



# IFSW Newsletter

ASIA & PACIFIC REGION

Issue 1, June 2016

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## *Editorial*

It seems like we have just welcomed in 2016 but almost half of the year is over and the next issue of our Newsletter is due. This round we have the regular reports from the desk of the IFSW-AP President and Member-at-Large, and a sharing of World Social Work Day celebrations from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Bangladesh. The contributor from Bangladesh, Mr. Habibur Rahman, has also given an enlightening description of social work development in Bangladesh which is still struggling to achieve professional recognition. The Philippines and Indonesian Associations of Social Workers report on their successful workshops held recently on building the capacity of social workers to manage disasters. This issue also carries an interesting and inspiring case study of how a social action organisation in India is empowering women through community development projects. We thank all those who have sent in articles, reports and photographs which have resulted in an extra 3 pages compared to the previous issue. Hopefully more articles will be forthcoming for the next issue from other regional

countries, especially after the Joint World Conference in Seoul which is to be held from 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. That event promises to be a time of exciting interaction and networking and learning experiences with plenary sessions, symposiums, workshops and all the executive committee meetings.

Disaster response and preparedness remains urgent on the agenda of IFSW-AP, and rightly so with the frequent incidences of calamities in the region. The next capacity building workshop is planned to be hosted by the Malaysian Association of Social Workers in January 2017. Further details are expected to be announced later. In addition, regionally, social workers are also feeling stretched to cope with a myriad of other social issues such as the maltreatment, neglect, trafficking and online sexual grooming of children and the dark websites promoting child pornography. Family violence, health and mental health issues, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS continue to keep social workers on their toes. Concern about the abuse and neglect of elders is also increasing to the point that some countries have or are in the process of formulating policies, programmes and legislation to protect the vulnerable aged. Some countries are also struggling to cope with the complex problems of refugees, illegal and legal migrants, stateless people and modern day slaves.

There is truly such a lot of work to do but there are not a great number of social workers who are competently trained and experienced to take up the roles and tasks required. Most of the developing countries like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia are just beginning to build a base in social work education and training for social workers. Even with more than 60 years of social work practice in Malaysia, there is a lack of trained social workers in appropriate fields of practice and also in continuing professional education programme for social work graduates. Perhaps a pooling of regional resources in providing specialised training programmes could be a way to bridge the gaps and hasten the process of enhancing the knowledge and skills of those currently engaged in working with the vulnerable groups.

Let's help each other achieve the goals of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development!

## *IFSW-AP Joint Report from IFAP Regional President & IFAP Member-at-Large: July 2014 - March 2016*



**Mariko Kimura**  
IFAP President



**Rose Henderson**  
Member-at-Large

### **Greetings from the President and Member-at-Large**

#### **Disasters as a Characteristic of the Asia Pacific Region**

Throughout the year, our region was hit by natural and human made disasters. One example is the earthquake in Nepal; another is the earthquake in Malaysia which was also preceded by a flood a few months earlier. As we write this our colleagues in Japan are once again responding to a major earthquake. China is still handling damages from earthquakes, flooding, and a cruise ship accident. Hail hit parts of Australia, train accidents occurred in India and Pakistan, the latter also suffering a mosque bombing. A plane crashed in Indonesia, while Vanuatu was severely ravaged by a hurricane, miraculously claiming only 11 lives, thanks to proper risk management measures. Hence the small island nation showed us the true importance of disaster preparedness. Mariko in her role as President has urged donations to one of our newest members, the Social Workers Association of Nepal (SWAN), so that we can help them deal with the aftermath of the devastating earthquake.

We are also aware of the huge and long term humanitarian needs that follow disasters of all types and note especially the current need for assistance in Yemen where about 80 per cent of the population are in need of assistance including food, fuel and health services. Our member in Yemen is playing a key role in the UNICEF funded project to establish and maintain safe places for children to enjoy organised activities, learn, express themselves and return safely back into their communities.

Unfortunately this is not an extraordinary year for the Asia-Pacific since, according to UN estimates, more than half of the world's 226 natural disasters in 2014 occurred in our region. That is why this issue is a priority for IFSW-AP and that is why we have been working to raise funds for further disaster related projects, such as workshops in our member countries.

### **The Asia Pacific Region Launched its Facebook Page**

In February, we launched our Facebook page to be able to engage more efficiently in global communication. Please send any information and pictures you would like to post on our Facebook page to the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership and they will arrange the actual upload. We need to do this for information management purposes.

### **IFSW Executive Committee Meeting in March 2015 and New Undertakings on International Trade Agreement System**

In March, the new Executive Committee gathered for the first time in Geneva, Switzerland. During this meeting, we strongly felt that we are still learning to cope with our roles and the workload. While this is the year for regional conferences, we can also find common global issues such as our work on the Global Agenda. One new policy development confirmed at the meeting has to do with social workers who work in countries other than where they were trained and are based. Other developments include policies regarding the Social Work Role in Social Protection Systems and position statements on International Trade Agreements/Systems, with Rose Henderson involved in drafting the latter. We recognise that reviewing and updating such policies regularly are necessary to keep up with the rapid pace of globalisation. We are also grateful for our members who represent IFSW at the United Nations and our Human Rights and Ethics Commissions. The development of a draft Terms of Reference for an Indigenous Committee is also expected to be discussed at the General Meeting in Seoul.

