

# 1 Introduction

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Work plays a central role in the global development agenda, though its importance may not be immediately obvious and can easily be overlooked. For example, when we think about international development, we might bring to mind issues like foreign aid, economics, poverty reduction, human rights, education and healthcare. We might even think about the role of charity organizations and governments in providing money to address some of these issues. But as soon as we scratch the surface, it is clear that work is one of the variables at the very core of this agenda, be it through the work of the organizations attempting to deliver aid (e.g., through improving education or addressing health issues), the work of local communities to generate income (e.g., through agriculture or self-employment) or the work of national and international leaders (e.g., through attempting to shape policy and create good governance). At different levels, all of these types of work aim to lift people and communities out of poverty.

Given this integral role of work in the global development agenda, it is remarkable that this area has only recently become a focus of those who study the world of work. Industrial-organizational (I-O)/occupational/work psychology<sup>1</sup> is defined by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) as the “scientific study of the workplace,” and I-O psychologists “apply research that improves the well-being and performance of people and the organizations that employ them” ([www.siop.org](http://www.siop.org)). I-O psychology, however, has tended to focus on impacting organizational effectiveness and individual well-being within the business context, with little attention to outcomes associated with societal well-being (Olson-Buchanan, Koppes Bryan & Thompson, 2013).

In recent years we have begun to see a shift in this focus. Just as we have seen an emerging social consciousness about issues like fair trade, sustainability and social justice, so too has our discipline begun to expand to embrace these issues, both as business outcomes, but also in recognition of the multiplicity of organizations and workplaces focused on these issues, where the theories and practices of I-O psychology have not yet seen widespread application. This area within I-O psychology has become known as humanitarian work psychology (HWP), the application of I-O psychology to some of the big issues facing society today, including poverty, inequality, social justice and decent work.

The aim of this book is to provide a set of case studies illustrating practical examples of humanitarian work psychology, in both applied and research settings.

The backdrop to these case studies is the content of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; United Nations, 2003). As a set, the MDGs deal broadly with social, economic and development issues that represent the urgent challenges of our age, ranging from poverty and hunger, to education, gender equality and empowerment, health, environmental sustainability, global partnership-building, and decent and productive work.

In this introductory chapter, we give a brief history of the development of HWP, and provide a description of the MDGs, which end in 2015 and will be succeeded by a new set of goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is worth noting that scholars and practitioners from many disciplines within and related to psychology have made significant contributions to global development efforts (e.g., Britto, Engle & Super, 2013; Campbell & Murray, 2004; Okpaku, 2014); indeed, as suggested above, it could be argued that mainstream I-O psychology is just now catching up. Because of the emergence of HWP and the increased involvement of I-O psychologists in addressing issues such as poverty, health and education, we have placed the focus of the current volume on these efforts as a way to highlight this important new development in our field, to demonstrate how I-O psychology has and can continue to play an important role in global development and to hopefully foster even greater contributions from the field in the future.

### History of humanitarian work psychology (HWP)

Increasingly, there has been a move toward the application of the theories, practices, research and principles of industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology to improving human well-being and solving the most difficult problems facing the people of the world today, including poverty, inequality, discrimination, absence of decent work, lack of educational opportunities and natural disasters. Over the past five years this movement, known as humanitarian work psychology (HWP), has gained momentum, culminating in the establishment of the Global Organisation for Humanitarian Work Psychology (GOHWP) in 2012.

On their website, the Global Organisation for Humanitarian Work Psychology states that HWP

concerns the synthesis of organisational, industrial, work, and other areas of psychology with deliberate and organised efforts to enhance human welfare. This definition includes activities that are not only traditionally associated with humanitarian assistance and international development, but also with the promotion of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) concept of decent work as well as poverty-reduction more generally.

