



International Federation of Social Workers

Newsletter 3/99



*IFSW observes
vote in East Timor*

President's Message

Social Work stands strong. As a profession and in its organised forms it is making a difference in many parts of the world. Despite feelings and reports of the contrary I believe we today can be optimistic about the growing influence of a social justice and human rights perspective in society.

In the last six months we have as a profession and a federation arranged two large, successful and influential regional conferences in Europe and Asia/Pacific. We have at these seminars demonstrated that social work matters and can offer solutions based on research and practice experience that successfully addresses major problems in society today.

We have with our presence in East Timor and in dialogue with the leadership and people of this small but brave country demonstrated our commitment and ability to offer our expertise as a profession when and where it is most needed. We have not only taken a stand, but also shown our willingness concretely to take part as a profession in the struggle for human rights and social justice.

Social Work also needs to strengthen its identity, to be able to serve and live up to its aspirations and expectations. Our work in this area I believe will show that our profession is based on theory of human and social systems, committed to and justified by human rights, and promoting empowerment

of people and enhancement of society. A clear and meaningful identity will also enable the federation to be focused on key, social work issues.

In the last year we have been able to demonstrate the capacity of the federation itself to respond to the demands from the membership for transparency, productivity and progress. The development of sub-committees in core areas of work, an activity planning and reporting system is now beginning to bear fruit. The meeting of the Executive Committee in Helsinki in June clearly demonstrated the strength and resoluteness of our International Federation of Social Workers. We need to continue to promote the establishment and maintenance of professional standards and best practices. With our very limited resources, but seemingly unlimited aspirations we need to identify new ways to focus our efforts on key issues pertaining to our Aims.

Our vision is to have effective influence on social work education and practice, and social policy at national, regional and international levels; using social work values to promote social change and social justice, thus being the universally recognised global voice of social work.

Stockholm, October 1999

*Elis Envall
President*

New Titles from NASW Press

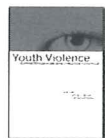


Youth Violence

Jeffrey M. Jensen and Matthew O. Howard, Editors

A timely, eye-opening book on the youth violence that has galvanized the nation, *Youth Violence* pinpoints the etiology of this escalating trend, which is found in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Five types of youth violence are analyzed: child abuse and violence, aggression among girls, school violence, substance abuse and violence, and gang violence.

ISBN: 0-87101-311-8, October 1999 (#3118), 280 pages, \$34.95

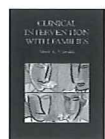


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Preserving and Strengthening Small Towns and Rural Communities

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This book defines the issues and crises of these surprisingly diverse populations and illustrates the myriad of solutions and interventions available to the social work practitioner in the rural context.

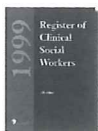
ISBN: 0-87101-310-X, June 1999 (#310X), 410 pages, \$36.95



1999 Register of Clinical Social Workers, 10th Edition

The 1999 Register, published every two years, is a valuable resource for determining insurance reimbursement eligibility, employment qualifications, professional referrals, and consultation. It lists more than 7,000 national and international practitioners who meet NASW's rigorous standards.

ISBN: 0277-0695, June 1999 (#0695), 700 pages, \$60.00



New Directions for Social Work Practice Research

Miriam Potocky-Tripodi and Tony Tripodi, Editors

New Directions helps you put your finger on the pulse of research into social work practice—past, present, and future. Contributors from the United States and the United Kingdom, prominent researchers of social work, offer a variety of critical assessments of practice research, provide a wealth of new data on the current status of research, and clearly lay down their own vision of the agenda for future studies.

ISBN: 0-87101-305-3, June 1999 (#3053), 139 pages, \$28.95



Repackaging the Welfare State

Pranab Chatterjee

Earlier studies of the welfare state, relying on various single social science perspectives, led to disciplinary tunnel vision. *Repackaging the Welfare State* corrects this myopia by offering an interdisciplinary approach to conceptualizing a welfare state that balances a civil society, which provides caregiving to the vulnerable, with wealth-building activities.

ISBN: 0-87101-304-5, March 1999 (#3045), 208 pages, \$32.95



Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare

Robert L. Barker

This is a commemorative booklet that relates the inspiring historical journey that social workers have taken in their efforts to meet the needs of all people. This special edition *Milestones* booklet includes more than 100 new or edited entries and biographies. At a glance, this mini-chronology provides the reader with enlightening facts about the important events that have shaped the social work profession.