### **IFSW-AP President Visits Hong Kong, Macau and China in April 2015**

In April, Mariko paid presidential visits to Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China where she had the honour of having meetings with local presidents of social work associations and heads of social service departments. This was the first time for Mariko to visit Greater China in her role as President after assuming the office last year.



Meeting Mr Gong Puguang, Vice Minister, Ministry of Civil Affairs & President of CASW

## **New Social Work Definition and Development of the Regional Amplification**

With regard to the Global Definition, we have been working towards a regional amplification throughout the year so that we could come to a conclusion with APASWE at our conference in Thailand. The revised draft will now be endorsed at the conference in Seoul in June 2016. Also, the Hong Kong Association of Social Workers completed the Chinese version of the new Global Definition and it has already been uploaded to the IFSW website. We believe that it will hopefully be of reference to many colleagues who have Chinese cultural origins all over the world. We thank the Hong Kong Association for their most meaningful effort.

## **Status of the Global Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region as of March 2016**

In the second phase of the Global Agenda, regional progress reports on 'Promoting the dignity and worth of persons', the agenda theme in 2015, were scheduled to be presented at an Agenda Forum in Thailand. These included case reports on what influence social workers have on people's lives and social change. We will collect these cases in our Global Agenda Report and make an appeal to IFSW, IASSW, ICSW as well as the UN and NGOs about the social impact of social work practice! The final draft of the Global Agenda Phase II Report is currently being prepared and will be disclosed in Korea in June 2016 when the Global Agenda initiative will enter Phase III. I would like to personally express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Bala Raju Nikku from Nepal representing IASSW and Rose, our IFSW-AP Member-at-Large, for leading this effort and facilitating the Forum.



Dr Bala Raju Nikku making his presentation

## **Report on Pre-Conference Workshops in Bangkok**

As mentioned earlier, the Asia Pacific Region organised a Pre-Conference Workshop on 'Children's Rights and Child Labour' preceding the Joint Regional Conference in Thailand. We did so keeping in mind the theme of Phase II, namely 'Promoting the dignity and worth of persons'. As a result of the work that was undertaken in Thailand at the pre-conference workshop on child labour including those of migrant

labourers, the following remit will be put to the General Meeting in Seoul:

*"That the General Meeting acknowledges that in all corners of the world, child labour is an unacceptable exploitation of the Rights of Children and that such exploitation seriously and negatively impacts on their long term health and wellbeing. We call upon IFSW to develop a position or policy statement against child labour policies and practices."*

The second workshop in Bangkok highlighted poverty, mental health and disasters as key themes affecting the dignity and worth of people for our Global Agenda report. The impact of these themes on indigenous people was also recognised across our region. Once finalised, this report will be included in the Phase II report as the Asia Pacific regional contribution to the Global Agenda Initiative.

## **The Recent Refugee Crisis and its Worldwide Impact**

Regarding the recent refugee crisis, we hear news about the constant mass flow of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers to Europe. Several governments, especially EU nations and other European states, as well as North American countries, etc., are making statements about accepting these people. Social workers and refugee support organisations will probably be actively engaged in specific assistance in the future. At the same time, we have to watch humanitarian efforts and responses by national governments very carefully as to how these are impacting on issues of human rights and psychosocial needs of refugees as well as the capacity and capability of social workers and social work organisations in dealing with the multitude of challenges posed.

## **Regional Human Resource Development and the IFSW Development Fund**

Originally utilising IFSW'S Development Fund, a Disaster Mitigation Workshop was held in Manila in 2013 and another one in Indonesia in January 2014 with Japan taking the initiative in 2012. During the workshop in Indonesia in 2015, a country frequented by disasters, Mariko explained that even though the IFSW Development Fund had ended, future disaster workshops would be organised to continue to raise awareness and to develop skills towards improving social workers' response to disasters. Indonesian colleagues also stated that they wished to have similar workshops in the future where they can enhance their disaster related skills.

## **Additional Efforts for Professional Skill Development Workshops Funded from Japan**

The Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership applied for grants for social work personnel training in the Asia Pacific Region to the

Japanese Centre of Social Welfare Promotion and National Examination in February 2015. We managed to receive grants to engage in these projects for at least three years. The first workshop to train disaster relief personnel took place in Jakarta, Indonesia between 5th and 7th January 2016 and in Palawan, the Philippines from February 29th to March 3rd, 2016. Both national associations of social workers in the two countries helped extensively to organise these events. We had 50 participants in Indonesia and 160 in the Philippines, including professionals from neighbouring countries. Hence, we could contribute to development of disaster support networks and the enhancement of disaster assistance skills in these two countries, even extending to professional networks in surrounding ones.



