



The August edition of the Global Cooperation Newsletter completes the publication of the presentations at the ICSW Commemorative Symposium held in Dublin in July 2018, which started with the July edition. Below we present abridged versions of the statements; the fuller versions are scheduled to be published on the ICSW website.

Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director and Editor of the Newsletter

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

The Discussion



Driss Guerraoui

Driss Guerraoui, Professor at Mohammed V University of Rabat, Secretary-General of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of Morocco and President of the ICSW MENA Region touched in his presentation upon several burning issues that civil society organizations, including the ICSW, are facing in the world of today.

The increasing inequalities within societies, along with their consequences, represent huge social challenges; demands for addressing the structural drivers of inequality with more equitable distribution of wealth are growing in many countries. When economic growth brings benefits only to the wealthy, feelings of injustice and frustration are rampant, with inevitably negative social implications. The digital revolution and instant communications make people better aware of their rights and their power. People expect to be treated with dignity and demand respect, justice and freedom.

One of the lessons learned by civil society organizations is that if the root causes of extreme inequality and other social pathologies are not addressed, they could exacerbate tensions between society and the state, spur hate behaviour among the various classes of society, and thereby foster a climate of insecurity and instability that can lead to anarchy.

Various factors complicate the situation: first, the existing crisis in the representativeness of elected bodies owing to the continuing decline in the unionization rate, low political party affiliations and mistrust in institutions and elites, and second, the emergence of new actors with the assistance of the collaborative internet networking that links isolated individuals and amplifies possibilities offered by the digital revolution. The emergence of various social networks brings greater visibility to individuals who can easily be digitally united around various protest movements. These campaigns can be spontaneous, autonomous and independent or carefully organized and manipulated by hidden or open political forces in search of a political legitimacy that is rooted in the street.

In this light the quest for more effective national civil dialogue in various areas becomes indispensable for maintaining social cohesion. The structures and mechanisms of such dialogue should be up-to-date, and be made more effective for businesses, more equitable for employees, more just for citizens and institutionally more sustainable for the state and society. The ICSW has vast experience in this area, and it should be used in the future.

Governments, civil society and other stakeholders are facing several major challenges that should be addressed. The creation of effective and people-oriented governance is the number-one priority. In addition to putting the citizen at the heart of its concerns, this type of governance must be more responsible and sustainable at the central and territorial levels.

The second challenge is political. It requires all actors to build a new institutional culture driven by a systemic approach to economic and social issues and an engineering of consultation, negotiation and mediation based on the principle of "effort sharing" in order to achieve common goals that require shared sacrifices and reciprocal concessions.

These common objectives may entail reconciling the quest for business competitiveness, which is indispensable in production of wealth, along with the adoption of proactive social policies aimed at preserving

jobs so as to prevent unemployment from worsening, maintaining public and private solidarity financing aimed at supporting the purchasing power of citizens and safeguarding the acquired rights of employees, as well as continuing to promote universal access on the part of the poor to social protection and establishing a universal basic income to fulfil one of the essential conditions of citizenship in societies shared by all. These objections are impossible to achieve without a new political culture, and the role of civil society here is enormous.

Promoting digital technologies for mass communication and developing appropriate methods of securing their IT infrastructures represent another crucial task. The objective of this approach is not only to protect against cyber-attacks but also, and most importantly, to be in sync with the digital age in order to win the battle for the necessary renewal of democracy and the conciliation between citizens' freedom and responsibility.

Finally, establishing mechanisms to promote participatory democracy practices within the community at all levels of economic and social governance is essential. This choice should result in strengthening the role of mediation, consultation, dialogue and regulatory bodies at the central and territorial levels so as to promote mutual listening, responsible and calm debate among citizens, with wider social participation.

