

From a small step to a milestone: A new journey for the journal

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In July 2016, we were invited to join the reception of *International Social Work* (ISW) at the World Conference on Social Work and Social Development in Seoul, Korea. In the past two decades, we have been contributing manuscripts, reviewing papers, and serving on the advisory committee and the editorial board. When we knew that ISW was looking for new editors, an idea came to both of our minds at the same time: Why not try?

We have known each other for more than 15 years. We have had close collaboration on research and publications. We each bring a set of complimentary and contrasting skills and networks, not only limited to scholarship but also friendship and brotherhood across cultures. We come from different regions. Patrick comes from Australia and has close connections with social workers and scholars in English-speaking countries, Europe, Middle East and South Asia. Ming-sum comes from Hong Kong and has strong networks in Chinese societies, East Asia and North America. We are confident that our joint effort will make our ISW more international.

Both of us strongly believe that social work is and should be an international profession with core humanistic values, and ISW is a major platform for us to build and share what we believe, what we are doing and thinking. We have also received support from our academic peers, including: Dr. Aisha Hutchinson, University of Bedfordshire, UK; Dr. Lucy Jordan, University of Hong Kong; Dr. Peace Wong, National University of Singapore; Dr. Kitty Mo, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong; as well as Professor Emeritus Lesley Chenoweth, Professor Donna McAuliffe, Dr. Jenny Boddy and Dr. Joe Liang of Griffith University, Australia. Eventually, we formed an editorial team and proposed the following plan and strategies to the search panel for their consideration:

1. Mission of ISW in the next four years (2018-2022)

- 1.1 To define and develop the nature, boundaries and diversity of social work practice internationally.

- 1.2 To provide an interactive and accessible platform for generating and sharing new knowledge in social work theory and practice.
- 1.3 To foster a diverse representation of international social work community in readership, authors, reviewers, and board leadership.
- 1.4 To provide a credible evidence base for advancement of the status and profile of the social work globally.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To discover and discuss important and interesting issues from the social work field locally with global implications for worldwide social work.
- 2.2 To expand the readership of ISW (in terms of downloads and subscriptions).
- 2.3 To enhance the diversity of ISW (in terms of format, contents, contributors and readers.)
- 2.4 To increase the impact factor of ISW.
- 2.5 To demonstrate the impact of social work research and practice.

3. Strategies

- 3.1 **Review first, submit later:** We shall invite potential contributors to provide a proposal of manuscripts, to be submitted for blind review. With a conditional acceptance with reviewers' comments, the author(s) will be invited to submit the manuscript within six months.
- 3.2 **Review first, translate later:** In non-English regions, potential contributors may submit a full manuscript in their languages for blind review. If the manuscript is accepted, the author(s) will be required to translate the manuscript for publications.
- 3.3 **Invite manuscripts from highly cited authors:** Highly cited authors will be invited to write for ISW to attract readers to cite.
- 3.4 Particular priority will be given to papers that demonstrate the **impact of social work practice and research** especially in social development contexts, or papers that bring to light new and innovative practice or theory that are important for debate in international contexts.
- 3.4 **Editor's choice for every issue:** A paper will be selected by the editors as their *Editor's Choice* to recommend to readers to download, read and cite. This paper will be made open access.
- 3.5 A review of the governance structure of the journal to include Associate Editors through a consultation with the Editorial Board and owners

(International Association of Schools of Social Work; International Council on Social Welfare; and International Federation of Social Workers)a.

- 3.6 **Regional Associate Editors:** In each continent, an associate editor will be appointed as a liaison for ISW.
- 3.7 **Topic Associate Editors:** To have Editors with topic-specific expertise (e.g., gender, disability, ethics, practice, health, etc.) lead editorial work. This would also be the basis for planning special issues.
- 3.8 **Frank Turner Award and Annual Most-downloaded Article Award:** As a tradition of ISW, the Frank Turner Award will be given to the best paper in each year. In addition, an award will be given to the author(s) of the most-downloaded article of the year.
- 3.9 To publish a **special issue for SWSD conferences** by invitation based on peer review of abstracts and subsequent presentations.
- 3.10 **Academic writing workshops for potential contributors:** At every SWSD conference, writing workshops will be organized. The potential contributors can bring their drafts to join a one-day intensive writing workshop right after the SWSD.
- 3.11 **International mentoring provided by well-established writers:** Well-established scholars will be invited and appointed as mentors for young writers in developing countries.
- 3.12 Extensive use of social media in promoting ISW.
- 3.13 Setting up an Open ISW Journal in the long run.

In an online interview conducted in May 2018, we presented these ideas to the owners of ISW: the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) as well as the publisher, Sage Publications. Fortunately, we got the full support from all the stakeholders and were selected as the Editors of ISW.

Of course, the aforementioned is only our dream: before we make it happen, we need to spend the first year of our term of office consulting the stakeholders from all over the world, moderating and refining it into a 'shared-vision', and then put it into practice step-by-step.

To encourage our practitioners and scholars to submit papers, let us share Ming-sum's poem here:

A Poem for Writers

My paper is my lover.

Let us swim in the sea of knowledge together...

Academic pursuits are not boring, but a process of exploring...

We are not climbing a hill to Heaven, but taking a walk in a garden.

Have something to say and have fun from your faith. Let us

be free from the fear of failure...

We feel very humbled in taking up this editorship. Let us embark on a journey together.