

Biannual Report 2016 – 2018 of the IFSW Representation in Geneva

Summary

Achievements

- 1 - Smooth transition to the new Main Representative
- 2 - Consolidations of the celebration of SWD at the UN
- 3 - The social work perspective has been included in the following documents/statement: *Online training caring for vulnerable children and, older refugees – Recommendation for the global compact on refugees (UNHCR) and WHO ICD- 10 revision*

Challenges

- 1- Not enough communication with IFSW members. How we can better represent our members and spread the information about our achievement?
- 2 -Lack of financial resources: representatives could not travel for attending specific meetings
- 3- Unpaid work: the volunteer Representative have limited time resources. The more time available, the better can social work been promoted to the UN

Organisation of the IFSW Representation in Geneva

Here are the names and the priority activity of the representatives.

Name and e-mail	Status and year of appointment	Position, function membership	Priority areas of activity
Klaus Kühne klaus.kuehne@sunrise.ch	Representative since 2011 (Main Representative 2011-2017)	Member of the core group of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors	Human Rights esp. Economic, social and cultural rights, Social Protection, poverty reduction
Tobias Roosen geray.roosen@bluewin.ch	Representative since 2006		UNHCR, refugees and migration
Pascal Rudin pascal.rudin@ifsw.org	Representative since 2013	Steering group for the international Training Tool (Children without parental care)	Children's rights
Priska Fleischlin priska.fleischlin@ifsw.org	Main Representative since 2017 (Representative since 2014)	Secretary of the NGO Committee on Ageing	SDGs, Older People, transnational corporations and Human Rights
One place vacant			
Sabine Bährer sabine.baehrer@datacomm.ch	IFSW representative at WHO before 2010	Member of the advisory group for ICD11 Chapter 7 Mental and behavioural disorder	Mental Health

In the time spanning 2016-2018 changes happened among the representatives:

- In 2017 Klaus stepped down from his position as the Main representative in the IFSW Delegation at the UN in Geneva. Priska Fleischlin was appointed to succeed him in the position. Thanks to an ongoing close cooperation and intensive exchange between Klaus and Priska a smooth transition was guaranteed without loss of experience or knowledge.
- Furthermore, after a period of exploring the UN, Doris Angst decided in 2017 to end her role as representative as she felt that representing social work without being a social worker was too difficult.
Since then, one place is vacant, and it is a strong wish of Klaus Kühne and me, to find a person living closer to the UN who can support the IFSW Team.
- Finally, IASSW is represented in Geneva by Anna Lavanchy and Laura Niccolin. Both are working at the University of Applied Science in Geneva where they are our colleagues for organizing the WSWD.

Meeting of the IFSW Team

In this period, the team has met twice: In November 2016 with Rory Truell at the office of Avenirsocial, Bern where ongoing business have been discussed. The next meeting took place in October 2017 in Olten, without Rory. Beside exchanging about ongoing discussions and work the representatives are involved with, some topics shall be forwarded to the general meeting:

- The policy papers are fundamental for the IFSW Representatives. Some of them are outdated and should be renewed.
- It would also be good to have a policy paper / shared vision on the Role of Representing IFSW to the UN that also clarifies, who of IFSW has to be contacted for submitting a statement.
- So far, not many written statements have been submitted for IFSW Geneva Team. The representatives are interested in learning more about it. Possibilities have also been discussed to better understand the tools we can use and how to the best possible including IFSW member organization. Short time frames for submitting the statements are a critical issue. No final solution has been found, further discussions have to be discussed.

We look much forward to the new website and hope we can increase the collaboration among IFSW representatives to the other UN Headquarters

World Social Work Day at the UN

Two successful World Social Work Days could be held at the UN Headquarters and in collaboration with UNRISD (United Nations Research Institut for Social Development,). The concept notes for WSWD 2017 respectively 2018 said:

Objectives of WSWD at the UN are:

- - To strengthen existing contacts and to establish new ones; to expand cooperation and partnership with UN organizations and with allied international NGOs.
- To spread knowledge about social work, its values, principles and methods in practice and theory among UN organizations and allied international NGOs.
- To highlight social work actions, policies and achievements in the pursuit of common goals.
- To disseminate knowledge about UN activities, goals, programmes and campaigns among social workers and social work organizations and schools.