ISBN: 0-87101-309-6, March 1999 (#3096), 25 pages, \$14.95



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Action plan and strategic planning

IFSW Executive Meeting in June 1999

The IFSW Executive Committee met in Helsinki, Finland in conjunction with the 1999 IFSW European seminar. The focus of the meeting was the completion of the Action Plan and the Strategic Planning for IFSW.

Action Plan

This document, organised under five headings or areas of operations, is intended to guide our work up to the next General Meeting. The areas covered are:

Policy, covering policy development and review as well as the activities of the Human Rights Commission.

Profession, incorporating the work of the Permanent Committee on Ethics, professional development and maintenance of standards and conferences and seminars.

Organisational activities include all the structural work in different bodies of the IFSW.

Membership reflects the service to members, recruitment and related work, Friends of IFSW etc.

The part on **External Relationships** embodies the work undertaken by our representatives to a variety of relevant international organisations, primarily United Nations agencies as well as our links to our sister organisations IASSW and ICSW.

Strategic Planning for IFSW

The Executive Committee participated in a planning exercise to further develop the strategic direction of IFSW, reviewing the Aims of IFSW and identifying and developing a draft Vision and Mission Statement for IFSW. The Aims of IFSW remain relevant, requiring minor updating.

The structure of IFSW and its means, having served well in the past will not be able to sustain the demands in the future. The meeting identified the need for continued and strong emphasis on social justice and continued influence on social policy at national, regional and global levels. We need to promote the establishment and maintenance of professional standards and best

practices. The administration of IFSW needs to identify new ways to focus our efforts on key issues pertaining to our Aims. This also demands effective, but transparent decision making processes.

Officers' Meeting

The new body, set up by the General Meeting of 1998 to be evaluated by the next General Meeting, gave a report to the full Executive Committee on its first meeting and work so far. The acronym, "ECCO" so far used for this body: the Executive Committee Council of Officers seemed to have a bad ring or the false association. The meeting therefore decided to use in the future the term Officers' Meeting, with no acronym, for this body.

The Task Force on the revision of the **Definition of Social Work** gave a report on its progress. The Executive Committee meeting expressed its view that social work is to be seen as one profession. The Task Force aims to finalise a final draft document by end of January 2000.

Has the world improved since 1995 ?

The implementation of the Copenhagen and Beijing UN conferences to be followed up next year

1995 was the year for two major global United Nations' conferences, the Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

While the Copenhagen Summit aimed at changing the global agenda through a process aiming at eradicating poverty, supporting sustainable development, and fighting unemployment and social exclusion, the Beijing Conference decided to promote equality, development and peace for and with the women of the world.

How have these ambitious agendas been implemented since 1995, and how can further steps be taken to form our battered world to a better place to live?

The President reported that the project to produce a manual on Sexual Exploitation of Children and social work, **Lives at the Crossroads**, had been forced to terminate due to external decisions. The meeting proposed the publication of a limited version on existing material so far collated.

The Relocation of the IFSW secretariat to Bern, Switzerland is reported on page 7 of this Newsletter. The relocation also included the establishment of new part time position at the secretariat of an Information Officer. Lisbeth Mattsson Johannesen will for a period of 12 months, hold the position.

The following executive meetings will be Officers Meeting January 27 – 29, 2000 in Bern and Executive Committee meeting July 22- 24, 2000 in Montréal.

Year 2000 will be a time for a continued dialogue between the many partners involved: Governments, NGO's and the general public.

The UN General Assembly will hold a special session in New York June called "Women 2000: Gender, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century", and another special session in Geneva in June 2000 called "World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World".

The international NGO society is closely following and contributing to the UN preparations for these special sessions.

The East Timor Independence Vote

Report of the IFSW Observers

At the town of Gleno on 30 August, 1999, the people came early to vote. Many had come from the surrounding villages the previous day, to avoid possible harassment by militia groups on the day of the ballot. By 6 am, half an hour before polling was due to open, there were more than 1,000 people patiently waiting in the dawn light. Their faces showed a quiet determination to play a part in this critical day for the future of their nation. The polling station opened, a little late, and the people began the historic vote. It was a slow process; for both the polling staff and the voters it was a new experience, and it was clearly going to be a very long day. Many would be there for hours, but the people of East Timor had waited 24 years for this day and they were not going to be put off by a few extra hours of waiting.