(<http://gohwp.org>)

Inherent in this definition are two broad areas of HWP, which can be seen to differ in focus according to where the hyphen is positioned. These two areas are described in Table 1.1. The first area, "The Psychology of Humanitarian Work

Table 1.1 A Topography of Humanitarian Work Psychology

	<i>The Psychology of Humanitarian Work (HW-P)</i>	<i>A Work Psychology That Is Humanitarian (H-WP)</i>
<b>Worker-Focused</b>	Fostering humanitarian worker well-being	Ensuring decent work for all workers
<b>Task-Focused</b>	Enabling humanitarian work for organizational goals	Meeting responsibilities towards multiple stakeholders

Source: Adapted from Carr, De Guzman, Eltyeb, Furnham, MacLachlan, Marai and McAuliffe (2012)

(HW-P)," focuses on the application of I-O psychology principles to humanitarian work, including disaster relief, poverty reduction and sustainable development. An example of this is examining what motivates people to work in the humanitarian aid and development sector. The second area is "A Work Psychology That Is Humanitarian (H-WP)," which refers to the broad application of humanitarian principles to I-O psychology as a discipline, including promotion of fair and just working conditions for all workers. Conducting research to better understand the impact of a living wage versus minimum wage on worker performance would represent an example of work in this second area.

Humanitarian work psychology's focus on the application of I-O psychology to issues relating to organized efforts to enhance human welfare is a departure from the more traditional avenues taken by those in the discipline, and represents something of an evolution (if not a revolution) in the field. From its inception in 2009 with the convening of the professional organization formerly known as the "Global Task Force for Humanitarian Work Psychology" (now the Global Organisation for Humanitarian Work Psychology), this field of endeavor has taken the precepts and research of I-O psychology to new levels in both international development and aid, as well as generating a renewed humanistic emphasis in the field.

HWP is expanding the boundaries of I-O psychology by applying I-O theories, methods and procedures to business and nonbusiness efforts to enhance human welfare across the globe. Some examples of HWP work include utilizing I-O psychology principles and applications to:

- Promote decent work and social empowerment for workers from marginalized groups, like individuals with disabilities
- Assist aid organizations with poverty reduction initiatives
- Develop disaster response management systems
- Help humanitarian organizations succeed at their missions
- Support sustainable global development
- Promote justice in organizations

As a concept, HWP resonates with many I-O psychologists, who feel that our discipline has a lot to offer the nonprofit sector. In particular, many students of I-O psychology are searching for ways to use the skills they are learning in a

more prosocial way. It is important to note that various I-O psychologists have long engaged in research and practice consistent with the goals and values of HWP (e.g., Carr, Inkson & Thorn, 2005; Frese, 1999; Lefkowitz, 2003; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005; Schein, 1999, 2001; Winefield, Winefield, Tiggemann & Goldney, 1991). In fact, we would argue that HWP is an inherent part of I-O psychology already, albeit an underdeveloped area. However, what has been missing is dedicated space and recognition within our discipline for those engaging in this work. The creation of the term HWP and an organization dedicated to its principles has resulted in considerable growth and expansion of the work in this area, including high-profile inclusion at major conferences such as the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) and the International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP), and a greater presence in mainstream I-O publications (e.g., Berry, Reichman, Klobas, MacLachlan, Hui & Carr, 2011; Santuzzi, Waltz, Finkelstein & Rupp, 2014).

### The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The MDGs marked an important historical milestone in international development, whereby nation-states and international organizations agreed to work together to reduce global poverty and related problems by the year 2015. Preparations for the 2000 Millennium Summit launched with the report of the Secretary-General entitled, "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century" ([www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/index.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/index.htm)). Additional input was prepared by the Millennium Forum, which brought together representatives of over 1,000 nongovernmental and civil society organizations from more than 100 countries. The Forum conducted a two-year consultation process covering issues such as poverty eradication, environmental protection, human rights and protection of the vulnerable.

The MDGs originated from the United Nations Millennium Declaration (United Nations, 2000). The Declaration asserted that every individual has dignity, and hence, the right to freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence and encourages tolerance and solidarity. The MDGs set concrete targets and indicators for poverty reduction in order to achieve the rights set forth in the Declaration. There are eight goals (see Table 1.2), which range from halving extreme poverty rates, to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education.

