



International Federation of Social Workers

Newsletter 2/99

***IFSW:
Other solutions
must be found
for the Balkans***

President's Message

Violence in many forms has been in our focus more than usual the last few months. Violence inflicted by humans to other fellow human beings is a destructive force in all societies. The school shooting in Littleton, Colorado, USA is an especially tragic disaster where social workers have played a key role in supporting the families and surviving victims with crisis intervention.

Paramilitary groups terrorising the population in East Timor again threaten the chances of a positive development towards justice and human rights.

The Balkans is experiencing the extreme violence of a tragic war situation. A humanitarian catastrophe is getting worse from day to day. The ethnic cleansing initiated by the Yugoslav regime is causing hundreds of thousands of refugees both inside Kosovo and to other countries. The bombing by NATO does not contribute to a positive and humane solution, but is on the contrary making the situation even more disastrous, killing innocent civilian victims including many children.

Numerous social worker colleagues and their associations in Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Serbia and the neighbouring countries as well as in western countries are active today in giving much needed emergency help to refugees fleeing from the Serbian army, paramilitary groups or from NATO bombing. But only an end to all violence can truly help these peoples.

Gender related violence is another destructive aspect of almost all cultures and societies, often concealed by family integrity and societal denial. In this area social workers need to play a more active role advocating for women's rights along with the rights of their children.

But social work must be active not only on the micro and meso levels. Social workers have since the origin of the profession been active in social development as change agents. In the description of the profession currently being developed within IFSW the change agent aspect will be central.

Social work needs to be active also on a structural level, in changing society to prevent violence. Social work can contribute in changing attitudes to culturally "accepted"

and concealed violence such as female genital mutilation, corporal punishment and domestic violence. Social workers need to work for peace both on a global and international level as well as within society on local level. IFSW has in two special statements called to an end of violence in the Balkans and East Timor. But the Balkans and East Timor are not the only places to suffer terror and unrest.

The suffering of peoples in many parts of the world (Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan, Rwanda, Colombia, Afghanistan, Turkey and many, many more) as result of current or recent civil unrest and terror are demanding attention and our professional consideration and commitment. Peace is a requisite and basis for social development and justice.

According to a recent report from the World Bank the developing countries have as a result of economic and political instability stopped developing. The number of people living in poverty is again growing. Africa south of Sahara is affected most severely as a result of the HIV/AIDS endemic, high infant mortality and lack of clean water. Cuts in foreign aid and outbreak of many civil wars are other important factors in the current negative development.

There are many examples of the devastating results of Structural Adjustment Programs forced on developing countries by the IMF and the World Bank, often resulting in a dismantling of existing social welfare structures. Since the 1995 Social Summit these actors have started to realise the necessity of development of social justice and security for people, not just economic development of a country. Removing debts alone is therefore not a solution to these enormous problems. Social workers have professional knowledge and skills to take part in and enhance the effects of international development work, but too few are today involved in this the largest field of social development.

Stockholm, June 1999

*Elis Envall
President*

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IFSW Newsletter

is open for advertisements, including inserts
Deadline is **September 20, 1999**
for the October edition.

For more information, please notify the Secretariat.

IFSW Statements on Peace and Human Rights

Other solutions must be found to Crisis in the Balkans

To President **Slobodan Milosevic**
Belgrade, YUGOSLAVIA,
Secretary General **Javier Solana**,
NATO, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
and the UNITED NATIONS

The Balkans are experiencing a tragic war situation. A humanitarian catastrophe is getting worse from day to day. The ethnic cleansing initiated by the Yugoslav regime is causing hundreds of thousands of refugees both inside Kosovo and to other countries.

The present bombing by NATO does not contribute to a positive and humane solution, but is on the contrary making the situation even more disastrous, killing innocent civilian victims including many children.

Historically the social work profession has had a tradition of commitment to peace, disarmament and the humanising of society.

