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Contemporary Challenges Facing Social Work in Turkey: Would Global Agenda Be Relevant?

Hakan Acar ⓘ*, Burcu Yakut Çakar, Yüksel Baykara Acar and Durdu Baran Çiftçi*

The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (GA) aims at strengthening the social work profession by building linkages between global challenges and local responses. Against the neoliberal conservative policy transformation in the last two decades, this article focuses on the effects of neoliberal policies on social work education and practice in Turkey and discusses the relevance and operationalisation of the Global Agenda in Turkish context. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data from focus group interviews held with social work academics and representatives of Turkish Association of Social Workers (TASW) reveal that the role of the profession has significantly been narrowed down; together with the degrading in the quality of social work education, professional values have considerably eroded and thus resulted in further deepening of the identity crisis of the social work profession in Turkey. The research findings also indicate relatively limited knowledge and recognition of the GA in Turkey so far. However, the GA was identified as potentially useful in dealing with local professional challenges. In this regard, the effective operationalisation of the GA in Turkey would be possible with the commitments of both social work educators through the curriculum and engagement of the professionals.

Introduction

Over the past decades, the neoliberal agenda has heavily impinged on social work and associated areas of social care (Harris 2003, Spolander et al. 2014, Golightley and Holloway 2017). In terms of the analysis of the impact of neo-liberalism on the social work profession, three main processes affecting the practice of social work around the globe were identified by Harris (2014) as marketisation (i.e. the introduction of markets into social work),

consumerization (i.e. the positioning of social service users as consumers or customers) and managerialisation (i.e. the reduction of funding to produce efficiency gains, the commodification of service provision and the execution of greater control over professional space) that are verified by the evidence from several international comparative research (see for instance Spolander et al. 2014 and Ornellas et al. 2019). Moreover, Ornellas, Engelbrecht, and Atamturk (2020, 238) added a fourth process into this classification as deprofessionalisation which refers to the reduction of professional discretion, deskilling of social work and diminishing professional autonomy and identity.

Similar issues were also identified in the relevant literature for social work in Turkey. For instance, the evidence from the research on occupational problems of social workers conducted by Gokcek Karaca, Karaca, and Dziegielewski (2018) reveals that the majority of social workers in the sample[1] (85.4 per cent) mentioned being 'forced to provide only focused or short-term problem solutions' while around three out of four participants in the sample indicated 'working without proper technical equipment, tools and instruments'. One research conducted with social workers in Burdur province ($n = 33$) (Cüm and Koroğlu 2021) identified several problems facing social workers such as degrading of the profession, insufficient preventive services and so on.

In response to the global challenges facing the profession, the process of The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development[2] (GA) has been initiated by International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW). The GA particularly aims at a re-positioning of the profession by strengthening the profile and visibility of social work, developing new partnerships, boosting the confidence of social workers and enabling social workers to make a stronger contribution to policy development (Truell and Jones 2012, 455-456).

This article aims at exploring the effects of neoliberal policies on social work education and practice in Turkey and discussing the relevance and operationalization of the GA in the Turkish context.

Social Work in Turkey

Social work education in Turkey was initiated in 1961 with the technical assistance from the United Nations (Aykara 2012, 109). However, social work education did not expand until the proliferation of social work departments in several universities in the early 2000s (Karataş and Erkan 2005). As of 2020, a total of 134 universities in Turkey have departments of social work with undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes. Moreover, there are two open and distance education programmes (YOK (Turkish Higher Education Institution) 2020).

[1]Research sample consisted of 89 social workers from 24 provinces across Turkey.
[2]The First Global Agenda for social work - 'The Global Agenda'- was from 2010-2020, and the second iteration from 2020-2030 with a focus on 'Co-Building Inclusive Social Transformation' (IFSW, IASSW and ICSW 2020).