Support for the eight goals, and a focus on improving the effectiveness of aid, was proposed in the Paris Declaration in 2005, and reiterated in Accra in 2008 at the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. As well as high-level commitment to the goals, many projects and research activities have focused on furthering the MDGs, and many different organizations and disciplines have become involved in this quest.

In the 2013 MDG progress report the UN Secretary-General, Ban-Ki Moon, said: "The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the most successful

Table 1.2 The United Nations Millennium Development Goals

By 2015, all United Nations Member States have pledged to:

#### **MDG1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

#### **MDG2: Achieve universal primary education**

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

#### **MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

#### **MDG4: Reduce child mortality**

- Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

#### **MDG5: Improve maternal health**

- Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio.

#### **MDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

#### **MDG7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020.

#### **MDG8: Develop a global partnership for development**

- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and nondiscriminatory. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally.
- Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.
- Address the special needs of landlocked and Small Island Developing States.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term.
- In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

Source: United Nations (2014).

global anti-poverty push in history" (United Nations, 2013, p. 3). And indeed, between 2000 and 2014 we have seen the number of people living in extreme poverty halved, the proportion of people without sustainable access to improved sources of drinking water more than halved (with 2.3 billion people now having access), the proportion of urban slum dwellers declined significantly, visible improvements in all health areas, including remarkable gains in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis, considerable improvements in primary education (including gender disparities being reduced in all regions) and increased political participation of women (United Nations, 2013, 2014).

Despite these great achievements there is still considerable effort required. The MDG Progress Report (2014) reports that one in seven people and one in four children are hungry. In addition, according to the report, the globe is experiencing major threats to environmental sustainability and serious decline of resources, more needs to be done to reduce child mortality and maternal mortality (despite improvements), greater availability of antiretroviral therapy for HIV-infected people is required, 2.5 billion people lack improved sanitation facilities (with one billion people continuing to engage in open defecation) and further efforts to achieve universal primary education are needed.

So, while there has been definite progress toward meeting the MDGs, such progress has been uneven across countries and regions, and there is still a long way to go to eradicate poverty. In order to continue this work, the United Nations has proposed a new set of goals – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – that will supersede the MDGs on 1 January 2016. We discuss the SDGs in more detail in the final chapter of the book, including suggesting an agenda for future HWP work.

### Organization of the book

As we reach the end of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) period, it is time to take stock of the progress that has been made, the contributions of humanitarian work psychology (HWP) to that progress, and where additional efforts will be needed. The aim of this book is to provide concrete examples of the contributions HWP has made to the MDGs and how HWP can assist in forging and implementing an agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We have divided the book into three parts. Part I includes chapters whose case studies focus on practical applications of I-O psychology to particular MDGs. Part II takes more of a process approach – the case studies in these chapters examine the various processes, strategies and methods that can facilitate progress, such as the use of technology or inter-organizational partnerships in tackling the MDGs. Finally, in Part III, shorter reflective chapters by a selection of key thinkers in HWP discuss the future of HWP, especially as it relates to international development efforts such as the forthcoming SDGs.

Below, we provide a brief introduction to each of the chapters in the book. See Table 1.3 for a summary of the MDG coverage by chapter for the first two parts of the book.

Table 1.3 Coverage of Millennium Development Goals in the Current Volume

Author(s)	MDGs							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Part I: Practical Applications of Using HWP to Address the MDGs</i>								
2. Vallières & McAuliffe				*	*			
3. Ng, Lai, Lau & Chan	*							
4. Abdul-Nasiru & Toaddy		*						
5. Osicki	*	*		*	*			*
6. Saxena						*		
<i>Part II: Process Considerations in Applying HWP to the MDGs</i>								
7. Gloss, McCallum & Foster								*
8. Meyer, Kanfer & Burrus				*	*			*
9. Foo								*
10. Glavey & Uduma				*	*	*		*
11. Mills & Wood	*			*	*	*	*	
12. Cruse			*					*

Note: MDG1 = Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; MDG2 = Achieve universal primary education; MDG3 = Promote gender equality and empower women; MDG4 = Reduce child mortality rates; MDG5 = Improve maternal health; MDG6 = Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; MDG7 = Ensure environmental sustainability; MDG8 = Develop a global partnership for development.

