



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

Global Education Commission Report (Period 2022-2024) MEMBERS

- Global: Vasilios Ioakimidis
- Africa: Antoinette Lombard
- Asia-Pacific: Mariko Kimura and Ai Hua Teoh
- Europe: Nicolai Paulsen
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Marinilda Rivera Díaz
- North America: Gary Bailey

Main Activities and Public Interventions for the period 2022- 2024

1. Implementation Strategy for the updated Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training

In 2021, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) announced and commenced the roll-out of the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training. Activities with regards to the implementation process included

- **Roll-out** of the documentation through a targeted dissemination strategy co-ordinated by IFSW and IASSW regional organisations. All members of both organisations have received the document in early 2021. Relevant and dedicated sections in the websites of IFSW was also developed as per agreed mobilisation strategy. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/>
- **Translation** of the document into a wide range of languages covering the membership of the two organisations. IFSW already took stapes to translate the document into the official languages. In addition, National and Regional Associations were invited to co-ordinate the translation process in their respective constituencies.

2. Global Standards Rollout (Peer Review) Pilots a. Europe

The endorsement of the HAN Bachelor of International Social Work programme



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In February 2022, the [Bachelor of International Social Work offered by HAN University in the Netherlands](#) was endorsed by IFSW in the first-ever pilot peer review.

The peer assessment conducted by the IFSW Education Commission, included the Dutch National Association of Social Workers (BPSW), IFSW-Europe Education Commissioner Nicolai Paulsen as well as HAN social work staff, students and representatives of their international practice networks. Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis, IFSW Global Education Commission was the Chair of the peer review process.

The HAN Bachelor of International Social Work was the first programme globally to be endorsed by IFSW. Other programmes in South Africa are currently going through a peer assessment process. Social work schools in any part of the world wishing to work towards or demonstrate IFSW endorsement of their programme can contact the [IFSW Education Commission](#).



Social Work Education and Research has also been on the agenda in Europe around the following activities - beside the endorsement of the HAN Bachelor of International Social Work programme.

3. An IFSW project addressing the New Social Workers' experiences

In 2020 IFSW Europe established a project to support and involve social workers who are new to the profession. This focused on students in their final year of studies and social workers in the first five years of their employment, and their requests to education and how to onboard practise. The project has identified significant concerns around professional training not preparing students for the social work role; poor quality placements / internships; difficulties with securing employment and a lack of support from employers in the early stages of a social workers' career.



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There were also concerns that the social work role can be very fluid which makes moving into the profession potentially difficult.

The project has also highlighted what new social workers see as helping them through the transition period. Intervention was seen as particularly helpful in supporting new workers to reflect on their practice, their learning and the emotions arising from their work. Peer support; supervision; ongoing training; caseload or workload reduction; formal induction processes; shadowing; mentoring and coaching were also seen as very valuable.

4. Eco Social Work in practice and in education

Climate change will affect us all, more than anything else. Especially people in vulnerable circumstances will suffer the most from the consequences of global warming, while their carbon footprint is the smallest. Human rights are at stake. The importance of the role of social workers is still underestimated in lots of countries. IFSW Europe wants to investigate and develop the term 'eco social work' to establish an IFSW Europe policy on the subject in order to inspire and learn from each other.

One answer is that education focusing on Eco Social Work is needed in the universities, and for professionals as well. From an ecological point of view, you could say that eco-wisdom requires a paradigm shift in ethics / professional ethics as well as a critique of the central values as self-reliance and the individualistic approach of problems in social policy, based on neo-liberal and anthropocentric thinking. The neo-liberal way of thinking is deeply anchored in most social work institutions in Europe. There is a need to make students and professionals aware of the fact that our wealth is accumulated at the expense of the global south, and the destruction of vast areas on the planet, and that the climate crisis is related to issues of poverty, precarity and health.

5. Social Work Students recruitment is challenged across Europe

The IFSW Europe delegates meeting in October 2022 revealed that several countries are experiencing a decrease in the number of applicants for the social work education programmes. The reason seems to be manifold, and is explained by a demographic development (declining youth cohorts and high employment in unskilled jobs), that the education programs are financially starved (the social work lecturers have poor conditions and the number of hours for students are reduced), that the social work profession's reputation is weakened (poor working conditions, poor salary, weakened power of professional action in practice), etc. It is decided to take up this discussion again when meeting in May 2023.

