

Reflections on the Next Global Agenda Volume 1

Contributions from
the International Association of Schools of Social Work,
the International Council on Social Welfare,
and the International Federation of Social Workers



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Foreword

David N Jones and Abye Tassé

The purpose of this pamphlet is to stimulate a global conversation about the global priorities for social work and social development in the next decade.

The Global Agenda, initiated in 2006 by the three sister organisations - International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) - was formally launched in 2010 at the joint world conference in Hong Kong. Since that launch, almost a decade ago, the Presidents of each of these organisations have changed but the global partners have all remained fully committed to working together to implement and advance The Agenda.

In this first issue of 'Reflections on the Next Global Agenda', the three current Presidents set out visions to provoke debate, along with a summary of the feedback that IFSW has so far gathered. The vision statements have been ordered alphabetically by organisation: Annamaria Campanini (President, IASSW) is followed by Eva Holmberg-Herrström and Tom Johannesen (President and Director, ICSW) and Silvana Martinez (President, IFSW). Finally, Rose Henderson (IFSW Board Member) and Rory Truell (IFSW Secretary General) summarise the feedback received by IFSW to date, drawing on the IFSW open website consultation page and workshops held at the 2019 Asia-Pacific, Africa and Europe Regional Conferences.

These vision statements were commissioned by us as the current and future Global Agenda Coordinators. We need to hear a diversity of ideas. Discussion about differences and commonalities is crucial in building a consensus about a global strategy that all can identify with and embrace and which inspires confidence. Each of the organisations was given the opportunity to contribute up to two short statements. These reflections are not formal, organisational position statements, but designed to stimulate that global conversation.

So now is your chance to respond and help shape the next Global Agenda. You can make your contribution through any of the websites below. We hope the organisations will feel able to publish more versions in this booklet series, free to download, to inspire others to bring forward their

support or different suggestions. Everybody's contribution counts, whether you are a social worker, an expert by experience, policy maker, educator or someone who is a partner with social work.

Many people - too many to name - have contributed to the success of the 2010-2020 Agenda – it has truly been a shared endeavour. What seemed like an impossible dream 14 years ago is now a global reality, giving us a firm foundation on which to advance The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development into the next decade. Please join the debate!

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Please see these websites to share your vision for the next Global Agenda 2020-2030:

<https://www.iassw-aiets.org/>

<https://www.icsw.org/>

<https://www.ifsw.org/ga-consultation/>

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Chapter 1

Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2020-2030: IASSW Vision statement

Annamaria Campanini, IASSW President

The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2010-2020 has united social work educators and social work and social development practitioners across the globe through shared experiences, best practices and by strengthening the role, influence and impact of social work and social development in promoting a more just society for all. In visualising a new world, the themes of social and economic equality, human dignity for all, sustainable environments and communities and strengthening of human relationships remain fundamental building blocks for the Global Agenda 2020-2030.

The challenge is to reimagine a new world in the face of ongoing human rights abuses, poverty and inequality, hunger, environmental disasters linked to climate change and global warming, wars and conflict, drug and human trafficking, xenophobia, migration, and gender-based violence, among other social ills. Underscoring these are three major discourses and practices that impact human development and well-being that need to be critically interrogated and challenged. These are the pervasive and pernicious influences of neoliberal capitalist globalization, new public management, and the indiscriminate adoption of science of the logical positivist tradition. Individuals, families and communities are left behind in degrading, unsafe and polluted environments without infrastructure and basic services, with little hope for a better future. A new world is only possible if social work and social development educators and practitioners unite in protecting people who are in vulnerable positions, but at the same time building their agency to engage in challenging and undoing oppression, discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, generally based on intersecting social criteria such as race, class, gender, caste, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location, religion and language. People's individual and collective political, socio-economic and cultural

rights, and their right to a safe, clean and healthy environment must be at the core of social work and social development education, practice, research and policy debates and actions.

In going forward with the Global Agenda 2020-2030, we commit to contribute to sustainable development where both people and planet matters; there is no social justice without environmental justice. We must strengthen our capacity and voice by analysing and using international laws, declarations and conventions to collectively tackle structural injustices, influence policy and facilitate social change on global, regional and local levels. The first 10 years have laid the foundation of a values based commitment, which has been an important step in contributing to a more just society. In the second decade we have to focus on specific areas where concrete actions of implementation are defined and their impact evaluated.