### *Part I – Practical applications of using humanitarian work psychology to address the Millennium Development Goals*

In Chapter 2 **Frédérique Vallières** and **Eilish McAuliffe** explore the effect of motivation upon the retention of community health workers (CHWs) in Sierra Leone, a country facing both significant challenges in child and maternal health (MDGs 4 and 5) and significant shortages of health professionals. Through their case study, the authors demonstrate that HWP efforts will be more successful when they align best practices from I-O psychology with awareness of local cultural and situational factors that might affect the applicability of such practices, which are typically developed based upon research on professional employees working in so-called “developed” economies.

In Chapter 3, **Eddie Chi Wai Ng**, **Man Kin Lai**, **Wendy Suet Yee Lau** and **Charles C. Chan** describe a mentorship-based initiative in Hong Kong to reduce intergenerational poverty. They reflect on the initial results of the program and identify areas where HWP can be utilized to improve various facets of such programs, focusing particularly on the recruitment, selection, training and support of volunteer mentors.

In Chapter 4, **Inusah Abdul-Nasiru** and **Steven Toaddy** describe the role of various stakeholders in education and the potential positive impacts and negative side-effects that mobile phone usage might have upon educational attainment in rural Ghana. In doing so, they illuminate how behavior within a particular cultural

and economic context may impact, for better or worse, the attainment of an international development goal, in this case MDG2 or achievement of primary schooling by all children everywhere.

In Chapter 5, **Mathian Osicki** describes IBM's Corporate Service Corps (CSC), which serves both as a means for partnering to help achieve international development goals as well as one example of corporate social responsibility. The CSC program involves sending trained teams of IBM employees abroad to assist local organizations and governments in implementing humanitarian initiatives. Osicki focuses in particular on their work with two governmental programs aimed to improve access to health care, education and other social services in the Cross River State region of Nigeria.

In Chapter 6, the final chapter in Part I, **Mahima Saxena** describes a study designed to understand how daily behaviors in the rural state of Uttar Pradesh, India, might impact the spread of the communicable disease Japanese Encephalitis. She describes how using ecological momentary approach (EMA) techniques can lead to insights about how individual choices are influenced by factors such as poverty and work environment; such findings can then lead to more fully contextualized development initiatives.

## *Part II – Process considerations in applying humanitarian work psychology to the Millennium Development Goals*

In Chapter 7, **Alexander Gloss, Scott McCallum and Lori L. Foster** propose that development goals (both their content and their achievement) are all related in some way to work. They propose a broadening of I-O psychology's conceptualization of work processes by delineating a framework for skills development that considers one's capacity to accomplish work tasks within the context of factors at the individual (e.g., motivation and goal-setting), workplace (e.g., human resource practices) and societal (e.g., social justice) levels. According to the authors, this new focus will allow for a more contextualized, nuanced and therefore effective understanding of how to achieve development goals insofar as they involve progress in the domain of work.

In Chapter 8, **Rustin D. Meyer, Ruth Kanfer and Carla Burrus** describe a goal-setting intervention for frontline healthcare workers in the Bihar state of India. In so doing, they illustrate the value of focusing on not only on international development outcomes, but the processes by which such outcomes are achieved. Meyer and colleagues provide helpful lessons learned from their own experiences that can be applied by humanitarian work psychologists who hope to get involved in future development projects.

In Chapter 9, **Su Chuen Foo** explores the impact of emotional exhaustion among humanitarian and development workers upon health and organizational withdrawal. Utilizing conservation of resources theory as a basis for her hypotheses, Foo shows that exhaustion has differential impacts on these outcomes depending upon whether the motivations of the employees for doing humanitarian work are prosocial in nature or not, as well as the effect of contact with the beneficiaries of their efforts.

In Chapter 10, **Sarah Glavey and Ogenna Uduma** discuss a partnership initiative between institutions of higher education in Europe, Africa and North America to improve postgraduate educational opportunities for those interested in a career in global health on the African continent, particularly early-career African academics. They demonstrate how insights from I-O psychology about inter-organizational networks can be seen in action within this partnership, and, drawing from both the literature and their experience, offer recommendations for those considering the development of other intercollegiate and international programs.