The welfare regime in Turkey has been identified as a familialistic Mediterranean regime where family assumes a pivotal role in provision of welfare services particularly by the women in households and religion has a marked influence on social policy making (Bugra and Keyder 2006; Gal 2010). In this setting, public social services mainly harboured curative and rehabilitative policies than preventive interventions (Yıldırım and Şahin 2019, 2540). The impact of neoliberal transformation on social work has particularly reflected a liberal residualist and social conservative outlook[3] (Bugra and Keyder 2006, 213) where social assistance policies were prioritized in welfare provision (Metin 2011, 194). In this regard, the scope of social work in Turkey has been reduced down to means-tested cash benefits and thus lacked a rights-based approach (Reçber 2019, Akkus 2021). This transformation could be also traced along the government policy commitments outlined in the main public policy documents[4] within the last two decades. Apparently, one can witness the vanishing of social work as a specific policy domain itself and the assimilation of both the profession and associated policy interventions.

Global Agenda in Social Work Literature in Turkish

The social work literature in Turkish was reviewed to determine the extent to which the GA was covered for the 2014 - 2020 period with respect to the 6 concepts identified in four pillars of the GA - namely *sustainability, environment/ecology, social and economic inequality, dignity, worth of the person* and *human relationships*.[5] This review was undertaken in two levels: in the first level, the titles of the articles published in *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet (Society and Social Work)* as the only well-established academic journal on

[3]Here, it should also be noted that the intrinsic characteristics of the welfare regime has blended with the neoliberal policy transformation and ultimately led to the strengthening the traditional values and gender roles with centrality of the family as the foundation of the society and consequent the neglect of any variety of family models existing in the contemporary complex fabric of the Turkish society (Yükselbaba 2013, Kaya 2014). Gunes-Ayata and Dogangun (2017: 621) refers to this process as "the promotion of patriarchal norms legitimized by moral and religious values". In a similar vein, Cosar and Yegenoglu (2011: 557) identifies the contemporary patriarchal politics as the intertwining of neoliberal, nationalist and religious politics. As emphasized by Ozbay (2014: 110), despite the inspirations or aspirations from the Islamist and traditional values, the prioritization of the family could be regarded as an outcome of the globalization taking place within a culturally conservatist neoliberal ideology. Actually, one could easily trace the impact of the blend of cultural conservatism and economic liberalism on the family and gender policies that aim to consolidate and sustain the family - and particularly the women in the family - in its pivotal role in care provision (Akkan 2018, Aybars, Beşpınar, and Kalaycıoğlu 2018).

[4]In Turkey, five-year development plans set out the main long-term policy context and constitute the basis for shorter term policy planning and implementation. The plans are available from https://www.sbb.gov.tr/kalkinma-planlari/ (accessed on 24 February 2021).

[5]The terms used for review in Turkish are *sürdürülebilirlik, çevre, eşitsizlik, insanın değeri, insanın onuru, insanın saygınlığı* and *insan ilişkileri* where *dignity* in Turkish corresponded to two terms.

social work in Turkish since 1983 were reviewed. For the 2014 - 2019 period, 11 articles out of a total of 234 published articles included the concepts of the GA.[6] Among those, only three relatively recent articles were directly on the GA (İçağasıoğlu Coban, Attepe Özden, and Pak 2018; İçağasıoğlu Çoban 2018; İçağasıoğlu Çoban 2019). Two of those articles discuss the GA in its historical background, content, commitments as well as its relation with World Social Work Day (IFSW 2020) while the other article uses the GA framework to discuss social work for Syrian migrants. The rest of the articles including concepts of the GA either used the GA as a reference or mentioned the GA in the discussion.

The second level of the review aimed at identifying graduate theses including concepts of the GA. All the graduate theses (both MA and PhD) completed in social work for the 2014 - 2020 period and officially registered in the Turkish National Thesis Centre of Higher Education Institution were reviewed over their titles and abstracts for each of the six GA concepts though the electronic database.[7] This review identified that only 15 graduate theses out of a total of 568 MA theses and 108 PhD theses completed between 2014 and 2020 on social work included the concepts of the GA in their titles and abstracts - i.e. 5 of them included *human relationships*, 4 theses referred to *inequality*, 3 theses mentioned *environment* while *dignity* appeared only in 3 theses.

Material and Methods

The impact of neoliberal transformation on social work in Turkey and the relevance of the GA within this context was explored through the perspectives of social work academics and representatives of Turkish Association of Social Workers (TASW). The data was collected under a qualitative research design through a semi-structured focus group interview. For the purpose of this research, the qualitative design was found useful in exploring the key informants' views and perspectives on both the dynamics of the transformation and the validity of the GA in the Turkish context.