Later in the morning, some armed militia arrived at the Gleno polling station. They fired guns into the air, accused UNAMET (United Nations Mission in East Timor) of bias, threatened the voters and UNAMET staff, and attacked the polling station with stones launched with home-made weapons. A UNAMET staff member from Japan was slightly injured.

The people fled in terror and the polling station was closed, while the Indonesian Police stood by and watched, taking no action.

Later in the day the polling station reopened, the people returned to vote, and by the end of the day 98 percent of the 3,500 registered voters had cast their ballots.

The courage and determination of the people of Gleno was repeated throughout East Timor on the day of the ballot. But the cost was high, and the people of Gleno had to pay dearly for daring to exercise the right to vote. That night and the next day houses of known independence supporters in Gleno and surrounding villages were burned. Militia went on a rampage in a nearby village, forcing people to flee for their lives. The local polling



Voting at the Gleno polling station was a slow process. Many would be there for hours, but the people of East Timor had waited 24 years for this day and they were not going to be put off by a few extra hours of waiting.

officers received death threats, and had to be escorted to the "relative safety" of Dili in our UN convoy, which was itself held up for some nine hours the following day by armed militia who seemed determined not to let us go.

Since then the situation has got steadily worse in Gleno, with more intimidation and many houses destroyed. Undoubtedly many of the death threats have by this time been carried out, now that the international observers have gone. And Gleno, unfortunately, is typical of the East Timorese experience, rather than the exception. The strength and courage of the East Timorese people, in the face of continuous and serious harassment and intimidation, served as an inspiration to those of us who were privileged to observe the ballot.

The subsequent cost to the people has been tragic, and thousands have died. There is no doubt that the people knew the risk. But even

so, their determination was clear and strong. It was summed up by a man who told one of our fellow observers:

- If they kill me before the ballot, that's a problem - if they kill me after the ballot, no problem.

Our role in East Timor, as official international observers, was technically a neutral one. We were there to observe and report on the fairness of the ballot, and to help determine whether the referendum was "free and fair". As far as we could judge, it was.

But in East Timor nobody is neutral. Our role was in reality not only to observe, but also to help make the ballot possible. Our very presence served to moderate the activities of the militia and the pro-autonomy (anti-independence) forces that sought to disrupt the voting. The pro-independence side did not engage in violence, threat or intimidation, while the other side clearly did, and hence our very presence was seen as support for the independence vote, however much we may have tried to maintain a strictly impartial position.

The people saw us as allies in their struggle for independence, and in this way the right to a free election became inevitably confused with the right to independence; in practice by supporting one we were also supporting the other. It was thus a very appropriate role for social workers, whose place must be uncompromisingly on the side of the oppressed, in this case the people of East Timor.

We spoke to the leaders of Falantil, the military wing of the resistance movement, in their camp in the mountains. They talked of their goal of peace for their country, and made it very clear that in the event of CNRT (National Council of Timorese Resistance) forming a government in an independent East Timor, they would institute an amnesty for militia members and would embark on a programme of national reconciliation.

They cited Nelson Mandela as their model, and saw their leader Xanana Gusmao as their own equivalent of Mandela. They also emphasised the help they would need in the reconstruction of an independent East Timor, after 24 years of Indonesian domination. We observed many other events, some inspirational, and some tragic:

A group of twenty frightened men on a mountain road fleeing their burning village in fear for their lives.

The strength and capacity of the unarmed civilian police contingent from many countries. The contrasting inactivity of the local police.

The polling booths at the remote village of Aculau, proudly made from bamboo by the local people, making the UNAMET cardboard booths redundant. The stunning beauty of the country, in such stark contrast to the ugly violence taking place there.

Militia attacking the transfer of the Gleno ballot boxes to a helicopter, resulting in one box breaking open with ballot papers scattered, but being collected by UNAMET staff anxious that every vote should count

East Timor is an area of major human rights abuse. It demands a strong response from the international community, greater than ever before. Yet the spirit of the people is undimmed. Social work, as a profession committed to human rights, has an obligation to support the East Timorese people in

their struggle. This can be done in three main ways:

Social workers, both individually and as a professional group, must add their voices to those calling for an immediate end to the violence and intimidation.

In the longer term, social workers have an important role to play in the future reconstruction of an independent East Timor. Public and community services in East Timor are virtually non-existent, and there will be an urgent need for adequate health, education, housing and other social services.

An informal offer of such assistance was conveyed to the Falantil leadership when we met them, and was appreciated. East Timor will need international support long after the current crisis is over, and, in their role as human rights workers, social workers will have much to contribute.

