



IFSW Newsletter

ASIA & PACIFIC REGION

Issue 1, June 2012

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Editorial

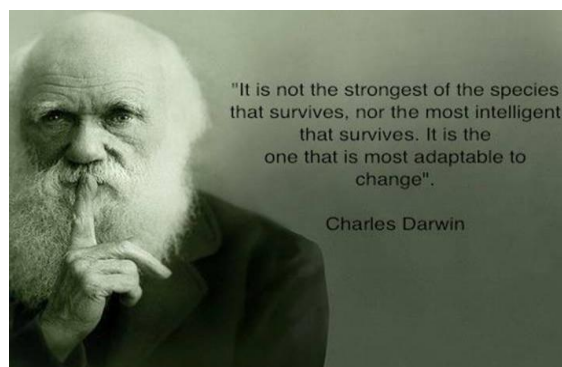
It is six months since the last newsletter of December 2011 and this is the first issue for 2012, just in time for circulation before the 2nd World Social Work Conference on Social Work and Social Development to be held in Stockholm, Sweden from the 8th – 12th July 2012. Staff and officials of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, the International Council on Social Welfare and International Federation of Social Workers which are jointly organising the Conference, have no doubt been very busy preparing for the last leg of this event in the past six months. Expectantly, many of those who participated in the 1st Joint Conference in Hong Kong in 2010 will be in Stockholm to follow through and to be updated on the strategies to implement the Global Agenda. According to Guardian Professional (www.ifsw.org) the Conference has already attracted more than 2,000 participants from among social work practitioners, managers, educators and researchers,

social policy planners and analysts, social scientists and social development professionals from all over the world. The Conference will certainly generate much discourse and sharing on its three relevant themes of human rights and social equality, environmental change and sustainable social development, and global social transformation and social action. Members of the IFSW-Asia Pacific Executive Committee extend their wishes to the organisers for another exciting, stimulating and successful Conference.

In this issue, John Ang, as President, shares his Report for the Regional Meeting on 9 July 2012 and his thoughts on developing a new Definition of Social Work to be presented during the Stockholm Conference. The Australian Association of Social Workers has posted some information on their preparations for the Stockholm Conference while the national associations of Korea, Hong Kong and Japan provide some news of their activities. We have also included interesting items from the Griffith University of Australia and the Malaysian Association of Social Workers.

As Publications Secretary, I wish to thank everyone who contributed articles for this issue and made my job easier! Let's keep them coming – the next issue will be in December 2012. Happy Conferencing to everyone who are making tracks for Stockholm!

Please send items, stories and articles preferably in MS word format as well as photos to the Editor, Elsie Lee at elsilee@gmail.com.



Charles Darwin

Report from the Regional President for IFSW Asia Pacific

At the Tokyo Regional meeting in 2011, we had the pleasure of being the first IFSW region to welcome our then in-coming Secretary General, Rory Truell who, in response, pledged to respond to the felt need to take the Federation through the process of change and to apply his experience as a bicultural social work professional to good use in guiding the work of the Federation across the globe. We were particularly thrilled to welcome him as someone who has come from our region.

We set off with the desire to invite more participative involvement among member countries so that social workers in the region could increase their awareness of the social issues in each other's country, learn from each other and engage in collaborative practice. I am happy to report that recently the Japan Association of Social Workers has set up a sister organisation relationship with the Singapore Association of Social Workers. This augurs well for the deepening of friendship and understanding between social workers from these two countries but I hope that this initiative will catch on so that there will be more exchanges within our region and across other regions of IFSW as well. The world is a shrinking place and unless we take a world perspective to many of the contemporary problems that plague us, it would not be possible to find solutions to them.

I am also happy about this initiative for another reason. As I have mentioned in other contexts, as a Federation, IFSW's direct contact with social workers is through the social work leadership in member countries. The Federation has no possibility to engage with the vast majority of social workers across the world, to know the work that they do, to empathise with their professional struggles, to support them and to honour them for the personal sacrifices that they make that has defined our profession as one which suffuses with the noblest aspirations of the human spirit. With more person-to-person exchanges, many of the lifetime contributions that our members have made will come to light in the international community and I would hope that the Federation would find some way of honouring more of these giants in our midst.