Participants

The participants of the focus group interview consisted of social work academics who published on the GA (5 people) and Executive Board members from TASW Headquarters in charge of international affairs (2 people).[8] The group

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[6]Among those, 6 titles included ecology, 4 of them included human relationships while sustainability and equality appeared in 3 titles.
[7]The official database is available from: https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tarama.jsp (accessed 15 December 2020).
[8]This seemingly small sample size is due to the very limited academic interest and lack of public coverage of GA among Turkish Social Work community covering both professionals and academics.

was remarkably heterogeneous as the ages of those 4 female and 3 male participants were between 29 and 67 (mean = 42.14) while their professional experience ranged from 6 years to 35 years (mean = 17.14 years).

Data Collection

The data was collected through the online focus group interview held in Turkish on Zoom. As one of the participants was unable to attend the focus group meeting, the research team also organized an online in-depth interview with her on Zoom. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured question form which was shared with the participants enclosed to the invitation email together with an information note on research including particulars on the aim, data collection process and ethical considerations. The questions aimed at exploring the impact of neoliberal policies on social work education and practice in Turkey and discussing the relevance and operationalization of the GA in the Turkish context. The interviews were recorded with the oral consent of all participants. The duration of the interview sessions were 150 min and 60 min respectively.

Ethical Considerations

The participants were fully informed about the research during the invitation phase. The information note shared at this phase included particular items on ethical considerations of the research. Those were related to the privacy, anonymity and consent of the participants as well as the rules and content of the focus group interview session. As mentioned above, online sessions were initiated with the collection of the oral consents from each participant and were then recorded accordingly.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is described as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data which is useful not only to organize and describe the data in detail but also to interpret various aspects of the research topic (as quoted in Braun and Clarke 2006, 79). After the transcription of the recorded data, the researchers read the transcribed texts several times and highlighted sentences or phrases they found meaningful within the research questions. Data were coded based on the theoretical framework and the aims of the research. First, the data were disaggregated into themes in line with the research questions. Then, all researchers cross checked those themes by

reading over and cross comparing the decomposed data. Finally, the findings were reported by interpreting the most representative quotations of the participants categorized under each theme.

Results

The results were categorized along two main themes. The first theme refers to the current transformation of social work in Turkey, the emergence of the policies in conflict with professional values and the erosion of professional identity in Turkey under neoliberal conservative ideology. The second theme points out the limited knowledge on the GA in Turkey and presents different views on the relevance of the GA in Turkish context.

Ideology, Professional Values and Erosion of Identity

Participants addressed the quality issues in social work education due to the proliferation of social work departments within a politically laden 'artificial growth' process described as an intentional and systematic increase in the number of undergraduate programmes.[9] The participants identified the negative impacts of lack of academic staff with social work qualifications. In this regard, the participants mentioned the challenges facing the professional values due to this degrading in the quality of social work education.

> All in all, the students completing the undergraduate education are not properly laden with professional values. Consequently, when they work in an institution, they become unable to contribute to or develop any institutional culture (Social Work Academic, 18 years of experience)

The participants highlighted the impact of policies on erosion of professional values due to the potential conflicting nature of the neoliberal ideology with the values of social work. In the focus group interview, participants indicated that in Turkey, the public welfare services were shaped along a particular political ideology and certain services (i.e. children services and family support services) are prioritized while public welfare service provision for specific groups are systematically non-existent.

> [Social work was] identified as a means of voting [political/electoral support], thus it constitutes a structure that becomes more and more systematically

[9]In Turkey, there is no structure, body or piece of legislation to regulate social work programs. That is to say, social work departments at different higher education institutions have the autonomy to shape the curriculum of their programme, which is only subject to the approval of the faculty board and the university senate for implementation. Alptekin (2021, 50-51) points out such discretionary and non-standard implementation of social work curriculum across Turkish higher education.

rendering service users dependent. This, in turn, leads to an inability to fulfil the main purposes of social work such as human rights, social justice etc … For civil society there are new fields that emerge … if the state denies, civil society steps in (such as services towards LGBT or migrants-asylum seekers) (Social Work Academic, 13 years of experience).