Numerous social worker colleagues and their associations in Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Serbia and the neighbouring countries as well as in western countries are active today in giving much needed emergency help to refugees fleeing from the Serbian army and paramilitaries or from NATO bombing. But only an end to all violence can truly help these peoples.

We, the International Federation of Social Workers, therefore ask all involved governments and other parties to initiate an immediate cease-fire and an ending of all war activities in the Balkans.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE and the United Nations must be authorised to carry out peacekeeping measures. A major humanitarian effort from the world community is needed: immediately in support of the many refugees suffering under miserable

conditions in Albania, Macedonia and elsewhere as well as on a long-term basis to rebuild Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia ensuring democracy, reconciliation and human rights and an infrastructure to support this.

We call on all our member organisations to give humanitarian aid and support to our colleagues and their associations assisting the victims of this catastrophe. We recognise that the tasks ahead are difficult and complicated. Time is needed to reach a situation where people will be able to live under humane conditions. The time to start is now, not later. Continued war does not create social security and justice, but will only make it more difficult in the future to rebuild the societies involved.

*Elis Envall
President
Tom Johannesen
Secretary General*

Secure Peace and Human Rights in East-Timor

To
The government of **Indonesia**,
government of **Portugal**,
government of **Australia** and
governments in **ASEAN** countries

The International Federation of Social Workers views with grave concern the increasing tension and violence in East Timor, and the very real danger that this could escalate into a major human rights tragedy.

The IFSW therefore calls on all parties to act responsibly towards ensuring that the people of East Timor are able to determine their future through free and fair voting, and to take firm measures to reduce the level of violence and intimidation in East Timor.

Specifically, the IFSW:

calls on the Government of Indonesia to ensure that military, police and

security forces respect the human rights of the people of East Timor, and prevent militia from intimidating or threatening the population, by moving swiftly to disarm the militia

calls on the Government of Indonesia to invite such international observers and peace-keeping forces as are necessary to safeguard the human rights of all the people of East Timor, to ensure that the upcoming vote is free and fair, and to ensure that the transition to the new form of government, as determined by the people of East Timor (whether that be independence, autonomy, partial autonomy or integration) be achieved without violence, intimidation or other human rights abuses

calls on all groups in East Timor to act in accordance with principles of non-violence, and to respect the human rights of all the population

calls on the United Nations to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the human rights of the population of East Timor are protected, including if necessary sending observers and peace-keeping forces for as long as they are needed

calls on governments with a special relationship with Indonesia, specifically Portugal, Australia and the ASEAN nations, to use their good offices to assist the Government of Indonesia to achieve the above objectives, and to support United Nations efforts to prevent further escalation of the human rights crisis in East Timor.

*Elis Envall
President
Tom Johannesen
Secretary General*

Strengthening and consolidating

IFSW development in Latin America and the Caribbean

IFSW Latin America regional meeting was successfully held in Costa Rica in April, with IFSW representatives from 16 countries in the region. The meeting strengthened IFSW links with social worker associations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The IFSW Latin American region has for many years faced severe problems, suffered from a lack of regional activities and a general weakening of its presence in the activities of IFSW. Since the 1990 General Meeting and World Conference held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, there have not been any IFSW conferences or seminars.

The number of member associations has slowly decreased, with the exception of the affiliation of the Brazilian association a few years ago. Many associations in the region have also reported that they face organisational difficulties and lack of member activity in their respective countries.

Special regional meeting

In an effort to overcome these problems, to revitalise the profession and integrate the region there have in IFSW for a number of years been plans for and efforts made to arrange a special regional meeting for all social worker associations in Latin America and the Caribbean.



"The meeting was very appreciated by all present and much needed contacts with existing members and non-member associations were established."

Through the generous support of two member associations in Canada, Denmark and Sweden and drawing on the Jane Hoey Development Fund the financial means for the meeting was secured.

