

EAPN LEARNING FORUM

Laulasmaa, Estonia

21st – 25th May 2013

Ian Johnston

**International Federation of Social Workers
(IFSW)**



About the presenter

- **Ian Johnston lives in Scotland. He is a registered social worker and Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts. He has worked in social work in the UK for the past 42 years.**
- **An experienced frontline social worker and service manager, Ian was Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers for more than 10 years.**
- **Works voluntarily in his village community and with an organisation providing social work services to the deaf community across Scotland.**
- **Serves on IFSW Europe's Executive Committee and represents the Federation at the European Social Platform & EAPN.**

Ian Johnston – Member of IFSW European Executive Committee

Former Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers





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Yes, from Scotland



Everything is possible!

Social work is about making sense of the impossible things that we all face at some time in our life.

Our job is about inspiring individuals and groups to explore all possible options to change their lives for the better.

The aim of this workshop is to enable you to achieve more with less resources through maximising your creativity.

Knowing where you're going!



Handling power



Knowing what's under the surface



“Practice without theory is to sail an uncharted sea. Theory without practice is not to set sail at all.”

Leonardo Da Vinci

Positioning ourselves



Making good use of our time



Achieving our goals



6/5/2013

small country



big problems

Poverty – some of the issues....

16% of Europe's population live below the poverty line, 8% of those who work still live in poverty and 19% of our children live under the threat of poverty.

20% of us believe that people are poor because they misuse their benefits.

Social Workers have first hand knowledge of the impact of poverty on the health and well being of individuals and groups and are uniquely placed to contribute to the awareness campaigns that are necessary to secure fairer and more equitable distribution of wealth in all countries.

Poverty in the UK

Even after 13 years of a Socialist Government, UK income and wealth were distributed more unequally than in any other rich country except America.

1/3rd of citizens do not own any property and their chances of doing so have diminished whilst the rich have got richer.

The top 10% get nearly 30% of the income while the poorest 10% get 2.5%. Such inequality accounts for the fact that the UK was ranked 20th out of 21 developed nations in a survey of the well being of children and imprisons more adults and children than almost any other country in Europe.

We can tell you what not to do.

The impact on children

A child in a poor family knows from their first day at school what it feels like to be worthless – no birthday parties, no holidays, no plane or even train rides – no computer for games or online chats – Facebook a closed book.

Shop windows, television images and playground conversation all remind this child that they are excluded from the mainstream.

It's not surprising that such children join gangs. Children with no power and few prospects create their own systems of status and rewards fighting for the respect they get nowhere else.

**(Polly Toynbee & David Walker – Unjust Rewards:
Ending the Greed that is Bankrupting Britain)**

The impact on health

The life expectancy of some groups can be as much as 20 years more than those living in poverty in the same cities.

Almost all social work service users are either already living with poor health or their health is threatened by the conditions in which they live.

Parents are unable to secure the conditions in which they can be good parents and are at risk from the common accompaniments of poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, poor diet, lack of exercise and violence and insecurity.

Poverty – the social work perspective

The hardship, distress and despair endured by individuals and families living in poverty largely occurs out of sight of politicians, other decision makers and opinion formers, far removed from the lives of the wealthy, which all too often are characterised by excess and greed.

The sensitive services that social workers provide very often take place behind closed doors too. We therefore have first hand knowledge of the impact of poverty on the health and well being of individuals and groups and are well placed to contribute to campaigns aimed at securing a fairer, more equitable distribution of wealth in all countries.

IFSW Europe became an organisational member of EAPN on 8th June 2012

International Federation of Social Workers

Established in 1950

Worldwide

Over 500,000 social workers from more than 80 countries who share a collective commitment to professional practice.

European Region – Independent NGO Status

40 member associations from 35 countries representing 165,600 social workers.

IFSW Promoting International Cooperation



IFSW EUROPE EXECUTIVE

IFSW President Europe

Cristina Martins, Portugal

European Honorary Secretary

Ana Martin, Spain

IFSW Europe Executive Committee

Ian Johnston, United Kingdom

Maria Moritz, Austria

Gabriele Stark-Angermeier, Germany

Hakan Acar, Turkey

Salome Namicheishvili, Georgia

Contact person for the Global Human Rights committee

Graça André, Portugal



IFSW - promoting our integrity

Sarah Banks defines professional integrity as:

- **Our commitment to professional values and capacity to make sense of the relationship between these and our personally held values**
- **Our awareness that the inter-relationship of our values constitutes the overarching goals and purpose of our profession.**
- **Our ability to give a coherent account of our beliefs and actions**
- **Our courage and determination, strength of purpose and determination to implement these values**

British Journal of Social Work (October 2010)

Social Workers must:

Tackle the fundamental causes of poor health as well as the consequences.

Rediscover the importance of work to improve service users material circumstances.

Pay greater attention to how disadvantage impacts on health across the life course.

Make Governments aware of the immediate and long term consequences of people not receiving social care services.

Recognise the health consequences of social issues such as domestic violence and suicide amongst young people.

**Pay attention to populations as well as individuals and families.
Give priority to prevention rather than protection.**

Secure equitable access to treatment and create the conditions for equitable health.

(Paul Bywaters – British Journal of Social Work – March 2009)



IFSW's message to President Barroso

“At a time when budgets are being cut, hard pressed social workers and healthcare professionals face insatiable demands for a service from those who are bearing the brunt of austerity measures. Failure to provide essential health and social care services at times of ill health and crisis, results in avoidable suffering and hardship, often leading to much greater expense in the long term.”

IFSW co-signed a letter from 64 CSO's expressing our concern to the President and the PM's of all EU Member States in advance of the recent EU Council Budget Setting Summit.

Commissioner Andor



6/5/2013

In Istanbul



6/5/2013

Keeping ourselves fresh

- The deliberate organisation of new and different inputs and stimulus to your working life to provoke alternatives.
- The continual search for new experiences that jolt you into making new and unique connections.

“Problems cannot be solved by thinking within the framework they were created in.” Einstein

“We should not to jump to conclusions based on past experience.” Edward de Bono

As SW's we know that even the worst situations in life can change for the better. This knowledge is our power. Solidarity holds the key to our success. If we combine our efforts with those who share our commitment to fairness and social justice we can make the world a better place for all who live in it. I wish you well. Thank you