

Report to International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW): Human Rights and Social Justice Committee July 2022

Disparity, challenges and concerns about human rights and social justice are a global concern. All countries and citizens continue to face challenges. There are huge gaps between intention and action. Among the global challenges for human rights and social justice, but not exclusive to, are:

- The continuing challenges faced by people across the globe continues because of the impact of COVID-19, and the effect of the pandemic on global, regional and national economies and the experiences of people. There is clear evidence of the significant disparity of support and resources between those with wealth and those with low income and/or living in poverty. Concern has continued to be expressed that the pandemic has hindered the ability to meet the 2030 Agenda/Sustainable Development Goals.
- The impact of climate crisis: it is imperative that environmental and human rights agendas become holistically integrated. There is a concern to deepen collective action by addressing the root causes of insecurity, increasing investment in resilience and early warning systems, developing multilateral partnerships, and more sustained efforts in peacebuilding and fighting the effects of climate change (Michelle Bachelet, UN Human Rights Commissioner and Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General 11.12.2021). State leaders must place people at the centre of government strategies in confronting the climate crisis.
- Human rights violations and situations of concern across the globe: This includes war, the impact of war, the oppression of groups and citizens and the significant displacement of citizens. Examples include Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and, more recently, Ukraine.
- Technology and the digital divide that has been further exposed in the COVID 19 pandemic. This results in economic and social inequality; inequality between individuals, household, communities, business and geographical areas.
- Progress for women's rights/ gender equality continues to be slow, with evidence of no progress or moved in the wrong direction in some countries. Examples include, the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, in violence against women; the overwhelming rollback on women's rights in Afghanistan, the widespread sexual violence characterizing the conflict in Ethiopia, attacks on abortion access in the US and Turkey's withdrawal from the landmark Istanbul Convention on Gender Based Violence: each is a grave erosion of rights in its own terms

As the Human Rights and Social Justice Committee aims states (see Appendix Two): *The IASSW recognises all social work educators and researcher's commitment to education, learning and research that highlights social workers unique contribution and situates social work education and research as imperative in highlighting, evidencing and challenging the violation of human right and centrality of social justice.*

The (Updated) *Global Standards for social work education 2020* promote Human Rights and Social Justice and provide unifying themes. The imperative continues to be how these themes are embedded in social work education in specific national contexts. This includes how to develop, support and train social work students and support post qualifying training of social workers to address complex social issues through human rights and social justice exposure, engagement, and lens, especially in preparing for a post-pandemic world.

The overall focus of the Human Rights and Social Justice (HRSJ) Committee, and proposed actions in moving forward during 2022-2023 is outlined in Appendix One.

The HRSJ Committee continues to endeavour to meet its aims (see Appendix Two).

The Membership of the HRSJ Committee is outlined in Appendix Three.

Janet Walker; Annaline Keet; Shirley Gatenio Gabel; Jessica Jönsson; Chaitali Das