In the immediate aftermath of the current crisis, there will be a need for appropriate post-traumatic recovery programmes. Programmes at a community level, where entire communities can be encouraged to work through the effects of trauma, will be the major priority.

After her time in East Timor, Evelyn Balais Serrano was able to meet Xanana Gusmao in Jakarta the day before he was released from house arrest. She conveyed to him IFSW's commitment to the cause of the East Timorese people, and our intention

to help in the reconstruction process. He was very happy to receive this offer, and asked that his gratitude be extended to IFSW Officers and members for their support.

Since we left, the situation in East Timor has significantly worsened, to a human rights catastrophe. East Timor has become a bloodbath, Dili has been reduced to a burnt-out ruin, and the fate of towns like Gleno, and the surrounding villages, can at this stage only be guessed, though we fear the worst.

Like all the UN officials and the other international observers, we feel a deep sense of inadequacy and pain. We helped the people make their momentous decision on the day of the ballot, and have now left them, at their time of greatest need, to face mass killings at a level which can be now described as genocide. Like the rest of the world we feel a sense of both outrage and of powerlessness, as we watch the inadequate response of the Indonesian authorities and the world community. The experience of having been there has led us to feel this even more keenly. We do not know whether the towns and villages we visited are still standing, or whether the people we came to know and respect are still alive. Yet our experience also emphasised the enormous strength, determination and spirit of the East Timorese people, who will continue the struggle for as long as it takes.

We cannot fail them now.

Jim Ife

Evelyn Balais Serrano

Evelyn Balais Serrano visiting Xanana Gusmao. He asked that his gratitude be extended to IFSW officers and members for their support.



The market is not a tool for social inclusion

Social workers sharing concerns across the world

IFSW has together with partners arranged two very well visited regional conferences in recent months.

720 social workers from 44 countries met in Helsinki, Finland and St. Petersburg, Russia in June to take part in the European Seminar, while 748 participants from 30 countries met in Brisbane, Australia in September for the Asia-Pacific Conference.

Although the two conferences were arranged in venues far apart, the main themes were very similar: How can social work meet the challenge of an increasingly free market economy and parallel faded welfare states? How can social inclusion be promoted in a world where community is substituted by competition, and where globalization is a process more of sharing a platform between the haves than expanding resource access to the have-nots?

Professor Bill Jordan from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom in his opening speech in Helsinki "Social Work in the Shadow of the Market Economy" argued for a broader interpretation of the social workers' professional role, an embrace of its lost heritage, toward the community development approach to areas of economic deprivation. This would demand a willingness to engage with the growing informal economy of those excluded from mainstream society. Through this approach it can be possible to help build social capital.

We should as a profession stop trying to pretend to be policemen, accountants and managers, but do what we have proven to be good at: Developing citizens' potential for solving their problems in willing co-operation and partnership with each other and with other local interest groups.

In Brisbane, Evelyn Balais-Serrano from the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, in her keynote speech linked inclusion with human rights and social work. She

stated that social workers have the most privileged position among other professions by being closest to people, literally and figuratively. Still, what we have accomplished in the past through this closeness to people is not enough.

Based on her experiences as a social worker and human rights activist in many of the most suffering areas in different continents, she stated that what we need to do is to consider our social work concept of human needs and how it can be translated to a human rights perspective.

She argued for a culture of resistance in which people suffering from victimization can keep their dignity. Silence, based on apathy or fear is a major danger.

The day before the Brisbane Conference, the IFSW Human Rights Commission arranged a one-day workshop prepared by Professor Jim Ife, the Commission's Secretary, and Evelyn Balais-Serrano. Around 70 participants met and worked for a large part in groups to identify issues and explore avenues for social work

action. The inseparability between social work theory, values and ethics and human rights were focused. The Human Rights Commission will consider if similar workshops can be arranged in conjunction with or as part of future IFSW World and Regional Conferences.

Both in Helsinki and Brisbane were regional meetings arranged for delegates of IFSW's member associations. The European Delegates Meeting planned a Social Work Action Day for Europe to take place November 12, 1999 and also decided to explore a project to make social work expertise available in the social reconstruction in the Balkans. The Asia & Pacific Delegates Meeting gave priority to further develop links between the organizations in the vast region and continue with the new regional Newsletter.

The next European Seminar will take place in Vienna, Austria and Bratislava, Slovak Republic, August 2001 (more information on page 8), and the next Asia and Pacific Conference will be arranged in Singapore, July 2001.