The task of appointing the 2013 host of the Asia Pacific Regional Conference has been difficult and slow because of the requirement for countries to submit joint bids to IFSW and APASWE and at the same time, to allow for consultations to resolve the many issues involved. I am happy that we have accepted the bid from Philippines and look forward to hearing about their plans to host us in Makati City from 15 to 17 May, 2013.

Going forward, we will work out a process of consultation with our counterpart regional organisation, the APASWE, so that we take on, within a shared time frame, all the anticipated issues of organising such a joint-bid. I would like to place on record my esteem and thanks to the President of APASWE for his understanding collaborative spirit.

I have indicated in the last report the need for us to work in cooperation across the region on projects that have a regional dimension. One such is the increase of social work capacity to contribute to disaster prevention, mitigation, response and recovery. We have received a modest grant from the Federation and I am glad to report that this agenda will be deliberated at the Makati Conference. Japan has agreed to provide leadership to this project and has been requested to involve other interested countries and to provide an implementation plan for the project.

We continue our search for indications of interest and resources for other projects such as collaborating across borders on ensuring that guest workers receive the necessary support and legal protection in their host countries even as they make personal sacrifices to seek a better future for their families and at the same time, the welfare of their family, especially that of young children, are attended to back home.

We issued a call among member countries in the region, for donation towards supporting Japanese social workers who may be personally affected by the recent triple disaster. I hope that you will consider donating generously towards this cause in solidarity with our colleagues, which I hope could be extended to those in other countries who have suffered personal misfortune. The extension of such a scheme would be something worth further thought.

Much support was extended to a country in the region for developing the necessary instruments towards forming a national association and for it to secure membership in IFSW and with other countries on payment of dues and other issues on membership application.

We have worked hard to extend the membership in the region and I am happy to report that several countries will be recommended for membership at the General Meeting arising from this effort.

I would like to commend our Publications Secretary, with support from Griffiths University in Australia, for putting up two issues of the Regional Newsletter in the short space of time that she has served in the Committee and each of the other members of the Regional Committee for the work and support given to me. The work has been made lighter and more fulfilling because of this.

As we look forward to support the IFSW in its Agenda for Action and other fresh initiatives as well as its work on deriving a fresh definition of social work pertinent to the times, I urge your active participation.

John Ang
President
IFSW Asia Pacific

The Quest for a Definition of Social Work

In this issue, I would like to draw your attention to the call at IFSW to participate in the ongoing project to craft a definition of social work that will reflect current realities. The definition has to apply equally well across the globe yet recognize particular variations in countries and regions. A good definition must be clear, concise and hopefully elegant. This will help people to remember and to use it.

Most of what I have to say here about the differences in the existing and proposed definitions has been abstracted from a recent keynote address that I gave at a conference organized by the Japan Association of Social Work in Okinawa on 26 May.

Social work stands in the gap of many divides. Between the rich and poor, between rich countries and poor countries and between giant corporations and the poor labourer, social work must plead the cause of redistributive justice. Between governments and the governed, social work must play more effective advocacy roles to secure enlightened policies that will narrow the education, wealth and opportunity gaps. Between people of different creeds, ethnicity and national backgrounds who today co-mingle at work in many cities, social work must confront prejudice in the workplace as it must in school, where children perceived as different from others are subjected to bullying and in public life, where minority people suffer abuse and discrimination. Between gender divides, social work must address structural impediments, empower women and promote non-discriminatory practices. Between the young and old, social work must foster intergenerational ties so that the young are not decried for their impetuosity and age appreciated from a whole-of-life perspective and not at the diminishing end.

How shall we live up to the ideals of humanity that unite social workers and yet in each country reflect the diversity of aspirations and way of life that give humanity its rich hues? What is the core that distinguishes us as a profession and what are the particulars that must be encouraged to flourish so that social work remains relevant to society?

These are questions that should occupy us if we are to claim that social work is relevant to a multifaceted and

changing world. Challenges and change are inevitable. Even prior to our becoming recognized as a profession, there were debates in the early years of the twentieth century on the proper response to the poor, between those representing the 'scientific' Social Darwinist approach and others favouring a more immediate understanding of the poor in their circumstance. (Parker-Oliver and Demiris, 2006). As the profession developed, there were other controversies, such as those in the 1950s between the 'functional' and the 'diagnostic' schools (Apteka, 1954). More recently, Lena Dominelli observed in 1996 that the 'competency-based' approach to social work threatens anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 1996). I am happy that scholars and social work educators in our region are participating in this debate.