The participants indicated closing down of institutions (such as community centres, kindergartens etc.) providing preventive-supportive services and the transformation of social work into 'provision of access to social assistance' as examples of the contemporary policies. Moreover, participants also mentioned that with the impact of neoliberal policies the profession tended towards a clinical-oriented approach whereby social work interventions were largely reduced to working with individuals.

The crisis of neoliberalism has transformed the profession as such in countries like the US and others where the clinical oriented practice is dominant. Our colleagues in Turkey are also aiming at a similar trajectory, especially for the new graduates … (Social Work Academic, 13 years of experience)

Another problem discussed by the participants relate to the transformation of social work into a service provision that could be fulfilled by any professional with degrees from different disciplines such as sociology, psychology or child development.[10] Identified as "the seizure of the field" by one participant,[11] this challenge is discussed in relation to both current job definitions and the tendency towards turning social workers into 'technical operatives' (Simpson and Connor 2011). In this process, the tools and methods used in practice were narrowed so much down that the professional activities and interventions were reduced into certain standard forms.

I mean that now there is more emphasis on job descriptions. When you have job descriptions, you come across the weird term 'social work officer'. The job is defined, then the competences for the job or professional competences are neglected and all others who can fulfil the tasks indicated in the description are put in the same basket (Social Work Academic, 18 years of experience).

In sum, the participants emphasized that deep-rooted problems in social work in Turkey since the early years of establishment of social work education were deteriorated through the impact of neoliberal policies and consequently, this process led to the weakening of the social work profession.

The Role and Relevance of Global Agenda in Turkey

The participants indicated that the GA is not well-known and recognized in Turkey. One reason for this was attributed to the lack of knowledge and

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[10]The 'social work officer' is officially defined in Article 3 of the Child Protection Law (No. 5395) - https://rm.coe.int/1680470946 (accessed 1 March 2021).
[11]Social work academic, 6 years of experience

information on the GA within the social work education curriculum in higher education institutions. Moreover, the unavailability of information and documentation on the GA in translated texts into Turkish was also mentioned as one of the main factors hindering the recognition of the GA both in social work education and practice.

The discussion on the relevance of the GA in the Turkish context revealed both optimistic and pessimistic perspectives. Among the optimistic views on the relevance of the GA for Turkey, the participants mentioned the potential of the GA in recalling and revoking the priorities of the profession at international and local level. In this regard, the participants especially pointed out that the existing challenges facing the social work profession in Turkey rendered the prioritization of contemporary social problems and the role of social work in dealing with these problems. Thus, the GA was referred to as having the potential to reorient the focus of the profession towards dealing with social problems and working towards solutions based on professional values.

> …we [social workers] are very much concerned with what we are doing, we forget to focus on how we are doing it (Social Work Academic, 18 years of experience)

The participants identified the GA as having the potential to contribute to drawing attention to the global validity of the local problems of the social work profession in Turkey and instrumental in mobilising and seeking support of the international actors like the United Nations (UN) for the professional problems at the local level.

> The GA would be the force that we can bring into the UN. Who is the GA? The GA is us… The more we are able to bring local problems to the GA and to strengthen the GA, the more feedback we would receive. The discussion of our profession at global level will in turn make it important at the local level (Social Worker, 35 years of experience)

The participants also mentioned that the GA would be effective and useful framework in systematic reporting of the problems facing social work in Turkey. However, the participants emphasized the need for political will and collaboration for the GA to be effective in providing solutions to the existing problems. Also, one participant indicated the importance of both the acknowledgement and the prioritization of the GA by the several groups that the social work profession deals with.

> …I mean we cannot set the agenda by ourselves only. Here, it is important that the groups we are working with, such as disabled, elderly, LGBT …other disadvantaged groups should be aware of the GA as much as we do and make the GA an important local agenda item. (Social Work Academic, 13 years of experience)

The pessimistic views on the relevance of the GA for Turkey mostly identified the GA as ineffective and not useful in contributing to solutions to

existing problems. Here, some participants underlined the nature of the GA as a framework document for paradigm change rather than a concrete road-map and indicated that it would not be effective as it does not involve a direct set of solutions towards professional and social problems. In addition to this view, given the current status of the social work profession and the relatively weak impact of the profession on agenda setting at the social level in Turkey, participants emphasized that the GA is "unrealistic"[12] in its potential for transmitting and prioritizing the problem areas as well as priorities indicated by the GA to the local agenda.