The group of speakers & participants in Indonesia 2016

In August 2016, a workshop is scheduled to be held in India on how to support women and children. Similarly to the above, this workshop will be funded from Japan, while local associations of social workers will help with the organising. Additionally, a disaster workshop is planned for January 2017 in cooperation with the Malaysian Association of Social Workers.

### **India Joined IFSW as Full Member**

In August, colleagues from India applied for IFSW membership. Since according to our current Constitution social workers from one nation can only join as one umbrella organisation, six professional associations in India formed their coordinating body for international membership. Prior to this, these associations met in Bangalore (now officially Bengaluru, according to pre-colonial traditional pronunciation) and made their joint decision about IFSW application. After a voting process by ballot by the deadline of October 12, India was accepted as a full member of IFSW. The results were announced at the IFSW-AP meeting of October 2015 in Thailand. During the same time, the South Asia Social Work Conference was held at the local Christ University, and Mariko attended to represent our Federation.

### **World Social Work Day Celebration in the Asia Pacific Region**

Events celebrating World Social World Day were held in the Asia Pacific Region focusing around March 15th, 2016. In New Zealand, 2014 was an anniversary year for the national organisation since its establishment so special celebrations took place at the end of that year. Social work associations in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Palestine, and Yemen also scheduled events to give

special meaning to this day. Their reports follow. In Indonesia, colleagues invited special guests from the Pacific and held an event on this day with special attention to human rights in accordance with this year's theme of the Global Agenda. We should make special mention of Bangladesh. A young social worker, Mr. Habibur Rahman took leadership and fifteen related organisations came together to celebrate World Social Work Day.



Bangladesh WSWD 2016 rally

The China Association of Social Workers had a celebration in Beijing on March 14th, with 200 participants from all around the country. During this celebration, in addition to presenting awards for exceptional activities by social work organisations and social workers, the IFSW-AP President was also invited. We look forward to similar lively activities from the country in the future.

### **China to Host the Joint Regional Conference in October 2017**

During the meeting in Bangkok, the China Association of Social Workers was given the green light to host the next Joint Regional Social Work Conference in Shenzhen in October 2017. Mariko continues to support the Organising Committee in preparing for the conference.

### **In Conclusion**

Finally, a few words on budgetary matters: Due to limitations in financial resources at the global organisational level of IFSW, the future provision of the Development Fund is not clear. According to the Global President, efforts are being made to look for funds apart from the regular IFSW budget. However, this fund is extremely important to the Asia-Pacific, since our region has a large number and a wide variety of social work organisations, while our members are on very different developmental levels facing very different circumstances. Therefore, on behalf of us, Mariko has humbly asked the IFSW Steering Committee to restart the provision of this fund in the future. At the same time, IFAP should come up with fund raising strategies to assist our regional work. We welcome any suggestions to assist us with this.

There is plenty more to report, but due to the lack of space and time we would like to limit our report to the above for now. With our new members, day-by-day we are strengthening the great diversity embraced by IFSW-AP. As your regional representatives, we wish to continue to attend as many events organised by member associations as possible, get to know to activities carried out by social workers and their organisation as much as possible, communicate the unique situation and the common themes to as many member nations as possible and additionally make appeals for our causes to the global organisation! Thank you all for the enormous contributions you make to IFSW Asia Pacific!

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### *IFSW-AP President's Visit to China*

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Dr Mariko Kimura, the President of IFSW-AP paid a visit to the China Association of Social Workers (CASW) in Beijing. During Dr Kimura's stay in China, she attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Chinese Social Workers Annual Conference in Beijing where she delivered the opening speech and joined Mr Gong Puguang, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Civil Affairs & President of CASW on stage to announce China's successful bid to host the 2017 Asia-Pacific Joint Regional Social Workers Conference in Shenzheng.



Accompanied by CASW representatives, Dr Kimura also had brief meetings with the Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs and discussions on indigenised social work development mode.



Meeting with Mr Zhu Qin hao, the Director of Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs.

She also made a visit to local social work organisations, and discussed social work development and its challenges.



From left: Prof Wang Si Bin, Mr Xu Qida, Mr Gong Puguang, Dr Mariko, Vice President & General Secretary of CASW, Mr Liu Jing

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### *Report on World Social Work Day 2016 (Hong Kong)*

This year marked the 9<sup>th</sup> year of World Social Work Day celebrations in Hong Kong. In response to societal change, the theme of this year was 'Ignite social work passion, build a new world together' (點燃社工情 攜手創新天). The aim was to upkeep social workers' commitment to social work mission in promoting the mutual support and collaboration among the practitioners, academic, the government and different stakeholders in society. Like previous years, Hong Kong Social Workers Association took the lead in forming the Social Work Day (HK) 2016 Organising Committee with 14 other social work organisations.

This was a genuine joint partnership in the sector for achieving a common goal of pursuing professional excellence and building a just and thriving community.

The Organisation Committee kicked off the planning in November last year. During the course, 3 major events were launched, including i) the annual long run race, ii) Social Work Day cake sharing, and iii) Social Work Day Signature Event. The highlights of each event are as follows:

i) The Annual Long Run Race held on 21st February 2016 marked the commencement of World Social Work Day (HK) 2016. Over 1000 people, comprising social workers, service users and their family members, and social work teachers & students, joined this remarkable event. This year we set up a new category for participants over 60 years old which attracted 30 runners. This annual event signified the solidarity of social workers and the partnership with the service users in pursuit of a common goal. The participation was very encouraging and the participants were in high spirit.



ii) Following the encouraging response in raising the awareness of social workers, their team and service users about the message of Social Work Day, we launched 'Together we celebrate the Social Work Day' cake sharing event (同分享蛋糕 齊賀社工日 攜手創新天). We distributed 300 cake coupons to social workers, social work teachers & students. Each was required to write up a short message for the social work profession and share the cake with a group of at least 8 people (users, volunteers, colleagues or students). All of the encouraging messages and the photos of each group's celebration of cake sharing were posted on the Social Work Day website.



iii) Aligning with the World Social Work Day, this year's signature event was held on 15 March 2016 at the campus of Caritas Institute of Higher Education,

Tseung Kwan O. This event was to gather the fellow social workers to examine and reflect on the concerns and issues society and the profession encountered. The topic this year was 'Towards a Humane City: Voices of Citizens'. We invited the Director of Social Welfare as our guest of honour, to deliver the opening address. It was followed by 2 enlightening sharing from Dr Ng Mee-kam, who spoke from the perspective of urban planning on mother nature and human nature; and Dr Eve Wong, from a senior practitioner's angle on use of creative art in expressing passion. The sharing sparked off heated discussion and feedback from the floor of 150 participants. Apart from sharing session, it was followed by a most refreshing and engaging group experience on experiential arts, such as circle painting, drum playing, creative drawing, etc. Participants did not just think cognitively, but also acted creatively to express their voice towards the vision of building a humane society.

We continued to ride on the Social Work Day (HK) website as a platform for our fellow social workers and public in accessing information of the events, the profession and social welfare sector. Besides, the website also served as a platform for appreciation, compliments, and recognition of social work contribution in society.

More information can be accessed from the following hyperlink:  
[http://www.ctgoodjobs.hk/events/socialworkday\\_2016/event.asp](http://www.ctgoodjobs.hk/events/socialworkday_2016/event.asp).

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## *Report on World Social Work Day 2016 (Malaysia)*

In celebration of WSWD 2016, the Executive Committee hosted a Public Forum on the theme 'Dignity & Worth of Peoples: No One Will Be Left Behind' to highlight the discrimination, exclusion, abuse and neglect of the poor, the undocumented people, refugees and migrant minorities. This was held on Saturday 19th March 2016 from 9.00am to 12.00 noon at Brickfields Asia College, Petaling Jaya.



While the discourse was guided by the global theme which came from the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development driven by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW), both the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP) were also highlighted in the forum with the emphasis on inclusive development for all, especially the poor 'Bottom 40 Per Cent' (B40).

As Malaysia has now adopted the UN-SDG Agenda 2030 and has ratified the Convention on Rights of the Child as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Malaysia is obligated by international human rights standards not to neglect non-citizens but to provide them basic human needs as a humanitarian response.

In this context while we recognise that Malaysia has formulated many policies and programmes for the equitable access of all communities, there might still be some unresolved issues when it comes to actual access and effective delivery for its citizens. In reality too there are sizable sections of people who are non-citizens and who are part of the B40 community facing major socio-economic as well as human rights exclusion in modern Malaysia. They are the undocumented people, refugees, migrant workers and illegal migrants, mostly from ASEAN countries.



Speakers: Richard Towle, Datin Rodhiah Zakaria, James Nayagam, Aegile Fernandez, and Petrina Setvinder

Mr Richard Towle, the UNHCR Representative in Malaysia gave a lucid description of the global and local situation of refugees and migrants, and related government policies/laws/inaction, corruption and public perceptions which have not helped to ease the problem. He spoke about the need to legalise these refugees and migrants and allowing them to contribute to the economy and social communities as the only way to reduce criminality, social stress, infectious diseases, etc., and to promote their dignity and worth as human beings. He added that Malaysia, in not doing so will be leaving 4 million people behind. He also extolled the work of social workers all over the world, in trying to meet the psychosocial needs of this vulnerable group of people with limited support from governments and limited resources.

Datin Rodhiah binti Zakaria, Head of the Medical Social Work Unit, University of Malaya Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur shared the continuing dilemmas being faced by health social workers in extending services to

migrant workers and their families in need of medical care and discharge planning due to restrictive government and hospital policies, and the situational needs of the migrants themselves.

Mr James Nayagam from the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) spoke of frustrations faced by the Commissioners in investigating and intervening in situations of human rights violations. He also described the stress and tensions faced by both immigration officers and illegal migrants in overcrowded detention centres, and the highly infectious spread of tuberculosis among foreigners in prisons, even affecting prison officers and their families. The biggest problem though is the thinking that these illegals do not belong here and they therefore do not get access to services unless visibly and physically ill.

