



# INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WELFARE

A WORLD ORGANIZATION PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



# What is ICSW?

## Our Members

Founded in 1928, ICSW is a non-governmental organization. Our membership consists of global, regional, national and local organizations, of varied backgrounds and expertise, from every region of the world. We are represented in more than 70 countries, most of which are in the developing world.

*ICSW's members are from countries like Brazil and Benin; Ghana and Guatemala; India and Indonesia. They are from Canada and Cyprus, Finland and Fiji, Slovakia and Senegal. They are from Jamaica, Jordan and Japan. They also include major global organizations, such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, HelpAge International and The Salvation Army International.*

ICSW's member organizations collectively represent tens of thousands of community organizations which work at the front line in their own countries and localities to promote social welfare, social development and social justice.

Within their own communities, many of these organizations provide help for people who are starving, ill, disabled or frail. They help young and older people. They help families, indigenous peoples, refugees and people in societies of transition. They also help people who cannot earn a livelihood or who are oppressed. Many organizations consist mainly of people who are themselves experiencing poverty, hardship or insecurity.

Other ICSW members are concerned with establishing and strengthening community

organizations, and with advocating improved government policies.

## Our Officers and Staff

ICSW is fully democratic and accountable. Our governing bodies at the global and regional levels are elected by the membership at regular intervals in accordance with our constitution and by-laws.

The global Executive Committee comprises a President, Treasurer, Past President and four representatives from each of ICSW's five regions. It also includes three representatives from global organizations. Each region also has an Executive Committee, led by the regional President.

The staff of ICSW is headed by a Secretary General who reports regularly to the President and the Executive Committee. In addition to the head office staff, there are regional staff and also representatives accredited to the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations.

## Our Funding

ICSW's core activities are funded principally by fees and donations from our members. Some core activities and individual projects are funded by special grants from private foundations, governmental and intergovernmental sources.

*ICSW has the highest level of consultative status with the United Nations in relation to the work of the Economic and Social Council. It is also accredited to FAO, ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO; and to regional intergovernmental organizations.*

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# What does ICSW do?

*ICSW and our members are active in a wide range of fields within the general areas of social development, social welfare and social justice.*

*They include: food and nutrition, health, housing, education, social security, human rights and urban development as well as many aspects of economics, finance and taxation.*

*We look at these issues from the viewpoints of children, young people, families, men and women, older people and diverse groups of people who have special needs.*

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### Information and Ideas

ICSW gathers and distributes information to community groups, other non-governmental organizations, governments and intergovernmental organizations throughout the world.

It publishes a quarterly *Social Development Review* with information, opinion and news about a wide range of issues and events at national and international levels.

ICSW also publishes a series of *Policy Issues Papers* in which experts from inside and outside our network identify problems, discuss options and propose solutions.

Other ICSW publications include our official policy statements on particular issues, global and regional newsletters for ICSW members, and collections of papers delivered at ICSW conferences, seminars and workshops.

### Training and Support

ICSW conducts training seminars and workshops for our members and other organizations, especially in developing countries. Different training programs deal with the establishment and operation of front-line community organizations and of national representative organizations, as well as various aspects of social welfare work.

ICSW prepares kits to help our members and other organizations with organizational development, research and lobbying. We also support individual member organizations with particular information and advice, and with assistance to convene conferences. In turn, many of our members then help other organizations in their communities with training, information, advice and other assistance.

ICSW obtains funding to enable its members to represent their concerns at key international meetings, and our officers and staff to visit members in order to plan and conduct regional or national seminars and training.

### Research and Advocacy

ICSW researches key social and economic issues, and also encourages academics and other independent researchers to pursue projects which we regard as important.

We also develop policies on a wide range of issues and advocate them to governments and intergovernmental organizations at global, national and regional levels. We prepare written submissions and address UN and other meetings, lobby governments and comment on drafts under consideration at key international meetings.

Where appropriate, ICSW works together with other non-governmental organizations in developing and proposing policy, especially by convening or attending joint forums and delegations in connection with intergovernmental meetings.



# Some recent projects

## ICSW at the Global Level

- convened two global forums for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development
- published the *NGO Summit Newsletter* on preparations for the Summit; organized daily Issues Forums for NGOs during the UN Preparatory Committee meetings in New York and distributed 12 Policy Papers on Summit issues
- published a Policy Paper for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing
- convened NGO briefings for the UN Preparatory Committee meetings for Habitat II in New York and in Istanbul
- launched a new quarterly publication, *Social Development Review*, and established a Social Development Website on the Internet
- initiated programmes aimed at strengthening NGO input to the UN's Commission for Social Development and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

## ICSW at the Regional Level

- organized numerous regional workshops in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development. Venues included Bangkok, Copenhagen and Manila
- organized further regional or sub-regional meetings aimed at encouraging and assisting NGOs to pursue implementation of the Summit agreements in each of our five regions. Venues included Portugal, Mauritius, Canada, New Zealand, Botswana, Brazil, Hong Kong and Spain
- conducted training and organizational development workshops for NGOs in several regions. Special priority in this area has been given to NGOs in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America
- led or participated in NGO forums and committees which lobby key regional or sub-regional organizations, such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the European Union and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

*Every two years, ICSW convenes a biennial International Conference on Social Welfare, attended by approximately 1,000 people worldwide. Recent conferences were held in Hong Kong, Finland, Morocco and Germany. Regional conferences are also held on a biennial basis. Hundreds of other conferences are organized each year by ICSW members at national and local levels.*





## ICSW Mission Statement

**T**he International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) is a global non-governmental organization which represents a wide range of national and international member organizations that seek to advance social welfare, social justice and social development.

ICSW's basic mission is to promote forms of social and economic development which aim to reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability throughout the world, especially amongst disadvantaged people. It strives for recognition and protection of fundamental rights to food, shelter, education, health care and security. It believes that these rights are an essential foundation for freedom, justice and peace. It seeks also to advance equality of opportunity, freedom of self-expression and access to human services.

In working to achieve its mission, ICSW advocates policies and programs which strike an appropriate balance between social and economic goals and which respect cultural diversity. It seeks implementation of these proposals by governments, international organizations, non governmental agencies and others. It does so in cooperation with its network of members and with a wide range of other organizations at local, national and international levels.

ICSW's main ways of pursuing its aims include gathering and disseminating information, undertaking research and analysis, convening seminars and conferences, drawing on grass-root experiences, strengthening non-governmental organizations, developing policy proposals, engaging in public advocacy and working with policy-makers and administrators in government and elsewhere.





## International Council on Social Welfare

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