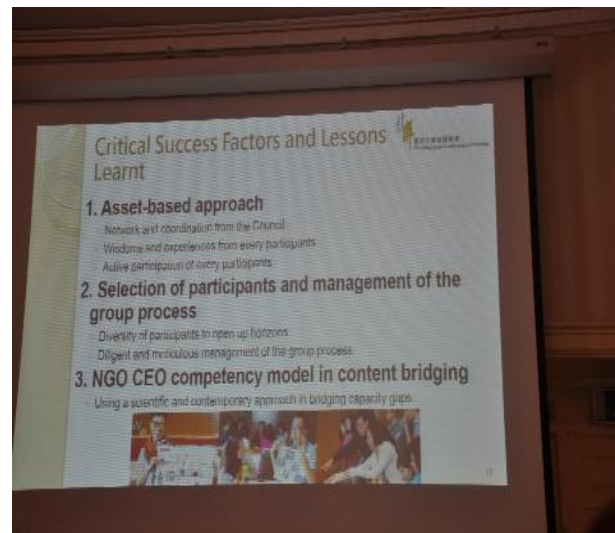


Dr. Crystal CHENG

Dr. Crystal CHENG, Business Director of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, focused her presentation on capacity-building issues, in particular on challenges and lessons learned regarding the two pillars of NGO activities embracing governance and leadership. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (hereinafter "HKCSS"), being the main association of social service organizations in Hong Kong, is working to

develop a strategic focus on strengthening the governance and management capacity of NGOs in order to enhance their accountability and the quality of their services. In order to achieve this aim, the HKCSS launched two projects in recent years: the Governance Platform Project and the Executive Leadership Development Programme.

The Governance Platform Project seeks to encourage NGO board members to engage in professional exchange and mutual learning. The Project encompasses various initiatives, such as seminars, board visiting, networking activities, non-profit governance knowledge portals, etc. The Executive Leadership Development Programme, on the other hand, brings chief executives, deputies and senior managers together to build the capacity and networks of the sector's emerging leaders. The Programme consists of workshops, seminars, reflective leadership camp, peer-learning cases and leadership coaching, in which senior executives can exchange and learn from cross-sector professionals, the government, policy makers and opinion leaders.



The HKCSS believes that NGOs that seek to serve effectively in the community need robust collaboration and development of the two pillars of NGO leaders, not only for a single organization, but also for the social welfare sector and society at large.



Sandra Carla S. Mirabelli

Sandra Carla S. Mirabelli (Brazil), speaking on behalf of her organisation Social Service of Commerce (SESC São Paulo) referred to the innovative experience of her organization in various social and cultural fields. These initiatives are, in many ways, similar to organization-wide activities of the

ICSW and are based on the defence of human rights, continuous knowledge-building and a commitment to social protection in the broadest sense, including the neighbourhoods where people and their families live.

In order to succeed with this approach an encompassing effort is required aimed at the inclusion of initiatives, projects and programs that is based on a top-notch analysis of "social topography", with attention given to a wide set of relationships existing in the places where people live. As societies become more complex and urbanization more entrenched, the level of safety has decreased. People tend to depend more on social protection schemes and programs because the protection bonds that were normally found in small communities and strengthened by family have become weaker. In this context, institutions such as the ICSW and the SESC play an extremely important role in helping people to find new meaning in life with wider access to culture, leisure, healthcare, education and welfare. A process of permanent/non-formal education as the basis for social transformation has become most important.

Our initiatives are based on the principles of education conceived by the educator Paulo Freire, which seek break down the barriers between education and culture, highlighting their communal, transformative and libertarian side. A context-based learning system, process-based assessments and collective knowledge- building are seen by the SESC as a path to the pursuit of self-empowerment. Culture is seen as a transformative and

empowering tool; this dimension permeates every program offered by the institution.

Education should be a process through which individuals start off being what they are and transform into what they want to become, taking into account the specific circumstances. Therefore, education should "occupy" life, mix in with it and be impregnated with the striving to change the world. The work carried out by the SESC and the ICSW follows these principles and aims to reveal and debunk a reality that creates and reproduces inequalities. It seeks to empower and emancipate individuals while increasing their participation. The existing complexity in society shouldn't be seen as a difficulty, but a challenge to be faced by all in the light of the countless needs arising from all segments of society, even if changes are small and happen slowly.

Brazil is a country characterized by vast diversity and massive social inequality. Currently, we are moving backwards politically, with social rights being lost, violence increasing, unemployment growing and social vulnerabilities on the rise. Social movements that consistently fight to guarantee hard-won rights are gaining momentum against this backdrop, and we are part of the movement that remains committed to building a fairer, more equal and humane society.