World Social Work Day 2017

WSWD 2017 on the topic of sustainable social work was conceived and organised jointly by IFSW, The School of Social Work in Geneva and UNRISD, the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). IFSW was especially in charge for a round table with representatives from several UN-Organisations. UN-Officers from UNRISD, ILO, OHRHR, UNHCR, ILO and UNAIDS gave their view on the role social work to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Social Work is valued and social workers around the world are called to cooperate with UN-Organisations to promote the attainment of common goals. A collection of quotes from this round table can be viewed on the IFSW-homepage. ¹

World Social Work Day 2018

Theme: Social Work and Youth -Towards Inclusive Sustainable Development. At the 2018 edition held at the United Nations Office at Geneva, participants from the policy, practice, academic and advocacy communities explored the role of social work education and practice in harnessing the potential of youth for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The two-day event was co-organized with IASSSW /University of Applied Science Geneva and Fribourg and UNRISD². While the first day focused on theoretical themes with speeches from Social workers and lectures, the second day included workshops and discussions with the audience. More than 140 people attended WSWD, while half of them were students.

Fields of activities of the Representatives

Klaus Kühne

ILO Recommendation 202 for the implementation of national Social Protection Floors

Social Protection Floors as proposed by the ILO Recommendation 202 in 2012 are strong, feasible and affordable instrument to fight poverty, for social cohesion and for economic and social stability. Meanwhile Social Protection Floors have been recognized as an important contribution to the attainment of SDG and are explicitly mentioned in the SDG Goal 1 Overcoming Poverty

Klaus is still representing IFSW in the core Group of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors. The adoption of the IFSW-Policy on “The Role of Social Work in Social Protection Systems” was an important step forward to bring in Social Work in the discussion of the GCSPF and to promote the fundamental idea that any social protection system need social work and is incomplete without the contribution of social workers.

As the secretariat of the Global coalition moved from Geneva to Buenos Aires, Argentina, it became more difficult to participate in the ongoing work on a face to face base. My participation in the annual meetings of the Global Coalition in New Delhi (2016), Buenos Aires (2017) and in Nairobi (2018) was not possible due to the restricted financial means of IFSW. But we could organize the participation of a local IFSW representation in Buenos Aires and in Nairobi.

Every Year in May -June the ILO Conference convenes in Geneva. Klaus succeeded in the application to participate as member of the Swiss delegation. He will try to bring in the position of Social Workers to this international UN-Body and will report his experience to the IFSW General Assembly.

¹ Detailed information available on IFSW Website: <http://ifsw.org/world-social-work-day-2017/>

² Concept Note, Bios and Program are on the website of IFSW: <http://ifsw.org/world-social-work-day-2018/>

Priska Fleischlin

Committee on Ageing: As Secretary of the Committee on Ageing, we have 4 meetings a year, organize side events during the Human Rights Council such as three side events on older refugees as a contribution to the global compact on Migration³. The submitted [written statement with recommendations](#) was presented during the [thematic discussion in November 2017](#).⁴

In July 2017, I attended the 8th **Open Ended Working group on Ageing (OEWG)** in New York. For three days, government officials, the independent expert on the rights of older people experts on academic topics and NGOs followed these themes: Justice and non-discrimination as well as: neglect, abuse and violence. August 2017: I attended WHO "The Global Research, Innovation, and Education in Assistive Technology" (GREAT) Summit, in Geneva. As a result of the participation in New York, the Chair of the NGO CoA and I were invited to this event. Most of the researchers discussed the current situation and possible developmental priorities in this area. Many did not seem to be aware that social workers are part of the support system. In September 2017 the board of our Committee on Ageing participated at UNECE ministerial conference in Lisbon, Portugal. On the third day, Ministers agreed on a new Memorandum of Understanding, confirming their commitment to the implementation of MIPPA for the next 5 years. Afterward, I attended the annual UNECE working meeting in Geneva from 23-24 November 2017 where a new Civil Society Representative was elected.

Main Representative: In this role, I followed the open invitation and participated at the 1. International Conference of Social Work in Iran⁵, in order to better understand global social work. I gave a short presentation about the Representation of ISFW to the UN.

At the same time in December, I was elected to build the function of a UN Commissioner for IFSW that will be discussed at the general meeting in Dublin.

In March 2018 a meeting was organized with the Deputy High commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), Kate Gilmore together with Rory Truell – further steps of collaboration will be discussed in a follow-up meeting.⁶

SDGs: Preparatory meeting of the UNECE in Geneva for the High Level Political Forum in 2017 and 2018: In 2017 I participated in the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), New York and co-organized a half day study event with the IFSW Representatives in New York on the Role of Social Work for fulfilling the SDGs. A report has been uploaded on IFSW Website.⁷

Tobias Roosen

On behalf of Refugees, Internal Displaced and Stateless People

The numbers of Refugees and Internal Displaced People (IDP's) furthermore increased up to 65 million, worldwide. Most are kept in difficult protected situations, one third of them is on a – mortal danger, move.

