

ifsw news

2/2000

*Imelda Dodds
New IFSW President*

*General Meeting News
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*Celia B. Weisman in Memory
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(Photo: Lisbeth Mattsson)

President's message

I want to begin by saying that it is a privilege to have been elected to serve IFSW and the international social work community as President for the forthcoming two years. Together with the incoming Executive Committee I intend to continue to strengthen the voice of social work internationally through our existing programs and activities. This is also a period when we will consider the best possible models to carry IFSW into the new millennium.

IFSW is now comprised of 76 member organisations representing 475,000 social workers throughout the world. It is an important body with significant roles. I want to pay a special tribute to those members of the Executive of IFSW who retired at the Montreal General Meeting. In particular I wish to express our most sincere thanks to Elis Envall, who retired as President after 6 very distinguished years at the helm of IFSW. Elis provided leadership and vision through a period that saw an increase in IFSW activity on a number of fronts. Dear to his heart was the completion of the work of the Task Force on the Definition of Social Work. It was therefore fitting that the General Meeting adopted the new definition of Social Work. I express our thanks to all who worked on the Task Force, in particular the project officer Isadora Hare. I am sure you will agree that they achieved a great outcome for social work.

Also retiring at the Montreal meeting were a number of members of the Executive who have completed the maximum term available: Ng Shui Lai, Treasurer and former Vice President Asia Pacific; Nigel Hall, Vice President Africa; Jo Allen, Vice President North America; Eilis Walsh, former Vice President Europe and Member at Large; Maria Herczog and Terry Bamford, Members at Large. As a member of the Executive Committee since 1994 I can assure readers that they will be greatly missed. Each has made an invaluable contribution to the work of IFSW and all remain committed to international social work. We thank you all most sincerely.

Montreal also witnessed an enormously successful Conference with 1,904 delegates from 86 countries. I express our thanks to the Organising Committee. They did a marvellous job.

I also want to share some of the views I expressed at the closing session. I was concerned that delegates did not leave Montreal without first remembering that the purpose of the conference was to address, in the context of social work practice & education, the most significant shift in political, economic and social policy – the impact of globalisation.

We were privileged to hear inspirational speakers in Stephen Lewis, Francoise David, Jim Ife & the Presidents of IFSW & IASSW Elis Envall and Lena Dominelli. All of them sketched for us the history, nature and impact of globalisation, often in the most poignant and painful of terms. At the same time they offered a clear sense of hope for positive change.

We benefited from their outstanding analyses of globalisation and very practical illustrations of its impact. I concur with my colleague Lena Dominelli, we occupied a privileged position by being able to attend the conference in the first place. We therefore have an individual and collective responsibility to share the key messages from Montreal.

Elis Envall's words of opening reminded us that 1.3 billion people live in extreme poverty i.e. on less than USD 1 a day. 30 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. This is not acceptable. His call was echoed by Francoise David, social worker and women's activist who charged us with the following;

"Do not allow poverty to be seen as a natural phenomenon. Do not tolerate violence and sexism. Take action to secure the opening of borders based on equality based on north & south and women and men"

I have been frequently asked by social workers to explain the relevance of international social work to their working lives. This is the subject of a long piece of work. However, I select the following words of Professor Jim Ife, who delivered the Eileen Young-husband Lecture, and of Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the UN, who delivered the Opening Address.

Jim Ife:

"The problems of our clients are caused as much by global forces as by national forces, and we cannot understand local problems without reference to global economic, political and cultural circumstances."

Stephen Lewis:

"Globalization is accentuating poverty on every front – while conflicts, pandemics and escalating poverty are happening the world is looking for your voice"

It is tragic that with frequent use some words, or phrases, become passé and seem to lose their effect. If ever the term "think global act local" has meaning it has it in the lessons we take from Montreal.

On behalf of the Executive and Secretariat of IFSW I extend every good wish to our members and Friends. We look forward to working with you in the coming two years.

Sydney, August 2000
Imelda Dodds, President

IFSW Executive Committee 2000-2002

President: *Imelda Dodds*, Australia

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Africa: *Kishore C. Ramgoolam*, Mauritius

Asia and Pacific: *Tan Ngoh Tiong*, Singapore

Europe: *Herbert Paulischin*, Austria

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New Member Associations

Sociedad Cubana de Trabajadores Sociales de la Salud

Asociacion Dominicana de Trabajadores Sociales Profesionales

Association of Social Institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic

Latvian Association of Professional and Care Workers

Union of Municipal Social Workers, Latvia

Association des Assistants Sociaux du Liban

Social Workers' Syndicate in Lebanon

Lesotho Social Workers' Association

Lithuanian Social Workers' Association

Colegio de Asistentes Sociales del Perú

Asociación de Asistentes Sociales del Uruguay

Interested in going to France?

