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International Council on Social Welfare

April 2020

President's Message

Pandemic Times



Eva Holmberg Herrström, President, ICSW

The world is hit by a pandemic. Covid-19 is spreading very fast around the globe by direct contact between people. Most governments try to suppress the virus by closing down activities and borders. People are encouraged to work from home, education goes on the internet and elderly people told to isolate themselves.

We do not know enough about how to deal with the virus, it is new and unknown and treatment unavailable. The capacity of health services differs, but face serious challenges. Up to 96 % of those infected have mild symptoms and get well, but the virus is fatal for others.

The quick spread of the disease has severe consequences for society. Production of goods and services as well as trade is hindered or stopped. Unemployment is increasing fast, and

many people face reduction of income or loss of it.

The economy may take years to recover, and the debt burden for countries and governments hard to cope with. Financial depression may increase mental health challenges. The less wealthy countries are hit harder.

Solidarity is at stake, and decisive for how the world will handle the pandemic. As young environmentalists say: We have only one planet. And we share it.

Executive Column

Covid 19 – Five aspects



Tom Johannesen, Executive Director, ICSW

As we stand in this crisis, some aspects seem to occur. I want to focus on five of them.

1. Solidarity

Poor countries are hit harder because they often are shorter on resources such

as adequate health services, social policy measures and communication tools. The informal job sector is especially hit, and make up half of the global job market. The poor in richer countries are also hit harder because they have more insecure jobs and in many cases less access to health services.



Unsplash - Mika Baumeister

The poor countries need our support to get through this pandemic, both immediately and later. And the poor in richer countries need access to health services and a functioning safety net.

2. Humanity

Elderly people and people with other diseases are hit harder and need protection that ensures the spread of the virus to go at a speed the health services can cope with. This is costing money. A lot of money. There are voices saying that it costs too much and that we better keep society going even if we risk not being able to care for those in need. What is the value of a life? And are elderly people less worth? The answers will show if we are in this boat together or if some should be left drowning so the boat can uphold its speed.

3. Environment

We know that the risk of dangerous viruses is connected to the reduction of

living space for wild animals. And that we are overusing natural resources in search of profit. The natural balance is out of control and can only be nurtured if we change direction and put people, not profit, in the driving seat.

4. Surveillance

To keep track of people's movement (for instance by recording their cell phones) can be helpful in trying to control the spread of the virus. And wise as a temporary effort. But also give societies a mechanism to continue controls of other reasons and such making the British author George Orwell's famous visionary «1984» novel a reality.

5. Politics

The former American President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in his inaugural address in 1933 that «the only thing we have to fear is fear itself». Fear is the parent of right-wing populism, nurtured by some surprising western countries that previously advocated international cooperation. Scapegoating is also coming to the surface in some places.

We have to stand against these trends and come out on the other side with continued and even stronger international cooperation.

We need to build bridges not fences. And understand we are in this together.

(The text is based on my contribution to the News and Views section in the upcoming edition of the International Social Work Journal from Sage Publications.)

**Announcement
Executive Director -
International Council on Social
Welfare**



**Executive Director - International
Council on Social Welfare**

The International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), established 1928, is a global, non-governmental organisation in consultative status to the United Nations, and representing a wide range of national member organisations seeking to advance social justice, social welfare and social work and development.

We are now looking for a new Executive Director and CEO to implement the decisions of our General Assembly, Board and Management Committee and having the overall administrative responsibility for our operations.

In addition to the Board and Management Committee the Director will work closely with our President and a full-time Information Officer, based in Uganda. The applicant can work from any location globally. Fluency in English orally and verbally is a must, other languages an asset. A degree in one of the core areas is necessary in addition to solid project

experience in the field, by preference internationally. Resource mobilisation is a key task, so is ability to communicate with membership and others.

Commitment to social inclusion and ethics, knowledge of the operations of the United Nations and other international bodies, analytical skills, ability to build cooperative relationships and understanding of cultural differences will be important.

The Director position is at this time offered on a voluntary basis (50 %) with a honorarium that can be developed into a salary through project development. Some international travel must be expected. We are an equal opportunity employer, but especially encourage women to apply. Expected commencement December 1, 2020.

More information from Eva Holmberg Herrström, President (eva.herrstrom@icsw.org) or Tom Johannesen, Executive Director (tjohannesen@icsw.org).

Send your application to tjohannesen@icsw.org not later than August 31, 2020.

Please mark the application and any information request «Executive Director ICSW».

New dates for ICSW Activity 2020



Unsplash Alessandro Moresco

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, we have rescheduled dates for activities this year:

The Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development in Rimini, Italy is now set for November 8-11, 2020. Early registration deadline is August 31, 2020.

The ICSW General Assembly is set for November 10, 2020 in Rimini. Deadline for nominations to elected bodies is set to September 1, 2020.

More information on swesd2020.org

ICSW Secretariat



We are happy to celebrate that our Information Officer Roselyn Nakirya now has been working for ICSW for 20 years. She is the face outward for our organisation and a source of living history. We are proud of and grateful for her continued contributions, and congratulate with the 20 year jubilee!

After many years having our office in Uganda hosted by The Uganda Nurses' and Midwives' Union we have this year moved into a new office in Entebbe, and hope the new premises will serve us well in the time to come.



New ICSW office – Entebbe

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome!