



**International Federation of Social Workers
2012 Report of the North American Region
Member Countries: Canada and the United States of America
2010-2012 Program Years**

Background

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) North American region is pleased to report that over the past two years, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the National Association of Social Workers-USA (NASW-USA) have worked together cooperatively in an effort to strengthen the profession in the region. The framework of the collaboration continues to operate under a Memorandum of Understanding which is currently under review by both organizations and will be re-signed at the IFSW World Conference this July.

Both organizations have a dual mission of protecting the profession of social work and seeking to ensure social justice. The political climate in both countries has posed challenges to the understanding and support of the social safety net, which social workers are mainly responsible for maintaining. As a result, CASW and NASW-USA have both worked on communications campaigns including publications, social media efforts, and outreach aimed at helping the public and decision makers to understand the profession and ultimately strengthening and securing its future. Both organizations have been engaged in addressing the deprofessionalization of social work and also recognize the importance of research on evidence-based and best practices and are actively engaged in collaborating and disseminating such research. CASW and NASW-USA have also spent a great deal of time addressing recruitment and retention issues for the profession.

CASW and NASW-USA continually monitor and address issues of regulation, including licensure and the ongoing evolution of their respective *Codes of Ethics*. They are also working with the social work education organizations in support of comprehensive and relevant education programs.

The IFSW North American region has been actively engaged in addressing some of society's most pressing problems such as the economic recession, the increasing challenges related to poverty, and the unemployment crisis. Professional social workers in both countries have not only been tasked with caring for more and more clients, but are asked to do so with fewer resources and support. Advocacy efforts have included addressing federal and local budgets which affect social services, holding briefings on Capitol Hill in the U.S. on issues of poverty and homelessness, and encouraging all elected officials to address these issues in a meaningful way. CASW and NASW-USA have both maintained active advocacy and political action outreach components.

Further, both organizations in the region have been vocal advocates for civil and human rights. CASW and NASW-USA have spoken out against the attacks on women's rights and health concerns. They have also supported rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and have consistently worked on behalf of all social work clients, particularly the most vulnerable among us. To that end, NASW-USA has been a leader in the push for the Affordable Care Act, reflecting a similar commitment as Canada to ensure health care for all.

CASW and NASW-USA look forward to continued collaboration and a strengthened presence within their region and internationally as they work towards a common purpose of social work being recognized as *the* helping profession, but, most importantly, on behalf of the millions of clients served by social workers each day.



Canadian Association of Social Workers Developments

In 2011, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) celebrated its 85th year of dedicated service to the social work profession in Canada. In its last 20 years, the weight of this legacy both nationally and internationally has been largely carried by past CASW Executive Director, Eugenia Moreno. Many of those engaged in the work of IFSW are familiar with Eugenia's dedicated work and passion in advancing the profession on the international stage. CASW is grateful for her leadership in this regard and her legacy will live on as IFSW moves forward with the implementation of the *Global Agenda*.

Along with the retirement of CASW's longstanding Executive Director, CASW has also experienced a great deal of change within the national federation since 2010. In this regard, CASW unfortunately lost the affiliation of the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and the Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW) to our national federation in 2011. CASW continues ongoing dialogue with both provincial organizations to reconcile differences while at the same time CASW began offering individual memberships to social workers who choose to remain committed to supporting both national and international social work movements dedicated to strengthening the profession and advancing issues of social justice.

Despite the challenges within the CASW federation, the need for a collective national social work voice committed to addressing the root causes of oppression and inequality in Canada is paramount. Nationally, the federal government in Canada is embarking on a mandate of restructuring the tenets of our national social and health programs from the collective good to individual rights. As a consequence, Canada's social safety net is being overhauled to reduce or eliminate federal involvement in health and social research as well as in the development and implementation of national strategies.

In opposition to this extreme change in directions, CASW developed a national "Accountability Matters" campaign to accentuate the federal government's role and responsibility to national accountability reporting standards for the billions transferred to the provincial and territorial

governments in support of the delivery of social services. CASW has also been in the forefront of opposition to changes in our criminal justice system that reverses the role of rehabilitation and place greater emphasis on punishment through mandatory minimums. As well, CASW continues to provide a strong and active presence on national coalitions that amplify the social work voice on the federal stage and are paramount to social work achieving parity in recognition with the more dominate professions operating within the health and healthcare system of Canada.