A special issue of "La Revue Française de Service Social" contains information for social workers and students who want to work or study in France. The issue is named "Assistants de Service Social sans Frontière: Petit répertoire pour comprendre l'essentiel du Travail Social", and is on sale for 90 FF from:

Association Nationale des Assistants de Service Social - ANAS, 15, rue de Bruxelles, F-75009 Paris, France, tel (33) 1 45 26 33 79, fax (33) 1 42 80 07 03, e-mail: anas@travail-social.com

Eileen McGowan Kelly Scholarship to Zimbabwe



(Photo: Kristiina Koskiluoma)

IFSW received 27 applications from 15 different countries for the Scholarship in Memory of Eileen McGowan Kelly, the founder of the Office of Peace and International Affairs of the National Association of Social Workers, USA. The Scholarship, which includes travel to and participation in the IFSW General Meeting and World Conference, was awarded to Munyaradzi Raphael Denhere (*photo*), a 27-year old social work student from Zimbabwe. In his speech to the General Meeting he expressed that the scholarship was an honour not only for himself, but for his Association in Zimbabwe and social workers in Africa, and that he wanted to share the experiences achieved in Montreal with his colleagues in Zimbabwe upon his return.

More coverage of the events in Montreal will appear in the next issue of ifsw news.

Books to spare for East Timor?

When The National University of East Timor was burnt down this also included the library. The University is therefore without books for its students and faculty. If you should have some books to spare for this young nation, especially anything related to community development in a broad sense or English dictionaries, please send them to:

Mr. Aurelio Guterres, Planning, Development and External Co-Operation, The National University of East Timor, CNRT Headquarters, Rua Balide, Dili, East Timor

Elis Envall:

A privilege to serve IFSW

The most rewarding part of being President for six years has been to meet individual colleagues, sharing their experiences, learning that social work matters, for the poor, the disadvantaged and marginalised and seeing that there is hope, hope for change and a better life for many. We as social workers have the responsibility and power to change the world order.

The economic, neo-liberal world order

- that leaves 1.3 billion living in extreme poverty;
- that accepts 34 million living with HIV/AIDS;
- that allows 250 million child labourers;

The male world order

- where 20-50% of the women are victims of domestic violence;
- that permits sexual exploitation of women and children;
- that maims 1 million girls and young women annually by female genital mutilation;

The violent world order

- where greed, nationalism and violence combine to reap numerous victims in atrocities beyond belief including massacres, sexualised violence and exploitation of child soldiers;
- which allocates vastly more resources to destruction and war than to development and care;

- that does not address xenophobic and homophobic structures in society.

We as social workers have the responsibility towards these masses as well as to the individuals, families or groups that we serve. And we have the power to address these injustices, these excluding and oppressing structures, these violations of human rights.

We have over the years done important work in the areas of Ethics, Human Rights, children's rights and rights of women and older persons. We can be proud of what we have accomplished although we have not reached all our - at times - very ambitious aims.

Finally, I want to acknowledge members, representatives, office bearers, Friends of IFSW and our staff for all you have done for IFSW. Your commitment to social work and international cooperation is invaluable. It has been an enormous privilege for me to be part of this exiting work and cooperation. I am grateful for having been allowed to serve you, IFSW and the profession in this special way.

Elis Envall, Immediate Past President IFSW

New Definition of Social Work

The General Meeting in Montreal adopted a new definition of social work. In July 1996 the Executive Committee appointed a special Task Force of ten persons with representatives from all regions plus the president of IASSW, to be jointly co-ordinated by Elis Envall and Isadora Hare of USA. Six years of effort, wide dissemination and review and thoughtful debate often over individual concepts and wording have produced this definition.

The definition is based on collected materials from across the globe. These include legislation and regulations governing social work practice, former statements from international organisations, codes of ethics, academic writing in journals and books, unpublished papers delivered at conferences, and documents specially prepared for the Task Force. A Consultation Day was held in Jerusalem in 1998 attended by members from 25 countries.

The definition is not a description of our professional practice as it occurs day to day, with the constraints of the context in which it operates and the demands and influences of other non-professional interests. A global definition cannot reflect every detail of practice, in every country, at any given time. This official IFSW definition of the profession aims to both reflect the state of the art of social work practice and to be a guiding principle for our professional activity, as it is to be understood ideally.

For IFSW it will be used in our contacts with UN and other international agencies and NGOs. Member organisations will hopefully disseminate it in their membership and country furthering the reflection on professional social work and its development.

This definition of the social work profession replaces the IFSW definition adopted 1982.

International Federation of Social Workers

Definition of Social Work

DEFINITION*

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.

COMMENTARY

Social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Its mission is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and change. As such, social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities they serve. Social work is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice.

Values

Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth, and dignity of all people. Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice has focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion. Social work values are embodied in the profession's national and international codes of ethics.

Theory

Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to its context. It

recognises the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people both to be affected by and to alter the multiple influences upon them including biopsychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyse complex situations and to facilitate individual, organisational, social and cultural changes.

Practice

Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilises a variety of skills, techniques, and activities consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments. Social work interventions range from primarily person-focused psychosocial processes to involvement in social policy, planning and development. These include counselling, clinical social work, group work, social pedagogical work, and family treatment and therapy as well as efforts to help people obtain services and resources in the community. Interventions also include agency administration, community organisation and engaging in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development. The holistic focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will vary from country to country and from time to time depending on cultural, historical, and socio-economic conditions.

** This international definition of the social work profession replaces the IFSW definition adopted in 1982. It is understood that social work in the 21st century is dynamic and evolving, and therefore no definition should be regarded as exhaustive.*

Social Work Conferences 2001-2002

Singapore, 31 July - 3 August 2001
IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Conference



Millenium Challenges and Action for Social Work Education and Practice

The Asia Pacific Conference of IFSW and APASWE (Asia and Pacific Association of Social Work Educators) will especially look at Social Work Across Borders, Information Technology and Social Work, Economic Imperatives and Social Work Practice, Socio-Cultural Transformation, Social Work and Peace, and New Partnerships, New Paradigms. Pre-Conference Training Workshops will take place 30-31 July.

Conference Secretariat:

Asia Pacific Social Work Conference 2001, Department of Social Work and Psychology,
National University of Singapore, 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, SINGAPORE 119260
Fax: (65) 778 1213, e-mail: swksec@nus.edu.sg

Vienna, Austria and Bratislava, Slovakia, 27-30 August 2001

IFSW European Seminar - The Danube-Conference

Managing Conflicts in Social Work - Dealing with Contradictions

The European Seminar, hosted by the social worker associations in Austria and Slovakia, takes place on the former border between two political systems. Today it marks the border between the European Common Market and the still excluded countries of Eastern Europe. Throughout its history, social work has been dealing with conflicts, differences and contradictions.

Participation in social and economic life versus social exclusion is still a core issue for social work. The European Seminar will look at these conflicts from the microcosm of the individual case study to the macrocosm of political and economic systems. The subject requires new theoretical viewpoints as well as learning from examples of good practice. Excursions to social agencies in Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Austria are integrated into the seminar.

Conference Secretariat:

Austrian Association of Social Workers, Mariahilferstrasse 81/1/14, A-1060 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Tel: (43) 1 587 4656, fax: (43) 1 587 465610, e-mail: oebds@ins.at website: www.sozialarbeit.at

Harare, Zimbabwe, 28 July - 2 August 2002

IFSW World Conference



Building Effective Strategies in Social Work Practice in a New Era

Hosted by the National Association of Social Workers, Zimbabwe, the IFSW World Conference 2002 will take place in Africa for the first time since 1974. Social work strategies should be designed to suit the realities on the ground, which build on and relate directly to the needs of the people we serve.

At the beginning of a new century we need to reflect on where we have come from and how our profession is able to meet new challenges.

The World Conference will present two pre-conference symposia on HIV/AIDS and Women as well as four key sub-themes: Social Development & Indigenous Social Work Practice; Social Inclusion and Poverty Alleviation; Human Rights, Social Justice and Conflict Resolution; and Health and Clinical Social Work Practice.

Conference Secretariat:

IFSW 2002 Conference Secretariat, Zimbabwe Convention Bureau (Pvt) Ltd., Mr. Satchmo Witness,
PO Box BE 1080, Belvedere, Harare, ZIMBABWE
Tel: (263) 4 702811, fax: (263) 4 724242, e-mail: zcb@harare.iafrica.com

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Celia B. Weisman in Memory

It is with deep appreciation for the significant contributions of our dear friend and colleague, Celia Weisman, that we honor her memory. She had a warm and infectious smile and a deep commitment to the social work profession. She vigorously championed international human rights, and devoted many hours to the perpetuation of world peace and social justice. Celia's ten year tenure at the United Nations in New York as the International Federation of Social Workers' principal representative to that body was one of her major contributions.

The daughter of an orthodox rabbi, Celia was born in London and later accompanied her family to the United States at an early age. After receiving the baccalaureate degree, she began teaching the German language. She earned her master of social work degree from the University of Pittsburgh after learning about anti-semitism and committing herself to its demise. She earned her doctorate in social work from Columbia University at age fifty. She worked passionately and energetically in support of social justice throughout her life. She recently retired from her faculty position at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work where her areas of specialization were gerontology and group work. She lectured nationally and internationally.



Knowledgeable about the social work profession's strong traditions around social development and advocacy in the local, regional, national and international arenas for policy and action, Celia worked quite tirelessly to perpetuate these efforts in meeting our contemporary needs. She very effectively organized the annual Social Work Day at the United Nations, attracting audiences

filled with professional social workers and social work students, eager to undertake our roles in transmitting knowledge about the human condition, in influencing decision-makers, and in contributing to the development of knowledge through research. Celia participated in the Executive Committee meetings of IFSW, reporting regularly on the key issues and recommending policy

positions, both during the meetings and through the IFSW Newsletter. Active also in the New York City Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Celia's contributions to their International Committee were many.

Our loss is great and Celia's memory will be honored by our commitment to advocacy and activism for social justice, human dignity, and social, economic and political development nationally and throughout the world.

National Association of Social Workers, USA

Ruth Mayden, President NASW

Josephine Nieves, Executive Director NASW

Josephine Allen, Past President NASW and Past IFSW Vice President for North America



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