

**International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)**  
**International Project Grant Final Report**  
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**The Guidelines on Social Work Practice Education &  
Internationalization: A Critical Review with Reference to  
Japan, Kenya, Norway and India**

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## **Executive summary**

The purpose of this international project is to critically review the guidelines on social work practice education at the bachelor's level in Asia (India & Japan), Africa (Kenya-Eastern African Countries) and Europe (Norway) with global standards. Documents of national and local guidelines were collected to analyze the macro/micro level of the common elements found in these documents and how they reflect IASSW/IFSW standards. The results revealed that 1)the clear and transparent policies and procedures, 2)building meaningful partnerships between educational institutions and society, as consistent elements with the IASSW Global Standards, and 1)Decision-making on practical training with service users, 2)Orientation to practical training sites and ongoing support, including training and education for training instructors, and 3)International training abroad, as inconsistent elements with the IASSW Global Standards. Discussions included; 1)the national-level regulations as effective ways to develop clear educational goals and procedures, 2)collaboration with practical training sites, 3)reflection on Clients' opinions, and 4)Necessity of information platform for international practical training. Six points are addressed as future recommendations

## **I. Rationale and purpose of the project**

The project, *Guidelines on social work Practice Education & Internationalization: A critical review*, where four different social work practice education in Japan, Kenya, Norway and India are investigated in how these Global Standards have come to practice in the national and/or local manuals/guidelines on bachelor level. Practice education is an important part of social work education to develop the best competence for social work students.

International Association of Studies in Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) approved the updated Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training in June 2020. The Global Standards describe Core Curricula for Practice Education, and IASSW/IFSW set standards for the educational institutions to develop local manuals or guidelines to detail standards for collaboration with the practice placements, procedures, standards for assessments or supervision etc.

The project aims were:

1. Critically review the guidelines on Social Work practice education at the bachelor's level in Asia (India & Japan), Africa (Kenya-Eastern African Countries) and Europe (Norway) with IASSW/IFSW's global standards.
2. Disseminate a more concrete and broader picture that facilitates developing guidelines for different regions/countries and generic components of IASSW/IFSW.

The expected contribution and outcome of the project was awareness among both academicians and practitioners of the need for standardised field education guidelines. Further, to improve the visibility of national bodies that promote social work education with the support of IASSW/IFSW and to encourage countries to initiate social work councils that guide professional social work practice education. The international sharing and imparting of

knowledge by social work educators may also enhance social work education to become thriving, well-resourced, inclusive, and participatory.

## **II. The process of implementation**

Documents of national and local guidelines were collected to analyse the macro/micro level of the common elements found in these documents and how they reflect IASSW/IFSW standards. To differentiate between universal, national, and local standards or guidelines, the IASSW/IFSW's standards are mentioned as the global standard, the national standards are mentioned as national guidelines and the local universities as manuals or local manuals. Practice education includes mostly practice placement, but for some educational institutions, it also involves some credits during some theoretical courses. The term practice education will include both, and the term practical placement will include only the practice periods outside the educational institution.

Discussion was conducted online meetings monthly, and with this aim, the research finding was disseminated through an International Webinar on 19 May 2023. The participants of the project have also abstained a webinar in 23 May 2023 hosted by Toyo University and local seminars or webinars that disseminated and discussed the findings further for a more concrete and broader picture that facilitates developing guidelines for different regions/countries and generic components to IASSW/IFSW. This academic report includes an overview of practice education guidelines and manuals in the four countries, analyzing and summarizing on this matter.

### **III. Outline of Social Work Education and Practical Training in Four Countries**

#### **1. Overview of social work education**

In India, for example, Madras Christian College (MCC) is a liberal arts and science college in Chennai, India. The Department of social work was established in 1999. The Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) started in 2005. The National Association of Professional Social Work in India (NAPSWI) is a non-profit, non-political, national-level organization dedicated to the promotion of the standard and status of the social work profession. There are a few more Social Work Association functioning in India: ISPSW (Indian Society of Professional Social Work), KAPSW (Karnataka Association of Professional Social Workers), KAPS (Kerala Association of Professional Social Workers) and PSWA (Professional Social Workers Association).

In Japan, the certified social worker was nationally qualified in 1988 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan. In 2022, there were 280,000 qualified social workers. MHLW regulates the curriculum, education, and procedures of social work licensure. Under the Certified Social Worker and Certified Care Worker Act Law, to obtain the social worker license, the following are required: 1) completion of the designated subjects (19 subjects & 1200 hours), 2) 90 hours of social work practical training guidance and 240 hours of practical training, and 3) passing the national examination. The national examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions, and the pass rate is usually 30~40%.

Kenya does not have a long history of professional training in social work. In Kenya, social work as a profession was introduced in 1962. National professional associations such as the Kenya National Association of Social Workers (KNASW), with 329 members, Kenya National Association for Medical Social Workers, with 709 members, and Kenya Social Work Educators Association (70 members) are the major bodies the social workers registered in the country. The undergraduate level

was introduced in 1976 at the University of Nairobi. Both public and private universities provide social work training from certificates to PhD. Most universities in Kenya offer courses at the undergraduate level and a few at the master's level. The Catholic University of Eastern Africa is the only Private University in Kenya offering programmes from Certificates to PhD in Social Work. Social work in Kenya is more generic than specialised. However, the country's number of professional social workers is not clearly known.

The history of the Norwegian Social work education programme can, among other roots, be traced to The Norwegian Diaconal Home (1890), which aimed to mobilise Christian men to serve men in need and get a 5-year deacon education. The first social work education was established by a NGO, (1920); a one-year course for women. Nationally, the three main social work educations started in 1950, 1961 and 1962. Currently, there are 40 bachelor's and 41 masters, full-time and part-time, in social work, social pedagogic and social education (2023).

The main trade union of social workers is FO, having 34 000 members, including students, and retired, about 80% women. Social workers are also members of other trade unions in Norway.

## **2. Practice Education Curriculum**

In India, the manual includes information on various types of Practice education placements, such as casework, group work, community work, and social action. It also offers suggestions on the practice education selection process, including the application, interview, and placement stages. It consists of a checklist of all the necessary paperwork, such as the Practice education learning contract and declaration by the students. The manual also includes information about the supervision process, such as the duties and responsibilities of the practice education institution and faculty supervisors. It specifies the frequency and duration of monitoring, supervision methods, and evaluation procedure. It also offers advice on designing learning objectives, analysing learning outcomes, and integrating

theory and practice. The manual typically includes directions on the documentation process and instructions on using technology in the documentation and creating electronic records.

In Japan, there are 90 hours of practical training guidance, and the students' number is limited to 20 per class. Students work on presentations, get lectures from social workers, and learn about social work ethics in practice. Under the MHLW regulations, students must conduct a total of 240 hours of practical training at two or more practical training sites in different fields. One should do practical training at one site for at least 180 hours. The field supervisor at the training facility develops a draft of the practical training program. During the practical training, students get supervision from a field supervisor. After the completion of the practical training, post-practice guidance is held at each school.

In Kenya, a well-developed and comprehensive practice education manual is available for students, field placement supervisors, and instructors. One of the challenges is finding field placement supervisors. The manual is not available in English on the website.

In Norway, the social work educations develop and administrate the practice education/placement according to National regulations relating to a common curriculum for health and social care education (2019) and Regulations on national guidelines for Social Work Education (2019). There is at least two periods of practice placements during the BSW, 24 weeks all together, with 20 weeks in authentic work situations, according to the national guidelines. The national guidelines and local manual concretize what the students ought to do during the practice, for instance gain experience in establishing contact, investigating/examining, assessing, and making decisions in collaboration with service users and experience in administration. The local manual, in Norwegian and English, is available for both students and practice placements. Individual contracts are made for each student together with the supervisor at the practice placement and must be approved by a teacher at the education institution.

### 3. Practice Education Guidelines

In India, the field work documentation component involves documenting practice education practices, reports, progress reports, and assessment tools. Fieldwork evaluation covers the evaluation of practice education practice, including self-evaluation, supervisor evaluation, and peer evaluation. A practice education manual in India is a handbook that gives practical assistance and support to students throughout their Practice education placement. It consists of a checklist of all the necessary paperwork, such as the Practice education learning contract and declaration by the students. The manual also includes information about the supervision process, such as the duties and responsibilities of the practice education institution and faculty supervisors.

In Japan, the Japan Association for Social Work Education (JASWE) is organised in social work education schools across the country. Based on the regulations of MHLW, JASWE has established 1) Social Work Practical Training Guidelines, 2) Social Work Practical Training Guidance Guidelines, and 3) Social Work Practical Training Evaluation Tables. It sets the minimum standard for practical training conducted at social work schools nationwide. Social work schools prepare curricula, manuals, and educational methods based on them.