On the international front, CASW continues to maintain its strong support for the work of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the development of the *Global Agenda*. For its part, over the last two years CASW has actively engaged its membership in calls to support the ongoing humanitarian crisis affecting millions of people in East Africa. CASW has also publicly joined the IFSW in denouncing the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) for its support of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill again before the Ugandan Parliament. Further to this, each year CASW marks international days dedicated to advancing universal rights including the World Day of Social Justice and Social Work and the International Days of Peace, Eradication of Poverty, World's Indigenous People and Women's Day.

Specific to IFSW, CASW Past-President Darlene MacDonald, who was elected to the IFSW Executive as President of the North America Region at the General Meeting in Hong Kong, was required to withdraw from her responsibilities due to conflicts with new employment responsibilities. Consequently, the role of President of the North America Region was transferred to NASW President Jeane Anastas and CASW's President, Morel Caissie assumed the role of the North American Region's Member-at-Large. Thank you to all involved in support of this transition between annual meetings.

CASW looks forward to supporting the *Global Agenda* in the coming years and will continue to focus nationally on strengthening the profession and advancing social justices. For information about CASW activities and initiatives in this regard, please visit the CASW website www.casw-acts.ca.



National Association of Social Workers—U.S.A. Developments

SWAN: NASW-USA continues to promote and fund international work through the NASW Foundation Social Workers Across Nations (SWAN) initiative. SWAN was created in order to provide a mechanism for social workers to take part in international social work programs to offer their expertise and skills to serve humanitarian needs within the international community on a voluntary basis and to develop collaborative linkages with organizations in other countries around the world.

Brazil: In October, 2011 a group of U.S. social workers, led by NASW-USA Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Clark, visited Sao Paulo and Rio De Janeiro, Brazil where they met with the Sao Paulo Regional Sector of the Federal Council of Social Workers, the Center for Studies and Research in Education, Cultural and Community Action, Institute of Studies of the Federal

University of Rio De Janeiro, Family Healthcare Center, and AfroREGGAE Cultural Group, an NGO with a focus on youth.

China: NASW-USA hosted several delegations of leaders from China in 2011 and 2012. The first was a delegation from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the second was coordinated through the U.S. Department of State, and was also representative of the People's Republic of China. NASW-USA staff and leaders provided information on social work in the United States, including standards for practice, educational, licensure, and other professional information.

Congressional Social Work Caucus: NASW-USA is a supporter of the Congressional Social Work Caucus (CSWC), one of the few professional caucuses in the United States Congress. CSWC celebrated its one year anniversary on World Social Work Day, and held briefings this year on the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative, healthcare reform, funding for mental health services and research, children's health and well-being, and poverty. At the one-year anniversary event, IFSW President, Gary Bailey, presented CSWC Chairman Edolphus Towns with *The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitments to Action*.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: The CEDAW Treaty helps women and girls go to school, own and inherit property, take part in public life, and fight violence and oppression, and NASW-USA has been a firm supporter of the ratification of this effort. NASW-USA sent out advocacy alerts to over 80,000 people and also sits on the International Violence Against Women Coalition.

Cuba: NASW staff led two delegations of social workers to Cuba in 2011, where they got a close-up view of community-based aging, health, and child welfare services in Havana. Each group met with Cuban IFSW member organization La Sociedad Cubana de Trabajadores Sociales de la Salud.

Foundations for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa: NASW-USA is a partner with the Foundation for Hospices in Sub Saharan Africa (FHSSA). Social Work Pioneer Bernice Harper was the founding President of this organization and NASW successfully raised \$20,000 in order to endow a scholarship in her name for social workers who address the psychosocial needs of the seriously ill in Africa.