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IFSW statement to US Authorities: Death penalty can not be justified

October 15, 1999

The International Federation of Social Workers strongly opposes the use of the death penalty, as a form of violation of human rights and a cruel inhuman and degrading punishment.

In particular the IFSW views with extreme alarm the cases of Justin L. Burrell in Delaware, Gregory Wynn in Alabama, Kenshawn Maxey in Nevada and Bobby Purcell in Arizona, who are all facing potential death sentences, whose alleged crimes were committed when they were under the age of 18. If convicted, they will join some 70 inmates on Death Row, who have been convicted for crimes they committed when aged 16 or 17.

The IFSW regards such sentences as a clear denial of human rights and as a gross violation of the United

Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, not yet ratified by the USA. Such sentences are further in conflict with the widely accepted view that children cannot be held fully responsible for their actions. Because of their age, such offenders are not only less responsible, but are also more capable of rehabilitation, and to deny them the right to rehabilitation is a further violation of human rights.

The IFSW does not condone crimes of violence, yet reaffirms the principle that all human beings, including violent offenders, are entitled to basic and inviolate human rights.

The IFSW takes the view that the use of the death penalty cannot be justified. It has not been shown to be an effective deterrent to violent crime, but rather only reinforces the cycle of violence by allowing the state to commit the ultimate violent act of statutory killing.

It is also in violation of basic human rights principles.

The IFSW therefore calls on all relevant State and Federal Authorities in the United States of America

- to take all steps necessary to ensure that Justin L. Burrell, Gregory Wynn, Kenshawn Maxey and Bobby Purcell, if convicted, are not sentenced to death;
- to revoke the death penalty for all those whose crimes were committed while they were under the age of 18;
- to ratify the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and
- to work towards the complete abolition of the death penalty in all States of the USA

Elis Envall
President

Dr. Jim Iffe
Secretary
Human Rights Commission

The IFSW secretariat is now in Bern

The IFSW Secretariat has successfully been transferred from Oslo, Norway to Bern, Switzerland, where operations started early September.

The Swiss Association of Social Workers provides office space in conjunction with its own office.

Closeness to the United Nations in Geneva, expanded office space to accommodate the staff of two, and more easy access both for visitors and for travelling in general have been among the key factors behind the relocation. It has also been important to ensure IFSW a permanent site.

The Secretary General, Tom Johannesen, has been joined by Lisbeth Mattsson as a part time Information Officer to provide services to member associations and others.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. The International Federation's mission is to improve the situation of the most vulnerable people.

We are now recruiting a

Senior Officer, Social Welfare

Reporting to the Director, Community Health and Social Welfare Dept., the Senior Officer will be responsible for providing technical support to the Federation's governing bodies for developing the necessary policies for Social Welfare; managing and providing support to the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; proposing and developing appropriate strategies, guidelines and tools for effective implementation of the policies by the National Societies, and ensuring that the Federation resource base is fully developed and utilised.

We require a degree in Social Sciences and a post-grad degree in Social Work. Experience should include at least 5 years of professional experience in a senior position, with expertise in social welfare, community social services and tracing. We also require at least 3 years experience working internationally, in the field or with an international organisation working with developing countries. Good English and either French, Spanish or Arabic are essential, as is the ability to travel widely.

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Social Work Conferences 2000 - 2001

If you want more information about any of these conferences, or would like to be on the mailing list, please contact the relevant conference secretariat

Montréal, Canada, July 29 - August 2, 2000



Joint IFSW and IASSW World Conference Promoting Equitable Societies in the Global Economy: Social Work in the 21st Century

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Conference Secretariat: World Conference of IFSW/IASSW 2000, Events International Meeting Planners Inc., 759 Victoria Square, Suite 300, Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 2J7. Tel (1) 514 286 0855, Fax (1) 514 286 6066 E-Mail: info@eventsintl.com

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

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From top: Herbert Paulschin, Austria, Lydia Zelmanova, Slovakia, Georg Dimitz and Gudrun Blümlinger, Austria



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Applications are encouraged for submission by February 1, 2000.

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IFSW Newsletter

is published by

International Federation of Social Workers

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CH-3000 Bern 1, Switzerland

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The Newsletter is open for advertisements, including inserts. Deadlines are

February 20, 2000 for the March edition,

June 1, 2000 for the July edition and

September 20, 2000 for the October edition.

For more information, please notify the Secretariat.