July 2022

Appendix One
Workplan for HRSJ Committee 2022-2023

Actions	How achieved	Comments
<p>THE HRSJ Committee facilitated a Workshop (10.01.2022) for IFSW Board members in a renewed dialogue to discuss and reflect on its position on Issue Based Advocacy. Based on the feedback from the Workshop, the HRSJ has reviewed the current approach to the IASSW role in issues-based advocacy and the appropriate representation of IASSW's position in relation to requests. This has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10. Procedures for Taking Stands on Issues (page 13) in IASSW Manual of Policy and Procedures • Write guidance notes to support discussion/decision about issues 	<p>A draft update of the procedures + guidance has been forwarded to the IASSW Chair and Vice Chair.</p>	<p>This will be presented to the IASSW Executive Board Meeting in July.</p>
<p>Strengthen the Committees understanding of teaching and learning within a human rights and social justice framework in schools of social work across the globe</p>	<p>Work with Regional Associations of Schools of Social Work to gain a greater understanding of teaching and learning of human rights and social justice, priorities, and actions in schools of social work.</p>	<p>A proposed semi-structured questionnaire will be used to support this and allow for local, regional and global positions to emerge.</p>
<p>A specific issue of the <i>Social Dialogue</i> magazine to be focussed on HRSJ</p>	<p>To support the workplan of the HRSJ Committee and its outcome a dedicated edition of the Magazine is in progress.</p>	<p>This should allow for greater visibility and representation of HRSJ.</p>
<p>Work with colleagues representing the IASSW in the United Nations</p>	<p>Meeting of Chair of HRSJ Committee Chair, President of the IASSW and UN IASSW Representative to meet on a regular basis to support developments any actions.</p>	<p>This should allow for improved liaison and action on behalf of IASSW.</p>
<p>Coordinate with the International Research Projects Committee to adopt Human Rights in different contexts and with different target groups as a theme in the next bidding.</p>	<p>Research Project Committee and HRSJ Committee to liaise.</p>	<p>Correspondence from the HRSJ Committee to Research Project Committee to be actioned.</p>

Actions	How achieved	Comments
A proposal by the HRSJ Committee for a Panel at the CSWE (USA) Conference 2022 has been accepted.	The panel theme is: <i>Comparing human rights and social justice in social work curricula across countries</i>	The Panel will take place during the Conference 10-13 November 2022.
HRSJ Website to be reviewed	The website content to be reviewed	This will ensure it is relevant and contemporary, reflective of the work and actions of the HRSJ Committee.
Synergy of the work with Regional Associations of Schools of Social Work	Invite Vice Chairs as representatives of Regional Associations to discuss with their committee members their approach and response to increasing dialogue in relation to human rights and social justice and social work education and research.	Regional Chairs/Vice Chairs of IASSW are invited to action this proposed action and feedback to the HRSJ Group.

Appendix Two

IASSW Human Rights and Social Justice Committee Aims

The focus of the Human Rights and Social Justice Committee (HRSJ) is on supporting education, learning and teaching and social work research in all aspects of human rights and social justice. This is intended to recognise the interrelationship for social work of human right and social justice and actions that are required to promote rights, responsibilities and justice for citizens, communities and countries. Further there is a concern for human right violations on social workers and social work educators and campaigning that support and promote human rights and social justice.

- The HRSJ Committee recognises all social work educators and researcher's commitment to education, learning and research that highlights social workers unique contribution and situates social work education and research as imperative in highlighting, evidencing and challenging the violation of human right and centrality of social justice. This includes emphasising the contribution to and for social work, situating social work education and learning and research as highlighting and seeking to represent and address at a micro and macro levels of practice.
- The HRSJ Committee situates the voices of citizens, service users and carers and social workers as being peacemakers through dialogue, including knowledge and skills, for example, in communication, conflict resolutions, negotiation, mediation. the HRSJ Committee acknowledge the continuing impact of violation of human rights and concern for social justice across the globe, including issues, including the impact political instability and oppression; the impact of war and internal conflicts; targeting of minority groups and particular groups, for example the rise of islamophobia; and nations of people; historical issues of abuse; and natural, environmental and manmade disaster.
- Social workers and social work service are also well placed to stand in solidarity with the diverse Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities against racism and intolerance cross the globe, recognising that racism and social injustice is deep-rooted and that we need to work collectively to stand with those who seek to challenge and change oppression. On-going action is critical to challenge, support and demonstrate solidarity and positive action. A particular feature of efforts in universities has been in relation to decolonising the curriculum.
- The HRSJ Committee seeks to work in collaboration with wider organisations and structures that address and/or comment on human rights and issues of social justice.

Appendix Three
HRSJ Committee Members (from December 2021)

Name	Institution	Comments
Janet Walker	University of Lincoln, England.	Chair
Anneline Keet	Nelson Mandela University, South Africa	Vice Chair
Shirley Gatenio Gabel	Fordham University, New York, USA	
Jessica Jönsson	Örebro University, Sweden	
Chaitali Das	Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany	