GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

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INTRODUCTION

The *process* of developing global standards for the education and training of the social work profession[1] is as important as the *product*, the actual standards that have been developed. In undertaking such an initiative it was also vital that minority opinions were considered and reflected in the development of the document.   Thus, Appendix A describes fully the processes that were involved in developing the standards, and it documents the minority views that were expressed. Given the centrality of the process-product dialectic, and the fact that the principles underscoring the standards emerged, to a large extent, out of the processes it is vital that the standards are read in conjunction with Appendices A and B. Appendix B provides the concluding comments and discusses the kinds of caution that must be exercised in the use of the document. Having duly considered all the concerns expressed in Appendices A and B, and having considered the need to take into account context specific realities, and the ambiguities surrounding the education and practice of social work professionals, this document details nine sets of standards in respect of: the school's core purpose or mission statement; programme objectives and outcomes; programme curricula including fieldwork; core curricula; professional staff; social work students; structure, administration, governance and resources; cultural diversity; and social work values and ethics. As a point of departure, the international definition of the social work profession is accepted, and the core purposes and functions of social work are summarised.

INTERNATIONAL DEFINITION OF SOCIAL WORK

In July 2001, both the IASSW and the IFSW reached agreement on adopting the following international definition of social work:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.[2]

Both the definition and the commentaries that follow are set within the parameters of broad ethical principles that cannot be refuted on an ideological level. However, the fact that social work is operationalized differently both within nation states and regional boundaries, and across the world, with its control and status-quo maintaining functions being dominant in some contexts, cannot be disputed. Lorenz (2001) considered the ambiguities, tensions and contradictions of the social work profession, which have to be constantly negotiated and re-negotiated, rather than resolved, to constitute its success and challenge.   It is, perhaps, these very tensions that lends to the richness of the local-global dialectic, and provides legitimacy for the development of global standards. According to Lorenz (2001:12) "It is its paradigmatic openness that gives this profession the chance to engage with very specific (and constantly changing) historical and

political contexts while at the same time striving for a degree of universality, scientific reliability, professional autonomy and moral accountability".

CORE PURPOSES OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Social work in various parts of the world is targeted at interventions for social support, developmental, protective, preventive and/or therapeutic purposes. Drawing on available literature, the feedback from colleagues during consultations and the commentary on the international definition of social work the following core purposes of social work have been identified:

- Facilitate the inclusion of marginalized, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people.[3]
- Address and challenge barriers, inequalities and injustices that exist in society.
- Form short and longer-term working relationships with and mobilize individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to enhance their well being and their problem-solving capacities.
- Assist and educate people to obtain services and resources in their communities.
- Formulate and implement policies and programmes that enhance people's well being promote development and human rights, and promote collective social harmony and social stability, insofar as such stability does not violate human rights.
- Encourage people to engage in advocacy with regard to pertinent local, national, regional and/or international concerns.
- Advocate for, and/or with people, the formulation and targeted implementation of policies that are consistent with the ethical principles of the profession.
- Advocate for, and/or with people, changes in those policies and structural conditions that maintain people in marginalized, dispossessed and vulnerable positions, and those that infringe the collective social harmony and stability of various ethnic groups, insofar as such stability does not violate human rights.
- Work towards the protection of people who are not in a position to do so themselves, for example children and youth in need of care and persons experiencing mental illness or mental retardation within the parameters of accepted and ethically sound legislation.
- Engage in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development, and to effect change by critiquing and eliminating inequalities.
- Enhance stable, harmonious and mutually respectful societies that do not violate people's human rights.
- Promote respect for traditions, cultures, ideologies, beliefs and religions amongst different ethnic groups and societies, insofar as these do not conflict with the fundamental human rights of people.
- Plan, organize, administer and manage programmes and organizations dedicated to any of the purposes delineated above.

GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

1. STANDARDS REGARDING THE SCHOOL'S CORE PURPOSE OR MISSION STATEMENT

All schools should aspire toward the development of a core purpose statement or a mission statement which:

1.1 Is clearly articulated so those major stakeholders[4] who have an investment in such a core purpose or mission understand it.

1.2 Reflects the values and the ethical principles of social work.

1.3 Reflects aspiration towards equity with regard to the demographic profile of the institution's locality. The core purpose or mission statement should thus incorporate such issues as ethnic and gender representation on the faculty, as well as in recruitment and admission procedures for students.

1.4 Respects the rights and interests of service users and their participation in all aspects of delivery of delivery of programmes.

2. STANDARDS REGARDING PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

In respect of programme objectives and expected outcomes, schools should endeavour to reach the following:

2.1 A specification of its programme objectives and expected higher education outcomes.

2.2 A reflection of the values and ethical principles of the profession in its programme design and implementation.

2.3 Identification of the programme's instructional methods and how these cohere with achieving both the cognitive and affective development of social work students.

2.4 An indication of how the programme reflects the core knowledge, processes, values and skills of the social work profession, as applied in context specific realities.

2.5 An indication of how an initial level of proficiency with regard to self-reflective[5] use of social work values, knowledge and skills is to be attained by social work students.

2.6 An indication of how the programme coheres with nationally and/or regionally/internationally defined professional goals, and how the programme addresses local, national and/or regional/international developmental needs and priorities.

2.7   As social work does not operate in a vacuum, the programme should reflect consideration of the impact of interacting cultural, economic, communication, social, political and psychological global features.

2.8   Provision of an educational preparation that is relevant to beginning social work professional practice with individuals, families, groups and/or communities in any given context.

2.9   Self-evaluation to assess the extent to which its programme objectives and expected outcomes are being achieved.

2.10   External peer evaluation as far as is reasonable and financially viable. This may be in the form of external peer moderation of assignments and/or written examinations and dissertations, and external peer review and assessment of curricula.