In Kenya, practice guidelines are provided to students in the fieldwork manual by the respective university, and no common guidelines are found or drafted by any associations. The Social work manual provides guidelines for placements in agencies and supervision assessment by the supervisors at the completion of placement or field attachment undertaken by the student.

In Norway the National regulations relating to a common curriculum for health and social care education (2019) and Regulations on national guidelines for Social Work Education (2019) regulates and set the minimum standard for the local manuals. The local manuals have the possibility to expand or concretize even more through their curriculum. According to the common curriculum, every



educational institution is responsible for offering the students relevant practical training, to be updated on the practice field and assist in pedagogical items and teaching methods including professional supervision. Together with the national guidelines for each social work education, the regulations will ensure that the education institutions are working on the connectivity between theory and practice.

#### **IV. Consistency with the IASSW Global Standards**

##### **1. Clear and transparent policies and procedures**

In India the University Grants Commission (UGC) is a legally recognized agency of the Indian government responsible for coordinating, establishing, and maintaining university education standards for instruction, assessment, and research. The BSW program offered in India comes under the Humanities field and has received approval from the Universities Grants Commission (UGC). The learning outcomes-based curricular framework (LOCF) for undergraduate education including BSW is a framework that is based on the academic standards and learning outcomes that are anticipated to be met by course graduates and holders of credentials.

In Japan, practical training sites are selected from those that meet the criteria of the guidelines based on national regulations. The JASWE guidelines stipulate that schools should provide necessary guidance to students by respecting the will of students and confirming their motivation. Based on this, schools confirm students' wishes of which field of practical training sites through questionnaire surveys, etc., and decide on the assignment of practical training sites. Schools also take into account students' commuting time, individual circumstances, etc. Students and supervisors get the manual and all information about the regulations, the study plan for the practice placement, a document called work placement information that is edited every year according to changes.

In Kenya after orientation in various specialized fields of social work, the students are given

chances to opt for agencies according to their aptitude. The students will then continue their attachment and be supervised by the appointed field attachment supervisors from both university and the agency. The students will be assessed based on the student's logbook, field attachment report, and report from the agency supervisor and faculty supervisor.

According to the national regulations in Norway, the education institutions are responsible for making cooperation agreements regulating "responsibilities, roles, practice placement capacities, competencies, and cooperation arenas at all relevant levels, and may also regulate research cooperation, development, and innovation." The local manual describes these procedures, expectations, and responsibilities. To meet the national regulations, VID and other institutions have a practice team of both administrators and social workers/teacher.

## **2. Building meaningful partnerships between educational institutions and society**

In India, MOUs with collaborative agencies help to engage in practice education placement between the BSW college and the Practice education agency. This entailed giving the practice education agency and its personnel resources, instruction, and continuous assistance for the student's professional development.

In Japan, JASWE has shown the importance of building partnerships with practical training sites. At the local level, many schools build close partnerships with practical training sites. Schools and practical training sites share information on volunteer activities at the training site, hold joint meetings, and invite supervisors to schools to give lectures to students. Many training institutions actively collaborate with universities because they intend to secure prospective staff. Social work practice education is one of the opportunities for social work organisations to recruit good staff.

In Kenya, the department assigns every student a supervisor. The attachment is done twice during the course of the student. There is no meeting of the academic supervisors and students in the

university due to the inadequate number of supervisors. Evaluation is done by the supervisor allocated by the department to the student. The student will submit the student's log book (fieldwork journal), daily report and summary report of the field attachment. The agency supervisor will also submit a confidential report to the academic supervisor.

In Norway, educational institutions often have networks with both public and private social welfare organizations or NGOs that implement social work projects. This is of big importance finding enough practice placements for the students every year. The different educational institutions cooperate to find placements in the same regions. Finding practice placements that fulfill the criteria and can have students every year, can be difficult often according to the work load for the practice field making it difficult to priority students and practice placements.

## **V. Inconsistency with Global Standards**

### **1. Decision-making on practical training with service users**

In Japan, IASSW's guidelines require that the opinions of service clients be reflected in the service. However, in reality, there are few opportunities to ask service clients about their opinions on the acceptance of students at their places. Although the information about practical training students is shared with clients, in Japan, there is no specific formal system to evaluate students' performance in practical training.