Social work is dynamic, accommodative and assimilative so that the controversial may even in time become commonplace. Besides, practitioners with different skills and experience may find different modes, levels and settings of practice more fruitful than others, different theoretical perspectives more salient and different strategies more appropriate with which to engage the social problems and issues of the day. These issues can also be framed differently from different socio-historical perspectives. Differences in the approach to social work are therefore to be expected and serve to underline the dynamism of the profession in the world.

The world bodies representing social workers and social work educators are currently in consultation with their respective members to review the definition of social work, which was adopted in Montreal, Canada at the IASSW- IFSW Social Work Conference in 2000. That definition is as follows:

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work."

In a recently concluded meeting with African member countries of IFSW, the definition was felt to be still applicable although there were dissenting views, some of which went something like this, as reported by the Secretary General:

- I work with a nomadic tribe so we have to get people to support each other, for example, asking one person to give a poor person two goats for milk and breeding. And in a year he gives the goats back but has his own. (*A young Somali male social worker saying that this is typical of his practice*).
- We are capacity building. (*A female Kenyan social worker*).

• We do community empowerment and education to help people to comprehend their rights because in Africa there is a lot of ignorance. For example, people can apply for a loan as it is their right and once the loan is paid back, they can get a bigger loan – social workers need to tell them this through education.

(A female Kenyan social worker).

• We go through the elders – if you don't get their support, nothing will happen. Getting the elders involved means it will happen.

(An Ugandan female social worker).

Here in these examples, social workers act as mediators, enablers, educators and intermediaries. These dissenting voices felt the need for African perspectives – “We need to bring in our people and environment into the picture, our land with floods and displacement; we need African life in the definition.” This awareness may in time lead to an African model of social work but for the meantime, they highlight the range of practice at the local level and reflect social work as multifaceted and diverse.

A consultation draft by the IFSW Task Force on Social Work Definition is currently in circulation as well as another one representing the views of Latin American countries. The Taskforce definition defines social work thus:

“Social work promotes socially just and inclusive systems based on capacity building, human rights, responsible citizenship and fair societies for individuals, families, groups, communities and beyond. The social work body of knowledge enables practitioners to work alongside people and communities to support their sustainable interdependence. The profession is guided by the understanding that resourced, informed interdependent people and communities make the best decisions on their own wellbeing.”

The Latin American version reads as follows:

“Social Work is a profession that falls within the realm of relations among social subjects and their relations with the State in the different socio-historical settings of the professional activity. It develops a social praxis and a set of socio-educational actions that fall upon life's material and social reproduction from the perspective of social transformation. It is committed (to) democracy and the fight against social inequalities, by strengthening autonomy, participation and the safeguard of citizenship for the achievement of human rights and social justice.”

The three definitions differ in certain important ways. The first definition makes clear that social work is about working with people, as individuals and in families, groups and communities. The principal foci of social work are ‘problem solving’ and ‘change’,

‘empowerment’ and ‘liberation’. Problem solving is directed at the ‘transactions between people and their environments’. Change is directed at enabling ‘all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction’. The language of ‘empowerment and liberation’ is muted and expressed as being ‘in solidarity’ with disadvantaged people ‘to alleviate poverty and to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion’. Implied in the idea of social inclusion is the broad acceptance of society and its institutions although human rights and social justice are recognized as primary motivations and justification for social work practice. The definition recognizes both the universal ‘holistic focus’ of social work and the context-specific practices arising from differences in the cultural, socio-historical and economic circumstance.

The second Taskforce definition plunges directly into the promotion of systems and institutions within society that is fair, just and inclusive. This systemic focus at institutions downplays social work's traditional concerns with individuals, families and groups. Partnership is forged with community members to ‘support’ their sustainable interdependence. The choice of the word ‘support’ suggests a co-participatory and egalitarian relationship between social workers and people in the community that they are working with. It has also been pointed out that the first sentence in the definition underlines the universal set of values and principles of social work whilst the last sentence pays respects to the contextual differences in different countries, which produce different life options.