2.11   The conferring of a distinctive social work qualification at the certificate, diploma, first degree or post-graduate level as approved by national and/or regional qualification authorities, where such authorities exist.

3.   STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO PROGRAMME CURRICULA INCLUDING FIELD EDUCATION

With regard to standards regarding programme curricula, schools should consistently aspire towards the following:

3.1   The curricula and methods of instruction being consistent with the school's programme objectives, its expected outcomes and its mission statement.

3.2   Clear plans for the organization, implementation and evaluation of the theory and field education components of the programme.

3.3   Involvement of service users in the planning and delivery of programmes.

3.4   Recognition and development of indigenous or locally specific social work education and practice from the traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups and societies, insofar that such traditions and cultures do not violate human rights.

3.5   Specific attention to the constant review and development of the curricula.

3.6   Ensuring that the curricula helps social work students to develop skills of critical thinking and scholarly attitudes of reasoning, openness to new experiences and paradigms, and commitment to life-long learning.

3.7   Field education should be sufficient in duration and complexity of tasks and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for professional practice.

3.8   Planned co-ordination and links between the school and the agency/field

placement setting[6].

3.8   Provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.

3.9   Appointment of field supervisors or instructors who are qualified and experienced, as determined by the development status of the social work profession in any given country, and provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.

3.10   Provision for the inclusion and participation of field instructors in curriculum development.

3.11   A partnership between the educational institution and the agency (where applicable) and service users in decision-making regarding field education and the evaluation of student's fieldwork performance.

3.12   Making available, to fieldwork instructors or supervisors, a field instruction manual that details its fieldwork standards, procedures, assessment standards/criteria and expectations.

3.13   Ensuring that adequate and appropriate resources, to meet the needs of the fieldwork component of the programme, are made available.

4.   STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO CORE CURRICULA

In respect core curricula, schools should aspire toward the following:

4.1   An identification of and selection for inclusion in the programme, curricula as determined by local, national and/or regional/international needs and priorities.

4.2   Notwithstanding the provision of 4.1 there are certain core curricula that may be seen to be universally applicable. Thus the school should ensure that social work students, by the end of their first Social Work professional qualification, have exposure to the following core curricula which are organised into four conceptual components:

4.2.1 Domain of the Social Work Profession

- A critical understanding of how socio-structural inadequacies, discrimination, oppression, and social, political and economic injustices impact human functioning and development at all levels, including the global.
- Knowledge of human behaviour and development and of the social environment, with particular emphasis on the person-in-environment transaction, life-span development and the interaction among biological, psychological, socio-structural, economic, political, cultural and spiritual factors in shaping human development and behaviour.
- Knowledge of how traditions, culture, beliefs, religions and customs influence human functioning and development at all levels, including how these might constitute resources and/or obstacles to growth and development.

- A critical understanding of social work's origins and purposes.
- Understanding of country specific social work origins and development.
- Sufficient knowledge of related occupations and professions to facilitate inter-professional collaboration and teamwork.
- Knowledge of social welfare policies or lack thereof, services and laws at local, national and/or regional/international levels, and the roles of social work in policy planning, implementation, evaluation and in social change processes.
- A critical understanding of how social stability, harmony, mutual respect and collective solidarity impact human functioning and development at all levels, including the global, insofar as that stability, harmony and solidarity are not used to maintain a status quo with regard to infringement of human rights.

4.2.2   *Domain of the Social Work Professional:*

- The development of the critically self-reflective practitioner, who is able to practice within the value perspective of the social work profession and shares responsibility with the employer for their well being and professional development, including the avoidance of "burn-out".
- The recognition of the relationship between personal life experiences and personal value systems and social work practice.
- The appraisal of national, regional and/or international social work codes of ethics and their applicability to context specific realities.
- Preparation of social workers within a holistic framework, with skills to enable practice in a range of contexts with diverse ethnic, cultural, "racial"[7] and gender groups, and other forms of diversities.
- The development of the social worker who is able to conceptualize social work wisdom derived from different cultures, traditions and customs in various ethnic groups, insofar that culture, tradition, custom and ethnicity are not used to violate human rights.
- The development of the social worker who is able to deal with the complexities, subtleties, multi-dimensional, ethical, legal and dialogical aspects of power.[8]

4.2.3   *Methods of Social Work Practice:*

*   Sufficient practice skills in, and knowledge of, assessment, relationship building and helping processes to achieve the identified goals of the programme for the purposes of social support, developmental, protective, preventive and/or therapeutic intervention – depending on the particular focus of the programme or professional practice orientation.
- The application of social work values, ethical principles, knowledge and skills to confront inequality, and social, political and economic injustices.
- Knowledge of social work research and skills in the use of research methods, including ethical use of relevant research paradigms, and critical appreciation of the use of research and different sources of knowledge[9] about social work practice.
- The application of social work values, ethical principles, knowledge and skills to promote care, mutual respect and mutual responsibility amongst members of a society.
*   Supervised fieldwork education, with due consideration to the provisions of Item 3 above.

4.2.4 Paradigm of the Social Work Profession:

Of particular current salience to professional social work education, training and practice, are the following epistemological paradigms (which are not mutually exclusive) that should inform the core curricula:

* An acknowledgement and recognition of the dignity, worth and the uniqueness of all human beings.
* Recognition of the inter-connectedness that exists within and across all systems at micro, mezzo and macro levels.
* An emphasis on the importance of advocacy and changes in socio-structural, political and economic conditions that disempower, marginalize and exclude people.
* A focus on capacity-building and empowerment of individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities through a human-centred developmental approach.
* Knowledge about and respect for the rights of service users.
* Problem-solving and anticipatory socialisation though an understanding of the normative developmental life cycle, and expected life tasks and crises in relation to age related influences, with due consideration to socio-cultural expectations.
* The assumption, identification and recognition of strengths and potential of all human beings.
* An appreciation and respect for diversity in relation to "race", culture, religion, ethnicity, linguistic origin, gender, sexual orientation and differential abilities.

5. STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO PROFESSIONAL STAFF

With regard to professional staff, schools should aspire towards:

5.1   The provision of professional staff, adequate in number and range of expertise, who have appropriate qualifications as determined by the development status of the social work profession in any given country. As far as possible a Masters level qualification in social work, or a related discipline (in countries where social work is an emerging discipline), should be required.

5.2   The provision of opportunities for staff participation in the development of its core purpose or mission, in the formulation of the objectives and expected outcomes of the programme, and in any other initiative that the school might be involved in.

5.3   Provision for the continuing professional development of its staff, particularly in areas of emerging knowledge.

5.4   A clear statement, where possible, of its equity based policies or preferences, with regard to considerations of gender, ethnicity, "race" or any other form of diversity in its recruitment and appointment of staff.

5.5   Sensitivity to languages relevant to the practice of social work in that context.

5.6   In its allocation of teaching, fieldwork instruction, supervision and administrative workloads, making provision for research and publications.

5.7   Making provision for professional staff, as far as is reasonable and possible to be involved in the formulation, analysis and the evaluation of the impact of social policies, and in community outreach initiatives.

6.   STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

In respect of social work students, schools should endeavor to reach the following:

6.1   Clear articulation of its admission criteria and procedures.

6.2   Student recruitment, admission and retention policies that reflect the demographic profile of the locality that the institution is based in with active involvement of practitioners and service users in relevant processes. Due recognition should be given to minority groups[10] that are under-represented and/or under-served. Relevant criminal convictions involving abuse of others or human rights violations must be taken into account given the primary responsibility of protecting and empowering service users.

6.3   Provision for student advising that is directed toward student orientation, assessment of the student's aptitude and motivation for a career in social work, regular evaluation of the student's performance and guidance in the selection of courses/modules.

6.4   Ensuring high quality of the educational programme whatever the mode of delivery, including distance, mixed-mode, decentralised and/or internet-based teaching. Mechanisms for locally-based instruction and supervision should be put in place, especially with regard to the fieldwork component of the programme.

6.5   Explicit criteria for the evaluation of student's academic and fieldwork performance.

6.6   Non-discrimination against any student on the basis of "race", colour, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, religion, political orientation, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical status and socio-economic status.

6.7   Grievance and appeals procedures which are accessible, clearly explained to all students and operated without prejudice to the assessment of students.

7.   STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO STRUCTURE, ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

With regard to structure, administration, governance and resources, the school and/or the educational institution should aspire towards the following:

7.1   Social work programmes are implemented through a distinct unit known as a Faculty, School, Department, Centre or Division, which has a clear identity within the educational institution.

7.2   The school has a designated Head or Director who has demonstrated administrative, scholarly and professional competence, preferably in the profession of social work.

7.3   The Head or Director has primary responsibility for the co-ordination and professional leadership of the school, with sufficient time and resources to fulfil these responsibilities.

7.4   The school's budgetary allocation is sufficient to achieve its core purpose or mission and the programme objectives.

7.5   The budgetary allocation is stable enough to ensure programme planning and sustainability.

7.6   There are adequate physical facilities, including classroom space, offices for professional and administrative staff and space for student, faculty and field-liaison meetings, and the equipment necessary for the achievement of the school's core purpose or mission and the programme objectives.

7.7   Library and, where possible, internet resources, necessary to achieve the programme objectives, are made available.

7.8   The necessary clerical and administrative staff is made available for the achievement of the programme objectives.

7.9   Where the school offers distance, mixed-mode, decentralized and/or internet based education there is provision of adequate infrastructure, including classroom space, computers, texts, audio-visual equipment, community resources for fieldwork education, and on-site instruction and supervision to facilitate the achievement of its core purpose or mission, programme objectives and expected outcomes.

7.10   The school plays a key role with regard to the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff.

7.11   The school strives toward gender equity in its recruitment, appointment, promotion and tenure policies and practices.

7.12   In its recruitment, appointment, promotion and tenure principles and procedures, the school reflects the diversities of the population that it interacts with and serves.

7.13   The decision-making processes of the school reflect participatory principles and procedures.

7.14   The school promotes the development of a cooperative, supportive and productive working environment to facilitate the achievement of programme objectives.

7.15   The school develops and maintains linkages within the institution, with external organizations and with service users relevant to its core purpose or mission and

its objectives.

8. STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND GENDER INCLUSIVENESS

With regard to cultural and ethnic diversity schools should aspire towards the following:

8.1 Making concerted and continuous efforts to ensure the enrichment of the educational experience by reflecting cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis in its programme.

8.2 Ensuring that the programme, either through mainstreaming into all courses/modules and/or through a separate course/module, has clearly articulated objectives in respect of cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis.

8.3 Indicating that issues regarding cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis are represented in the fieldwork component of the programme.

8.4 Ensuring that social work students are provided with opportunities to develop self-awareness regarding their personal and cultural values, beliefs, traditions and biases and how these might influence the ability to develop relationships with people, and to work with diverse population groups.

8.5 Promoting sensitivity to, and increasing knowledge about, cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis.

8.6 Minimizing group stereotypes and prejudices[11] and ensuring that racist behaviours, policies and structures are not reproduced through social work practice.

