

# World Social Work Day

March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Maison des Associations socio-politiques  
15 Rue des Savoises, Genève

## Refugees and Displaced Persons: The Role of Social Work

With Keynote Speakers from the UNHCR, UNICEF, IFRC and others



For more information please visit our  
homepage [www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)

To register please contact:  
[priska.fleischlin@ifsw.org](mailto:priska.fleischlin@ifsw.org)



**EASSW**

EASSW - European  
Association of Schools of  
Social Work



**Hes-so**  
Haute Ecole Spécialisée  
de Suisse occidentale  
Fachhochschule Westschweiz  
University of Applied Sciences and Arts  
Western Switzerland

**World Social Work Day 2016 at the UN Geneva**  
**Refugees and Displaced Persons: The Role of Social Work**

*Maison des Associations socio-politiques*  
 15 Rue des Savoises, Genève

**With Photographs about the Forgotten Refugees in Trans Caucasus by Jan Zychlinski**

- 9.00 – 09.30**                    **Registration and welcome coffee**
- 9:30 – 9:50**                    **Welcome and opening statements**
- Klaus Kühne**, IFSW Main Representative at the UN in Geneva  
**Joëlle Libois**, HES-SO Genève  
**Prof. Vimla V. Nadkarni**, IASSW
- 9.50 – 10.30**                    **Forced Migration: Refugees, Internal Displaced, Stateless, Poverty + Climate Refugees: The Role of Social Work in Origin and Transit countries**
- Monika Brulhart**, UNHCR  
**Natia Partskhaladze** or **Jean Claude Legrand**, UNICEF
- 10.30 – 11.00**                    **Morning coffee break**
- 11.00 – 12.00**                    **Panel: Forced Migration and the Role of Social Work**
- Moderator:**    **Miloslav Hetteš**, ICSW  
**Panellists:**    **Monika Brulhart**, UNHCR  
                       **Natia Partshkhaladze** or **Jean Claude Legrand**, UNICEF  
                       **Nicole Windlin**, Swiss Red Cross
- 12.00 – 12.45**                    **Interventions from the audience – questions and answers**
- 12.45 – 14.15**                    **Lunch**
- 14:15 – 15:15**                    **Integration and / or Return: The Role of Social Work**
- Dr. Jemilah Mahmood**, IFRC  
**Milena Chimienti**, HES-SO
- Panel: Integration and Return: The Role of Social Work**
- Moderator:**    **Nino Žganec**, EASSW  
**Panelists:**    **Dr. Jemilah Mahmood**, IFRC  
                       **Rolf Widmer**: ISS and FICE  
                       **Milena Chimienti**; HES-SO  
                       **Iago Kachkachishvili**, Tbilisi State University
- 15:15 – 15:35**                    **Afternoon coffee break**
- 15:35 – 16:15**                    **Interventions from the audience – questions and answers**
- 16:15 – 16:45**                    **Presentation of common statement and closing remarks**  
 IASSW + IFSW

*Overall moderation by Klaus Kühne, IFSW and Anne Lavanchy, Genève, HES-SO*

Simultaneous Interpretation will be provided in French and English. The participation is free of charge but we are grateful for any contributions. There will be a collection box at the coffee table and at registration desk.



## World Social Work Day 2016 at the UN in Geneva: Concept Note

# Refugees and Displaced Persons: The Role of Social Work

WSWD is celebrated annually worldwide by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) ([www.iassw-aiets.org](http://www.iassw-aiets.org)) and by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) ([www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)). Every year social workers celebrate WSWD at the UN to establish contact, cooperation and partnership with UN organisations and with allied NGOs. The aim is to show the social work perspective (values, principles and methods of social work) and action on global issues and to highlight achievements of social work in the pursuit of common goals.

### World Social Work Day 2016

WSWD 2016 will address the role of social work facing the situation of refugees and displaced persons. Millions are fleeing their place of living in search of survival and security, risking their lives on dangerous escape routes and threatened by human traffickers and other criminals who take advantage of their distress. The reasons for internal and international forced migration are manifold: discrimination, oppression and expulsion of political, ethnical or religious opposition or minorities, violent conflicts, natural and manmade disaster and climate change, land expropriations for dam building, urbanisation projects, land grabbing etc.

### Needs and Rights of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants

Regardless of the different reasons for displacement and forced migration and notwithstanding that the international treaties are not applicable equally to all situations of forced migrants, the psychosocial situation and the needs are similar in any case. Feelings of relief and gratitude for a successful escape and hope for a better life are mixed with uncertainty and insecurity, grief and despair, and often with traumatization caused by the uprooting from their place of living, by the loss of their livelihood and their familiar social surroundings.

First of all, those displaced and dispossessed people are in need of shelter, food, clothing, health services and special care for vulnerable groups such as children and youth, especially if unaccompanied, disabled and elderly people. Safe places for children, for girls and women are needed. All are in need of protection against discrimination, exploitation, mistreatment and criminalisation. Migrants without documents, with none or only temporary legal status are in situations of increased risk.

Time to settle down, acceptance and respect is of great help for the waiting and tasks ahead, be it the obligation to return, transfer to another country, granting a temporary permit to stay or of asylum. In various ways these situations need adaptation to new living spaces, social surroundings, occupational and educational systems and learning of foreign language and customs.

States are obliged to provide for basic immediate needs of incoming and transient refugee and asylum seekers. They have to guarantee respect of human dignity, basic human rights and social protection to refugees, displaced persons and migrants in their territories.

## The Role of Social Workers: Challenges and Achievements

Often social workers are given the responsibility to assist and accompany asylum seekers and refugees to safer places and to provide psycho-social support to them until their return in the country of origin or transit to another country. or, if asylum is granted, until refugees are economically integrated and have become self-reliant.

Social workers whether working in public or private positions, employed or volunteering are guided by the global definition of social work and the joint IASSW/IFSW “Statement of Ethical Principles” and code of ethics of their national professional organisation based on human rights. International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work

**Global Definition of Social Work** “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”  
**Adopted in 2014 by IASSW and IFSW**

(IASSW) and International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) are the three global organisations of social work and social welfare that have committed themselves to the “Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development” (2012) to action on all levels to promote social and economic equalities, dignity and worth of peoples, to work toward environmental and community sustainability and to recognize the importance of human relationships.

Social workers have a multitude of methods and techniques at their disposition to approach and alleviate the situation of migrants: individual and family counselling; group and community work; child care and social educational work; introduction to local language; customs and institutions; training and capacity building for the adaptation to and integration in educational and economic systems; networking with cultural, social and religious organisations of compatriots and of local population; organising volunteers and mentors for day to day support and guidance in local work places; preparing refugees for repatriation and countries for returnees; advocating and lobbying for refugees rights; and this list is by far not exhaustive.

To meet these challenges, it is crucial that a qualified social work workforce is available, that knows and respects ethical standards of social work profession and has a broad basic training in social work and further training for specialised work with extremely vulnerable and often traumatised populations.

### Objectives of WSWD 2016 at the UN in Geneva

Special attention will be given to:

- highlight the role of social work, its values, ethical principles and methods working with refugees, displaced persons and migrants and present some examples of good practice,
- explore the possibilities of cooperation between UN agencies and international social work organisations and reactivate, reinforce and widen existing cooperation and initiate coordinated activities,
- advocate for the more effective use of social work potential in the realisation of human rights and social development, including the support and promotion of social work training programmes and professional associations.