

IMPLEMENTING A GLOBAL CODE OF ETHICS TO ENSURE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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Webinar #30



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Schools of Social Work (IASSW) Global
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Moderator

WEBINAR AGENDA

Developing a Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles

Dr. Vishanthie Sewpaul, PhD, Chair, IASSW Global Social Work Taskforce; Emeritus Professor, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; Professor II, University of Stavanger, Norway

Establishing and Promoting a Global Statement of Ethical Principles

Ms. Dawn Hobdy, LICSW, Commissioner, Permanent Committee on Ethical Issues International Federation of Social Workers; Director, Office of Ethics and Professional Review at the National Association of Social Workers (NASW); Adjunct Professor, Howard University School of Social Work. USA

Global Social Work Ethics and International Field Training: The experiences and practice dilemmas of Norwegian and Swedish social work students

Dr. Jessica H. Jönsson, Research Fellow, School of Law, Psychology and Social Work, Örebro University, Sweden

Ms. Aina Lian Flem, Associate Professor of Social Work, affiliated to the Department of Social Work at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

Questions and Answers

WHY THE REVIEW?

Adoption of the 2014 Global Social Work Definition

- Informed by critical, post-colonial theories
- Underscores structural & participatory approaches
- Micro-macro continuum

Counter Western Hegemony

- Decolonize ethics

GLOBAL SOCIAL WORK STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES



THE PROCESS

- Extremely challenging
- Wide diversities in views
- Latin America – radical Marxist language
- Some Asian countries - too much focus on social change
- All except Europe and North America – 2000 Definition
- Western hegemony
- Challenges in working towards de-colonization
- Active listening to ALL voices – responsiveness
- Humility – regional and/or national amplifications

Sewpaul, V. & Henricks, M. (forthcoming) The (r)evolution and decolonization of social work ethics: *The Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (GSWSEP) International SW*

9 CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Recognition of the inherent dignity of humanity

2. Promoting human rights

3. Promoting social justice

- i. Challenge discrimination and institutional oppression
- ii. Respect for diversity
- iii. Access to equitable resources
- iv. Challenge unjust policies and practices
- v. Build solidarity

4. Promoting the right to self-determination

5. Promoting the right to participation

6. Respect for confidentiality and privacy

7. Treating people as whole persons

8. Ethical use of technology and social media

9. Professional integrity

THE PROCESS

- **Ethical Principles Serve As Moral Compass – Choice Of Path Is Still Ours**



Live And Work In A World Of Ethical Pluralism

RECONCEPTUALIZING ETHICS

- Inter-subjectivity and inter-relatedness of human dignity and human rights – *Being for the Other; Ubuntu; “small gifts”*
- Individual and group rights
- Coexistence of human rights and collective responsibility

- Embodied vulnerability of humanity
 - Social workers are not fragmented entities
 - Critical reflection on how the personal influences the professional and vice versa - foundation of everyday ethical practice
 - All human beings are embedded in societies and dependent on their socio-political, economic and cultural structures and conventions
 - Does not negate human agency/freedom
 - Promote non-hierarchical relationships; minimize “us” vs “them”; greater empathy
 - Acknowledging and dealing with vulnerability - constitutive of strengths, and are sources of growth & development.

CHALLENGE TAKEN-FOR-GRANTED ASSUMPTIONS

Confidentiality

- Shared confidentiality

Self-determination

- Structural constraints – intersection of social criteria such as race, class, gender, language, nationality, geographic location, disability
- Ideal of self-determination requires resources
- Control functions of social work
- Ideological control of consciousness – normalize prejudices, discriminations & injustices
- Heighten consciousness – self and others

Cultural diversity

- Not construct socio-economic concerns as cultural issues
- Not stretch the boundaries of moral relativism
- Role of social workers as cultural mediators

Dawn Hobdy, MSW, LICSW

**Secretary, Permanent Committee on
Ethical Issues, International
Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)**

**Director, Office of Ethics and
Professional Review, National
Association of Social Workers (NASW)**

**Adjunct Professor, Howard University
School of Social Work**

United States



ETHICS COMMITTEE

Permanent Committee on Ethical Issues

- The Ethics Committee is responsible for the review of the Statement of Ethical Principles, that every member of IFSW is required to adhere to, in addition to their own Code of Ethics.
- The Statement presents:
 - basic ethical principles of the social work profession
 - offers guidance and recommends action when the work presents ethical dilemmas not only for members but for individual social workers in relation to the people with whom they work, colleagues and others in the field
- The Commission has five members
 - one from each region
 - coordinated by the Secretary to the Committee, who is appointed every two years by the Executive Committee

BACKGROUND

1. In July 2016, the Secretary of The Permanent Committee on Ethical Issues of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) was appointed

2. Tasked with working collaboratively with members of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) to review the IFSW Statement of Ethical Principles *to determine whether there was a need for revisions.*

3. Asked to consider the Global Definition of Social Work approved by the IFSW General Meeting and the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014

GLOBAL DEFINITION OF SOCIAL WORK

The following definition was approved by the IFSW General Meeting and the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

PROCESS

Survey



Consultation



Communications and Collaborations

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

- **Obtaining timely feedback from members**
 - Cultural contextualization
 - Global inclusion
- **Establishing the best working relationship between IFSW and IASSW**
- **Agreeing on the purpose and goals of a statement of ethical principles**
 - Harmonization from diverse stakeholders
 - Principles vs. Codes of Ethics
 - Aspirational vs. prescriptive
- **Meeting the needs of the membership**
 - Clear, concise and simplified language
 - Universally accepted
 - Easily translatable

OUTCOME AND MOVING FORWARD

- Shared Principles
- Goal: Promote the Statement jointly and individually
- IFSW
 - Promote the new Statement regionally
 - Develop educational opportunities
 - Work with regions and country associations that already have Codes of Ethics
 - Work with associations to develop Codes of Ethics
 - How can a Global Statement support or challenge a Code of Ethics?