The Latin American proposal identifies clearly the relations between subjects and the State as the key emphasis and promotes a social praxis and socio-education role for social work aimed at social transformation. According to this formulation social workers, by their training and theoretical reflection, are aware of the inequities in society and of the policies and regulatory practices, that perpetuate them. Thus, they take culturally appropriate social action to fight all forms of discrimination, injustice and oppression for the ‘promotion, protection, restitution and enforceability of human and social rights and the means to access them’.

Each definition champions a viewpoint, from client work to institution building to anti-oppressive practices. How do we relate to the intellectual currents that are shaping social work in the world today? Traditional social work theory has been enriched by radical critiques and the development of critical and feminist theories. These provide us with conceptual tools to analyse the oppression masked in everyday life – those powers of control that are structural and institutional, even in welfare policies and schemes, as well as those in the personal and interpersonal

spheres that keep the poor in their place. Meanwhile, feminist critique has opened our eyes to systematic discriminatory practices and mindsets that confine women to the home and kitchen. We are challenged by global trends that question held beliefs about families, sex and procreation. How do we contribute to the debate about human rights with sensitivity, humanity and dialectical understanding of the deep roots of our culture in its interface with this global tide?

How can we in the Asia Pacific region contribute to this co-creation of a definition at IFSW that will reflect our understanding of what the profession is? We have social workers working in conflict zones, in remote villages, in desert communities, city slums and island enclaves. Many work on survival issues with the very poor, with children in the streets and woman and girls in red light districts. Each is involved with the daily struggles of our clients. In indirect practice, social workers are also employed as government servants and consultants doing research, designing services, influencing policies or participate directly in crafting policies and directives on health care, education, housing, urban and rural development and social service provision.

We should find a definition that will embrace all that they do and yet point to areas that are legitimate concerns for social workers and which our colleagues in other parts of the world struggle with. Some of these concerns may touch on the quality and honesty of governments but we should be sensitive in our language so as not to threaten the possibility of practicing social work in those countries. We should also be aware that even as the nature society changes and new issues of living come to light, social workers must redefine their roles and act.

It is in this light that I offer the following definition, which I think, is closer to our traditions to seek your participation:

“Social work is a world profession dedicated towards improving the quality of life of people everywhere. Recognising that people are affected in their circumstance by individual, relational, cultural, historical, socio-economic and environmental factors, social workers pledge themselves to the highest ethical standards in the promotion of peace, social justice, human rights and dignity without losing sight of the goals of meeting personal, livelihood and aspirational needs.”

John Ang
President
IFSW Asia Pacific

Australian Social Workers for Stockholm

Many Australian social workers are coming to the Stockholm conference. Eyes and ears will be open in preparation for the next IFSW Conference which will be held in Melbourne, Australia in 2014. You are all invited to come and be involved.

In Stockholm Professor Karen Healy, AASW President, will be giving a keynote speech on Social Work Education. We are delighted to have a new President for the AASW. She has a long association with Sweden. Others from the International Social Work (ISW) Committee, including the convenor, Professor Lesley Chenoweth and committee members, Naomi Spencer and Dayle Foreman, are also presenting at the Conference. Professor Richard Hugman has been involved with the Ethics Committee review for the IFSW and is standing again as a representative on behalf of the AASW.

Naomi's subject is Rejuvenating the Commonwealth – feedback from the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which was held in Perth in October 2011. The Commonwealth is a network of a third of the world's people with common political, educational, legal, governance and trading infrastructures. The Commonwealth is an important vehicle for training, capacity building and dispute resolution. Exchange, mentoring, training and development possibilities exist, including ongoing grants which are available for projects. Preparing for this was a major activity of the ISW Committee last year.

Australian social workers are happy to assist the IFSW Asia Pacific chapter in a variety of ways. We are involved with advocacy on behalf of neighbours whose lives are impacted by climate change. Another concern is human trafficking. Australia is a destination country and many Asian countries provide crucibles. Australians are keen to showcase and invite students to our fine education facilities. With our well established social services, there is also interest in exchanges and sharing information with our colleagues. The ISW Committee is keen to promote exchange and educational opportunities for social workers internationally. You are welcome to let us know of your 'pet' projects.