³ Respecting, Protecting, and Fulfilling the Rights of Older Refugees /Sept.2016. Older Refugees' Human Rights /March 2017. Ensuring the Rights of Older Refugees in the UNHCR Global Compact for Refugees / March 2018

⁴ Report uploaded on IFSW Website: <http://ifsw.org/news/ifsw-joins-in-drafting-recommendations-for-unhcr-on-the-needs-of-older-refugees/>

⁵ <http://ifsw.org/news/letter-of-invitation-and-support-to-attend-social-work-conference-in-iran/>

⁶ Report uploaded on the IFSW Website: <http://ifsw.org/news/ifsw-meets-with-un-office-for-human-rights/>

⁷ Report available on IFSW Website: <http://ifsw.org/news/high-level-political-forum-2017-united-nations-new-york-workshop-to-promote-social-workers-role-for-reaching-the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>

On behalf of the New York Declaration of the UN on a 'Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework', short CRRF, there is a lot of engagement wanted - by UNHCR as well as by the international community of states and should be done until the end 2018. There should come a global compact on migration as well as a global compact on refugees. Therefore it is necessary to put more attendance on a better global governance. It is necessary that CRRF becomes able to close as many of the existing gaps – and to reduce the too many inhuman obstacles and difficulties, as possible. To only have a comprehensive framework, is not enough, it has to change as many situations as possible - to much better ones. There should be a fundamental change from now 'stop and go' to a move on a path which for refugees which is much better to be calculated, less dangerous und more sufficient.

Measures to prevent people to flee, are highly wanted, most of them occurs where states or the economy are failing, or climate change has devastated natural living conditions.

As the World Bank currently is stepping into this major task and will financially better engage in refugee contexts, the Bank created some financing instruments for countries hosting large refugee populations. And, there are ways NGOs can engage with the World Bank on refugee-related issues. And as example for the related difficulties, we see, that the Brussels 'Donors Conference for Syria and the region' has collected some 50% of its estimated goal of 6 Billion US-Dollars, money is highly needed but not that much granted.

On the other side, the numbers of Stateless people are decreasing, if the efforts therefore do not flag, it could be eradicated by 2025.

As Social Workers are involved and be engaged in this very complex issue, there is still a lot of good work to do. And professional Social Work is somewhat different from social engagement or social activities. That is to be communicated...

Pascal Rudin

As a representative of IFSW to the United Nations in Geneva, I am committed to social work practice that is in line with the convention on the rights of the child (CRC). In collaboration with Child Rights Connect, IFSW has contributed to build an online training tool (Massive Open Online Course, MOOC) that is aimed at educating Social Workers and related professionals on the topic of «caring for vulnerable children». In response to the increasing number of «children on the move», a further MOOC is currently being developed. Apart from these projects, IFSW has invited Social Workers from around the world to attend the Geneva International Alternative Care Conference in October 2016, has co-organised side events during the session of the human rights council throughout the report period, and has handed in statements on topics relevant to Social Work. All these interventions aim to make the perspective of Social Work available to relevant stakeholders within and beyond the UN.

Sabine Bährer-Kohler

In May 2016 I was in touch with Klaus Kühne regarding the ongoing process of the WHO/ ICD- 10 revision. In 2016 no face to face meeting of the whole advisory group was scheduled in Geneva (<http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/TagMH/en/>). In June 2016 for example a WPA publication was presented, showing the current status of the revision: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911773/> (retrieved April 26, 2018).

In September 2017, I received an invitation for the next meeting of the Advisory Group in China, namely the Shanghai Meeting of the Field Studies Coordination Group/ International Advisory Group for the Revision of ICD-11 Mental and Behavioural Disorders.

No IFSW budget was available for covering the travel costs to China (September 17). Therefore, I was not able to participate at the meeting. Some information can be found on the website: http://www.shanghaiarchivesofpsychiatry.org/Download/Volume%2029/Issue%206/2171_70.pdf (retrieved April 26, 2018).

For the current status of the classification (26.4.18), please see: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/revision/en/> (retrieved April 26, 2018). The 11th Revision of the international Classification of Disease (ICD 11) is due by 2018.

Further readings:

ATD Fourth World & Franciscans International: (2015) Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty. A handbook for implementing Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/05/2015-09-01-GuidingPrinplsEPHR-HANDBOOK-EN-ATD_FI_Handbook_English_WEB-1.pdf

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