8.7 Ensuring that social work students are able to form relationships with, and treat all persons with respect and dignity irrespective of such persons' cultural and ethnic beliefs and orientations.

8.8 Ensuring that social work students are schooled in a basic human rights approach, as reflected in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the U.N. Vienna Declaration (1993).[12]

8.9 Ensuring that the programme makes provision for social work students to know themselves both as individuals as well as members of collective socio-cultural groups in terms of strengths and areas for further development.

9. STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO VALUES AND ETHICAL CODES OF CONDUCT OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

In view of the recognition that social work values, ethics and principles are the core components of the profession, schools should consistently aspire towards:

9.1 Focused and meticulous attention to this aspect of the programme in curricula design and implementation.

9.2 Clearly articulated objectives with regard to social work values, principles and ethical conduct.

9.3 Registration of professional staff and social work students (insofar as social work students develop working relationships with people via fieldwork placements) with national and/or regional regulatory (whether statutory or non-statutory) bodies, with defined codes of ethics.[13] Members of such bodies are generally bound to the provisions of those codes.

9.4 Ensuring that every social work student involved in fieldwork education, and every professional staff member, is aware of the boundaries of professional practice and what might constitute unprofessional conduct in terms of the code of ethics. Where students violate the code of ethics, programme staff may take necessary and acceptable remedial and/or initial disciplinary measures, or counsel the student out of the programme.

9.5 Taking appropriate action in relation to those social work students and professional staff, who fail to comply with the code of ethics either through an established regulatory social work body, established procedures of the educational institution, and/or through legal mechanisms.

9.6 Ensuring that regulatory social work bodies are broadly representative of the social work profession, including where applicable social workers from both the public and private sector, and of the community that it serves including the direct participation of service users.

9.7 Upholding, as far as is reasonable and possible, the principles of restorative rather than retributive justice[14] in disciplining either social work students or professional staff who violate the code of ethics.

APPENDIX A: THE PROCESS OF AND UNDERLYING APPROACH TO DEVELOPING GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The Global Minimum Qualifying Standards[15] Committee was formally established as a joint initiative of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) at the joint IASSW/IFSW Conference in Montreal, Canada in July 2000. (See Appendix C for a list of the Committee members). This discussion document was put together with the input of various Committee members, a review of relevant documents, e-mail consultations, and personal consultations with colleagues wherever possible [16]

On the whole there was a favourable response to IASSW and IFSW developing a standards setting document that elucidates what social work represents on a global level. This document that identifies certain universals, may be used as guidelines to develop national standards with regard to social work education and training. Such a document should reflect some consensus around key issues, roles and purposes of social work. However, given the profession's historically fragmented strands; the

contemporary debates around social work's intra-professional identity; its identity *vis-à-vis* other categories of personnel in the welfare sector such as development workers, child care workers, probation officers, community workers and youth workers (where such categories of personnel are differentiated from social work); and the enormous diversities across nations and regions, there was some scepticism about the possibility of identifying any such "universal". The suggestion was that such a document must be sufficiently flexible to be applicable to any context. Such flexibility should allow for interpretations of locally specific social work education and practice, and take into account each country's or region's socio-political, cultural, economic and historical contexts while adhering to international standards.

The main reasons for the development of global standards were to (stated in no particular order of priority):

X   Protect the "consumers", "clients" or "service users"[17] of social work services;
X   Take account of the impact of globalization on social work curricula and social work practice;
X   Facilitate articulation across universities on a global level;
X   Facilitate the movement of social workers from one country to another;
X   Draw a distinction between social workers and non-social workers;
X   Benchmark national standards against international standards;
X   Facilitate partnerships and international student and staff exchange programmes;
X   Enable IASSW and IFSW, in developing such guidelines, to play a facilitative role in helping those faculties, centres, departments or schools of social work[18] that lack resources to meet such guidelines.
X   Give practical expression to the aim of IASSW as some saw the formulation of international guidelines for social work education and training to be the core business of IASSW.

Clearly not all of the above expressed purposes are feasible e.g. it is not feasible via such an endeavour to draw a clear distinction between social workers and non-social workers, neither might we be able to realise the objective of protecting "clients" through the standards. Facilitating the movement of social workers from one country to another is a contentious issue in view of the direct recruitment of social workers from some countries to others e.g. from South Africa and the Caribbean to the United Kingdom to the disadvantage of South Africa and the Caribbean. However, from an ethical point of view the migration of those social workers that wish to practice in another country should be enabled and not blocked. Retention of social work skills within countries are dependent on such factors as service conditions, salaries and validation of the profession which need to be addressed on national levels.

A few participants expressed the view that the document should go further to include more practical guidelines. These practical guidelines should include: - a multi-tiered classification for the basic qualification e.g. with a range from the number of years of basic schooling + at least one year of full time social work education to a degree with 3 or 4 years of social work education (the minimum period of practical training should be specified in such a classification); the acknowledgement and recognition of prior learning experiences; and the identification of core competencies, knowledge and skills as applied to context specific realities. A very small minority went as far as asking for the global standards to prescribe texts and minimum number of hours that students need to spend on reading. This was clearly an impossible request to include at the global level as it would entail a complete denial of context specific realities. Indeed, it would perhaps be impossible to entertain such a request even at local or national levels, as it would contribute to the curtailment of academic freedom, restrict knowledge development and constrain the development of critical thinking. Other participants

expressed concern that the proposed multi-tiered system may appear to be far too elitist, with perhaps social workers from the Two-Thirds World[19] being more likely to be categorised into the lower ranks. Prescribing lengths of training or number of course credits are problematic, given the variations of the academic year across countries and regions, and the diversities in crediting courses in different contexts. Also, for example, a six to twelve month intensive social work programme, with careful selection of mature students with appropriate prior learning experiences and/or related qualifications, might prove to be as valuable as a first degree social work programme with school leaving students. It is the *quality* of the educational programme that must not be compromised. From available information, it would appear that the academization of social work is becoming the norm, with many countries opting for either a 3 or 4 year Bachelors degree in Social Work, with a few countries like Chile being an exception with a 5 year Bachelors degree.

A minority view was that IFSW and IASSW begin with no document; that a grassroots approach be used in encouraging national bodies to formulate their own standards. These national standards, formulated for example via a five-year action plan, could then be processed into global standards. However, one does not have to adopt an either/or approach to the development of global standards. If we accept the premise that such standards do not represent a finite or static product, but a dynamic process through which we continue building a framework that we aspire towards then we accept that such an endeavour would involve a global-regional-national-local dialectical interaction. This must involve cross national and cross regional dialogue.

In developing global standards care needed to be taken that we did not further fragment and de-professionalize social work, as so clearly elucidated by Dominelli (1996) in her discussion on the impact of the competencies based approach to social work education and practice. This view was supported by Lorenz (2001:19), who while not invalidating the need for quality control[20] by having some benchmark criteria, warned that it might "trivialise social work skills even further". To circumvent this possibility we made concerted efforts to transcend the kind of reductionist language, used within many national/regional contexts in their development of unit standards, designed to meet criteria for the competencies-based approach that fragments social work skills and roles into minute, constituent parts. We acknowledge that there might be merits to the competencies-based approach on national/regional levels. However, this is seen to be far too specific to be applied to the global level.

During consultations questions were raised regarding "minimum" by whose or what standards? Is it possible that "minimum standards" could decrease rather than enhance the profession's standards? An alternative argument was that as "standards" represent an ideal, they could, in effect, come to be "maximum standards" that all Schools of Social Work in all countries and regions are put under pressure to attain. The experience of South Africa in the early 1990s is a case in point. The then Council for Social Work, which was actually a State apparatus designed to uphold the ideology of apartheid, proposed what it called "minimum standards". However, the document actually reflected superior standards and proposed control mechanisms, which, if accepted, would have jeopardised the position and, perhaps, the very existence of Schools of Social Work at the historically disadvantaged black institutions, which were poorly resourced compared with the white universities. Fortunately there was sufficient solidarity among social work educators who rejected the document so it did not become part of the statutory requirement. These concerns provided further ground for omitting

the "minimum" from this document, and to move toward the use of: "global standards for the education and training of the social work profession". This document does not purport to reflect minimum standards, but *ideals* that schools of social work should consistently aspire towards.

Some colleagues who engaged in the consultation process also expressed concern about the possibility of a western domination. Given the western hegemony in social work education and practice, and that "Western European countries and the USA perhaps have **fairly settled** views of what social work is and what it means to provide **good** social work education" (Payne, 2001:41 – our emphasis), such fears are not merely speculative. We acknowledge that the claim to what constitutes good social work education in Western Europe and the USA may be based on ill-founded premises.[21] Australia and Canada also seem to have made a great deal of progress in the development of national standards. In order to prevent such a Western domination the following were considered, and must continue to be considered in relation to the global standards:

- Ensuring representation from different regions of the world on the Committee in the formulation of the standards.
- Facilitating as much consultation and inclusion in the process as possible.
- Ensuring that the global standards take into account a country's unique historical, political, cultural, social and economic contexts.
- Ensuring that the unique developmental needs of countries are considered in relation to the global standards.
- Ensuring that the profession's developmental status and needs in any given country are considered.
- While encouraging schools to secure adequate resources to the extent possible, that we ensure that there is no assumption that schools with lesser resources provide poorer quality programmes.
- Facilitating open dialogue across national and regional boundaries.

Amongst those who participated during consultations, there was overwhelming concern that context specific realities, and the resources available to individual institutions to meet the global standards, are taken into consideration. In the development of global standards we should not create unintended consequences by disadvantaging some educational institutions. As much as global standards may be used to benchmark national norms and standards, as far as possible, national and regional experiences and practices (even where formal standards do not exist) were incorporated into the formulation of the global standards. Where national or regional standards do not exist, IASSW and IFSW should collaborate to facilitate the development of such standards. The circular, interactive and discursive processes in developing national and global standards can, in these ways, become and remain continuous and dynamic. The process-product dialectic, in the formulation of the global standards, has been vital. While we had necessary pre-determined timeframes, we tried, as far as possible, not to compromise consultation processes.

Two participants during consultations recommended a two-phased process; the first which would involve consultations to "get everyone on board" that might span a two to six year period. The second phase would consist of submissions by each region/ national body to IASSW to ensure compliance. The recommendations ranged from bi-annual submissions to submissions once in five years. The majority believed that

beyond the formulation of a standards document, IASSW/IFSW could play no role, and that these bodies could not really effect any mechanisms to "ensure compliance". Monitoring, conforming to the global standards and the possibility of downgrading or up grading of educational institutions were not seen as the tasks of IASSW/IFSW. The roles of IASSW and IFSW should be facilitative and supportive. Payne (2001) pointed out that by virtue of membership with IASSW, educational institutions had to uphold at least the following minimum criteria:

- That social work education takes place after a school leaving certificate has been obtained; and that
- Social work education takes place at the tertiary level.

While these two criteria were accepted as valid for the purpose of this document, it must be remembered that various educational institutions do recognise prior learning experiences in the selection of students, where a school-leaving certificate has not been obtained. Where recognition of prior learning experiences is implemented (generally with policy or criteria determined at school, local or national levels), this needs to be accepted and respected.