Ms Aegile Fernandez, heading TENAGANITA, a civil society managing cases of migrant workers, refugees, and stateless children described the trials and tribulations of dealing with so many varying needs. Added to the difficulties, the workers are exposed to pressures and lack of support from the authorities. She stated that migration is a mess in Malaysia. She urged Malaysians to take more responsibility and act to change the situation.

Mrs Petrina Setvinder from Dignity for Children Foundation talked about giving dignity to children as an organisation running educational and community based programmes including day care and counselling support for the children of refugees and undocumented young people, including those on the streets.



Datuk Dr Denison summing up

In summation, Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria remarked on 3 points: 1) the reality of issues gained from statistics, real life stories, casework practice, corrupt officials, and negative perceptions of people in authority as well as those in the community; 2) public policies that are in place and that need to be put in place to deal with the multitude of issues in relation to the SDGs and ASEAN initiatives; 3) need for social workers to adopt a more rights-based approach in

practice and to be professionally trained for the kind of work that TENAGANITA is doing, as well as engaging with parliamentarians and strengthening relationships with UNHCR and other like-minded organisations.

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## *Social Work in Bangladesh: The Way of Practice and Progress*

### **Background**

In Bangladesh, social work as academic discipline started through a short durational training course with the help of the United Nations in 1953 which was extended later on. In 1958, the College of Social Welfare and Research was established under the close guidance of Dhaka University. In the session of 1958-59, this college started firstly social work academic programs with 55 students. In 1973, the college was renamed as the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR).



Habibur with invited speaker @ National Convention of Acid Survivors Foundation

The ISWR at Dhaka University then started a 2 year MA degree in social welfare and a 3 year BA Honors degree in social work. This institute is currently conducting a 4 year honors, regular 01Masters degree, 02 years Masters and 04 specialized Masters along with Masters of Philosophy and PhD degree. The College of Social Work under Rajshahi University also runs a 3 year Honors degree in social work in the year 1965-66, and in 1992-93, the National University started both Honors and Masters degree with compulsory field work.

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology started B of Social Sciences (Hons) in social work in the session of 1993-94. Currently this University is providing Honors, Masters and PhD degree. In addition, Jagannath University also started offering Honors and Masters along with M. Philosophy and PhD Degree. Pabna University of Science and Technology has also started Honors and Masters in social work.



Community meeting on child Issues of the slums

### **Present Status of Social Work in Bangladesh**

Though social work has been introduced over five decades in academia of Bangladesh but it could not create space at mass level. Still there is a common query regarding the status of social work like who are the social workers - the academicians or the practitioners, such as NGO workers/development activists? If we designate the academicians as social workers then the question comes - without practice in the field how could they become social workers? On the other hand, if we treat NGO workers or development activity workers who come from different educational background and do not possess social work theoretical knowledge, how can they become social workers with only work experience in the field? In Bangladesh, social work is still not widely known as a counseling-based service or a professional service. In most cases, people rely on psychologists or physicians for mental health problems. There is a huge gap between academia and problem based practice in Bangladesh. Actually it originated from the root of professionalization process in Bangladesh. Since social work is not a profession and even does not bear any recognized social position, none of the brilliant or career seeking students feel interested to choose this subject. There are also no specific job fields which require only social work graduates such as medical social worker, school social worker, clinical social worker, industry social worker and development activists, etc., as in developed countries.

### **Employability of Social Work Graduates**

However, there has been a very slow and gradual recognition of social work in the academia and social service fields in Bangladesh over the decades. There are thousands of NGOs working across the country. Most of them are actively involved with various socio-economic programs towards changing the conditions of the poor. Beyond these activities, different efforts are also made by the government itself or jointly with many international organizations. Social work graduates do try to seek employment in NGOs but they face many problems as the employers are not well concerned about the importance and applicability of social work knowledge. Social work has not yet achieved adequate attention and recognition from the

concerned authorities which basically means the State. People in fact do not know much about social work discipline and tend to relate it with sociology because of prejudices and misunderstanding regarding the nature and scope of this discipline. Also social work graduates have to compete with graduates from other disciplines for social work jobs. Graduates from other disciplines are getting jobs in such fields where social work knowledge is mandatory such as hospital social work, clinical social work and social services department.

Although the employment opportunities for social work graduates are not encouraging in Bangladesh, social work is actually unique and essential like many other disciplines, for example, economics, law or even public administration. Social work as an academic discipline has all the attributes to grow in a fashion that could be made distinguished by dint of its outstanding contributions in the fields of socioeconomic development programs in a country like Bangladesh. There are many fields where social work practice can be extended to as Bangladesh is still listed as a least developed country having poverty as the major problem. Therefore, the core focus is rationally on poverty-reducing socio-economic development programs by the government.

**Potential Areas of Social Work Practice in Bangladesh**

Social work is basically a service oriented profession that helps people to be more functional in personal and social life. As we know Bangladesh is socially and economically rapidly growing in terms of its industrialization and technological development. These types of process of development also create so many problems that occasionally require sustainable solutions. Social Work is very appropriate to bring proper solution to all sorts of diversified problems. In Bangladesh, the process of professionalization of social work and diversified practice simultaneously is expected to continue to evolve. Social work practice is expected to extend to the following areas: schools, especially preschool level, family counseling, hospital or medical setting, clinical setting, industry setting, in corporate offices, in banks and NGOs, in community clubs, for child/adult and aged counseling, etc., as Bangladesh is facing multifaceted problems.

