

Women Interest group Report, July 2020

Women Interest group: Janet Walker, Carolyn Noble, Davis McNabb, Helle Strauss, Shahana Rasool, Fran Waugh (co-chair), Darja Zaviršek (chair)

Dear Colleagues,

The global gender inequalities related to unequal educational opportunities, payment and gender pension gaps, violence against women, sexual abuse and harassment, access to health and gendercide, the household and care work which are un-equally shared among women and men and many other issues, remain major social work concerns. The current Global Pandemic related to COVID-19 has further seen the marginalisation of women's concerns and issues.

The WIG completed the global research about the present human rights situations on women and the issues of teaching gender and gender justice in social work educational institutions. The descriptive analysis has been almost completed and will be soon ready for the IASSW web site. Fran Waugh and myself wanted to present the content analysis at the Rimini conference but now we are preparing the results for publishing. As soon as we get the confirmation that the results will be published, we will put the material on the IASSW web site.


The global lockdown due to the fear of the infection with the Sars-cov-2 brought up new issues and evidence of gender inequalities. This includes evidence that demonstrates that outbreak preparedness and response efforts remain largely gender-blind and there is a lack of seeing the gendered nature of pandemics. The additional pressure on women in providing care for children and home-schooling and as unpaid carers, the inability of women to continue with their career as they were again asked to take over household and nurturing work among the relatives and household-members, need to be addressed. The "labour-of love" phenomenon has been reinstalled. There are reports on the increased rates of gender-based violence, particularly domestic and sexual violence, as well as an increase in teenage pregnancies. In countries where many people died in elders homes, women are the majority. Women also make up around 80% of the social sector workforce globally, rendering them exposed to the virus as they tackle the pandemic on the frontlines. The fall out for women will be significant, including the impact of economic, social and health in-equality.

In the previous WIG meeting, the members suggested preparing a special issue of Social Dialogue on women; still open is the decision of the editorial work.

The members of the WIG also discussed the possible questionnaire related to the social workers/social work educators women's experiences during the lockdown to prevent Sars-cov-2 infection : childcare, mental health issues, support networks, violence, the issues related to disabled people and disabled children, substance abuse, solidarity and voluntarily work, networking, community work under restrictions, political social work and so on. One of the concerns is that the work to collect questionnaires is a very long process and a lot of work is needed to obtain a representative amount of responses.

A PhD student helped with the descriptive analysis of the on-line questionnaires for what 500 USD was allocated; payment was done in April 2020. Other 2.000USD allocated to the Women's Interest group will be used by the end of 2020 for other work related to the global questionnaire and other gender-related research for social work academic community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Darja Zaviršek', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Darja Zaviršek (chair); Fran Waugh (co-chair)

11.7. 2020