Dr. Jessica H. Jönsson
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Psychology and Social Work,
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Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Global Social Work Ethics and International Field Training: The experiences and practice dilemmas of Norwegian and Swedish social work students




The study

In this study, we explore ethics in international field training experienced by Norwegian and Swedish students in social work education and field training in the Global South.

Guided by the following questions:

- ▶ *What characterises the ethical issues and dilemmas encountered by the students conducting field training in the Global South?*
- ▶ *What are the key ethical challenges for students doing international field training in the Global South?*
- ▶ *How can social work educators promote ethical alertness in international field training in the Global South?*



Unequal power relations in social work

- ▶ Strengthening critical and global perspectives in today's social work education
- ▶ GSWEF's recognizes the intersubjectivity of human dignity and human rights
- ▶ Broadening the domain of professional ethics beyond practical dilemmas to more 'situated' approaches



Method and material

- ▶ The empirical illustrations presented in the study is obtained via:
 - ▶ Focus group interviews after completion of field training
 - ▶ Students' field reports and ethics assignments
- ▶ 24 students in Norway and Sweden who conducted their field training in Bahamas, Cameroon, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Philippines and Zambia
- ▶ The narratives were analysed by using qualitative content analysis in a five step model, to identify relevant themes and to provide a comprehensive understanding of manifest and latent contents within critical and global perspectives



Key findings I

- Rediscovering global power relations in everyday encounters
 - dealing with practices reproducing inequalities
 - dealing with ambiguities and West-centrism
 - balancing ethical use of social media
 - balancing competing ethical principles



Example: Balancing competing ethical principles

- *Once I was in the process of helping one of the youth prisoners to leave the prison, the office clerk claimed a fee from me before the youth could leave the prison. I was caught in a dilemma: should I deny paying the fee, or should I give in and contribute to the corruption to secure the release of the youth? I concluded that my moral responsibility was first of all to secure the release of the young boy, and I decided to pay after bargaining the fee to a smaller amount.*



Key findings II

- Rediscovering professional integrity
 - Dealing with dual relationships
 - Counteracting 'false generosity' and paternalism




Example: Counteracting 'false generosity'

- ▶ *I often struggled with how to handle responses on myself as white and rich during my fieldwork. I felt that my colleagues at work expected me to give them money or some of my 'affluent' wardrobe. The pressure I felt tempted me just to give something to be more at ease. But, I was prepared to critically reflect on such incidents and concluded that such acts would strengthen the stereotyped superiority of my role as a visitor from a western country, and thus widening the gap between me and my colleagues. That helped me to not enter into a relation of the 'rich helping the poor'.*



Key findings III

- ▶ Redefining educators obligations in promoting ethical alertness
 - ▶ Scrutinising students' and educators' motivations for international field training
 - ▶ Creating spaces for critical reflexivity
 - ▶ Creating partnership for transformative learning of situated ethics



Example: Creating partnership for transformative learning of situated ethics

- ▶ *Our local supervisor was of immense help. When I learnt about the long-lasting consequences of apartheid, I became more conscious of `Us` and `Them` divides in my home country. I really started reflecting on the often unspoken discrimination of black people at home, and I became much more aware of the injustices taking place.*

Thank you!



Jessica H. Jönsson & Aina Lian Flem

References

- ▶ Banks S (2016) Everyday ethics in professional life: social work as ethics work. *Ethics and Social Welfare* 10(1): 35-52.
- ▶ Flem A.L, Jönsson J.H., Alseth A K, Strauss H and Antczak H (2017) Revitalizing social work education through global and critical awareness: Examples from three Scandinavian schools of social work. *European Journal of Social Work* 20(1): 76-87.
- ▶ Jönsson J.H. and Flem A.L (2018) International field training in social work education: beyond colonial divides. *Social Work Education* 37(7): 895-908.
- ▶ Jönsson J.H. & Flem, A.L (2019) Global social work ethics and international field training: The experiences and practice dilemmas of Norwegian and Swedish social work students (Forthcoming)
- ▶ Sewpaul V (2013) Inscribed in our blood, challenging the ideology of sexism and racism. *Affilia* 28(2): 116-125.

Questions & Answers

- Please type your questions into the question window to be posed by the moderator
- We regret if time does not allow all questions to be answered.

**May 7, 2019 – Global Social Service Workforce
Strengthening Symposium: Evidence to Action,
Washington, DC, and live webcast**

**June 13, 2019 – Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse
and Online Exploitation (webinar)**

**July 3, 2019 – Nation Building: The value of a child and
youth care workforce in the provision of social services,
NACCW Conference in Durban, South Africa and live
webcast**

We invite your comments on future topics of interest.

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