nations in 1945, and in 1948 the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Countries across the globe, each in its way, implemented policies to facilitate the realization of human rights, protect against the rise of tyrannies, and foster solidarity among citizens.

In the last decade, it has become evident that respect for every human by all humans is waning as it is overcome by greed for power. This signals that the approaches we undertook over seven decades ago, while noble-minded, were not enough, and more needs to be done. The top social issues we confront this year are not new, and our responses to date have not been complete.

Inaction in addressing climate justice, the effects of climate justice on forced migration, the treatment of refugees, the reserving of health care for those who can afford to pay for it, the existence of unnecessary hunger and food insecurity, and the dramatic manipulation of racial inequities to create divides question our very humanity. Stigmatization, marginalization, and oppression of people due to their race, gender, sexual identities, physical or cognitive abilities, age, religion, ethnicity, or body size result in the continued spiraling of these constructed divides to the top of the list of social issues. The authors in this issue address the lived experiences of people in their countries and communities, calling for change.

As co-editors of this journal, we believe that educating people about human rights and rights-based approaches in social work and social policy can help further efforts to bring humanity to the forefront. Decisions made about our future by politicians, businesses, social service providers, and governments anchored in human rights move us toward creating a sustainable world for all.

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