New vice president

With a very energetic new Vice President for the region **Juan Manuel Latorre Carvajal** and his tireless work, in collaboration with the presidents of the Brazilian and Costa Rican associations, the

meeting was successfully held in Costa Rica, April 9 - 12 of this year. The theme of the meeting was: **"Continental Integration - International Cooperation"**

The countries present represented by their Social Work associations' presidents were: ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA, BRAZIL, CHILE, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, PANAMA, PARAGUAY, PERU, URUGUAY and VENEZUELA.

The president of ALAETS, the Latin American Association for Schools of Social Work, **M^a Cecilia Vega Guzman** and the president of Colegio de Trabajadores Sociales de Puerto Rico took part also. The regional Vice-President **Juan Manuel Latorre**, the IFSW president **Elis Envall**, the Secretary General **Tom Johannesen**, the member of the Executive Committee **Valdete de Barros Martins** and **Eugenia Moreno** from the Canadian association represented IFSW.

Interesting lectures

The participants were given several interesting lectures on the situation in



The organising team.
Valdete de Barros Martins,
Brazil,
Juan Manuel Latorre
Carvajal, Vice-President
and
Silvia Guerrero, student
Costa Rica

Latin America concerning Social Politics, Economic and Social contexts.

In several sub regional working groups the current situation and professional and organisational problems in each country were addressed.

Further work in plenary and groups focused on what can be done towards strengthening and consolidating the organisational and professional development in the region.

Regional plan

The result of the work was a regional plan of activities for the next five years including sub regional (Central America/Caribbean, Cono Sur and Andinas) networks and activities.

Appreciated meeting

The meeting was very appreciated by all present and much needed contacts with existing members and non-member associations were established.

There is now a sincere commitment from the whole of the region, a solid base to build on and concrete plans for future regional and sub-regional co-operation as well as organisational and professional development.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Senior Officer, Social Welfare

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organisation, 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.

Reporting to the Director, Community Health and Social Welfare Department, you 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.

To succeed you will have a degree in Social Sciences together with a post-grad degree in Social Work. This should be coupled with at least five years professional experience in a senior position, with expertise in social welfare, community social services and tracing. We also require at least three 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.

To apply, send a full CV and covering letter, quoting Ref: SOSW/99 no later than 15 July 1999 to: Amanda Batra, Recruitment Co-ordinator, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19. Fax: (41 22) 730 4958 or email us at vacancies@ifrc.org

Visit our website at www.ifrc.org

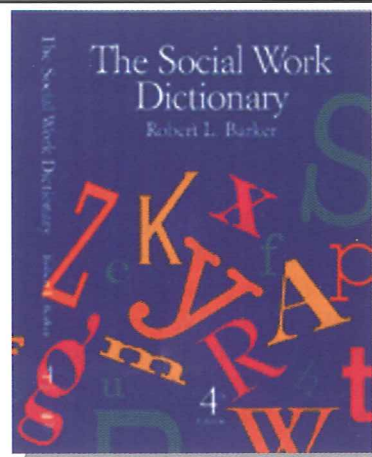
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IFSW99

Letter from Phyllis Coard, Grenada

Social Worker imprisoned for 15 years - Please write!

"In January we had general elections here. The government, which had previously had only nine out of the fifteen Parliamentary seats, and therefore felt unable to release the political prisoners in case the Government fell, was returned to power, winning all fifteen seats!

Though they cannot now use that excuse, we anticipate it will take a real struggle to win our release, and since this year, with the millennium coming up, is the most favorable time for a release, I ask those of you who feel able to, please to write a short letter of appeal to Grenada's Prime Minister, **Dr. the Hon. Keith Mitchell, at the Prime Minister's Office, St. George's, Grenada, Eastern Caribbean**, asking for our release.

If possible, it would be very helpful if you could send a copy of the letter to the Grenadian newspapers, either to **The Grenada Informer, PO Box 622, Market Hill, St. George's, Grenada, Eastern Caribbean** and/or to **The Grenadian Voice, PO Box 633, 10 Melville St, St. George's, Grenada, Eastern Caribbean**. The length of the letters is not important; it is the number of letters or postcards which is important.