**A Glimpse at a Few Recent Social Work Activities**

Since there is no established professional social workers association in Bangladesh, no remarkable events were observed by the social workers over the years. In 2016, the Department of Sociology & Social Work of the People’s University of Bangladesh pioneered the celebration of World Social Work Day 2016 on 15<sup>th</sup> March in association with more than 15 other development organizations through holding a rally and organizing a seminar in Bangladesh. Among the partners, the National Association of Social

Workers, Bangladesh (NASW, B) has performed a very significant role to celebrate the day so remarkably.



Delegates from various NGOs at the rally for WSWD 2016



Faculty staff with students and delegates at WSWD 2016

The news of the events has been widely covered in both electronic and print media. A few other universities also observed the day accordingly. So many activities have recently been performed keeping focus on social work professional expansion towards serving humanity.

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*Community Development Project of Centre for Social Action (CSA), India*

**Theme: Promoting Human Dignity and Worth of Persons**

**Case Study: Ms Shakuntala, 36 years old**

***“I have an identity of my own now. I’m known by my name and I have received appreciation and acceptance as an important part of this community.”***

**Background / Context**

Rarely in historical or religious writings have a woman been named and discussed as an individual except in terms of an exceptional ability or inability to fulfil family obligations. Women were rarely remembered as individuals even when they did something memorable (Rajkumar, 2000). Keeping in view the status of women in developing countries like

India, the present case study of Ms Shakuntala has been conducted to examine the empowerment of women in context of community development project of Centre for Social Action (CSA) - a centre at Christ University, Bangalore, for promoting volunteerism and enabling students to develop as socially responsible citizens through developmental initiatives.

During the years of 2003-2010, CSA had implemented a community development project covering 14 villages in Jadehenahalli Hobli, Hoskote Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District in Karnataka State. The major focus of the project was on children and women empowerment under 5 major components namely: 1. Early Childhood Care & Nutrition, 2. Strengthening Children Education, 3. Community Health and Hygiene, 4. Livelihood Development and 5. Promotion of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). At the beginning of the project intervention Ms Shakuntala was one of the beneficiaries under antenatal and post-natal care support programme.

### Ms Shakuntala

Ms Shakuntala was born to a lower middle class agricultural family in the year 1982 in Baddhepalli village, Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India. She completed her schooling at the government school in Baglur, Hosur and cleared her 10<sup>th</sup> grade with good scores. She attempted to pursue her education but was unable to do so as her parents got her married to a man from Hoskote. She had to give up her studies although she was smart and capable of achievements. In 1998 she moved to her husband's home and started living the regular life every girl is expected to. By the year 2003 she was a full time housewife and mother of three, staying indoors and her world was limited to her family alone. Her in-laws were conservative and only allowed her to move outdoors to graze cattle or fetch water.

The only interaction Ms Shakuntala had with the outside world and the community was when the women would gather and have a casual chat during the cattle grazing. It was during the year 2003 - 2004 in one of these conversations that the other women mentioned the self-help groups and how they function for the benefit of the members. Young Shakuntala instantly loved the idea but did not take the offers of the other women to join the group as she was well aware of what her in-laws' reaction to her bold attempts would be. She was more educated than the other members and hence they kept asking her to join the group. Some members approached her in-laws as well but they refused to allow her to join the SHG. Once, her father visited her and discussed the same

with her in-laws. She was then permitted to join the group with a number of rules and restrictions that intended to safeguard the values of the family.

### Brief summary of activity / action being showcased (what was done, how it was done)

Ms Shakuntala was enrolled in the Self-Help Group promoted in her village by CSA. She was one of the active members in the group and never missed any training and meetings conducted by the project staff. Having been educated up to SSLC, the project staff motivated her to take the role of Health Care Worker in the project and performed well in her duties. Due to her experience, skills and knowledge gained in the project she has been selected as Accredited Social Health Activist in the local Primary Health Centre and attended all health related assignments in her communities. Her knowledge and skills in managing SHGs, micro finance, bank linkages, problem solving skills, book keeping, networking with various government, and private service providers helped her to execute all her tasks well. When asked about the changes CSA has brought into her life, Ms Shakuntala said, "I was carrying my third child and I was very weak and CSA took initiatives to help me with nutritious food, they assisted the education of my 2 other children. More than anything else I have an identity of my own now".

### Outcomes

At the end of the project period i.e., in 2010 June, when CSA decided to withdraw its support, 15 group leaders from SHGs were selected and trained in various managerial skills, and handed the responsibilities of continuing the project on their own. Initially they were struggling a little bit but they are steady and strong now. The federation has been registered as Souhardha under the Societies Act and Ms Shakuntala is one of the executive committee members as secretary. She has been given the responsibility of managing the entire project in the position of Community Organiser and paid a monthly salary from the federation fund.



