



**International Federation of Social Workers**  
**Internationale des Travailleurs Sociaux**  
**Federación Internacional de Trabajadores sociales**

**Interim Education Commission**  
**Report**  
**July 2020**

## **MEMBERS**

- Global: Vasilios Ioakimidis
- Africa: Lawrence Mukuka and Zena Mnasi
- Asia-Pacific: Mariko Kimura
- Europe: Nicolai Paulsen
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Marinilda Rivera Díaz
- North America: Joan Davis-Whelan and Gary Bailey

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **1. The Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training.**

Over the last 12 months, the Interim Education Commission co-ordinated the process of updating the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training.

This was a complex project that resulted in a strategic and wide-ranging approach to building global consistency across social work education. The jointly agreed standards set out a minimum baseline for educational quality which was deemed by the IFSW executive as a critical strategic development for the social work profession.

The new standards include a wide range of additions and changes to the 2004 document. We believe that the new set of standards retain a balance between the diversity required in a global organisation and also a categorical emphasis on human rights and social justice. Therefore, the new document is more politically assertive in a number of crucial areas such as racial and gender equity, social justice, human rights, de-colonisation.

Our Commission worked very closely with IASSW throughout this process. The 'consultation and drafting' stage of the Global Standards closed in March 2020. In total the two organisations (IFSW and IASSW) received and considered more than 1000 comments from colleagues in all 5 regions and prepared 9 drafts. All members of the Joint IFSW-IASSW dedicated to the project an enormous amount of energy and time.



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In August 2019 in a joint meeting attended by Silvana Martinez, Rory Truell, Vasilios Ioakimidis, Dixon Sookraj, Ana-Maria Campanini and Barbara Shank IFSW and IASSW agreed on the milestones of the second part of the updating process and confirmed the end-date. The milestones followed were as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Agree on a structure for the Standards Document	Sep 15.
Consider and Update Context and DOMAIN 1: Standards regarding the “School’s” core purpose or mission statements DOMAIN 2: Standards regarding programme objectives and outcomes	Sep 30
2. Consider and Update Domains 3-4 DOMAIN 3: Standards with regard to programme curricula and field education DOMAIN 4: Standards with regard to core curricula	Oct 21
3. Consider and Update Domains 5-6 DOMAIN 5: Standards with regard to professional staff DOMAIN 6: Standards with regard to social work students	Nov 15
4. Consider and Update Domains DOMAIN 7: Standards with regard to structure, administration. Governance and resources DOMAIN 8: Standards with regard to cultural and ethnic diversity	Dec 1
5. Consider and Update DOMAIN 9: Standards with regard to the values and ethical codes of the profession	Dec 20
6. Develop a draft document	Jan 10
7. Consolidate views from both organizations (IASSW and IFSW)	Jan 30



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8. Seek feedback from stakeholders – Regional VP, IASSW Board, and others, etc.	Feb 28
9. Finalize document & submit to IASSW Board	May 30
10. Present proposal to IFSW and IASSW General Meetings	June/ July

Throughout the process, the regions were fully involved through: a) the regional presidents and vice presidents and b) regional representatives in the commission.

In July 2019- Regional presidents and vice presidents received a report on the progress of updating the standards and were also encouraged to consult with their regions and share feedback on proposed changes with the commission. All regions responded positively and shared feedback on initial report.

In October 2019, Regional presidents and vice presidents received the first draft. Regional presidents and representatives were encouraged to consult with their members and share feedback on the draft.

In December 2019. Regional vice presidents received a revised draft. This had incorporated feedback received by members in the previous round. Regional presidents and representatives were encouraged to consult with their members and share feedback on the draft.

In January 2020, Vasilios Ioakimidis and Dixon Sookraj met in Canada in order to discuss feedback from their respective membership and try to synthesize the documents and agree on a joint draft.

In February 2020 Regional presidents, vice presidents and regional representatives to the commission received the joint IFSW and IASSW draft.

In March 2020, IASSW provides some additional minor feedback (mostly cosmetic and stylistic).

In March 2020, the final draft is submitted to the IFSW Executive.

In addition to the aforementioned process, some regions facilitated events that were relevant to the broader discussion about Global Standards. Ideas from these events were also fed back to the Commission at an ad hoc basis in order to consider them during the process of updating the Global Standards. Examples of additional material considered include statements from Conference of the African Region, feedback from the conference in Greece, Europe (see below), a



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statement on Gender Violence issued by the Dutch Association and subsequent communications on this issue.

The main objectives of the updated Global Standards are to:

- Ensure consistency in the provision of social work education while appreciating and valuing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Ensure that Social Work education adheres to the values and policies of the profession as articulated by the IFSW and IASSW.
- Support and safeguard staff, students and service users involved in the education process.
- Ensure that the next generation of social workers have access to excellent quality learning, opportunities that also incorporate social work knowledge deriving from research, experience, policy and practice.
- Nurture a spirit of collaboration and knowledge transfer between different social work schools and between social work education, practice and research.
- Support social work schools to become thriving, well-resourced, inclusive and participatory teaching and learning environments.