A short postcard could simply say, "As we approach a new century, I appeal to you to give Grenada a fresh start, free from old political hatreds, by releasing the Grenada 17 political prisoners".

The Grenada 17 received what eminent international attorneys consider to be a flagrantly unfair trial. They agree that the Prosecution's evidence was flimsy and much of it obviously fabricated, yet even this evidence does not prove the vast majority of the 17 guilty of any crime. The Grenada appeals court even refuses to give its written judgement, eight years after upholding the convictions.

The Grenada 17 have been denied by a special Act of the Grenada Parliament the right to an appeal to the British Privy Council enjoyed by all other Grenadians.

The 17 were convicted by a jury which had previously shouted abuses at them, called them 'criminals' and 'murderers' even before the trial began.

The 17 steadfastly maintained this innocence of murder, while apologizing to the Grenadian people

for the political mistakes they made which contributed to the tragic deaths of 1983.

None of the 17 wishes to return to politics, and most wish to settle abroad. They are, therefore, no threat to Grenada's stability.

They have led exemplary lives while in prison, teaching and counselling other prisoners, especially young prisoners.

After 15 years in prison, it is surely time to release. Time to put old hatreds behind, to forgive and reconcile, to build a country free from hatreds. Grenada is the only English-speaking Caribbean country to hold political prisoners. Surely, it is time to remove this blot on Grenada's reputation.

My Dear friends, I would appreciate so much whatever you can do to assist us in this way, in securing our freedom, so that we may be enabled not only to take up our own lives again, but also to care for our now elderly parents and other elderly relatives, as well as to give our children the joy of having their parents again.

With much affection,"

Phyllis Coard

Write to Saddam Hussein!

In the last edition of the Newsletter 1.99 we asked you to write letters in support of our colleague Feisal Al-Sane. We did not have room in IFSW Newsletter 1.99 for the address and suggestion for the text of the letter and therefore we publish it here.

Feisal was the Secretary General of Kuwait Association of Social Workers and Saddam Hussein's prisoner for more than eight years. IFSW and our Human Rights Commission have been making representations since 1992 for his case.

Please write to Saddam Hussein and demand the immediate and unconditional release of our colleague Feisal Al-Sane along with his relatives and all other persons still held in Iraq and full information on all arrested persons and their fate.

President Saddam Hussein
Presidential Palace
Karradat Mariam
Baghdad
IRAQ

Dear Sir

According to very reliable information given to us/me from the Human Rights Commission of the International Federation of Social Workers, IFSW our colleague the Secretary General of Kuwait Associ-

ation of Social Workers, Mr. Feisal Al-Sane has since the invasion and occupation of Kuwait been and is still being held prisoner in Iraq.

I/we turn to you in person, as we are aware of your personal relationship to Mr Al-Sane, begging for your personal intervention to release him and to let him join his family longing for him desperately in Kuwait.

We implore you to show mercy after more than eight long years and to fulfil the demands for immediate and

unconditional release of our colleague the Secretary General of Kuwait Association of Social Workers, Mr. Feisal Al-Sane along with his relatives and all 605 persons missing or still held in Iraq and full information on all arrested persons and their fate.

Sincerely

Date and place

Signature

News from the UN

The NGO Community in New York is active as ever. A number of meetings during the last period have been related to development and globalization with the global monetary crisis as background.

Two of the most important processes in the UN now are heading for the General Assembly special session in Geneva June 2000 to review the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen 1995 and the General Assembly special session in New York June 2000 as a follow-up of the World Conference on Women in Beijing, also in 1995.

Also in late 2000, a Millenium Summit will be held to review the progress of the various Conventions and Agreements made during the last decade. Ahead of this, a Millenium NGO Forum will meet May 29 -June 2, 2000, in New York.

The Commission for Social Development (CSD) concluded its

37th session in February. The Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action with its commitment to social development, eradication of poverty, fight against unemployment and support for social integration formed the framework.

However, the financial crisis is seen as a major obstacle to achieve the goals. From an NGO point of view, there certainly also seems to be a lack of willingness to give priority to social development.

