

Social Work Symposium

Responding to the Refugee Crisis

March 15, 2016

World Social Work Day

Catamaran – River Box – Johann Böhm Platz 1,
1020 Vienna, Austria

Side Event on March 16

National Conference on Social Work
Responding to the Refugee Crisis



obds

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Information Pack for the Social Work Symposium Responding to the Refugee Crisis

Information on the Social Work Symposium Responding to the Refugee Crisis. For Social workers and refugees from the countries that refugees are escaping from, transiting through and seeking asylum within.

The social work profession grew enormously in response to the refugee crisis following the Second World War and since that time social workers have been supporting refugees and migrants in their journeys and transitions to new communities and societies. The current crisis is no exception with social workers in all the affected countries applying their knowledge and skills at all points of the refugees transition and with the communities where they seek asylum.

Social workers are trained and skilled in helping people through dramatic change in their lives and on healing and building communities that are under pressure or suffer from racial tension. From their worldwide on the ground experience, social workers have witnessed which policies enable refugees to positively integrate into a new environment, and which policies undermine their aspirations and the wellbeing of the communities that they join.

At a time where there is a need for increased service coordination and the development of policies and practices that will assist refugees, The International Federation of Social Workers has called for practitioners and refugees in each of the affected countries to assemble, plan and take further action in response to this crisis.

The International Federation of Social Workers in partnership with OBDS and Younion, are facilitating a meeting of social workers and refugees from the countries where people are escaping from (War Countries), social workers from the countries where the refugees are transferring through (Transfer Countries) and where they find asylum (Asylum Countries).

When and Where: Vienna (Hosted by OBDS and Younion) on World Social Work Day, 15th March 2016. Catamaran – River Box 1020 Vienna, Johann Böhm Platz 1

Symposium Objectives: To bring together social workers and refugee representatives from the affected countries to:

1. To create an overall working plan for social workers in each of the affected countries to coordinate information that provides a better understanding and response to refugee needs during their journey, transfer and integration in the asylum countries.
2. To develop a focused strategy on particular vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children and young people, older people, those with health issues and trafficked persons.
3. Establish a comprehensive political advocacy strategy that reflects a 'ground up' perspective on refugee needs, aspirations and solutions.
4. To establish social work models that support refugees in isolated situations where other forms of assistance are not available.
5. To utilize the skills of social workers constructively to developing inclusive and cohesive societies.

The Symposium: The Symposium will be held on World Social Work Day March 15th 2016. In addition to the invited social work and refugee representatives the event will be live-streamed to enable international participation.

Social Work representatives are invited to attend in person from the following countries:

- **War countries:** Syria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia;

- **Transfer countries:** Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Spain;
- **Asylum countries:** UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Russia.

Other organisations invited to attend in person: Representatives from United Nations' Agencies and internally focused refugee INGOs.

Financial support for attendance: IFSW will provide transportation, accommodation and meal expenses for approximately 20 people. Priority will be given to representatives from the countries where refugees are escaping and representatives from low-income countries.

Programme

The symposium will take the form of a 'working group' and all representatives will be actively involved. There will be three panels each comprising the representatives from the war Countries, the Transition Countries and The Asylum Countries. There will also be keynote addresses from the invited UN agency (tbc) and INGOs.

14th March

- Representative's arrival
- Evening joint dinner

15th March

- **Morning Session:** Welcome, introductions, keynote address and 2 panels.
- **Afternoon Session:** Keynote address, third panel and workshop on agreed statement and plan of action.
- **Evening:** Joint dinner

Working language: English



Side Event on 16th March

National Conference on Social Work Responding to the Refugee Crisis

Objectives: The symposium will address the basic principles of social work in emergency action and relief, strategies development of transformation from emergency care for masses of people to individualize social work for refugees and create programs for special and vulnerable groups.

The working groups will have the focus

- to analyse the experience we have made,
- to learn from the international expertise and
- to find joint power for the challenges to expect in 2016

Participants: professional and volunteer organisations involved in action

Programme: moderated large-scale conference, participants will be invited to take an active part in the sessions; key note by Ruth Stark, IFSW, refugee-testimonials, input by an expert in crisis management.

Working language: German

Organised by:

- obds - Austrian Association of Social Work
- YOUNION – trade union
- AK – Chamber of Labour Austria

Where and when: ÖGB-Catamaran, Wilhemine Moik Saal, 1020 Vienna, Johann Böhm Platz 1 from 9.00 am to 5.00 p.m

To register your interest in attending this forum or to receive more information, please contact

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at the earliest opportunity!