As a process that is specifically human, education that is "woven together" requires connections, exchanges, harmony, consistence; education is an act of love, where love is seen as a primordial feeling that is inherent in human beings and awakens us to humbleness over selfishness, inequalities and prejudice. Those who love understand and respect others, which is why love is a basic assumption for the process of education.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) for working with such humane conscientiousness and connecting people so that we can realise that the future is already in the present and that time is something we plan to build for others.



Prof. P.K. Shajahan

P.K. Shajahan, Professor of Social Work and Vice President, ICSW, called his presentation "A multi-stakeholder approach to social protection: Leaving no one behind". He underscored that Agenda 2030 mandates us to take everyone on board in achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). More than a

third of those goals are directly related to the scope of social protection which is one of the main focuses of the ICSW. Hence, the ICSW with its avowed goals of promoting social protection through engagements with social policies and a multitude of actors has been able to articulate the need for social protection in achieving the SDGs.

Rather than passive protection against contingencies, addressing structural roots that keep people in poverty and inequality is to be the focus of universal and sustained social protection. It is believed that no meaningful sustained economic growth can be achieved in the absence of social protection. Social protection is not an expenditure on welfare but an investment in economic development itself. Thus it combines rights as well as development perspectives with an aim to reduce the risk and vulnerability of populations. Hence social protection need to be located at the intersection of human rights, human development and vulnerability/risk reduction.

Within the actions aimed at achieving the SDGs, the ICSW believes that striking a balance between social, economic and environmental growth aimed at reaching everyone, especially the poor, is possible, if the roles of various stakeholders are understood and their efforts are synchronized. While the state remains the primary responsibility holder for ensuring universal social protection by devising and implementing the necessary social policies and programmes aimed at reducing vulnerabilities, other stakeholders

such as international actors, civil society and the market/industry need emphasis.

International actors, including the ICSW, could engage in creating the global environment for universal social protection through global campaigns, devising policy frameworks and engaging in networking and advocacy.

Various civil society organizations and collectives play a very important role by remaining as pressure groups and providing ground-level implementation support to state agencies.

Further they can also provide legal support and engage in national and local campaigning for rights and justice. As practiced in India, civil society organizations engaging in legal recourse, such as public interest litigation as well as conducting social audit, have resulted in bringing transparency and ensuring better access to social protection programmes for the marginalized.

Finally, the market/industry is quite often out of bounds in discussions on social protection, except in areas such as social insurance schemes. However, the market too can play a significant role through corporate social-responsibility initiatives, where the resources and expertise required for social protection programmes can be augmented by such collaborations with the industry.

Considering the specific focus of the ICSW on social protection, a renewed engagement could include the following;

- Developing a global strategy to promote Universal Social Protection (USP)
- Infusing energies into member organizations and partners in bringing USP into the areas of their operation
- Developing and disseminating working models of multi-stakeholder collaborative approaches
- Bringing out periodical status reports on USP
- Establishing global, regional and national networks/platforms involving multiple stakeholders.



Dr. Cassandra Goldie

In her presentation **Dr Cassandra Goldie**, Executive Director of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), underscored the importance of the work that the ICSW is doing globally and regionally.

The fight for social justice and human rights has never been more acute than it is today. The ICSW has an established reputation and name recognition as a preeminent international civil society organization, providing a voice for people facing poverty and exclusion.

She acknowledged past Australians who had contributed to this great history, including Julian Disney, Denys Correll and Michael Raper. She urged that the ICSW should not become complacent—it should continue striving to be relevant for its members and stakeholders, most importantly showing courage and leadership.

The promotion of universal social protection is an important political and socio-economic endeavour and it is supported by our organization at large. Civil society should hold governments accountable for their commitments.

In this light the monitoring of attacks on social protection and advocating for progress should become one of the important directions for the future work of the ICSW. It may strengthen existing partnerships and create new alliances.



Chinchai Cheechoeroen

Chinchai Cheechoeroen, Regional President, South-East Asia and Pacific region, National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand (Thailand).