IFSW was especially active in introducing the idea that psychosocial well-being is an integral part of health, and mental health was included by CSD in the definition of health after much debate.

The Commission on the Status of Women met for three weeks in March. Three significant issues of special relevance to social work were addressed:

1) The Health of Women. 79 countries sponsored a resolution against traditional health practices that are inter-

preted as violence against women and a violation of their human rights, namely female genital mutilation.

The World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF have joined NGOs in urging governments to eliminate this practice.

2) The AIDS Crisis. Worldwide more than 30 million people suffer from HIV/AIDS.

3) Sexual Trafficking in Women. 33 countries supported a resolution against sexual trafficking in women and girls. Such occurrences may be subject to charges under the new international Criminal Court.

All three issues can use more advocacy from IFSW member associations.

Social Work Day at the UN

More than 200 social workers and others attended the 16th Annual Social Work Day at the UN March 23, addressing "Issues in Global Health: Challenges for Social Work Practice"

Celia B. Weisman

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Social Work Conferences 1999 - 2000

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

Brisbane, Australia, September 25, 1999

IFSW Human Rights Commission: one-day workshop in conjunction with the Regional Conference of IFSW.

Human Rights and Social Work: Regional Perspectives and Action Responses

For more information contact Jim Ife, Secretary, IFSW Human Rights Commission, School of Social Work & Social Administration, The University of Western Australia Nedlands WA6907 Australia, Fax +61 8 938 1070, Email: jife@cylle.uwa.edu.au

Brisbane, Australia, September 26 - 29, 1999,

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IFSW and APASWE (Asia Pacific Association of Social Work Education) in conjunction with the 26th National Conference of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Promoting Inclusion - Redressing Exclusion: The Social Work Challenge

Social work has retained a core interest in promoting a just and inclusive society. The conference will explore the causes and consequences of social exclusion, and the manner in which social work can confront and redress social exclusion in many domains of its practice.

Conference Secretariat: Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IFSW and APASWE,

P. O. Box 3496, South Brisbane Business Centre, Queensland 4101, Australia

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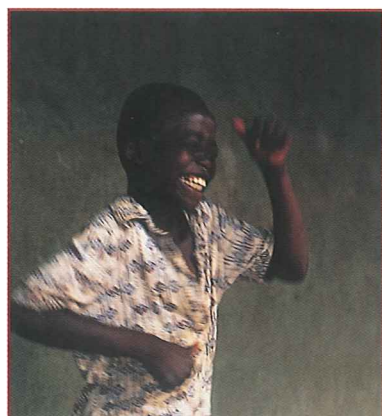


Photo: Charlotte Thege/Phoenix

Nairobi, Kenya, November 23-25, 1999

IFSW's 5th Pan African Regional Conference

Marching into the Millenium: Social Workers in the Development Process

After a long break, IFSW Africa is again sponsoring a Pan African Conference, the first since 1989. The objective of the Conference is to critically assess African Social Work Practice and Education in a changing world.

The theme will be addressed under four headlines: Social Development and Poverty Reduction; Disaster Management and Conflict Resolution; Working with vulnerable Groups; and Social Work Education.

A one-day pre-conference symposium is offered November 23 on "Social Workers role in Disaster Management and Working with HIV/AIDS; while the main conference is taking place November 24-25.

Conference Secretariat: Kenya National Association of Social Workers, P. O. Box 28534, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel and Fax (254) 2 446615.

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

We live in a world where changes occur at a greater pace than ever before. What role will social work play in the 21st century? How can social work be oriented to better meet the needs of people and communities in a global economy? Social workers must promote the inclusion of all people; they must formulate and articulate social and multidimensional solutions for today's complex problems of inequity, violence, migration, population health etc.

The World Conference will look at the development of successful experiences that could bring changes and foster equality everywhere in the world. Social workers and Educators will be invited to inform each other about the projects and ideas that empower people and that can be translated from one community to another.

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



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