Hope Conference: NASW-USA will host a national practice conference, *Restoring Hope: The Power of Social Work* July 22-25, 2012 in Washington, DC. The conference will feature internationally renowned speakers including Nobel Peace Prize Winner and social worker Leymah Gbowee from Liberia. In addition, several sessions will include international content such as human trafficking, social work capacity building, international youth advocacy, mental health across cultures, and international service learning projects. Fred Phelps, Executive Director of CASW, will join NASW-USA at the conference and provide a presentation on *Rebranding Canada*.

IFSW: NASW-USA was pleased to welcome IFSW Secretariat General Rory Truell to the national office in August 2011 for their Delegate Assembly which is the representative, decision-

making body of the organization through which NASW members set broad organizational policy, establish program priorities, and develop a collective stance on public and professional issues.

Immigration: NASW-USA has worked against punitive immigration laws and reforms that promote discrimination and racial profiling. Laws that would criminalize immigrants, endanger human rights and threaten the civil liberties of citizens and immigrants have been actively opposed by NASW-USA as we are actively called on by our *Code of Ethics* to prevent and eliminate discrimination.

India: In February, 2012, NASW-USA led a delegation of social workers to Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra, India. NASW President Dr. Jeane Anastas and Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Clark led delegates to visit Deepalaya School, an NGO dedicated to marginalized children, Indira Gandhi National Open University School of Social Work, programs for the homeless, St. Stephens Hospital, Institute of Human Behavior and Allied Sciences, Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, and Jaipur Foot, an organization which provides prosthetic limbs free of charge.

Institute of Medicine, Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education: NASW-USA is a member of the IOM Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education which aims to apply an ongoing, multi-national, multidisciplinary approach to exploring promising innovations in health education. The Forum brings together stakeholders from a variety of disciplines and sectors to engage in dialogue and discussion to illuminate contemporary issues in health professional education.

Institute of Medicine, Global Violence Prevention Forum: NASW-USA serves on the IOM Global Violence Prevention Forum aimed at addressing the high burden on global health posed by violence against women and children. Aims of the forum include providing an ongoing, regular, evidence-based, impartial settings for the multidisciplinary exchange of information concerning violence prevention, the illumination of policy, research, and practice priorities worthy of further study or investment, and the gathering of information on the scientific basis and public health needs pertinent to global violence prevention.

International Council on Social Welfare: NASW-USA continues to work with and provide space and support at the national headquarters for ICSW. NASW-USA also held a reception in February 2011 honoring ICSW President Christian Rollet and Executive Director Denys Correll.

Japan: In 2011, NASW-USA provided practice materials and connected the Japanese Association of Social Workers in Health Services with medical and hospital social workers in the United States in order to enhance their understanding of this field of practice.

Korea: The Korea Association of Social Workers (KASW) and NASW-USA engaged in a professional exchange with the placement of a KASW staff member at NASW for ten months in 2010-2011 to learn how U.S. social workers are supported by the Association.

Tanzania: Working with the American International Health Alliance, NASW-USA has continued its professional exchange and Twinning Project with the Tanzania Social Work Association (TASWA) for the third year. NASW-USA President Dr. Jeane Anastas, along with NASW staff, traveled to Tanzania in August 2011, as well as March 2011. NASW-USA hosted TASWA representatives (including the Tanzania Commissioner of Social Welfare) for a two-week visit in the USA in November 2011. Meetings were held with Schools of Social Work, UNICEF, USAID, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Health Resources Services Administration, and the White House.

United Nations: NASW-USA secured NGO status through the United Nations in 2009.

UN Convention Rights of the Child (CRC): NASW-USA has been involved in the Campaign for U.S. ratification for the CRC, which is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights.

Vietnam: In 2011, NASW-USA met with a delegation of social workers from Vietnam to discuss U.S. models of foster care and child protection. This meeting was held in conjunction with staff from the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

World Social Work Day: NASW-USA continues to proudly support Social Work Day at the United Nations both with a financial contribution and the attendance of several NASW leaders and staff. Dr. Elizabeth Clark offered remarks this year regarding the importance of *The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitments to Action* and its relevance to the *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW-USA also asked members to support World Social Work Day through social media efforts.