In Chapter 11, **Maura J. Mills and Benjamin S. Wood** describe a consulting firm, Social Impact, which engages in a variety of projects designed to facilitate the effectiveness of organizations engaged in development efforts. As Mills and Wood's specific examples demonstrate, interventions and program evaluations utilizing HWP's knowledge base (e.g., research methodology and data interpretation) can be applied to efforts that align with any of the MDGs, even ones that seem less central to the world of work.

In Chapter 12, **Sean Cruse** discusses the role of the United Nations Global Compact in facilitating the establishment of partnerships between various constituencies, including private businesses. Cruse outlines the goals and processes by which the Global Compact operates, and identifies several examples of the progress that can be made on specific issues, such as women's empowerment and anti-corruption, when organizations of all types (e.g., businesses, NGOs, governments) act collectively.

## *Part III – Reflections on humanitarian work psychology beyond the Millennium Development Goals*

In Part III, the contributors look forward and consider how HWP can best make an even greater contribution in the future, in particular with respect to the SDGs that will begin on 1 January 2016. Apart from a concluding chapter by the coeditors, the chapters in Part III are reflections written by some of the leading researchers, practitioners and thinkers in the field of HWP.

In Chapter 13, **Karen Hand, Stuart C. Carr and Malcolm MacLachlan** argue that HWP can move forward in the international development arena by "crossing over" or applying techniques and knowledge to new initiatives or domains. They identify three areas of crossover, including organizational efforts to support decent pay, the branding of humanitarian efforts and thinking not only about challenges but the broader contexts and assumptions built into those challenges.

In Chapter 14, **Adrian Furnham** identifies several thorny challenges associated with conducting this kind of research, which is at the same time applied, interdisciplinary, multi-method, and value-laden. He illustrates how psychology has contributed understanding relevant to each of the eight MDGs, and concludes with some suggestions for the future growth and impact of HWP.

In Chapter 15, **Ben M. F. Law and C. Harry Hui** note the crucial role that volunteers have played in HWP's involvement in MDG efforts. They argue that I-O psychology, with its traditional focus upon salaried employees, needs to be



expanded to allow for successful practical application where volunteers comprise part of the staff. Law and Hui identify several areas for enhancement based upon the volunteer management literature.

In Chapter 16, **Telma Viale** reminds us that international development requires conveying messages that are able to change minds and compel impassioned action from all stakeholders. In order to accomplish this, she argues that we need to pay attention to the framing embedded in these messages, as research in the area of judgment and decision-making has long shown that the way information is presented can affect impressions as much as or more than the actual content. Viale also points out the role (underutilized thus far) that organizational development needs to play in international development.

In Chapter 17, **Lichia Yiu** and **Raymond Saner** discuss several reasons why HWP is particularly poised to make unique contributions to the SDGs, including the ability to think about problems at both the human and system levels, significant experience implementing change within organizations and an understanding of how complex problems that involve multiple stakeholders and require large-scale collaboration can be successfully navigated. Through the expansion of an earlier model of HWP, Yiu and Saner demonstrate the importance of context in understanding the value and focus of HWP in its various forms.

While acknowledging the achievements and the positive impact that HWP has had thus far, in Chapter 18 **Joel Lefkowitz** calls for an even broader conceptualization of HWP, one that incorporates humanistic values into our education, scholarship and practice. He argues that a transformation of this nature would result in the field of I-O psychology being *de facto* synonymous with HWP.

Finally, in Chapter 19, the coeditors describe the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, reflect on the content of the book as a portrait of current HWP efforts in the development arena and suggest some ways that, by focusing increased attention to process, context and theory development, humanitarian work psychologists can make significant contributions to the SDGs and the global development agenda.

## Note

- 1 It should be noted that we default to the term I-O psychology in this chapter; this term is interchangeable with both work psychology and occupational psychology, which are used in different country contexts. Throughout the book, the chapter authors utilize the term most common in their country of origin.

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