While here (in Sweden), keep an eye out for Friends of the Commonwealth, Friends of IFSW, COSW (the Commonwealth Organisation of Social Workers), the Antipodeans' gathering and other networking and collegial support opportunities. Enjoy Stockholm and plan to be in Melbourne in two years' time...!

Naomi Spencer
International Social Work Committee
Australian Association of Social Workers

Development of Narrative Therapy in Australia

Australia's Michael White, a social worker, co-developed narrative therapy which is proving to be effective. The Dulwich Centre is one of a myriad of community service organisations which has opportunities which may interest you.

Dulwich Centre Foundation International is looking for experienced narrative therapists/community workers /teachers who wish to volunteer their time to teach in contexts of social suffering, and in communities in which there are very few resources and often in circumstances of considerable hardship. If you are an experienced narrative practitioner and are in the position to volunteer your time (and to fund your own airfares) and would like to participate in challenging, rewarding and inspiring assignments, please contact us at: dulwich@dulwichcentre.com.au. There is a considerable emphasis on teamwork and support in relation to these projects.

Report on Activities of the KASW

1. The Korea Association of Social Workers is making a pivotal contribution to the Establishment of the "Act for the Improvement of Treatment and Status of Social Workers and Others"

The Republic of Korea has experienced a remarkable economic growth for the past 60 years even in the ruins of the Korean War (195~1953). The country is the only one that has developed from an economically assisted country to an economically assisting country in terms of OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee). Clearly, social workers who have taken the side of the socially weak and stood out for their welfare, rights and interests have played a key role in this significant economic and societal development.

However, social workers who have played a leading role as a bridge for social welfare services in both public and private sectors, have been themselves in relatively poor condition, compared with those of other social welfare experts. The KASW has since made a strenuous effort to improve their treatment and status. As a result of such an effort, the KASW saw the "Act for the Improvement of Treatment and Status of Social Workers and Others" established on March 30, 2011. This Act is to legally regulate the improvement of the welfare of social workers and others. So, the time has come when the state or government should be responsible for the improvement of treatment and status of social workers and others. The establishment of the Act is enormously significant in the history of Korean social work in that the importance of social workers' role has been accepted by the state and the public.

The Act includes the following: first, the central government and autonomous local governments should act to make a contribution to the improvement in the social welfare of social workers and others by strengthening and improving their treatment and status. Second, the central government and autonomous local governments should act to improve the treatment of social workers and others, enhance and improve their welfare and status. Third, the central government and autonomous local governments should act to increase the pay of social workers and others to the level of that of public officials in charge of social welfare. Fourth, the Minister of Health and Welfare and the governors of autonomous local governments should check the level of pay and the realities of payment to social workers and others every three years. Fifth, in order to stabilize the lives of social workers and others and improve their welfare, an individual or organization can establish a social welfare credit by receiving approval from the Minister of Health and Welfare.



Mr. Sung-Chul Cho, KASW President talking about the Act for the Improvement of Treatment and Status of Social Workers and Others"

2. KASW Seminar: "Discussion on the Development Effectiveness of ODA Development and Challenges for Korean Social Workers"

The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4), the largest general meeting in its history, was held in Busan, Republic of Korea from November 29 to December 1, 2011. The general meeting, attended by Minister-class persons from about 160 nations around the world, was an arena for discussion about how to effectively cooperate for development. The 3-day discussion led to the declaration of 'A Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation' or 'The Busan Manifesto', a resulting document. The core of the Manifesto is to turn the paradigm of assistance policy from 'effectiveness of assistance' to 'effectiveness of development' and construct a new global partnership that helps link a variety of assistance partners like developed countries, emerging countries, and private sectors.

The KASW and the Korean Academy of International Social Work used this HLF-4 as the momentum to draw the Korean social workers' attention to the third world nations at the level of international social work. And they used it as another momentum for social work

professionals in South Korea to take an active part in the fields of international development cooperation. For this purpose, the two organizations worked together to hold a seminar titled ‘Discussion on the Development Effectiveness of ODA and Challenges for Korean Social Workers—Through the Opportunity Given by the HLF in Busan’. The seminar checked the present state of assistance development cooperation conducted at the global level and took a look at what direction Korean social workers should take in the field with presentations given on what direction to go in the future. Furthermore, it addressed a variety of challenges to be resolved—and roles to be played—by the social work educators and practitioners.

