

## Research Committee Report

June 26, 2018

Prepared by Darja Zaviršek

Committee: Darja Zaviršek (chair); Marcus Knutagard (co-chair); Teresa Bertotti.

The Research Committee met twice via skype;

Once we produce an extensive feedback to the Ethical Principles in Social Work, which is below in the document; the feedback was sent to Vishanthie Sewpaul (see Appendix).

Second we discuss the possible activities in the future.

We concluded that, for now, the current description on research which is on-line gives good definition and is fine;

<https://www.iasw-aiets.org/the-iasw-statement-on-social-work-research-july-2014/>

We agreed that the aims of the Research group are-

- Promoting the integration of social work research and social work education
- Promoting social work research (in connection with other committees and other work done by colleagues and associations)

Activities for the next term:

- strengthening the connection of the IASSW with the regional and global social work research organisations; (ESWRA; American society of social work research; transnational associations), through mapping and request of giving reciprocal visibility.
- mapping of the main regional research association

### Appendix:

#### Feedback to the Ethical Principles of Social Work

#### Feedback of the Research Committee of the ISSW to the proposed draft of the Ethical Principles, February 3, 2018

##### The following proposed changes are:

###### Page 2:

We would propose to add explicitly »*in research context*« to specify research as separate area where ethical issues have to be taken in consideration.

The sentence reads:

Recognising the embodied vulnerability of ourselves and, more particularly of the people whom we engage with, this Statement is designed to ensure multiple levels of accountability: towards the individuals, families, groups, and communities that we engage with; ourselves; the organisations that we work in; **the research contexts**; and the broader societal contexts within which social work education, practice and research is located.

###### Page 4, Section 2.Human Rights; under 2.1.:

The UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities is missing (written 2006, adopted by over 130 countries after 2007) is the newest UN document; it is extremely important in the area of human rights of the disabled.

The sentences reads:

- 2.1 Social workers embrace and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights of all human beings, as reflected in human rights instruments and conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Covenant on Economic and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Page 4, Section 2.Human Rights; under 2.3.:

Culture(s) sometimes violate human rights; persons who have difficulties with this view, might recognize that some cultural practices inflict pain (children's pregnancy for example when the child's uterus is not yet biologically ready for pregnancy; FGM etc.).

The sentence reads:

2.3 Recognising that culture often serves as a disguise to violate human rights **and inflict pain**, social workers serve as cultural mediators to enable consensus building, to find an appropriate balance between competing human rights, and to advocate for the rights of marginalized, stigmatized, excluded and oppressed individuals and groups of persons.

Page 4, Section 2.Human Rights; under 2.4.:

Collective responsibility is important as well as responsibility for each other and the environment and the reciprocal relationships within communities; at the same time diversity among individuals, groups and communities is important for human rights.

The sentence reads:

2.4 Social workers recognize that human rights need to coexist alongside collective responsibility, understanding that individual human rights can only be realized on a day-to-day basis if people take responsibility for each other and the environment, and if they work towards creating reciprocal relationships within communities and **respect diversity**.

Page 5, Section 3, The Right for Self-Determination; under 3.5.

In some countries "mental health" is subsumed under a broader-umbrella term disability and in some not; we suggest to keep the word "mental health" and add the word "disability".

The sentence reads:

3.5. Social workers acknowledge the realities of people, whose self-determination is often curtailed on account of various factors, including the control functions that social workers exercise in fields such as child protection, criminal justice, **disability** and mental health.

Page 5, Section 3, The Right for Self-Determination; under 3.6.

The problem of world-wide institutionalisation of long-term welfare service users goes against self-determination, but it is widely accepted in social welfare system of many countries; therefore we propose to add the idea of "non-institutionalized housing". Living in ordinary environments is one of the fundamental human rights issue under the Article 19 of the UN CRPD.

The sentence reads:

3. 6. Social workers recognize that the agency of individuals intersect with structural conditions, and that the ideal of self-determination **requires living in non-institutionalized housing, and having** resources like good education, decent employment, access to health care, secure and stable housing, safety and security, adequate sanitation, clean water and pollution free environments.

Page 6, Section 4. The Right for Participation; under 4.2.

In some countries people cannot participate fully in the societies due to some person's characteristics or orientations; we suggest adding the sentence which clearly speaks on this.

The sentence reads:

4.2. Social workers work towards building the self-esteem, and the capabilities of people, resourcing people to participate fully on their societies, and promoting their full involvement and participation in all aspects of decisions and actions that affect their lives. **People shall have the right to participate regardless of their gender, age, disability, ethnic, religious or other personal orientation.**

Page 6; Section 5. Treating People as Whole Persons; under 5.1.

Many people are discriminated due to the sexual dimensions of their identities or gender; this goes beyond the biological characteristics; therefore, we propose to add the word »sexual« in addition to the biological.

The sentence reads:

5.1 Social workers recognize the biological, **sexual**, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of people's lives, and understand and treat all people as whole persons.

**Page 7, section 7.2.4 Challenge Unjust Policies and Practices; NEW ENTRY 72.4.2.**

We propose a new point 7.2.4.2. which would emphasize social work research as a specific area which works towards social change and towards ending oppression.

The new entry reads:

**7.2.4.2. Social workers who are doing research in situations where policies and resources are inadequate or where policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful aim that their research work makes a change; in doing so, they can use a variety of social science qualitative and quantitative research perspectives and research methods in accordance to the social work research principles.**

**Page 7, section 7.2.4 Challenge Unjust Policies and Practices; NEW ENTRY 72.4.4 (previous 7.2.3).**

We propose to include the whistle-blowers to be explicitly protected and defended by IASSW and IFSW.

The sentence reads:

7.2.4.4 Global bodies such as the IASSW and IFSW, in collaboration with social workers' employers and/or national professional/statutory organisations, have an obligation to protect and defend social workers who are threatened in the line of duty, because of their opinions or when they draw attention to injustice, **including the whistle-blowers.**

Page 10; Section 9. Professional Integrity; under 9.2

Social workers must not allow their knowledge and skills to be used for inhumane purposes, such as torture and also not for example the incarceration of persons on the basis of personal circumstances or similar. Therefore, we suggest to add the wording »incarceration of persons on the basis of personal circumstances«:

The sentence reads:

9.2 Social workers support peace and non-violence. Social workers may work alongside military personnel for humanitarian purposes and work towards peace building and reconstruction. Social workers must not allow their knowledge and skills to be used for inhumane purposes, such as torture, **incarceration of persons on the basis of personal circumstances**, military surveillance or terrorism, and they should not use weapons in their professional or personal capacities against people.

Page 10; Section 9. Professional Integrity; under 9.6

Social work has a triple mandate, as it was theorised by the Katherine Kendal awardee Prof. Silvia Staub Bernasconi: the mandate to the governments, service users and to the social work profession/discipline itself; the relationship of the three mandates is often ambivalent or even conflicting. The principle 9.6. mentions only two mandates, towards the government and the clients, but leaves out the third mandate. We propose to add the third mandate, »the principles of social work as a social science discipline«.

The sentence reads:

9.6 Social workers acknowledge that they are accountable for their actions to the people they work with, their colleagues, their employers, the professional associations, and local, national and international laws and conventions, **as well as to the principles of social work as a social science discipline,** and that these accountabilities may conflict, which must be negotiated to minimize harm to all persons.

Sincerely,

Darja Zaviršek (chair); Marcus Knutagard (co-chair); Teresa Bertotti.