Ms Shakuntala at her work place

Presently she has been visiting all 12 project villages and has developed very good rapport with the communities. She monitors regularly the functions of Self-Help Groups, Cluster Level Activities, and Children Activity Centres, etc. She has very good rapport with the line departments and brings schemes for the benefit of the poor. The Federation has Rs.75 lakhs generated through the micro finance grant (26 lakhs) given from the project fund which is very systematically managed and controlled by the federation members with the leadership of Ms Shakuntala. She is the pillar of the project after CSA's withdrawal and CSA has lauded her effective role in making the project a sustainable one.

Ms Shakuntala is an important member of her community, she is well known among both students and staff members at Christ University and CSA for her heartening story and achievements. She said, more than anything else, *"I have an identity of my own now. I'm known by my name and I have received appreciation and acceptance as an important part of this community"*.

*"Even in my family I am now looked at with respect and not as an object that cooks, washes and fulfills every one's commands."*

*"There were days when I wished I could go back and study but now the village has offered me a post in the Panchayat (the Local Self Government of Rural areas). I've been able to keep away caste prejudices and I feel complete and whole. My energy has been channelled into such a transformation in my family, in my village and community. People trust my words and seek my advice. I am no more that cornered teenager who didn't have a voice. And all this would have been a dream if not for CSA and its volunteers."*

### **Implications for ongoing professional practice/ service delivery**

Self-help groups and micro-financing is impacting the lives of many people in the rural India. Ms Shakuntala is a living example of these efforts. To move from being treated as a girl with restricted financial freedom, or rather no freedom, to a lady who deals with millions in a savings account, involves actively in the community activities, promotes small enterprises and leads many more women to empowerment, is an absolutely noteworthy impact.

Ms Shakuntala is one of those very few empowered women and a role model in the development of women and their communities in her village. The role of her husband is also appreciated as he has given her all the support for her to attend to her work without any problem. She orientates the students of Christ University on the project activities, strategies, networking/liason, and resource mobilisation, and she co-ordinates the students' rural camps.

She is now proud to be a woman from a much marginalised family and scheduled caste community and says with tears in her eyes that her status in the society has gone up comparatively. She never imagined that staff from government departments and banks will call her "Madam". But she made it with her hard work and networking. Community members call her "Akka" (Elder sister) which is a respectable word in her community. Her commanding voice makes other leaders and members very active and sincere in their work. She has been the bridge between CSA and the Federation and updates all the development works through reports implemented in the villages. This is one of the success stories from the sustainable development intervention of CSA projects.



Prof Dr Mariko Kimura chatting with Ms Shakuntala

CSA carries out community based development projects in many villages in Hoskote, Kolar, Bangalore urban and in other states. They focus on empowering the localities to confront their problems and overcome them through the resources they can find for themselves. Women like Ms Shakuntala have enhanced their hidden potentials and also contribute to their communities impacting the lives of many more people. When asked about what she would like to say to the world and her counterparts, she responded immediately, *"Educate your girls, and allow them to move out"*. Most women think they must stay at home and not cause disrespect to the family by doing bold things. They often think only men are supposed to be active participants of the society. But they must come out, and if they do they can change their family, their village, their community and it will eventually change the whole country. *"Girls must be educated too. They must progress because they have that unique power and potential to lead the country into development."*

There are many more women like Ms Shakuntala in our country who need motivation. Many women are hoping for a chance to prove their capabilities. There will hopefully be many more women like Ms Shakuntala who will continue to nurture more brilliant and efficient communities in the society. This world needs women like Ms Shakuntala who work with determination and dedication at the same time who do not compromise on their family's welfare. She is indeed an example to learn from. CSA's support and

efforts in this regard is immense and must be appreciated.

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<http://csa.christuniversity.in>.

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## *National Seminar Workshop on Building Resiliency in the Face of Disasters, Philippines 2-4 March 2016*



Mr. Jerwin T. Navarro addressing the audience

The Philippine Association of Social Workers, Inc., in cooperation with the Japanese Coordinating Body for the International Federation of Social Workers, spearheaded the conduct of the National Seminar Workshop on Building Resiliency in the Face of Disasters on March 2-4, 2016. The seminar workshop was held at the beautiful Ponce de Leon Garden Resort, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines. This worthwhile endeavor was coordinated by a team of visionaries and organizations bound by a common goal: to spread awareness about disaster risk management and develop resilience among people.

The event was attended by 309 participants from the Philippines and other IFSW-AP member countries. Participants represented different organizations including the local government units, non-government and international social development organizations. They came to share their rich experiences and learn

more on working in emergency response and in providing psychosocial support. Target participants were social workers, barangay officials, practitioners from allied professions, lecturers, researchers and decision makers.



Ms Eva Ponce De Leon making her speech

Amidst the continuing threat of disasters and the foreseeable havoc it can bring to many families and communities, the seminar workshop was deemed timely and relevant to the call of the times. The Philippines experiences major human-made and naturally-caused disasters every year, the strongest of which so far was Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in 2013. Family survivors are still reeling from its traumatic effects as it taught them important lessons in life.