Celebrating the 90th anniversary of the ICSW and the 57th anniversary of the establishment of the National Council on Social Welfare is an opportunity to reflect on social developments in Thai society and, more broadly, in the ASEAN community.

The quest for appropriate social welfare models should be seen as a way to address and reduce inequalities in society and build social security for all people; it is essentially a way to encourage hope. The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, with its four core themes, is particularly important to all partner organizations focusing on issues of shared significance. Working together is essential in exploring emerging issues and addressing common challenges, bearing in mind the Sustainable Development Agenda and the shared vision of the ASEAN countries.

Thailand also recognizes the importance and active role of the private sector in building empowerment and fighting poverty and inequality.

Support provided by government agencies gave a boost to collaboration between the public and private sectors when the Council on Social Welfare Organization of Thailand was established in 1958. The name of the organization was changed to the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand (NCSWT)

in 1960. NCSWT became a member of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) in 1968. We are particularly pleased to note that during the 1988-1991 term Khunying Amporn Meesuk, a representative from the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand, was elected as President of the ICSW.

At its establishment the National Council originally had only 9 member organizations, but in 2017 the membership grew up to 958. The NCSWT plays an important role in numerous initiatives at the national level, supporting member organizations in many ways. Some examples include the launch of the National Social Work Conference, the establishment of the National Social Work Day, the creation of Outstanding Volunteer Recognition, and proposing an effective mechanism for the National Social Welfare Commission.

As a regional cooperation platform ASEAN focuses on emerging issues and facilitates the achievement of pertinent social welfare goals crucial for countries and people. In collaboration with government structures and with the support from the ICSW the NCSWT has been instrumental in organizing, since 2006, an annual international event sponsored by the government and the NGO community--GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development.

National Councils on Social Welfare in each member country working together with ICSW, and with assistance provided by the ASEAN Secretariat contribute directly to this activity. Among the main issues that have been addressed are the issues of social protection, the consequences of ageing, preventing human trafficking and other matters.

The GO-NGO Forum provided an important platform for the elaboration of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection.

Addressing the participants of the Symposium, **Ronald Wiman**, (Finland), Regional President, ICSW-Europe, made a



Ronald Wiman

strong pitch for the promotion of comprehensive social policies.

The ICSW has a coherent history of advocating for a comprehensive approach to social policies. While also addressing more specific issues, the ICSW has made sure that these would be seen as integral parts of broader societal and developmental challenges. Our contribution to the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 (The Tampere Declaration http://icsw.org/images/docs/ICSW_History_2_008.pdf), strongly promoted the concept of "A society for all" as the vision for social development. This idea was then well integrated into the Copenhagen Declaration and documents.

Now again the ICSW has a great window of opportunity. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for advocacy and expertise in order to integrate the ethical and the social dimensions into the implementation strategies of the Goals. The ICSW and its members have the expertise to bring in a comprehensive societal perspective that will balance the ethical, social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development – in this order: sustainable development is an agenda of equity within and between generations. We need to build societies for all within the limits of one globe for all. There is no plan B because no Planet B exists.

Opportunities for the ICSW to get involved again in major global and European processes are coming up next year. For instance, the Commission for Social Development focuses on inequality, the Commission on the Status of Women deals with social protection, and, in

Europe, the follow-up of the Gothenburg Social Summit on the European Pillar of Social Rights calls for a wider social policy perspective. Doors are open for us provided that the ICSW can make available the right kind of expertise - in time and on time and in the right place: in New York and in Brussels.

Summing up **Solveig Askjem**, the moderator and a past President of the ICSW expressed her wish that the ICSW successfully continue its various activities aimed at improving human condition in the face of economic, social, political and environmental challenges.

Photo credits: Sergei Zelenev

The content of this Global Newsletter may be freely reproduced or cited provided the source is acknowledged. The views do not necessarily represent policies of ICSW.

Newsletter Editor:
Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director
E-mail: szelenev@icsw.org,

Address:
ICSW, 5700 Arlington Ave.,
Bronx, New York, 10471 (US Office)

icsw@icsw.org
Website www.icsw.org

If you wish to cease receiving this newsletter, please click 'here' providing your name and email address