The seminar served as a starting point for social workers in Korea to take an active part in the field of international development cooperation and actively cope with a number of challenges facing international societies. The KASW, with a continuous interest in development cooperation, intends to make an effort to draw social workers’ attention to it and encourage them to be involved in it. In November 2012, under the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC), the KASW will hold a forum titled ‘2012 Social Work and Social Development: the Role of Social Workers and the Challenges Faced’. Its purpose is to search for social workers’ roles and future directions responding to the challenges faced in the field of international development cooperation.



Discussions at the Seminar

3. KASW Joining the UN Global Compact and Constructing the Basis for Transparency Raise and Anti-Corruption Campaign

Since it signed an agreement with the Council for the Korean Pact on Anti-Corruption and Transparency in March 2006, the KASW has played a leading role in the ethical management by social welfare institutes. In October 2006, it opened the Social Work Ethics Counseling Center and the Social Work Human Rights Counseling Center, doing its best to encourage social workers’ ethical practice. A project, ‘The Education Project for Strengthening Social Workers’ Capacities and Raising Transparency in Practice’ implemented from 2007 to 2009 under the support of the Community Chest of Korea, played a key role in the introduction of ethical management by Korea’s social welfare institutes.

On the basis of its continuous efforts, in December 2011, the KASW joined the UN Global Compact to raise transparency in operating institutes and lay the foundations for sustainable management and anti-corruption in the field of social welfare. Joining it, in order to spread the values of human rights, labor, the environment, and anti-corruption, which are the UN Global Compact’s four values - and to make a fairer and more transparent society, in May 2012, the KASW started in earnest to campaign anti-corruption under the slogan: ‘Campaign for the National Promise to Make a Society without Corruption’. On May 24 in the same year, it banded with the Anti-Corruption Civil Movement Association to hold a declaration ceremony, ‘Campaign for the National Promise to Make a Society without Corruption’ and it has since been passionate about the campaign.

Faced with challenges like poverty and climate change, globally and domestically, with challenges like economical polarization and societal conflict, the KASW, as a professional organization of social workers, will observe the UN Global Compact’s 10 principles, and continuously pursue and come up with new directions for social unification based on a sense of social responsibility.



At the declaration ceremony for the ‘Campaign for the National Promise to Make a Society without Corruption’

4. Commemorative Ceremony - “2012 World Social Work Day”

The KASW, as a member organization of the IFSW, has celebrated World Social Work Day with other national associations to commemorate the achievements social workers. Since 2007 the KASW has held a commemorative ceremony on April 22, that is, Social Workers Day (Korea) every year. This year, however, it changed the day from April 22 to March 30, on which the “Act for the Improvement of Treatment and Status of Social Workers and Others” was passed, to celebrate our achievement.

In addition to a commemorative ceremony of the Social Workers Day, the KASW has held an athletic event for social workers around the country every year. This year, it celebrated the 6th anniversary of the Social Workers Day on April 13, and rewarded social workers who have contributed to the development of social work with the Award of Minister of Health and Welfare, Award of the President of KASW, and Hanmaek Grand Social Worker Award. And it held the ‘6th Athletic Event for Social Workers’ in order to

pursue unity among social workers and encourage pride as a social worker. It was attended by more than 1,000 social workers who enjoyed soccer, relay, and rope skipping in groups. In spite of a rainy day, it was very successful. The Gangwon Association of Social Workers won the flag and prize money in the Soccer Event for the Flag of Minister of Health and Welfare, which is the highlight of this event.

Furthermore, it held a workshop as a special program of this year, with the theme: "2012 Current Issues and Challenges of International Social Work" which was attended by social workers working in the field of international cooperation and people who are interested in international social work. The workshop was designed to introduce the "Global Agenda on Social Work and Social Development" which has been promoted since 2010, and to encourage Korean social workers to participate in it. The workshop, held on March 20, on "World Social Work" was a good opportunity to report to social workers in Korea the progress on the promotion of the "Global Agenda on Social Work and Social Development", and the trends and activities of international social work.