APPENDIX B: CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND CAUTION IN THE USE OF THE DOCUMENT

The development of global standards, by their very nature, generally tends to fall within the prescriptive, reductionist, logical-positivist paradigm. Efforts have been made to adopt an alternative and a more empowering, non-prescriptive language in this document. The main aim is to enhance social work education, training and practice on a global level, by facilitating dialogue within and across nations and regions. The document reflects global standards that schools of social work should consistently aspire towards, which (collectively and if met) would actually provide for quite sophisticated levels of social work education and training. This is, as it ought to be – the provision of the best possible education and training for social work students who, after qualifying, bear enormous responsibilities in their communities.

The extent to which schools of social work meet the global standards will depend on the developmental needs of any given country/region and the developmental status of the profession in any given context, as determined by unique historical, socio-political, economic and cultural contexts. These are given due consideration throughout the document. It is accepted that while some established schools might have surpassed the standards contained in this document, other schools might be in the process of beginning social work programmes. The document details ideals regarding what schools, such as latter, might aspire towards even if it takes the next twenty or more years to reach them. In specifying the standards, there is no expectation that all schools in all parts of the world would measure up to them on an immediate level. Also whether or not schools measure up to them will not be determined at the international level. A school may engage in self-assessment to determine the extent to which its programme is consistent with the standards elucidated in this document. Quality assurance and accreditation criteria and procedures will have to be determined at national and/or regional levels. There is undoubtedly, on a global level, a move toward the creation of national and regional qualification frameworks (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2003).

In formulating the global standards, care was taken to ensure that we do not take on the dominant language of managerialism (this does not mean the negation of sound management) and marketization, which is seen to be inconsistent with the core values and purposes of social work. By locating the global standards against the international definition of social work and the core purposes of social work, the document ensures an approach to education and training that supports human rights, social justice, and an essential commitment to caring for, and the empowerment of individuals, groups, organisations and communities. It also reflects a commitment to the personal and professional development of social work students, with particular emphases on the development of the critically self-reflective practitioner and the place of values and ethics in social work education and training. In the formulation of the global standards the challenge has been for them to be specific enough to have salience, yet broad enough to be relevant to any given context. While the standards have been formulated at the global level, the document allows for sufficient interpretation and application at the local levels.   What would be a distinctive advantage is empirically based comparative international research involving the application and evaluation of the standards in different contexts. This would help in identifying gaps and limitations of the current document and for further revision and refinement.

Given the number of concerns that were raised in the preamble to this document and some additional issues that arose as the consultations proceeded caution must be exercised in how the document should and should not be used. There was some concern raised during the consultation process from a colleague in Canada that the development of global standards may be used for international trade purposes in relation to the Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS). IASSW and IFSW categorically assert that the standards are not to be used for such a purpose. Neither of these international bodies is bound to GATS regulations, and there was no external funding to the development of the global standards. The formulation of the standards represents the attempt to uphold the best possible standards for the social work profession on a global level, and to facilitate dialogue and debate within and across national and regional boundaries and is in no way linked to international trade in services. The intention is to enhance academic freedom and promote the development of locally specific theory and practice, rather than inhibit or constrain such development. We concur with the view of Rossiter (undated, p.5) that there is a need to mobilize against such trade agreements as "they 1) increase poverty, 2) contribute to environmental degradation, 3) reduce the power of labour, 4) contribute to national and international inequality, 5) constitute an un-elected, non-transparent series of agreements that weaken local power and government power to regulate economies towards human need rather than profit". Such agreements also reduce the power of individuals to control their own working and welfare environment.

In the elucidation of standards on structure, administration, governance and resources neither IASSW nor IFSW endorses that view that those schools that lack material and infra-structural resources have poorer quality programmes. However, it is accepted that adequate human and material resources do facilitate easier achievement of programme purposes and objectives. Some colleagues in the Asia-Pacific, the African and the Nordic regions have indicated that they have used the draft document as leverage to lobby for more adequate resources from their institutions. That the document, even in its draft form and without adoption at the international level, was used for such a purpose is clearly an advantage.   However, it must be borne in mind that such

pressure from external sources may offend some educational institutions in other regions of the world. Thus, whether or not the document is used for the purpose of lobbying for adequate resources or how this is done should rest at the discretion of the individual school.

In formulating global standards for the education and training of the social work profession, neither the IASSW nor the IFSW will play any monitoring, control or accreditation function at the level of the school. Whether or not IASSW and IFSW would play any significant role at the national or regional level in the future will depend on how the document is interpreted in different contexts, how it is operationalised in different parts of the world, and on the requirements and expectations of its membership. One of the fears in producing a document such as this is that we recognise that a text, once written, is outside of the control of its authors.[22] The roles of IASSW and IFSW are intended to be supportive and facilitative. There must be clear mechanisms of communication across national and/or regional social work educators' associations and IASSW. Part of the developmental objective to the global standards, should be IASSW's and IFSW's commitment to developing guidelines about mechanisms to facilitate such communication. One of the objectives is that, through the assistance of the Census Commission, IASSW will develop a data bank containing the details and programmes of member schools and of national and/or regional standards and systems of quality assurance and accreditation. Such information may be shared on an international level on request and/or via the websites of IASSW and IFSW. It is hoped that such sharing would provide the impetus for schools of social work to aspire towards the global standards for professional social work education and training elucidated in this document. The document is not intended to be a fixed timeless product; it is a dynamic entity subject to review and revision as and when the need arises. This can only be achieved with continued critical debate and dialogue within the profession on local, national, regional and global levels.