6. Summer School in Turkey and the 'Aegean Declaration on Climate Justice and Social Work

In August, a pioneering collaboration, known as the 'Social Work Summer Camp', was initiated, bringing together social workers from Greece, Turkey, and the UK. This initiative was championed by the Turkish Association of Social Workers, the Hellenic Association of Social Workers, Liverpool



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Hope University, and the University of West Attica, and was spearheaded by the Muğla Branch of the Turkish Association of Social Workers in collaboration with the Muğla Metropolitan Municipality.

Over five days, participants engaged in comprehensive discussions, workshops, insightful lectures, hands-on field trips, and community-building activities, focusing on the role of social work in the escalating climate crisis. This event was not only a meeting of minds but also an opportunity for practical learning and community engagement.

A significant outcome of this initiative was the formulation of the 'Aegean Declaration on Climate Justice and Social Work.' This declaration is a unified call from all participating organizations and individuals, urging global support for social workers and movements advocating for climate justice. The declaration emphasizes the critical role of social workers in addressing climate change and its impacts on communities. The declaration can be accessed here: [The Aegean Declaration](#).





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7. A EU financed research and development project on RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN VOICE IN SOCIAL SERVICES

IFSW Europe is partner in a Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action aiming to three types of social service: Community-based disability and mental health services, Child protection services, and Services for young people at risk of social exclusion.

The project is framed around the concept of ‘responsiveness’ within social services as a new way of thinking about democracy and co-creation in the context of citizen-government interaction. This concept focuses on changes and concrete actions within social services prompted by learning from citizen perspectives and voices. The project will start March 2023, and more news will follow in 2023.

8. Intensive Seminar on Social Work and Political Conflict (Belfast, Ireland)

Our Commission, through our Chair Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis, participated in the intensive seminar on the interplay between social work and political conflict in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia Herzegovina. This seminar was designed to explore emergent themes from the literature 'International Perspectives on Social Work and Political Conflict,' edited by Prof Joe Duffy, Prof Jim Campbell, and Prof Carol Tosone and published by Routledge.

The literature highlights the impact of political conflict on victims and survivors, social work practice, and social work education. This seminar included contributions from social work academics from each of the three case studies. Additionally, presentations by professionals and NGOs working with victims and survivors in Northern Ireland were integral to this seminar, providing real-world insights and applications of the discussed themes.

These initiatives represent significant strides in the field of social work, linking academic discourse with practical application, and emphasizing the critical role of social workers in addressing both environmental and political challenges. The outcomes of these initiatives are expected to have a lasting impact on the global social work community and the populations they serve.



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9. International Conference

Participation to the Social Work and Social Policy in Times of Global Crises

19 - 22 September 2023, Ohrid On the occasion of 65th Anniversary of the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy. Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis was invited to deliver the key note presentation focusing on challenges for social work education and practice.



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B. Africa

10. Curriculum alignment with Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training

The Task Force developed a five-point scale (1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree) to explore the curriculum alignment with the global standards. Four universities volunteered to do the alignment (Zimbabwe, Uganda and two universities from South Africa; one urban- and one rural-based). Universities had to score each standard and provide comments to explain the scores. Submissions were due in August 2021.

The findings were presented at an international online conference (1-3 September 2021), hosted by the Association for South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) in collaboration with various stakeholders, including the national Department of Social Development.

IFSW and IASSW shared a two-hour workshop on the Global Standards which was scheduled for Wednesday, 1 September 2021. The programme entailed a brief overview of the Global Standards; an introduction of the work of the IFSW Africa Region on the Global Standards, and an introduction of the curriculum alignment instrument.



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Representatives of the respective universities shared their experiences on the analysis in a panel discussion.

- University of Venda (South Africa): [Lobelo Mogorosi](#)
- University of Pretoria (South Africa): [Ntembie Bila](#)
- Makerere University (Uganda): [Hadijah Mwenyango](#)
- Midland States University (Zimbabwe): [Itai Mafa](#)

In brief, they were all in agreement that it was a valuable exercise to learn how their curriculums are aligned with the Global Standards and to clearly see where the gaps were. It also gave them the opportunity to explore their universities' collaboration with practitioners which emphasised the co-responsibility of social work educators and practitioners for implementing the Global Standards.

Three respondents commented on the panel's discussions which further enriched the debate. The workshop ended with a reflection on how social work practitioners and educators should collaborate in rolling out the Global Standards.