The Global Agenda 2020-2030 must prioritise the world's children in each of the pillars. Too many children are hungry every day, lack health and education opportunities, are living in polluted environments and conflict areas, and are exploited in poor as well as in rich countries, and miss early childhood development in the first 1000 days of their lives, which leave them trapped in poverty with bleak prospects of a better future.

We invite social work educators to develop curricula that are aligned with global trends and which are locally relevant, that will integrate micro, mezzo and macro practices to attain the UN Sustainable Development Goal of equitable, socially inclusive, integrated and environmentally sustainable economic growth and development. Social work theories, models and interventions must prepare social workers for locally relevant social work and social development practice to address the issues arising from a rapidly and intensely globalizing world, to intervene at individual and community levels, and to shape social policies and promote structural changes. Field placements must create opportunities for real life practice experiences for students. Strong partnerships must be established between education, research and practice to ensure relevant training and educational opportunities.

Suggested themes or pillars for the Global Agenda 2020-2030 are as follows:

1. **Respect for relevant local/indigenous knowledge systems of all peoples:** This pillar would allow engaging all people in finding solutions to structural challenges that are relevant to their own contexts and life experiences; countering discrimination, Western hegemony, racism and human right abuses, and developing enabling environments that create pathways to transform negative outcomes of poverty and inequalities into positive outcomes of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable communities.

2. **Conflict, violence, war and peace building:** This pillar would allow for addressing gender-based violence, domestic violence, violence in schools, xenophobia-based violence, religion-based conflict, inter-personal violence, bullying, and facilitating inclusive and peaceful communities and non-violent societies on micro, mezzo and macro levels. The pillar applies to all people in vulnerable positions, but in particular against girls and women within personal and political contexts, protecting their rights and entitlements and recognising their agency to contribute in political, economic, social and cultural development sectors.
3. **Child protection, participation and agency:** This pillar would allow for addressing children in vulnerable positions and the need for their protection, while recognizing their agency to contribute to the social, economic and environmental dimensions that create sustainable communities. It allows for challenging child labour; child soldiers; malnutrition; hunger; gender discrimination; patriarchy; unsafe and polluted environments and developmental delays in early childhood. Children should be recognised and engaged as key partners in finding positive pathways for climate change and ecological sustainability, including protecting the physical environment against depletion of natural resources, disaster prevention, preparation, and management.
4. **Migrants, refugees and displaced people:** This pillar would allow for addressing exclusions, poverty, hunger, power structures, xenophobia, discrimination, human rights abuses, violence, climate change and human trafficking through social work education, research, practice and policy development.

Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Walking into a Different Decade

Eva Holmberg Herrström, ICSW President and Tom Johannesen, ICSW Executive Director

Walking into a Different Decade

As we approach the 2020's the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development can celebrate 10 years of influence since 2010. As we now want to set an agenda for 2020-2030 we have to realise that the world looks quite different than it did only 10 years ago.

Planet and People in the driving seat

The climate crisis is here as a result of setting profit instead of planet and people in the driving seat for a very long time. As social policy influencers we will meet challenges and tasks unheard of until now. The consequences of the climate crisis will go beyond our present imagination. There will be changes in health, social security, conflict, movement of people and a number of other areas.

We need to quickly and with vigour develop a deeper understanding of the interconnection between environmental and social issues. And move into a complex agenda with humility. But also with the confidence that we can deliver with our joint and vast experience in social matters. Deliver, not manage. Because this change will go beyond management. The best we can do is to take charge of change.

We can not do it alone

We can not do this alone as a sector. We have to develop partnerships beyond those we have nurtured for a long time. We should do that with environmentalists, with whom we have to develop cross-professional strategies. And we should also seek ways to interact better with the governmental and corporate sectors to see if there are common ground to be found in the crisis we face. We have to be present. Some have said that if you are not at the table, you are on the menu. We need to ensure that social protection and people's well-being is nurtured, not shrunk. The alternative to putting people first is anarchy and social unrest.

Identity as political force

Another major concern as we move into a new decade has to do with identity. Matters linked to this play an increasing and changing role in the public domain. It is sometimes and more and more often

leading to nationalistic policy-making, moving away from international cooperation and following narrower paths.

Roads are closed instead of paved, fences are built instead of bridges. We need to counteract this and work on expanding the definition of we instead of clinging to a definition of us. Throughout the history and also contemporary practice of social policy solidarity has been the main project. This is our road, and we should continue widening it.

Develop national umbrellas

As global organisations in social work and social development we have a special responsibility to do what we can to encourage the development of national umbrella bodies in social well-being. And to support them in developing capacity building and resource provision.

