**Eco-wisdom for social workers, leaving no one behind**

**Final report 2021-2025**

In 2021 IFSW Europe started the eco-social project, funded by IFSW Global. The main aim was to raise awareness among the associations of the importance of developing eco-wisdom for social workers. There were no hard targets to be measured, and activities developed rather organically. Of course the project started in covid-19 times, so the first two years all activities were on-line.

Colleagues from different countries (e.g. Norway, Ireland, Portugal and the Netherlands) helped us to think things over at the start, and from there a range of webinars has been developed, to start with the on line conference that was supposed to be held in Zagreb.

After we had on-line meetings with a smaller network group, we see progress, esp. in the field of the so called just transition, common gardening and other community work initiatives. Research shows how heath stress and natural disasters caused by climate change has a huge impact on citizens of all ages, and even more on children and young people. At the other hand we see that the awareness among social workers is still to be enhanced. This is echoed by research among social workers in the United Kingdom and in The Netherlands, and among social work students in Poland. In the meantime, experiences are shared, like the success of common gardening with the support of community work, the social work support for the struggle of Sami about their land, and lots of energy-shortage and fair transition projects all over Europe. Some national associations are developing policies on eco-social work, like publishments in Norway and Sweden, the BASW statement and 2024 conference, the establishing of a network in Denmark, a project with an important paper about cooperation with research and education in Spain, a special edition of the SW magazine in Austria, and a practical guide in Portugal, and a magazine on eco-social work in The Netherlands.

The extent to which a national association has the issue on the agenda depends partly on the size of the organization (that narrows down the possibilities) and also on other subjects that need to be taken care of. I think that in some cases the importance might still be underestimated, looked upon as another task rather than as vital for the profession.

On the DM October 2022 in Berlin, May 2023 in Prague and October 2024 in Lisbon we worked together to exchange ideas and to get more focus. We had an excellent key-note by Dr Richard de Brabander at the Prague conference, a well visited session with 5 interesting presentations, and a workshop on eco-social wisdom.

The WSWD 2024 was dedicated to eco-social thinking / buen vivir, most countries devoted each in their own way WSWD to this theme. We had a very successful 2-day seminar in Rotterdam ‘on the way to Oslo 2025’ in June 2024, and a presentation and workshop at the BASW conference in Edinburgh in the same month. The activities of IFSW Europe have been reported in the United Nations network Harmony with Nature annual report September 2024. In September 2024 I had a workshop on ecological justice on a Dutch-Flemish conference in Rotterdam. In June 2025 IFSW Europe was represented at the EASSW conference in Salzburg with a workshop on ecological justice.

This is just a glimpse of what have been done and of what is going on.

**Overview of activities**

* Webinars in 2021 and 2022.
* Presentations and workshops on conferences in Zagreb (2021 online), IFSW-E Prague (2023), BASW conference (2024), Belgian-Dutch SW conference Rotterdam (2024), EASSW Salzburg (2025)
* Participation at Brussels EU conference European Employment & Social Rights Forum (Brussels, November 2023)
* Presentations and discussion on the IFSW-E DM in Berlin, Prague and Lisbon.
* Two-day eco-social conference in Rotterdam (2024) in cooperation with Inholland university
* Preparation in cooperation with Dr Richard de Brabander, with representatives from Belgium, Poland and Sweden, of a symposium to be held in Oslo 2025
* Preparation of a workshop to be held in Oslo 2025

**Finance:**

The budget was held by our treasurer and has been used mainly for travel expenses and for the 2-day conference in Rotterdam 2024. The budget will be exhausted after the Oslo conference.

**Concluding:**

* The interest in eco-social work is growing, the awareness of the urgency is there. There is a growing amount of good practices all over Europe. What remains is, that social workers who are not involved in community work see little possibilities to include an ecosocial orientation in their daily work.
* Natural disasters in Europe, esp. draught, fires and floodings, ask for more preparedness as social workers. This includes concerns about healthy food and drinkable water.
* There is a growing network, this is mainly informal.

**Personal commitment:**

It has been an honor and a pleasure to lead this project. I learned so much, and met so many enthusiastic and committed people. I thank IFSW Europe for trusting me with this. Herewith I end my activities for the project in a formal capacity.

**To be discussed:**

* Does IFSW Europe want to continue to focus on eco-social work?
* Will there be a continuation / re-start of the project with a new lead and new goals?
* How could IFSW Europe keep the (mainly informal) network involved?
* Does IFSW Europe want to get committed with a (EU funded) research project, to be led by Dr Richard de Brabander (more information in October next)?

Rotterdam, August 2025, Josien Hofs

***Reframing the human condition***

*As Meredith Powers and others state in the introduction of SDG volume 3, we must stop seeing ourselves as the top of the pyramid. We have to learn to respect all living creatures on mother earth, the seen and the unseen. We cannot afford to maintain the obviousness of (economic) growth, as it is becoming a threat to all life. There are no easy solutions, our ways of living have to change if we want to live in an eco-social world where no one is left behind.*