We have consolidated the four universities' analysis into one document; indicating both the scoring and comments of the respective universities on each global standard.

The Task group had two online workshop sessions in 2022 (4 March and 12 April) to do the in-depth analysis of the consolidated alignment documents, identifying the trends across the of the four pilot universities. The next step was to individually and collectively look at (1) similarities between universities on areas of alignment with the Global Standards, and (2) the challenges that featured with alignment and why that might have been the case. We met on 18 October for an update on the progress made which has to be completed by February 2023. We will have an online meeting to consolidate the findings and then schedule a few online webinars in the region to present the findings. At the planned regional webinars in 2023, we will (1) create further awareness on the Global Standards, (2) encourage universities to use the 5-point scale to voluntary benchmark their social work curricula with the Global Standards, and (3) invite them to submit their findings to the Task group if they so which so that we can keep track of progress in rolling out the Global Standards and further analyse the region's standing on the Global Standards.

Based on the information gathered from the pilot's analysis, we conclude that the 5-point scale is a valuable tool to benchmark the social work curriculum's alignment with the Global Standards and to identify possible gaps for improvement.

The IASSW reached out to us to use the 5-point scale in developing modules on the respective standard categories which will be available for enrollment online and to be completed on own time for continuous professional development (CPD) purposes. The aim of developing modules on the standards is to develop



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capacity in mastering and implementing the Global Standards. Members of the Africa Task group are involved in developing these modules and hence social work educators (ASSWA) and practitioners (IFSW) remain with their commitment to collectively promote the Global Standards in the region.

11. IFSW Africa Region Education Commission on Global Standards for Social Work and Education

With regard to our ongoing project of rolling out the Global Standards to schools of social work in the region, we have made less progress than intended. We have completed the analysis of the four university pilot project on the alignment of the social work curriculums with the Global Standards and next, we have to consolidate the analysis in terms of similarities and challenges among the participating universities. We have shared the self-developed 5-point scale for the alignment exercise widely with different regions across the globe to use and adapt as needed.

The Task Group had one online meeting on 6 June 2023. We intended to have webinars in the region to share the findings and in addition, to invite social work schools in the region to voluntarily assess the alignment of the social work curriculum with the Global Standards. The webinars have not yet realised, but remain in the planning.

In other ways it has been a very busy year as members have been engaged in different events as representatives of the Africa Education Task Group to further the priorities of the Global Standards in social work education and practice; in the Africa region but also globally.

We've had three engagements with the global standards in the region, represented by Prof Janestic Twikirize:

- In April 2023, she discussed the global standards in a Webinar hosted by the Association of Social Work Educators in Kenya (ASWEK), as a framework to inform the development of minimum standards for their social work programmes in Kenya.
- In July 2023, she and the IASSW President, Prof Anna Maria Campanini presented the Global Standards in a workshop organised by the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) in Entebbe, Uganda. The IUCEA is the responsible body mandated with quality assurance mechanisms for higher education in the East African community. The IASSW has set up a Task Force to develop an e-learning programme on the GSSWET. The planning for this has commenced. Various academics are included in the modules and envisage to have this in place during 2024. The Global Standards informed the process of developing benchmarks for the Bachelor of Social Work in the East African Community.
- In December, 2023, Prof Janestic Twikirize, facilitated the discussion of the Global standards with social work faculty at the University of Juba, South Sudan, at the invitation of UNICEF, as part of their efforts to strengthen social work education in the country. The standards are expected to inform the review and revision of the social work curriculum at the University of Juba.



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12. Engagement with the Chinese Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) included two events, represented by Prof Antoinette Lombard:

- A conference paper was video recorded on the topic, Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training: A useful benchmarking framework for MSW Programme. From a South African and African experience. It was submitted to the host on 3 May 2023 in time to be translated for the conference.
- IASSW and the Chinese Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) jointly embarked on a project on Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training. I prepared a 90 minutes recorded video lecture for the implementation of the Global Standard, The characteristics of a good school of social work. I submitted it on 31 July 2023 to CASWE for translation from English to Chinese. Other standards have been recorded by other IASSW members for the CASWE project. Another Task Group member, Dr Varosh Nadesan presented a similar 90 minute video recorded lecture on the standard, Teaching social work practice in the curriculum. These recordings will be made available on the websites of IASSW and CASWE.