Let us walk together. It will be demanding.

Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Another World is Possible

Silvana Martinez, IFSW President

The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development has been established in the last 10 years as a key tool for the profession, but also for all those people who work in the field of public policies, social policies and social development based on a human rights perspective. In the last decade, key issues have been addressed that served as great pillars for thinking, discussing and addressing social problems that affect us globally. It has also been a key instrument to make visible the practices of social workers regarding these problems and to think about new social intervention strategies. It has also served to address the issues of the Agenda collectively and holistically involving many people, with different perspectives and cultural, political, social and economic contexts. It has also allowed the visibility of Social Work as a profession and of the contributions, it makes throughout the world to promote more democratic and equitable practices, vindicating the ethical principles of the profession.

We are currently facing a new challenge: to think, debate and develop a New Global Agenda for the next ten years (2020-2030). It is a challenge, since we need to condense into some pillars or key issues the diversity, complexity and depth of the social problems that make up the current global social order, understood as a historical, collective, political and conflictive construct, which implies a complex plot of processes in which power relations, exploitation and domination are constitutive of said construct.

If we understand this order (in the macro level) as a historical and political construct, this implies that it is not natural and that the social inequalities that are consequences of it (in the micro level) are also not natural but political. That is, they are the product of human decisions, political decisions and concrete practices. Then, this order can be deconstructed and constructed in another way and, therefore, **another world is possible**. It is possible another world more human, more democratic, more egalitarian, less violent, where the dignity of the human being is respected, as

well as the planet, nature, the environment, where the wealth of the world is distributed more equitably, and Human Rights can be respected, and technology can be used for the benefit of humanity and not for its destruction.

In this unequal, convulsed and violent world in which we live, we need to build a political view of Social Work. This is necessary to be able to unveil (bring to the light) the power devices that sustain and reproduce social inequalities and not to be paralyzed by its superficial consequences. It is also important to understand that Social Work is not enough. We need to involve both people who suffer from inequalities as well as social movements, popular organizations and governments, who make the political decisions.

The role of Social Work educators is also essential in order to think about a training based on a Human Rights approach from a critical perspective. We have to think about the professional profile required by the new times and the deep and accelerated changes that we live. This is very important because we need professionals with a solid theoretical, epistemological, ethical and methodological training, to address the complexity and depth of the social problems that Social Workers around the world face every day in our practices.

In this sense and after these reflections, I consider it very important to include in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development for the next 10 years, the following topics or pillars:

1. **Gender Relations and the Right to Sexual Diversity:** This pillar would allow addressing topics such as patriarchy, gender violence, femicides, domestic violence, homophobia, inequalities of women and girls in education, work, health, and justice, among others.
2. **Migrations and Human Displacement:** This pillar would allow addressing the reasons and causes of migration caused by armed conflicts, climate change, hunger and extreme poverty, among others, and the problems that these displacements imply: uncertainty, loss of rights, discrimination, lack of work, uprooting, breaking social and family ties, xenophobia, and even death.
3. **Respect for Cultural Diversity and Self-Determination of Peoples:** This pillar would allow addressing the issue of indigenous peoples, racism, ethnicity, disrespect for cultural diversity and the imposition of cultures, languages, knowledge, religions and forms of social and political organization of some peoples over others.

4. **Democracy, Social Justice and Social Movements:** This pillar would allow addressing issues such as inequalities between rich and poor, unemployment, job insecurity, authoritarian governments, destruction of the environment, austerity policies, and restriction of rights, among others.

Chapter 4

The Next Global Agenda: Creating a Vision We Can all Get Behind

Rory Truell and Rose Henderson, IFSW Representatives to the Global Agenda

This short article is designed to provoke thought and discussion on the Global Agenda: The Next Ten Years. Through testing ideas across the social work profession, within the communities we work alongside and with other likeminded professions we are already acting to shape the future of the social work role. Add your ideas through the link below.

“We are not just social workers, we are visionaries” were the opening lines at the 2019 Asia-Pacific conference in India. Vision for a new future is core to social work. This is evidenced in daily practice around the world where practitioners bind the profession’s principles of liberation, human rights and social justice together with the unique solutions of the families and communities they work alongside. Vision has also been demonstrated by the profession as a whole, and perhaps in its greatest expression, with the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, referred to below as the Agenda.