Award Recipients of 2012 Social Workers' Day



6th Athletic Event for Social Workers



Support from KASW Members

Kim, Soo-Jung
Korea Association of Social Workers

Stepping into a New Era - Hong Kong World Social Work Day 2012

March 20, 2012 marked the fifth year Hong Kong commemorating World Social Work Day. In addition to organizing a Forum on the Day, the Organising Committee also organized a Pre-Forum Conference on March 3 and a Walkathon on the first day of 2012. In addition, representative of the Hong Kong Social Workers Association presented the Local Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (the Local Agenda) to the Chief-Executive-Designate of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, Mr. C Y Leung, on June 14.

The Local Agenda was jointly prepared by the local co-organizers of the 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development in 2010, when close to 3000 people from the global social work community came together in Hong Kong to participate in the first ever Joint World Conference and prepare the draft Global Agenda.

The Local Agenda reaffirms the inherent value and dignity of human beings, and that social workers are pioneers and advocates of social development. It contains the priority actions proposed by more than 300 social workers in areas related to population ageing, poverty, disability, ethnic diversity, social protection, community health, family functioning, youth development, sustainable development, user participation, social work education, social work professional autonomy, and social welfare services financing.

Participants at the Pre-Forum Conference prepared a list of recommendations for the incoming HKSAR Government, building on the Local Agenda and Global Agenda.

The main theme of the Social Work Day 2012 Forum was "Social Welfare Planning". The Director of Social Welfare officiated at the Forum and then 5 invited panelists and 250 participants discussed the vision and philosophy of social welfare development, roles of social workers and social welfare organizations, and the mechanism for planning social welfare services. The panelists included the heads of Hong Kong Social Workers Association, Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union, Hong Kong Council of Social Welfare and Department of Applied Social Studies of the City University of Hong Kong. The participants included representatives of local social work training institutes, social services organizations, social work students as well as service user groups.

The efforts of the social work community have seen some encouraging achievement. The Chief-Executive-Designate, Mr C Y Leung, has committed to reinstate a medium and long term social

welfare planning mechanism, which was suspended about 15 years ago.

Last but not least, more than 300 people participated in the 2012 New Year marathon to kick start the Social Work Day. If you want to know more about the commemorating events, see the photos and share the spirits, please visit www.socialworkday.org.hk.

Irene Leung Piu Yui
Hong Kong Association of Social Workers

Podsocs, the Podcast for Social Workers on the Run – Be a Part of it!

The School of Human Services and Social Work at Griffith University in Australia is about to launch *Podsocs*. The *Podsocs* initiative, designed for social workers, practitioners, policy makers, students, researchers and educators, provides a forum for the dissemination of the latest research and exploration of practice issues across the globe. *Podsocs* is built on the assertion that social workers are influential and provides a unique way for this influence to be expressed. Framed by social justice principles and the values of social work, contemporary and sometimes controversial issues and perspectives are presented by the *Podsocs* team.

Podsocs will launch with fifteen podcasts showcasing the work of researchers and practitioners from Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the Americas and the U.K. Over time, the *Podsocs* tendrils will extend to wherever social work is practised and will include the voices of the people with whom we work. The first fifteen podcasts present conversations on topics such missing people, adoption, surrogacy, equality, the Social Workers Act in Malaysia, supervision, street vending children in Nigeria, and the experiences of people with intellectual disabilities in prison to name a few. New podcasts on diverse topics will be released at regular intervals.

Podsocs will be launched within the next few weeks and podcasts will be available at www.podsocs.com and downloadable via itunes. You'll also find *Podsocs* via Twitter and Facebook. Do you have a topic you would like to hear about? Would you like to share your research or practice experiences? Need student resources? If so, check out *Podsocs* and email the team. *Podsocs* will grow and develop with *your* support and with contributions from social workers across the globe. Australian social workers have an added bonus as listening to *Podsocs* will attract continuing professional development points for AASW accreditation. Bookmark, download and become a *Podsocser*!

Malaysia – Gearing up for Competency-based Child Protection Practice

The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD), the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are working in partnership to capacity build social workers for child protection practice, and as supervisors and trainers. UNICEF commissioned Dr Pauline Meemeduma, Australian Social Work Consultant with years of experience in child protection work and expertise in competency-based education and training, to conduct a series of workshops to train trainers (TOT) from among social welfare officers, medical social workers, social work educators and practitioners from non-government welfare organisations.



