IASSW TEAM OF REPRESENTATIVES AT UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

REPORT TO THE BOARD

JANUARY-JUNE, 2018

**BOARD ACTION NEEDED**:

At the end of 2018, it will be time for us to file our quadrennial report with ECOSOC at the UN. The report will require reporting on our association’s efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I need assistance in determining a way to collect this information.

**REPORT SUMMARY:**

IASSW has been visible at the UN Headquarters during this 6 month period through co-sponsorship of 4 side events, 2 each at the Commission for Social Development in February and the Commission on the Status of Women in March. IASSW also co-sponsored Social Work Day at the UN in late March and initiated a faculty roundtable as part of the extended event. We have participated in the work of NGO committees on Migration, Social Development, the Status of Women, Mental Health and Children’s Rights plus the Working Group on Girls. The interns produced monthly newsletters for the IASSW membership to provide updates on IASSW activities, important UN initiatives, and resources for use in teaching and research. With Rashmi’s help, I wrote and filed our annual required report to the Department of Public Information and it was approved, preserving our accreditation with DPI.

Details of these activities are given below.

**TEAM MEMBERSHIP:**

Our team of representatives all continued their work during the period January-June, 2018. Dr. Hokenstad plans to rotate off the team at the end of the year. A colleague of his, Dr. Sharon Milligan, has expressed an interest in serving and we had an extra pass available through our Department of Public Information accreditation (in addition to our ECOSOC accreditation). Dr. Milligan is particularly interested in health issues. She attended the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in March and met with me and with several other team members for orientation. In addition, I received a request from Professor Marciana Popescu of Fordham University School of Social Work asking if she could also represent IASSW. She has been working on the Global Compact on Migration and would like to continue this work. We have the capacity to secure temporary badges, which is what we use for our interns. Ideally, an “open” position should be advertised and selected through the procedures suggested by Lena Dominelli. In the past, this has not generated candidates with reasonable access to the UN, but we should try.

**USE OF BUDGETED FUNDS:**

The largest expenditure is to provide transportation reimbursement for 2 graduate student interns for the IASSW team at the UN. Our interns each incur about $2000 in transportation costs to travel to the UN 2 days a week for the 8 month placement. We would have a difficult time attracting interns without providing the stipend. Interns greatly expand our visibility at the UN and activity with the NGO committees at the UN. They each devote 20 hours per week to IASSW-UN work and also produce the UN newsletter that is sent to all members and posted on the website. We think the newsletter is a great product to show members what IASSW is doing for them. To date, I have not secured an intern for 2018-2019. It would be greatly limit our visibility and activity at the UN to be without an intern.

The other expenditures are for IASSW memberships to selected NGO committees and fees to sponsor workshops at UN Commissions. Membership fees are modest, usually $50 per year. Our sponsorship of a workshop at the Commission on the Status of Women cost $210. These fees can be higher if we need to use audiovisual equipment or cannot secure co-sponsors to share costs. Our limited budget does not permit us to have the same level of activity with UN efforts that many other NGOs maintain. Specifically, we are unable to send a delegate to major international meetings on key issues. We should explore ways to engage members closer to these events, but this would also require developing a way to orient these members to UN representation.

**COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**Mental Health**: As a member of the NGO Committee on Mental Health, Dr. Rebecca Davis serves on the Human Rights Working Group that is focusing on global mental health issues around mass incarceration. Rebecca has also participated in educational events organized by the Working Groups on Refugees and Trauma and Non-Communicable Diseases.  Overall, the agenda of the NGO Committee on Mental Health is promoting and advancing investments in mental health at the global and national levels.  Some of the programs this year included topics on Refugees and Immigrant Mental Health, Racism and Mental Health, and Youth Voices Against Gun Violence.

**Social Development**: The main theme of the NGO Committee on Social Development for the past year and next year is Social Protection and the drive to expand social protection systems globally. The Grassroots Subcommittee has focused on implementation of the SDGs and awareness and impact of implementation on the ground. Lynne Healy and our interns are active with both the full committee and the subcommittee. IASSW co-sponsored side events on both topics at the February meeting of the UN Commission for Social Development with ICSW: “Strategies for Poverty Eradication: Grassroots Take on SDG Awareness and Implementation with several other NGOs and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); and “Strengthening the Institutional Structures for Sustainable Development: The Role of Social Protection”, co-sponsored with ICSW, the ILO, the European Union Protection System Program, and UNDESA. Dr. Healy and Dr. Shirley Gatenio Gabel of IASSW both spoke on the social protection panel. We were also pleased with the collaboration with ICSW and the opportunity to link with the ILO and other international agencies.

**Migration**: From 2017-2018, the Committee on Migration focused on four areas, each of which was addressed by a Subcommittee, namely: the Global Compact for Migration; Xenophobia & Social Inclusion; Climate-Induced Displacement and Refugee & Migrant Children. IASSW was represented on this committee and the Climate subcommittee by Dr. Rebecca Thomas and our two interns, Justice Birch and Katherine (Shrevie) Shepherd. In the first part of the year, we spent time learning as a subgroup on the topic and engaged in facilitated discussions. The sub-committee developed concept proposals and talking points about the issues. Through short presentations at the beginning of our larger meeting, our committee informed the larger committee on Migration on the issues of climate-induced displacement. In addition, through the active participation of our students our sub-committee organized a side event at the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women entitled “Shouldering the Burden; Rural Women and Climate-Induced Displacement”, co-sponsored by IASSW. The Embassy of Bangladesh sponsored this event. The event was well attended—standing room only-- and received. On May 1st the subcommittee organized another side event at the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues entitled Climate Induced Displacement: Realities, Rights and Responses. Currently the subcommittee is going on mission visits to talk with government representatives regarding climate-induced displacements and to encourage governments to address this issue and to find ways of engaging in sustainable development.

Because all subcommittees meet at the same time, it will be helpful to have Dr. Popescu involved who can participate at the discussion related to Civil Societies response to the Global Compact for Migration.

**Committee on the Status of Women:** We are represented by Dr. Shirley Gatenio Gabel. She was involved in the planning for the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women, the largest event of the year at the UN. IASSW sponsored a parallel event: “The Paradox of Maternity Policies: Leaving Rural Women Out” that was well attended and received.

**SOCIAL WORK DAY AT THE UN**

IASSW co-sponsored the annual Social Work day at the United Nations on March 26 and the accompanying Student Conference on March 25th. In addition, IASSW initiated and sponsored (with the Kendall Institute of the Council on Social Work Education) a faculty roundtable discussion on “international content for all social work students.”

Dr. Shirley Gatenio Gabel co-chaired the planning committee for social work day with Michael Cronin of IFSW. The event is attended by over 600 educators, practitioners and students and features both UN and social work speakers. President Annamaria Campanini was the opening speaker. She also spoke to the student event the day before, an event attended by about 200 social work students.

The faculty roundtable was advertised to educators who were accompanying student groups to social work day. About 25 participated in a lively discussion and enthusiastically recommended follow-up discussions next year and at the 2020 Rimini conference.

Submitted by Lynne Healy, IASSW Main Representative to the UN New York