In Kenya, in terms of nurturing valuable partnerships between the educational institution, the agency, and service users in decision-making regarding practice education, there is little or no opportunity to reflect the views of service users in practice education. No such provisions of at least 25% of the overall education activity within the courses are found in the curriculum. Practice

institutions are evaluated through the supervisors' assessment and feedback from students. Securing quality practicum in institutions is sometimes difficult to meet the demands of social work institutions. The collaborative initiatives in the field practicum are though highly promoted no such initiatives are found unless tailor-made projects are incorporated as part of the field practicum. The provisions for ongoing training though necessary national bodies are not keen to provide. There is no regulatory body to guide social work education in Kenya. Schools may organize meetings with practice supervisors to exchange ideas and incorporate training, but participation is voluntary.

In Norway, decision-making on practical training with service users is not found in the national or local guidelines, but the partnership is mentioned in other national or local documents. Every social education institution has a board of members from the work field and service users.

## **2. Orientation to practical training sites and ongoing support, including training and education for training instructors.**

In India, supervisors' credentials, professional competence, communication, and interpersonal skills must be upheld to guarantee that students receive the best supervision and mentorship throughout their Practice education placement. The success of the Practice education of the BSW program is depends on the choice of Practice education supervisors in the social work departments.

Field supervisors in Japan are not required to undergo special training at the national or organisational level once they complete the training to become supervisors. Educational institutions may hold meetings or seminars for field supervisors to exchange ideas and incorporate training, but participation is voluntary. Therefore, once they have taken the training, they have little opportunity to improve their supervision skills unless they get training voluntarily.

In Norway the National regulations relating to a common curriculum (2019) regulate the responsibility of each educational institution and the practice placement. The education institutions are responsible for making cooperation agreements regulating “responsibilities, roles, practice

placement capacities, competencies, and cooperation arenas at all relevant levels, and may also regulate research cooperation, development, and innovation”. The practice provider is “responsible for the daily instruction and follow-up of students and should ensure that practice supervisors are normally of the same profession as those being supervised”. Several educational institutions offer a 10-15 SPE-course for local supervisors. The course can be a part of the national approval as a supervisor in social work, provided by the union for social workers. Some educations follow up the supervisors by offering seminars.

### **3. International training abroad**

According to the regulations of countries under research, training institutions must fall under a certain list, such as those stipulated in the Social Welfare Act. Therefore, it is not possible to conduct international welfare training in practical training to obtain national qualifications. There are systems in place through social clubs based in the school by which students can apply for exchange programs in coordination with the school. Communication Channels such as Shared Goals and Objectives, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Feedback and Evaluation, Support, and Recommending students be registered in international organisations and countries they wish to work in later as part of professional growth. In Norway students can have their longest practice placement abroad and several education institutions cooperate with universities abroad. The international practice place fulfill the same claims as the national practice placements and the students going abroad get the same approval as students having their practice placement nationally.

## **VI. Discussion**

### **1. National-level regulations as effective ways to develop clear educational goals and procedures**

After consultation by the committee, the educational curriculum for social workers was presented, and researchers and practitioners participated in creating a curriculum that integrates theories and methodologies. In addition, it seems that a structure has been established in which the organisation that organises educational institutions supports it and that clear goals enable standardised goals and procedures. This also has the positive effect of promoting cooperation between the community and educational institutions.

### **2. Collaboration with practical training sites**

In addition to the regulation, the social circumstances, for instance, the declining birthrate, ageing population, and increasing various welfare problems, make securing high-quality workers even more important. The desire to have good staff among social work organisations also promotes collaboration. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that there are cases where practical training instructors have felt stress with evaluation and guidance. It is crucial to make effective use of methods other than face-to-face meetings (Watanabe et al., 2018).

### **3. Reflection on Clients' opinions**

There are few cases where the thoughts of clients about accepting students are reflected in the evaluation of the students. The background to this may be the recognition that practical training guidance is provided by social workers and, therefore, evaluations are regarded as the task by

supervisors or other staff. Considering whose rights social workers will protect, it is desirable to set up opportunities to listen to clients' opinions. It is necessary to discuss how we can develop the system to listen to clients' opinions and to what extent to reflect them in the evaluation of students.

#### **4. Necessity of information platform for international practical training**

The similarities among BSW Practice education or practicum requirements in India, Japan, Kenya, and Norway highlight how serious giving students a thorough and organized Practice education placement experience is to prepare them for social work practice.

