



Report of IFSW Ethics Commission 2022-2024

Commissioners:

Jane Shears	Global Commissioner
Stephano Akuzike Joseph	African Region
Hassan Mousavi Chelak	Asia Pacific
Kim Strom	Canada and North America
Gabriele Stark-Angermeier	Europe
Latin America	Vacant

Global Commissioner report.

The activities identified in the 2022 report were:

- Reviewing applications from prospective new members to IFSW
- Research article based on global webinars
- Developing abstracts / papers for submission for conferences in 2023 and 2024
- Developing Continuing Professional Development materials incorporating ethics and values

- Developing Commission workplan for 2023/4
- Developing a Terms of Reference for the Ethics Commission

Activities and Achievements.

- **Reviewing applications** from prospective new members to IFSW.

At the end of 2022, applications were received from **The Guinean Bissau Association of Social Workers, the National Alliance of Professional Social Workers of Kazakhstan** and the **National Association of Social Workers Ukraine (NASWU)**. All three applications were successful. Welcome to our new members from the African, Asia Pacific and European IFSW regions. New applications received from Cambodia and Taiwan in 2023.

- **Research:** The global webinars carried out in 2022 were analysed and three overarching themes were identified:
 1. Ethical challenges during the pandemic caused a rethinking of ethics in social work practice in relation to: a) self-care; b) digital working; c) less bureaucracy, more discretion and creativity.
 2. Importance of a holistic approach in relation to: a) people and planet; b) working with communities.
 3. Social work's contribution to social and environmental transformation in relation to: a) social workers as skilled experts in social protection and sustainable development; b) extending the concept of justice (from social to ecological).
 4. Prepare proposal for research into the ethics of the digital working environment on the practice and education of social workers in partnership with IFSW and the Social Work Ethics Research Group.

The full article: Social work beyond the pandemic: Exploring social work values for a new eco-social world, was published in the journal, International Social Work.

Transnational Social Work Project – research into evaluating the experiences of social workers who have trained in one country and practising in another (ongoing).

- **Attendance / papers at conferences.**

In Africa, the regional commissioner attended the conference with Social Workers from Botswana and South Africa focusing on the issue of ethics and how it affects the delivery of social work in the present dispensation (the digital era). The presentation dissected how social work ethics can still be relevant and applicable.

The IFSW Asia Pacific conference was held in November 2023 and attended by over 2000 delegates. The Global Commissioner attended on behalf of the Commission and presented a paper at a workshop session with colleagues from Japan and Hong Kong.

A preconference workshop was held at the European Social Work Research Association conference in partnership with the Social Work Ethics Research Group (SWERG). Kim Strom is also a member of SWERG.

The 2023 regional conference (IFSW Europe) took place in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2023. The delegates meeting was held before the conference where reports were given on the work of the global ethics committee to date. The working group on research in the field of professional ethics was also a focal point, and various aspects were presented.

A paper on the workforce issues reported by social workers was presented at the European Conference for Social Work Education in 2023.

Co-organiser of the 3rd International Symposium on Social Work in a Complex Society: Promoting Wellbeing Beyond Risks and a Call for Change. The symposium was joined by social workers, care professionals and researchers from European and Asian countries, offering great opportunities for knowledge exchange and networking.

- **Continuous Professional Development.**

A paper was presented at the IFSW Asia Pacific Conference on the creation of a bespoke Continuing Professional Development Programme designed to support Overseas Qualified Social Workers into social work positions in the United Kingdom. This online learning package contains specific teaching and learning on ethics, values and human rights.

The African regional representative organized and attended a virtual shared learning seminar on [Humanitarian Response to Disaster and Conflict: Ethical and Professional Principles for Social Workers](#). The event was presided over by Professor Janet Walker from Lincoln University and Support Social Work in Malawi (SSWIM), and with Symon and Shoshon Turner Sweet from Alliance for Children Everywhere. This was organized immediately after the devastating impacts of Tropical Cyclone Freddy (TCF) which affected the Southern Region of Africa and Malawi - one of the countries severely affected. Social workers appreciated their critical role to play in terms of ethics and general social work, as well as Psychological First Aid. The event recognised that following TCF, social workers were overwhelmed and need to develop knowledge and skills to ensure application of social work and ethics in emergency situations.

- **Developing Commission workplan for 2023/4**

With the exception of an ongoing vacancy in the IFSW Latin America and Caribbean, the Commission has a full team.

In the African region, the process of profiling the voices of social workers reflecting on the response and the aftermath of the TCF crisis continues, and work is ongoing about how this can shape our future responses. This will also be developed into a journal article and presented at the IFSW Panama Conference in April 2024.

The work of IFSW Europe was characterised by various projects such as the issue of sustainability in social work and the fight against poverty. Once again this year, the focus was on cooperation with social workers in Ukraine and discussions have focused on displaced persons and the reconstruction of the country after the war.

IFSW Asia Pacific Commissioner is leading on survey research to explore how members are implementing the IFSW statement of ethical principles. A report will be published in 2024.

In 2024, the Commission will contribute to the IFSW Commissions' continuing professional development programme which is currently at the planning stage.

- **Developing a Terms of Reference for the Ethics Commission**

Work has taken place on developing a Terms of Reference for the Ethics Commission in relation to membership, recruitment and retention. Further work will be undertaken in co-production with the IFSW Commissions in 2024.

- **Planned activities for 2024 / 2025**

- Reviewing applications from prospective new members to IFSW
- Carrying out research and presenting findings
- Developing a statement on the impact of digital technologies on the education and practice of social work
- Developing abstracts for submission at and presenting at conferences in 2024
- Contributing to the IFSW Commission Continuing Professional Development programme
- Completing work on the Terms of Reference for the Ethics Commission
- Developing a workplan for 2025