Participants enjoying a lively session



Field Visit

Overall, the event was evaluated as very good with competent resource persons who shared their experiences through their presentations. Participants were satisfied with the learning they got from different topics which they considered relevant to their functions as social workers. Most of them found the topics very enriching as their knowledge, skills

and techniques needed before, during, and after disasters were enhanced. How to collect relevant accurate data during disaster and the importance of partnership and networking were especially given emphasis.



The participants

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***1st Learning Forum on Psychosocial Support in Disaster Situations: the Roles and Skills of Social Workers in Asia Pacific***



Mr. Margowiyono, the Secretary of Directorate General for Social Protection and Security from the Ministry of Social Affairs giving a brief on disaster management efforts

The Indonesian Association of Social Workers or Ikatan Pekerja Sosial Profesional Indonesia (IPSPI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership, organized a three days international learning forum on Psychosocial Support in Disaster Situations. The Learning Forum was held

from January 12-14, 2016 at Training Center Pusdiklat Margaguna, Jakarta.

The program aimed to strengthen roles and skills of social workers in providing psychosocial support in disaster situations. After the program, participants were able to:

1. Explain advanced knowledge of psychosocial support.
2. Improve the psychosocial support program that they design to respond to psychosocial needs in disaster situations.
3. Demonstrate the roles and skills in provision of psychosocial support in disaster situations to respond to target groups that they manage.



Introduction session

The learning forum welcomed 58 participant from all over Indonesia and four (4) countries in Asia Pacific; The Philippine, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Japan. The participants were representatives of social workers, humanitarian workers, government institutions, students and academics.



Prof. Dr. Ismail Baba in a sharing session



Nurul Eka in another session

The program featured three sections:

1. Inspiration speeches: on the first day, the speech delivered by Mr. Margowiyono, the Secretary of Directorate General for Social Protection and Security from the Ministry of Social Affairs gave an inspirational speech about the Ministry's efforts in Disaster Management and the implementation of

psychosocial support in disaster response in Indonesia. On the third days, speeches were delivered by Mr. Ryo Oshima, represented The IFSW-AP and Mr. Yasuharu Nakashima represented the Japanese Association of Certified Social Workers. Both shared the Japanese experiences in disaster management.

2. Program learning session: Sharing practices and learning from field on provision of psychosocial supports in disaster situation. Program continued with discussion of parallel session. Participants were divided into three group based on subthemes:

i) Understanding psychosocial needs of disaster's survivors & Implementation of rights based approach and principles in psychosocial support; ii) Knowledge of therapies used in disaster situation & Stress management for social workers in providing psychosocial support in disaster situation; and iii) Developing psychosocial support models for: children, woman and other vulnerable groups in disaster situation & Community based psychosocial support in disaster situation.



Dialog with survivors in Rusunawa Jakarta

3. Skills building sessions: Workshop sessions in the afternoon to enhance skills on psychosocial capacities. Participants were divided into two groups and visited two locations that have implemented psychosocial support program; temporary housing for survivors in area of landslides in Bogor, West Java and residential building apartment for survivors for eviction in Kampung Pulo, Jakarta.



Dialog with survivors in temporary shelter in Bogor

The significant result from the learning forum was urgency to developed the capacity building of social workers, develop training modules, standards of competence and service on psychosocial support in disaster situation.



The participants

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## *Upcoming Social Work Events in 2016*



### ***IASSW-ICSW-IFSW 4th Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Seoul, Korea***

The theme of the conference is based on “Promoting the Dignity and Worth of People”, the second of four themes of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development.

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 e-mail: seoul@swsd2016.org

### The 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health



### ***The 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 Singapore***

Organised by:  
 Singapore Association of Social Workers in Partnership with



Department of Social Work  
 Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

<http://icsw2016singapore.org/>



Organised by:  
 CBR Global Network, Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development, and Social Institute of Malaysia  
<http://www.2ndcbrworldcongress.com>

**2nd International Social Development Conference**  
**17th - 18th August 2016, Langkawi Island, Malaysia**

Organised by:  
 School of Applied Psychology, Social Work & Policy,  
 UUM College of Arts & Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development, and Social Institute of Malaysia  
 Tel.: +604 928 5717 / 5718 / 5719 / 5720 / 5721  
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**Capacity Building Workshop for Child Rights Social Workers**  
**'Child Rights and Social work Intervention'**  
**18th - 19th August 2016**  
**Bangalore, India**

Organised by the India Network of Professional Social Workers' Associations (INPSWA) in collaboration with the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership, and co-sponsored by the Japanese Center for Social Welfare Promotion and National Examination. Limited to 50 participants.

Applications & inquiries to:  
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**2nd CBR World Congress: Empowering and Enabling**  
**27th - 29th September 2016**  
**Kuala Lumpur**

The focus is to provide a setting for diverse communities of practice, policy, education, research and social development to engage in a dialogue to promote the well-being of persons with disability around the world.

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*To be announced soon...*

**IFSWAP-APASWE Regional Joint Conference 2017 in Shenzhen, China**

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