APPENDIX C

The Committee consists of the following members

IASSW Representatives

Vishanthie Sewpaul from South Africa (Chair of the Committee since January 2001); Lena Dominelli was Chair of the Committee from July 2000 until January 2001.
Sven Hessle from Sweden
Karen Lyons from the United Kingdom
Denyse Cote from Canada
Nelia Tello from Mexico
Barbara White from the United States
Hoi Wa Mak from Hong Kong
Lena Dominelli as ex-officio member in her capacity of President of IASSW

IFSW Representatives

David Jones (Co-Chair of the Committee from the United Kingdom)
Ngoh-tiong Tan from Singapore
Richard Ramsay from Canada
Juan M.L. Carvajal from Columbia
Charles Mbugua from Kenya
Sung-Jae Choi from Korea
Imelda Dodds as ex-officio member in her capacity of President of IFSW

Lynne Healy from the United States served as consultant.

N.B. *This is the final document adopted at the IASSW and IFSW General Assemblies in Adelaide, Australia, 2004. However, as the use, implementation and review of the Global Standards is to remain a dynamic process, please send your comments or recommendations to Vishanthie Sewpaul.*

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[1] All reference to "social work" in this document is to read as the "social work profession", and reference to the "social worker" is to read as the "social work professional"

[2] Some colleagues have criticized this definition, expressing the view that it did not adequately cover their contexts. A colleague from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, expressed concern about the lack of emphasis on responsibility and the collective within the western paradigm. He proposed the following additions to the definition (written in bold italics): "The social work profession promotes social change *as well as social stability*, problem solving *as well as harmony* in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems *and respecting unique traditions and culture in different ethnic groups*, social work intervenes at points where people interact with their environments *and where individuals go well with their significant others*. Principles of human rights and social justice *as well as responsibility and collective harmony* are fundamental to social work *in various countries."*

[3] Such concepts lack clear definition. Persons who fall into the categories of being "marginalized", "socially excluded", "dispossessed", "vulnerable" and/or "at risk" may be so defined by individual countries and/or regions.

[4] Stakeholders include the educational institution itself; the "profession" however organized or informal including practitioners, managers and academics; social work agencies as potential employers and providers of fieldwork learning opportunities; users of social work services; students; the government where this funds the institution

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and/or sets standards and the wider community.

[5] Self-reflexivity at the most basic level means the ability to question: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Is it in the best interests of the people whom we are working with? Such reflexivity is necessary and desirable irrespective of the context one practices in, whether the emphasis is on e.g. liberal democracy, communitarianism, autocracy or authoritarian socio-cultural systems or democratic socialism.

[6] Field placements take place in different settings, within formal organisations or through direct links with communities, which may be geographically defined or defined by specific interests. Some schools have established independent student units in communities, which serve as the context for fieldwork.

[7] The concepts "racial" and "race" are in inverted commas to reflect that they are socio-structural and political constructs, wherein biological differences amongst people are used by some dominant groups to oppress, exclude and marginalise groups considered to be of minority status.

[8] Quoted from Dominelli, L. (2004) *Social Work: Theory and Practice for a Changing Profession*. Polity Press: Cambridge

[9] Pawson, R et al (2003). *Types and quality of knowledge in social care.* Social Care Institute for Excellence. http://scie.org.uk/scieproducts/knowledgereviews/KRO3summaryonlineversion071103.pdf

[10] "Minority groups" may be defined in terms of numerical representation and/or "minority" in terms of socio-economic and/or political status. It remains an ambiguous and contested concept and needs to be defined and clarified within specific social contexts.

[11] While cultural sensitivity may contribute to culturally competent practice, the school must be mindful of the possibility of reinforcing group stereotypes. The school should, therefore, try to ensure that social work students do not use knowledge of a particular group of people to generalize to every person in that group. The school should pay particular attention to both in-group and inter-group variations and similarities.

[12] Such an approach might facilitate constructive confrontation and change where certain cultural beliefs, values and traditions violate peoples' basic human rights. As culture is socially constructed and dynamic, it is subject to deconstruction and change. Such constructive confrontation, deconstruction and change may be facilitated through a tuning into, and an understanding of particular cultural values, beliefs and traditions and via critical and reflective dialogue with members of the cultural group *vis-à-vis* broader human rights issues.

[13] In many countries voluntary national professional associations play major roles in enhancing the status of social work, and in the development of Codes of Ethics. In some countries voluntary professional associations assume regulatory functions, for example disciplinary procedures in the event of professional malpractice, while in other countries statutory bodies assume such functions.

[14] Restorative justice reflects the following: a belief that crime violates people and relationships; making the wrong right; seeking justice between victims, offenders and communities; people are seen to be the victims; emphasis on participation, dialogue and mutual agreement; is oriented to the future and the development of responsibility. This is opposed to retributive justice which reflects: a belief that crime violates the State and its laws; a focus on punishment and guilt; justice sought between the State and the offender; the State as victim; authoritarian, technical and impersonal approaches; and orientation to the past and guilt.