There are regional variances in the specifics of the regulations, though universal elements offer a foundation for guaranteeing that BSW students are receiving a high-quality Practice education placement experience.

There are differences in the specifics of the curricula between nations, but common elements offer a foundation for guaranteeing that BSW students are receiving a high-quality education that will prepare them for social work practice.

The IASSW standards offer a thorough framework for BSW Practice education placements, highlighting the significance of fostering students' social work competencies through supervised experience in various settings.

However, In Japan, it is almost impossible to conduct practical training for licensure in countries other than Japan. This is probably because there has not been much thought that practical training in countries other than Japan will meet the standards and regulations set by the national regulation. To consider conducting international practical training, regulations for practical training in other countries must be shared. At the same time, since social work is required to respect the indigenous knowledge of the region, information of their unique cultural backgrounds should also be included. Based on

reflections from other countries, it is desirable to reflect upon: Stressing Diversity and cultural sensitivity in Practice Education, Creating and implementing a standardised Practice education placement and supervision process, combining theory and practice in Practice education, building social work competencies in students and Obtaining accreditation and recognition.

## **5. Recommendations**

The recommendations offer a worldwide view of social work field education, considering the many demands and difficulties that social work practitioners and students encounter worldwide.

- 1 ) The IASSW recommendations have significantly influenced the BSW curriculum in India, Kenya, Japan and Norway, and provided a comprehensive social work field education framework.
- 2 ) The standards have allowed BSW students to receive a high-quality education that will prepare them for social work practice while also considering the various demands and difficulties faced by social work practitioners and students in multiple nations.
- 3 ) The BSW curricula in Japan, Kenya, India and Norway, adhere to the IASSW recommendations for social work field education, covering all of the essential elements included in the recommendations.
- 4 ) However, given issues like resource availability, cultural context, and the unique demands of the student body, it's probable that not all of the guidelines will be fully covered or applied in every country's BSW programme.
- 5 ) Developing social work skills and competencies among students in India, Kenya, Japan and Norway can be significantly aided by aligning the BSW curriculum with the IASSW guidelines for social work practice education.
- 6 ) The IASSW guidelines significantly affect BSW Practice education or practicum guidelines in India, Kenya, Japan and Norway's curriculum. They can help to ensure that students obtain a high-quality Practice education that will equip them for successful social work practice.



## **VII. Conclusion**

The progress of globalisation requires solidarity that transcends national borders. This is also strongly true of social work. Social work education is also working in solidarity across borders. Although in countries like Kenya and India, Social Work Education is guided by University Education Commission or University Grant Commission, there are no social work institution or council that guides and regulates practice education except the individualistic approach to social work practice. It is found that established National Associations do not play a major role in Social Work Practice Education. Interestingly it is found that students are provided with adequate instructions in the manual of the university to practice education and guidelines to practice institutions. The inadequacy of the regulatory body of social work in Kenya and India restricts the facilitation of the practice education standardization.

It is observed in common that detailed regulations on the requirements for practicum supervisors and school instructors enable them to keep the quality of education, but the subsequent evaluation has not been done sufficiently. The system is still inadequate to deal with diverse practices, such as international practical training keeping IFSW and IASSW guidelines. Even if we find most of the global standards in the common curriculum, the national guidelines for social work education and in the local manual IASSW are often not referred to.

It is also a concern of local social work educators that when the global and national standards are so specific, the local manual gets fewer possibilities to develop the practice placement according to local needs and local approaches to social work. IASSW highlights the space of the service users and the practitioners in the development of practice education. This could be help at the national or local level to increase this partnership.

The Practice education manuals for a BSW programme in countries under research are vital

reference that provides helpful direction and support to students during their Practice education placement. It explains the goals and objectives of practice education, the roles and duties of students, supervisors, and agencies, and the evaluation procedure. It intends to ensure that students acquire high-quality practice education experience. It intends to ensure that students acquire high-quality Practice education experience and are well-prepared for careers in social work.

The IASSW guidelines can enhance the curriculum for BSW Practice education or practicum in the nations of Kenya, India, Norway, and Japan by guaranteeing the standardized quality of Practice education, strengthening the diversity and cultural sensitivity of Practice education, strengthening the integration of theory and practice, fostering social work competencies, and facilitating accreditation and recognition.

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