> What could we publicise? … Are we in a position to define the problems? What is our power as a profession? We are not in a position to define those [set the agenda] … (Social Work Academic, 18 years of experience)

The majority of the pessimist views pointed out the mismatch and lack of overlaps between the components of the GA and the social work agenda in Turkey. Here, participants mentioned an interrelated dynamic where the transformation in social work in Turkey reveals the problems of the profession and prioritizes those in the local agenda. As yet these remain unresolved, the issues and priorities of local social work agenda resembles a closed circuit and it becomes impossible to discuss global problems under such circumstances.

> We have a huge fire and a very loud turbulence inside so much that those prevent putting the GA on our local agenda. We are also unable to approach globally unfortunately, we cannot get out of our own agenda (Social Worker, 14 years of experience)

All in all, according to the participants, the knowledge on the GA in Turkey remains highly limited and the views on the relevance of the GA for the Turkish context attribute both positive and negative traits.

Discussion

The findings of the research suggest a tendency towards an erosion of professional values and identity in social work in Turkey.

The erosion became evident initially by the quality related problems in social work education. In this regard, Yeler (2019, 282) points out the lack of a standardized common curriculum for departments of social work. The research evidence from Alptekin, Topuz, and Zengin (2017) demonstrate that more than two-thirds of the teaching staff at social work departments across Turkey do not possess any degree in social work.

The impact of conservative neoliberal policies are also evident in professional practice in Turkey. In this regard, the degradation of social work into

[12]Social work academic, 18 years of experience

provision of mostly cash benefits led to not only moving the social profession away from its fundamental aims and values but also creating a structure where service users became dependent on cash benefits with very limited levels. The research by Canbulut (2017) on the views of social workers on poverty alleviation policies in Turkey finds that the low levels of cash benefits make service users live just scarcely enough. İçağasıoğlu Çoban and Özbesler (2009, 35) also point out that cash and in-kind benefits for households in Turkey remain simply insufficient and lead to a cycle of persistent poverty.

Moreover, the neglect of social work values has led to disregard of some groups in service provision in Turkey. For instance, Yılmaz (2014) points out the neglect of the LGBTQ+community within the conservative familialistic social policy context in Turkey.

The individualistic approach has dominated the provision of social services and the focus of the professional interventions shifted towards micro (clinical) practices in Turkey.[13] Similar traits were found to be influencing social work practice in different countries such as Italy, Portugal and Russia as cited in Ornellas et al. (2019, 1187).

The research evidence indicates a very limited knowledge on the GA in Turkey. Indeed, unfamiliarity of the professionals with the GA or lack of a global perspective in social work education is not particular to the Turkish context. For instance, Nikku and Pulla (2014, 381) point out similar traits for social work in South Asia where the professionals were argued to have limited awareness about the GA process due to lack of educational resources and access to global information.

In relation to relevance in the Turkish context, the GA was identified as potentially useful in mobilizing the support of international organizations in dealing with professional problems in Turkey. The narratives from social work educators in South Asia as documented in Nikku and Pulla (2014) also emphasize the importance of developing regional/local strategies and objectives (as a response to local challenges) in enabling global bodies to promote those as prominent in the GA.

Another dimension for the relevance of the GA was referred to as structuring a more systematic, thematic and regular framework for reporting relevant developments and problems in social work in Turkey. In this respect, while the GA would make the evidence visible and contributions of the social work credible in global context, it would also help leveraging the local monitoring and

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[13]Micro practice or direct practice involves working directly with individuals, families, and groups whereas macro practice in social work involves collectively working with people to achieve more systemic and structural solutions…Although a growing number of scholars called for the integration of micro and macro practices as opposed to emphasizing one type of practice (Austin et al., 2005, 2016; Donaldson, 2005; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015; Krumer-Nevo, 2020; Knight and Gitterman 2018; Shdaimah & McCoyd, 2012; cited in Sulimani-Aidan and Feldman 2021: 2), Knight and Gitterman (2018:5) say that the decline in coverage in macro content specifically and community work particularly has been documented (Deal, Hopkins, Fisher, & Hartin, 2007; Grodofsky & Bakun-Mazor, 2012; Hill, Ferguson, & Erickson, 2010; Koeske, Lichtenwalter, & Koeske, 2005; Weiss, 2006).

reporting potential in the Turkish context to provide more contributions towards linking with global challenges and practices as well as stimulation of further elaboration of the local challenges.