The next two stages of the process involve: a) approval through the IFSW and IASSW respective General Meetings, and b) supporting regions towards the gradual implementation of the new standards.

The Education Commission members wish to express our thanks to the IFSW executive for the step by step support and validation of the various drafts that have been circulated.

## **2. Other Activities and Public Interventions**

In addition to the updating the Global Standards, our Commission also engaged, facilitate or supported a number of other activities related to educational matters. This included:

- Facilitation of the IFSW- SWAN international Covid19 webinar series

In March, April and May 2020 our Commission supported and facilitate a series of (very successful) webinars organised by the Social Work Action Network (International) and the International Federation of Social Workers. The webinars were in response to the Covid19



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pandemic and asked the question: What can, and should, social work and social workers do in the face of the Covid19 crisis. The webinars drew speakers from across the globe. Each event was viewed by thousands of interested social work academics, practitioners and students. [At the time of writing this report, the four international webinars had been viewed 38,000 times on Facebook, with several thousand further views on the IFSW and SWAN websites and SWAN YouTube page]. The webinars indicated a clear demand for a social work response to the crisis and supported the now widely used twitter hashtag #swresponds.

**Social work and the Covid 19 Crisis: international perspectives**

Hosted by Social Work Action Network, Critical and Radical Social Work Journal and International Federation of Social Workers, Interim Education Commission

What is the role of social work in the present crisis?  
What barriers are workers facing?  
What Mutual Aid projects are developing?  
Are there innovative social work practices developing across the globe?  
What demands should social workers and social care workers make on governments?  
Speakers from across globe will briefly outline what is happening in their countries before a question and answer session, led by viewers, will shape the rest of the meeting.

Speakers include:  
Gianinna Muñoz (Chile)  
Dawn Belkin Martínez (US)  
Dora Teloni (Greece)  
Filipe Duarte (Portugal)  
Andy Brammer (UK)  
Jessie Yasmin Turban (South Africa)  
Raed Amira (Palestine)

Hosts: Michael Lavalette (Social Work Action Network) / Yasilias Ioakimidis (International Federation of Social Workers, Interim Education Commission)

Live stream via  
Social Work Action Network - SWAN  
<https://www.facebook.com/socialworkfuture/>  
Thursday 2 April 5pm (UK time)

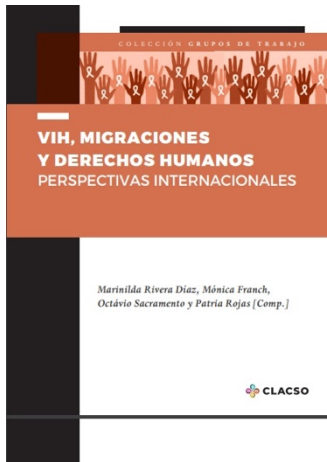
Social Work Action Network IFSW

- Dr. Rivera Díaz collaborated in the writing process of the public statement against detrimental practices and policies toward public education from Jair Bolsonaro, President of Brazil. It was published on June 24, 2019 on IFSW webpage. Also, there were other public statements published against political practices on human rights violation from Latin American and Caribbean countries at regional level.
- Joint IFSW and IASSW press release with regards to “Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training”  
<https://www.ifsw.org/iaasw-ifsw-to-update-global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/>
- International Book Presentation:

Dr. Rivera Díaz coordinated the presentation of the international book “VIH, Migraciones y Derechos Humanos: Perspectivas Internacionales (HIV, Migrations and Human Rights: International Perspectives). The book is compiled by: Dr. Marinilda Rivera- Díaz, Dr. Mónica Franch (Brazil), Dr. Octavio J., Rio Janeiro (Portugal) & Dr. Patria Rojas (EU) and published by the Latin American Council of Social Sciences. Retrieve on: <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/gt/20191202102019/VIH-Migraciones-y-Derechos-Humanos.pdf>. The activity took place at the University of Puerto Rico on December 3, 2019 and counted with the virtual participation of international authors and researchers, the President of IFSW for Latin American and the Caribbean, Mr. Larry Emil Alicea. Invited Speaker: Dr. Mark Padilla, full professor at Florida International University.



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-Virtual Conference in Latin America: COVID-19: Acciones desde el Trabajo Social” (COVID-19: Actions from the Social Work”

Date: April 23, 2020

Panelists:

Dr. Silvana Martínez, IFSW President

Dr. Marinilda Rivera Díaz, IFSW Interim commissioner for LAC

Prof. Violeta Flores, University of Valparaiso, Chile

**FITS ALC Presenta:**

**COVID 19 Acciones Desde el Trabajo Social**

En vivo x Facebook FITS ALC

**1 PM**  
Hora El Salvador

**3 PM**  
Hora Puerto Rico y Chile

**4 PM**  
Hora Argentina

**Jueves 23 Abril**

**Participantes:**

- Dra. Silvana Martínez  
Argentina  
Presidenta Mundial FITS
- Dra. Marinilda Rivera  
Puerto Rico  
Comisionada Regional  
FITS-ALC Educación
- Maestra Violeta Flores  
Chile  
Académica de Trabajo Social  
Universidad de Valparaiso

**Modera:**  
Larry Emil Alica-Rodz.  
Puerto Rico  
Presidente FITS ALC

**Conversaremos:**

Sobre las experiencias del trabajo social a nivel mundial y regional relacionadas al COVID 19. La Presidenta Mundial nos dará la perspectiva mundial. La Dra. Rivera hablará en el marco de la salud como tema de énfasis. La colega chilena Maestra Flores conversará sobre la respuesta desde su área de énfasis en acciones profesionales en contextos de desastre.