The Agenda was launched in 2010 when 3000 social work representatives from all regions across the globe met together in Hong Kong. It was a time when social work wanted to unite, to make a stand, to share resources and to propel forward the profession’s perspective of social justice and new relationships to manage the world.

The 2010 ten-year Agenda was dynamic, holistic and visionary. Its four integrated pillars addressed all aspects of social development, some that were well understood by the profession and some which were new. These pillars were: ‘social and economic equality’, ‘dignity and worth of all people’, ‘community and environmental justice’ and ‘human relationships’.

A decade later we can all look back with enormous pride at what has been achieved. Predating the United Nation's 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs), social workers promoted an integrated global campaign that significantly built the confidence, unity and growth of the profession. Through the Agenda, social work reclaimed its political voice and expanded its core foundations further integrating climate justice, indigenous wisdom and the facilitation of community-led development into its international body of knowledge.

Over these ten years, the profession grew by 40% as new national associations of social work formed in response to this global campaign. The profession also reached new heights of recognition and was able to demonstrate that social work is essential for every society's economy, peace and sustainability. Acknowledgement of social work's importance in social development even reached the height of the United Nation's Secretary-General, Ban ki Moon saying that social work is essential to achieving the SDGs.

The question now, at the end of the first 10 years, is how to build on these vast successes and how to shape the profession's impact going forward in the next decade. This has been a focus for IFSW, involving a worldwide online consultation as well as regional and national discussions during the past year. Like the first 2010 Agenda, social workers this time have considered the context of the global political context in their responses. These have included that the SDGs have not yet made the progress the UN had intended and the increasing political shifts supporting populism, racism and nationalism. These realities have brought a sharp focus to the consultation and especially on (1) how the social work role can contribute to building grass-roots solidarity within communities, between communities, across societies and between countries, and (2) how social workers can assist communities to identify their own goals and aspirations which can be mapped against broader global strategies such as the SDGs.

The consultation so far reflects that social workers everyday 'ground-up' skills of facilitating solidarity within families and across populations are critically needed in the absence of other global civil society level rights structures. The emerging consultation message is: The next Agenda needs to focus more outwards; to bridge the gaps between the broad social movements, to facilitate communities to organise in advocating for their rights, for the profession to act as a catalyst in co-creating a more inclusive and informed democracy and the awareness that interdependent communities and an interdependent world are essential to sustainability and peace.

Envisaging how this might look, a possible title for the next agenda could be, The Global Agenda for Social Work, Sustainability and Social Justice. Themes could be developed that blend everyday

language along with the social work's professional terminology so that everyone can see themselves as a part of the Agenda, and thereby as a part of shaping the future. Theme examples could include:

‘Shared values’: Promoting shared ethical frameworks across communities, societies and the world.

This theme casts the profession's tried-and-tested global ethical principles outwards, saying that the principles are not just for the profession but for all people.

‘Living together’: Recognising diverse interdependencies and everyone's strengths.

This theme highlights the core mandates of social work, that all people in the world need to be equally recognized and live in interdependent relationships, and that all people in the world have strengths which are needed to foster those relationships and build inclusive communities.

‘Livable Futures’: Building inclusive, safe, sustainable and thriving environments

This theme speaks to ensuring environments are respectfully managed in their own rights as well as to meet people's rights in this and the following generations.

‘Decision making’: Facilitating rights and responsibilities

Recognizing that voting once every four years in a private booth is one of the weakest forms of democracy, this theme highlights the critical importance of building systems of local and global participatory democracy.

‘Solidarity’: Nurturing unity in diversity

This theme challenges market driven political systems that deny equality for all and focuses on the realization that community, societal, regional and global unity must be based on the celebration of diversity - and through solidarity - rights, security, social justice, economic and environmental sustainability can be won.

The outward focus of such an Agenda would represent a natural step in the profession's development. But it would also come with challenges that would need to be managed. The use of broader language should not deny the significant complexity of social relationships and social solutions. Nor should generalized themes prevent the social work profession from being able to

focus on specific issues, for example, ‘ending violence against women’ or ‘the right to birth registration’, as all issues should be able to be highlighted alongside the general themes.

The consultation generated so far suggests that the themes need to be more integrated than the previous phase, more outward looking, and more focused on binding communities together. An Agenda that will build on the enormous successes of the past ten years, that utilize the profession’s role in every community, and provide inspiration to change the world.

Make your contribution to the Global Agenda discussions here: <https://www.ifsw.org/ga-consultation/> Submission can be made until the 18th July 2020.