13. In the European region, The main regional activities – reflecting an ongoing roll-out of the Global Standards – have in 2023 been linked to

- 1) Participation in the EU financed Horizon Europe research and development project on RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN VOICE IN SOCIAL SERVICES, where IFSW Europe is one of several partners. The project is framed around the concept of ‘responsiveness’ within social services as a new way of thinking about democracy and co-creation in the context of citizen-government interaction.
- 2) A preparatory talk about ECO SOCIAL WORK IN PRACTICE AND IN EDUCATION – and how climate change will affect us all, especially people in vulnerable circumstances. One answer is that education focusing on Eco Social Work is needed in the universities, and for professionals as well. From an ecological point of view, you could say that eco-wisdom requires a paradigm shift in ethics / professional ethics as well as a critique of the central values as self-reliance and the individualistic approach of problems in social policy and practice.
- 3) A preparatory talk about THE RECRUITMENT OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS – and how several Europe countries experience a decrease in the number of applicants for the social work education programmes. The reason seems to be manifold, and is explained by a demographic development (declining youth cohorts and high employment in unskilled jobs), that the education programs are financially starved (the social work lecturers have poor conditions and the number of hours for students are reduced), that the social work profession's reputation is weakened (poor working conditions, poor salary, weakened power of professional action in practice), etc.



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14. Asia- Pacific

Since the publication of the Global Standards Document, the IFAP region, like other regions, has been searching for specific methods of promoting how to reflect the several issues contained in this document in the training of social workers.

Based on the idea that this matter should be advanced jointly with an educational organization, APASWE, Asia Pacific Association of Social Work Educators, a joint workshop was held in February, 2022. Attached is the poster. Representatives of IFAP and APASWE made presentations, respectively, and the content was to disseminate information on the state of education in their respective countries.

Besides these attempts, other countries in the region, such as Iran in collaboration of Association of Social Workers and Japan, in collaboration with the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Work, also held symposiums on global standards to raise awareness of the document among domestic professionals and educators.

Looking at the movements in Europe, the direction of global standards indicates a broader framework that goes beyond the framework of educational curricula and practical training so far, and attempts to make use of these in social work practice sites are required. In other words, it includes the content of fostering social workers for young social workers who have left educational institutions.

In the future, we would like to actively communicate the contents of the global standards to social workers professional bodies, who are working in the field, and to make them understand the meaning of this document for people working in the field and users of social work. More specifically, it is required to link with the efforts of professional organizations themselves. Professional organizations are urged to disseminate and raise awareness of this document.

15. Other Activities and Public Interventions

-IFSW in cooperation with APASWE, organised a workshop on social work education (see poster below). The event was scheduled for February 19, 2022 and having Vasilios Ioakimidis will deliver a presentation on current updates and future directions.



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-Vasilios Ioakimidis presented the Implementation Plan in an event organized by the Iranian Association

Asia-Pacific Joint Regional Workshop

Examining the Updated *Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training*

Time & Date: **February 19th (Sat) 2022, 7:00-9:50 am (UTC)**

Venue: **Online (Zoom)** Participation Fee : **Free**

The *Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training* were updated in 2020. However, the new document's content is yet to fully reach the professional social work community in the Asia Pacific Region, and we face several challenges as we engage in educational reform.

We organize this joint workshop with regional speakers, to study the new *Global Standards* and discuss challenges and opportunities. Also, to provide a global perspective, we welcome IFSW Education Commissioner Dr. Vasilios Ioakimidis who co-chaired the revision of the document. Additionally, to learn from other regions, we invite a European group of social work students who have already utilized the updated *Global Standards* in their studies and practice.

Moderator: Dr. Mariko Kimura (IFSW-AP Regional Education Commissioner)

>PROGRAM

- > Opening remarks by Ms. Rose Henderson, IFSW-AP Regional President
- > Keynote speech by Dr. Vasilios Ioakimidis, IFSW Education Commissioner
- > *The Updated Global Standards: the Global Revision Process and Expectations towards Schools*
- > National reports from the Region
 - Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the Updated Global Standards on the National Level*
 - Australia: Dr. David Rose, APASWE President
 - Iran: Dr. Hassan Mousavi Chelak, IFSW-AP Regional Ethics Commissioner
 - Malaysia: Mr. Teoh Ai Hua, IFSW-AP Honorary Secretary
 - Philippines: Dr. Jowima Reyes, APASWE Board Member
- > Presentation by European Student Group
- > Q & A and Discussion
- > Concluding comments by the moderator
- > Closing remarks by Dr. David Rose, APASWE President