Transmisión en vivo [facebook.com/FITSALC](https://facebook.com/FITSALC)

-Conference co-organisation in Greece



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The Department of Social Administration and Political Science of Democritus University of Thrace, Greece the Hellenic Association of Social Workers (SKLE), the Social Work Center of the University of Essex and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), as honorary co-organizer, hosted a conference on: “Social Deprivation, Child Protection and Human Rights”. (Friday 1st November 2019 to Sunday 3rd November 2019).

Vasilios Ioakimidis (Chair of the Interim Education Commission) and Ana Radulescu (President of IFSW-Europe) contributed to the conference.

### **3. IASSW- IFSW collaboration on educational matters**

During this period, our commission worked very closely with our counterparts in IASSW. Our joint work has been characterised by collegiality, cordiality and professionalism.

In February 2019, the presidents of IASSW and IFSW met in London and *inter alia* discussed issues related to the Education Commission. Vasilios Ioakimidis attended the part of the meeting related to educational matters. On the basis of the mutual recognition of the important role both organisations can play in the area of education, we agreed to develop further plans for joint work on the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training.

A follow up teleconference was organised in August 2019. This meeting was attended by Silvana Martinez, Rory Truell, Vasilios Ioakimidis, Dixon Sookraj, Ana-Maria Campanini and Barbara Shank. All participants agreed that there was good progress on the process of updating the Global Standard, agreed on the milestones and confirmed the end-date for the process.

In January 2020, Vasilios Ioakimidis and Dixon Sookraj (IASSW) met up in Windsor, Canada and over two days reflected on the feedback received on previous Global Standards’ drafts. They synthesised this feedback and produced a mutually acceptable final version. The final version has been seen and endorsed by the Executive Committees of the two organisations.

The excellent and proactive work between IFSW and IASSW during the demanding process of updating the Global Standards makes us feel confident that the Education Commission can be a bridge between the two organisation and will help enrich our partnership.

### **Challenges**

The main challenge our Commission faced during the reporting period is related to the partial engagement of some regions with the work of the Commission. As in all IFSW Commissions, our work is based on voluntary contribution to the Organization. However, it has not always been easy for all commission members or regional representatives to engage fully due to other work commitments.



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Another challenge our commission experienced relates to the need for clarification of potential overlap in the activities of different organisational sections or committees. IFSW is an organization that deals with complex topics intersecting multiple levels of social and political activity. Due to the nature of these issues, it is inevitable that there will be some overlap over the remit of different sections or commissions. As commission we propose that protocols and mechanisms around IFSW intervention (such as issuing statements on subjects that intersect the remit of different commissions) are clarified.

## **Future Plans**

The future objectives of the Commission are informed by the “direction of travel” agreed by the Executive Committee in January 2019 and by the views of the Commissioners.

The broad mission of the commission will be to provide a permanent and inclusive platform for practitioners and educators to work together in order to monitor, explore and intervene in discussions about the nature and development of social work education at a global level.

A crucial aspect of this process will be monitoring the rollout of the updated Global Standards. We appreciate that developing a new set of standards is only part of this journey. Rolling out the new standards and incorporating the documents’ principles into curricula will be a far more demanding process. Our commission will be working closely with regional and national associations in order to support the process of implementation.

In addition, the Education Commission will also engage with the following activities:

- Transfer of knowledge and good practice about social work education (global level). This could happen through the facilitation of seminars, conferences or other events in liaison with national associations and regions.
- Help create a repository of freely accessible educational material. During the covid-19 lock down an increased number of really important discussions and seminars were facilitated by members of IFSW and other social work organizations. An important task for our organization will be to co-facilitate the creation of a platform sign posting or hosting free accessible resources.
- Sustain the dialogue and enhance the consultation on educational matters with IASSW and other global/regional organizations
- Represent IFSW in fora discussing issues about social work and Higher Education.
- Monitor the expansion of social work education globally and identify qualitative and quantitative trends
- Intervene in support of social work education when there are political or technocratic pressures to make “concessions” to the quality of education.
- Explore, document and celebrate the history of IFSW’s involvement in education.





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- Lead on the facilitation of events, publications and research projects that advance the inclusive, practice-based, holistic and participatory nature of social work education (including the International Social Work Journal and the Federation's publications).
- Promote genuine participation of people who use services in social work education.
- Support the process of de-colonization of social work curricula.