The GA was also identified as irrelevant as its priorities did not match with the local agenda and that the profession in Turkey has been so much struggling with the problems in social work education as well as social work practice. Similar concerns were raised in several research on the local relevance of the GA. For instance, social work students in South Africa identify the lack of specific reference to health related problems (Raniga and Zelnick 2014), frontline social workers, administrators and social work educators refer to the impact of local social challenges in Caribbean region (Sogren and Nathaniel 2017) and social work educators from various countries of South Asia emphasize the lack of international understanding about the local issues given the challenges facing the professionals (Nikku and Pulla 2014). Moreover, Healy (2017, 12) recognizes the less importance attributed to global issues by social workers 'on the ground' and argues for developing a synergy between global priorities and the local practice to help in eradicating the overly parochial and domestic-oriented nature of social work practice.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that professional social work roles have been narrowed; the service provision was aligned along individual-oriented interventions rather than preventive or supportive services. Consequently, the professional identity and social work values have been eroded in Turkey. As the dominant ideological paradigm has denied those most in need of opportunities, the provision of services systematically ignored certain groups. Social work education in Turkey, too, encountered significant problems of quality and standardisation which in turn acted to deepen the existing professional identity crisis.

Neoliberal transformation in the Turkish context could be conceptualized as a symbolic case of authoritarian neoliberalism where the transformation of pre-existing institutions, practices and norms into market-oriented power relations have gone hand in hand with the consolidation of authoritarian state power (Borsuk et al. 2022). Adaman and Akbulut (2021: 283) further emphasize the intensification of "endemic" authoritarianism in recent years with the repression of the radical left, people who identify as LGBTQ+, striking workers as well as ethnic communities. Ozkazanc (2020) conceptualizes this contemporary authoritarianist tendencies in Turkey as an articulation of populism, ultra-nationalism and nativism. Indeed, the repression has gone further with the purge of civil society notably by a large number of arrests of activists including human right defenders and recurrent bans on demonstrations and gatherings together with the closing of many rights-based organizations as

part of the measures under the state of emergency (European Commission 2018, cited in Yabanci 2019). In such shrinking domain for fundamental rights and freedoms as well as recurrent deficiencies in the field of democracy, rule of law and human rights, one example for the outcome of the erosion of constitutional rights under the complex collusion of religious nationalism, conservatism, neoliberalism and authoritarianism has been the reinforcement of patriarchal policies praising family and motherhood alongside the repression of rights-based movements and organizations (Ozkazanc 2020). As far as the social work profession is considered, the necessary and sufficient conditions of democracy and constitutional citizenship laden with social rights to guarantee an active, free and equal citizen status are deemed crucial for an effective and functioning professional identity (Schlingensiepen-Trint 2019: 95). In this regard, this current context of the endemic authoritarian regime in Turkey also cultivated the erosion of the professional identity and social work values.

Against this background, our findings identify a less limited knowledge and recognition of the GA in Turkey. This could be attributed to the lack of information on the GA in social work education curriculum and unavailability of translations of the relevant documents on the GA. As a result of this, the social workers in Turkey have been less involved with and connected to global networks and communities. In this context, the GA was identified to potentially provide leverage for systematising thematic and regular monitoring and reporting of the issues and developments in social work in Turkey.

It should be noted that despite the relatively large impact of local dynamics in Turkey, similar challenges and problems have been experienced by different countries as a result of the dominant neoliberal policy outlook. The growth of the awareness of common challenges would pave the way for raising international collaboration and solidarity to cope with those. Nevertheless, in such a context, social work academia should inherit a pivotal role in embedding international social work in social work education curriculum. Palattiyil et al. (2019) highlight that the challenge for achieving outcomes of the GA depends much on how far social work curriculum across the world is prepared to include international social work context under the contemporary challenges and are able to relate and apply these to the local situations they encounter. In this respect, the obligations of international standards on local social work policy and practice as well as the organization of the profession and relevant regulations were identified as important determinants of the engagement with global commitments including the pillars of the GA.

Disclosure Statement

The Authors declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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