[15] As "minimum standards" appeared to be too prescriptive, the suggestion at the IASSW Board meeting in Chile in January 2002, was that we refer to "Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training". This was considered a more appealing alternative in view of the main paradigm adopted in the document. Also while each component of the "standards" may represent a minimum, put together, the document reflects quite a sophisticated level of education and training. A first draft was debated in the IFSW General Meeting in 2002 leading to specific proposals which were reported at the Montpellier conference. As consultations proceeded a preference seemed to emerge for the use of "International Guidelines for Social Work Education and Training." This was on account of linking the concept "global" with "globalisation", with all of the latter's negative connotations and hegemonic discourses. However, on producing the fourth draft of the document as "international guidelines" and on receiving further feedback, some colleagues reflected a clearer preference for "Global Standards". The pattern that emerged was interesting as the more developed Western schools seemed to prefer "international guidelines" while developing schools preferred that we retain "Global Standards". This warrants further discussion and research. Colleagues from developing schools expressed the view that "Global Standards" were more substantive and might contribute to the development of their schools and curricula by allowing them more bargaining power within their institutions. Given that we were always mindful of reinforcing a Western hegemonic discourse, and that the standards must serve the needs of developing schools we decided to revert to the earlier decision and adopt the term "Global Standards." It is unacceptable that a Western hegemony prevails, simply because the West might have more presence and voice at international gatherings. Furthermore, IFSW, representing a practitioner-based body, was quite categorical in its rejection of the use of "international guidelines." The concept "global" was debated at different times within both IFSW and IASSW. Both organisations concluded that "global" was an inclusive concept referring to all regions and all countries of the world, while international may refer to two or more countries. As the standards are intended to be applicable to all schools of social work on a

global level, the use of "global" is more appropriate. According to Payne (2001) a standard refers to a pointer towards something distinctive or an ideal. A standard is defined as a "rallying principle", "a degree of excellence required for a particular purpose" or something "recognised as (a) model for imitation", "recognised as possessing merit or authority" (Oxford Dictionary). Given that we depict ideals that we aspire towards, non-prescriptive "standards" would be more appropriate than "guidelines'. As "qualifying" is self-evident and perhaps redundant, it was dropped from the title.

[16] The Chair of the Committee consulted with Faculty from Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan; representatives from Michigan State University, Hope College and Calvin College, Michigan; representatives from Social Work and the Social Welfare Training Institute – University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica; and with the Joint Universities Committee (JUC) on Social Work Education, South Africa. The document was shared with colleagues at a seminar in Santiago, Chile in January 2002. A plenary consultation session was held at the IASSW conference in Montpellier, France in July 2002, with educators and practitioners in New Zealand in January 2003, and in February 2003 a consultation session was held at the CSWE conference in Atlanta. A consultation session was held at the Association of Caribbean Social Work Educators in Barbados, July – August 2003, with colleagues in Estonia in August 2003 (by Lena Dominelli), and a plenary consultation session at the JUC conference in South Africa in October 2003. The first draft was debated in the IFSW General Assembly in 2002 leading to proposals that were reported to the Montpellier conference. Since the development of the first draft the document has been available on the IASSW and the IFSW web-sites. In addition both IASSW and IFSW colleagues have discussed the document at various forums in the Asia Pacific Region, Eastern Europe, the U.K., North America and Canada, Africa and in Latin America. In an effort to broaden consultation the fourth reviewed document was sent to all delegates (who had e-mail addresses) that attended the IASSW conference in Montpellier (2002). The document has been translated into French, Spanish, Swedish, Serbo-Croatian, Russian, Danish and Italian and is available in these languages on the web-sites. The publication of the document in the journal "Social Work Education" was a further attempt at consultation and inclusion. The document has been sent to various colleagues in different parts of the world requesting their input and comments. All feedback was considered and, as far as was reasonable and possible, was reflected in the reviews of the document. The overall response to the document has been overwhelmingly positive, with some colleagues commenting that as a global standards document, it is the best it could be. All responses received, from very diverse contexts such as Mexico, Chile, Mauritius, China, the Philippines, Russia, Armenia, Croatia, Australia, Africa and the U.K. indicated that the standards support, and would strengthen, national initiatives and would not negatively impact on the development of locally specific social work education, training and practice.

[17] These concepts suggested here are problematic as they reflect the traditional bio-medical model, which supports the notion of the service user as a passive recipient of social work services with the social worker as "expert" who knows best, and an implication of a hierarchical worker-client relationship, characterized by a so-called neutrality. It is antithetical to the holistic biopsychosocial, spiritual model which views people as active agents in change processes and structures, and to empowerment based practice, which calls for active involvement, rather than a detached neutrality, on the part of practitioners. A suggestion has been made for the use of "participants in social services." However, this alludes to an ideological position that is inconsistent with current realities of practice, which is indeed based on skewed power relationships, where service users are not fully integrated as equal participants in social work processes, delivery mechanisms and structures. Given the contemporary ethos of practice it is perhaps more ethical and realistic to retain the concepts "service users", "clients" or "consumers", despite their limitations. An alternate suggestion was for the use of "people who access social services". But this is too awkward and cumbersome for consistent use.

[18] For the purpose of convenience, the document shall refer to "the school" or "schools" even where the context of study is a faculty, centre or department.

[19] Given the limitations of dichotomies, and the linear modernist implications of the use of words "under-developed", "developing" or "developed" there is preference for the use of the concept "Two Thirds World". The concept reflects, numerically, the majority of the world's population that live in poverty and deprivation, and it does not imply any evaluative criteria with regard to superiority/inferiority.

[20] It is envisaged that such quality control will not be instituted at the international level, but at local, national and/or regional levels.

[21] See e.g. Pozutto (2001) who in comparing the possible lessons that South African social work has for other parts of the world, concluded that, '… (For) the most part, US social workers envision the social order as a given, largely unchangeable entity... Much of the American social work profession has accepted the 'knowledge' that legitimates the American social order. The drive to professionalism was…an early step in that direction.…(The) function of much of contemporary social work is to 'normalize' the population.…(Social) work is a form of social control contributing to the legitimisation of the current social order' (Pozutto, 2001, pp. 157-158).

[22] For a discussion on this and debates around totalizing discourses; representation; the universal and the particular; and knowledge, power and discursive formations see Williams and Sewpaul's article on Modernism, Postmodernism and Global Standards Setting published in *Social Work Education* 2004, Vol 23, No. 5.