Host: International Federation of Social Workers Asia Pacific Region (IFSW-AP) <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/asia-pacific/>
Asian and Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE) <http://www.apaswe.com/>

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- Antoinette Lombard and Mariko Kimura took part in a workshop inviting social work academics, students and practitioners across Europe to explore the significance of International Social Work and how it can be integrated in the social work education, training and practice. The Workshop was facilitated by the [European Association of Schools of Social Work \(EASSW\)](#) (24th May, 2022)

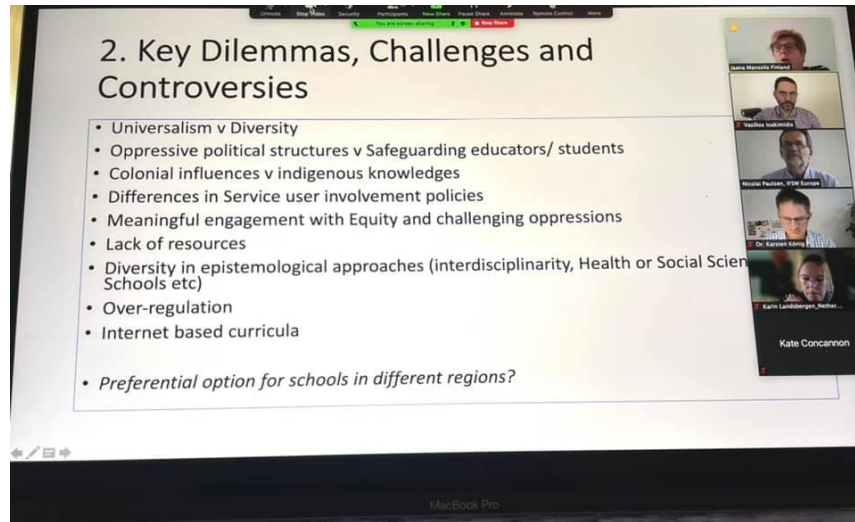
- GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK 2022 (4th to 8th April 2022)

The *International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)* in the spirit of co-building a new eco-social world, joined the *World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA)* and global community in celebrating the Global public health. The two partners co-organised an event "Health and Social Wellbeing in a Conflict Environment" some of the presenters of the event included:

Bettina Borisch. Executive Director WFPHA; Ricciardi Walter. Committee member, European Advisory Committee on Health Research (EACHR); Ana Radulescu. IFSW European Regional President; **Marinilda Rivera Díaz. IFSW Regional Representative for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the IFSW Education Commission** and Malabika Sarker. Professor and Acting Dean at the James P. Grant School of Public Health at BRAC University, Bangladesh among others.



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- The Global Education Commission with the support of academics from 8 Universities facilitated the first ever Continuous Professional Development course on the timely topic of “Educating for Peace- Social Work in the Context of Conflict”. The course consisted of 6 weekly lessons attended by well over 300 participants each week.

Universities that supported the design and delivery of the course included:



The full programme of the CPD course can be found below.

16. Future Plans

The Global Education Commission will continue to prioritise the following objectives and future plans



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- Transfer of knowledge and good practice about social work education (global level). This could happen through the facilitation of CPD courses, seminars and conferences
- Help create a repository of freely accessible educational material.
- Sustain the dialogue and enhance the consultation on educational matters with IASSW and other global/regional organisations
- 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.

- 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-colonisation of social work curricula.

More specifically:

As in the previous year, our Commission’s main objective for 2024 is to support the implementation of the Federation’s vision and key policies for the improvement of Social Work Education globally. The Education Commission has already achieved to become 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.

Therefore, the two main pillars of our work for 2024 will be:

- Continuation of the Global Standards roll-out. Our commission is committed to continue working closely with regional and national associations, as well as universities, in order to support the implementation of Global Standards and eventual update of social work curricula. We aim at ensuring the Standards are translated into key languages across all continents.
- Completion of the “Institutional Endorsement” process. This process will ensure that the Global Standards become a live and dynamic document that impacts positively on the lives of educators, students and users of services.



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Furthermore, our commission will be proactive in promoting knowledge and good practice about social work education at global level. This will include the facilitation of seminars, conferences or other events in liaison with national associations and regions.

Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis

On behalf of the

Global Education Commission