The first TOT in Foundational Child Protection Practice was held in May 2011 followed by a Teaching Lab in September 2011. The second TOT in Tertiary Child Protection Services was conducted in June 2012. In addition, Pauline has also trained social workers in understanding and implementation of the National Competency Standards to prepare social workers for the regulation and licensure of practice when the proposed Social Workers Act is enacted and enforced in the near future.



To reinforce learning and teaching skills, MASW has undertaken the task of facilitating practice labs for these trainers in 2011 and 2012, and will continue to support all efforts at enhancing competent practice.

Elsie Lee
Vice-President
Malaysian Association of Social Workers

A Report on World Social Work Day from Japan

Commemorating the East Japan Earthquake 11 March 2011: Learning from Experience and Planning for Mid and Long-term Support



On March 25, 2012, Japan celebrated World Social Work Day. Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership, Social Care Service Staff Members Association, Administrators' Association of Japanese Social Work Schools and Japanese Association of Schools of Social Workers organized a social event commemorating the East Japan Earthquake day, 11 March 2011 which occurred one year ago. According to Japanese Police Agency report, 15,854 lives were lost, 26,992 were injured, and 3,155 people are missing across twenty prefectures.



Social workers gathered at this event acknowledged that the people and the areas affected have not fully recovered, and mid and long-term support is much needed. Some of the recommendations resulting from this World Social Work Day event are 1) setting up disaster social work stations, and 2) establishing disaster medical assistance teams.

Mariko Kimura
for the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW

UPCOMING EVENTS...

International Conferences



2nd World Social Work Conference on Social Work and Social Development, Stockholm, Sweden 8th – 12th July 2012



Jointly promoted by the International Association of Schools of Social Work, the International Council on Social Welfare and the International Federation of Social Workers, the Conference will have three main themes - human rights and social equality, environmental change and sustainable social development, and global social transformation and social action.

Website: <http://www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org>



Strengths Based Practice in Social Work and Human Services Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, 22nd – 24th November 2012

The conference invites practitioners to reflect on strengthening individuals, groups, communities, and organisations. Medium is Posters, Multimedia and Papers in that order. All contributions Peer refereed. Organized by: Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 30th July 2012

Website: <http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au>

Contact person: Kimberley Lloyd-Jones.

The 7th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health



REGISTRATION
AVAILABLE
SOON!



7th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health, Los Angeles, California 23rd – 27th June 2013

The theme for the Conference is "Research to Practice: Completing the Circle".

Hosted by the USC School of Social Work and Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Southern California, USA.

Website: <http://pathways2013.com>

Regional Conferences



3rd Conference in Advancing Social Work Series: Improving Practice Competencies in Education and Mentoring, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

16th – 17th July 2012

Organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences (Social Work Programme), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kuching, Malaysia

The conference is aiming to strengthen the working relationship between those in the field and trainers, so the next generation of social workers are well equipped to deal with contemporary practice issues. It also aims to encourage a strong mentoring culture within the work setting – a traditional core area of professional practice which it is timely to revive. It is through education and supervision that the profession will achieve the levels of competencies expected of it by the proposed Social Workers Act and by the public we serve.

Website: <http://www.ciasw.unimas.my>

11th International Narrative Therapy and Community Work Conference, Adelaide, Australia **6th – 8th March 2013**

Come and join national and international practitioners in exploring thoughtful and diverse forms of narrative therapy and collective narrative practice. Relevant to those working with individuals, families, groups and communities, this event will interweave practice, theory and politics. It will invite practitioners to consider links between therapy, community work, and the creative/performing arts. Past conferences have been in Brazil, Hong Kong, Liverpool, Atlanta, Norway, and Mexico.

It will coincide with the World Music Festival WOMAdelaide, the Adelaide Fringe Festival, and the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. There are pre-conference workshops on March 4 and 5. More information on www.dulwichcentre.com.au.

To be officially announced soon...

2013 Asia Pacific Social Work Regional Conference Philippines

IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Working Group

President:	John Ang (Singapore)
Member-at-Large:	Mariko Kimura (Japan)
Secretary:	Rose Henderson (New Zealand)
Treasurer:	Michiko Hirata (Japan)
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