

News from our societies – ICSW: Weaving alliances

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In the past months, ICSW has continued weaving alliances and working as a team to address the challenges of social welfare in a historical context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, and geopolitical conflicts in different parts of the world. On our website, we present some of the initiatives and projects in which ICSW members participate, from proposals on how to move toward a more solidarity-based economy, to the analysis of different proposals to strengthen social protection systems in developing countries.

The new lines of work in the field of social welfare promoted by the United Nations, and the priorities that have been established for the UN Commission on Social Development in view of its meeting in February 2024, offer us a forum for debate and lines of action to organize our collective work for the benefit of social welfare. Decent work, inclusive social policies, and support for social policies in the Global South are priorities for discussion and action over the coming years.

In 2023, we will publish the results of the seminars conducted by ICSW in 2022, comparing good practices in the digitization of welfare systems in 11 countries: López Peláez, A., Suh, S.M., Zelenev, S. (eds). 2023. *Digital Transformation and Social Well-Being. Promoting an Inclusive Society*. London: Routledge. And at the end of 2023, we will publish the best papers presented at the World Conference organized by ICSW and IASSW in Seoul in 2022 (<http://www.swsd2022.com/>), in a book entitled ‘*Social Welfare Programs and Social Work Education at a Crossroads: New Approaches for a Post-Pandemic Society*’. Both books are published by Routledge, after a demanding anonymous peer review process, which ensures their quality.

In less than a year, we will be holding the ICSW, IASSW, and IFSW World Congress in Panama (<https://swsd2024.org.pa/>). It is a great opportunity to meet, discuss, and set priorities for ICSW in the coming years. I encourage all ISW readers to register and participate; since 1928, the ICSW, IASSW, and IFSW world congresses have contributed to the debate and improvement of welfare systems, giving voice to the concerns and projects of welfare professionals and social workers.

In 2 years, in 2025, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen (1995). One of its main outcomes was to put people at the center of development policies. Today, putting people at the center of our activity remains a collective priority. In these 30 years, ICSW has developed an intense activity to energize social policies, share good practices around the world, and provide the various institutional actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with relevant information for decision-making.

To prepare for the new World Summit in 2025, and to generate a new impulse in social policies at global and local level, we need to analyze the trends of social change in which we are immersed and which generate new challenges and opportunities for social welfare. It is important to analyze the processes of technological transformation, beyond digitalization, addressing the challenges brought about by artificial intelligence and service robotics (which is going to be key to face the challenges arising from aging, dependency, and unwanted loneliness). It is also necessary to give voice to collectives and countries that remain invisible in the public agenda, with special reference

to the Global South. And the social pacts that have generated our welfare systems, from decent work to pensions or intergenerational solidarity, need to be redefined and reinforced in a new complex and difficult environment, whether in health, work, food, or geopolitics.

For an organization like ICSW, with almost 100 years of history, participation is the answer to many of the questions we ask about our future. Our organization has been relevant for 100 years because so many people have participated in it over the years. I would like to thank and remember here all the members of ICSW over the last 100 years. Thanks to them we are here, and I am sure that in the next 2 years, we will be able to contribute decisively to the success of the new Global Summit in 2025, redefining the priorities of social policies for the next 30 years.

Meanwhile, I hope we can meet in Panama in 2024.

Take care and stay healthy!

Antonio López Peláez
ICSW Executive Director