Marginalization and Social Work in a Changing Society Workshop

This workshop will bring together various concerns related to marginalization in society and the role of social workers in countering this. To marginalize a group of people means to make them feel isolated and unimportant and to exclude them from participating – as the majority expect to do – in the everyday life of a society. It may involve bullying, abuse, incitement of hatred, discrimination and racism, all of which are contrary to social work values as enshrined in IFSW's Definition of Social Work and our Statement of Human Rights. This workshop will examine the meaning of marginalization and how it can be tackled through positive social changes in the European context.

This workshop could be set up for either a group of 70 or 150 persons depending on the availability of rooms. It can be co-facilitated by myself and a representative on the Human Rights team of IFSW Europe. There is only one hour available for this workshop so it is suggested the time is divided as follows:

5 mins Overview of the concept of marginalization and defining its major concerns (as facilitator I can prepare and present this).

25 mins Small group discussions clustered under certain themes (to be identified by participants), but may include issues such as –
- poverty and austerity
- refugees
- LGBT
- drug and alcohol users
- institutional care leavers/youth issues
- the elderly, people with disabilities
- religious groupings, ethnicity

Note – when people register for the workshop (presumably at the same time they register for the conference) they could be asked to identify which groups within society subject to marginalization they wish to focus on. The co-facilitators will review submissions and cluster these into identified thematic areas. Registered participants will be allocated a small group with no more than 7 persons. Unregistered participants who arrive at the venue will be given a choice to join a group, depending on numbers.

Key questions for the discussion groups will be –
- ❖ What are the concerns relating to marginalization of this identified group/thematic area?
- ❖ Consider what social workers can do to counter marginalization?
- ❖ Identify positive social changes that could be successfully used to counter social exclusion and marginalization?

25 mins There is insufficient time for feedback from each group, so there will be a general (plenary) discussion on the three questions leading to the final wrap-up.

5 mins General conclusions and recommendations lead by the co-facilitators.

Nigel Hall
(Secretary to IFSW Human Rights Commission)