

IASWG Board Retreat Minutes
January 26, 2024 10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time (US and Canada)

PRESENT: Alexis Howard, Andrew Spaumer, Ann Bergart, Barbara Muskat, Carol Cohen, Diana Coholic, Emily Santonocito, Erin Nau, Georgianna Dolan-Reilly, Greg Tully, H  l  ne Filion Onserud, Hilda Baar, Jen Currin-McCulloch, Karla Herrera, Kristina Lind, Kyle Mcgee II, Lorrie G. Gardella, Mamadou Seck, Mark Macgowan, Namoonga Chilwalo, Nancy-Angel Doetzel, Padraic Stanley, Reineth Prinsloo, Robert Martinez, Samuel R. Benbow, Ser   Godfrey-Kaplan, Shelita Birchett Benash, Shirley Simon, Stephanie Baird

Business Topics

- See Barb’s recent email about the Mutual Aid Action Team of IASWG (spearheaded by Joanna Sulman)
- Please consider attending non-English language presentations (Board further discussed this topic later in the meeting)

General News/Updates

- Kyle - Namoonga & Robert have recently joined the Nominations and Elections Committee
- Carol shared upcoming international conferences:
 - [CSWE in Kansas City this October](#) (Deadline for submissions is February 12th)
 - The Social Work & Social Development – [SWSD 2024](#) world conference jointly organized by IFSW, IASSW & ICSW will be held from 4th to 7th April in Panama (There will be IASWG-related sessions)
 - [World Conference on Social Work and Social Development](#) will be held in Nairobi in 2026
 - International Social Work Research Conference (ECSWR: April 17-19, 2024 in Vilnius, Lithuania)
- Krisitina - held the first ad hoc meeting this year to bring students to the symposium (looking for more students) - The next meeting is on February 27 from 11:30am-12:30pm EST
- Sam - The membership committee is looking for content for the upcoming newsletter. Please email Sam and Georgia with submissions.

Breakout Rooms: discussing ways to further engage our members and expand the reach of the organization

Breakout #1 - What brought you to IASWG? What keeps you coming back to IASWG?

- Theme of community
 - Question: How do we communicate the experience of community to those who have never had that experience with IASWG?
- Learned about the organization through a current member
- Avoiding burnout, being part of an organization that is supportive, welcoming, and strengths-based
- Personal connections as being important, being a group ourselves
- Introduced to the association and stayed for the relationships, passion for the work, speak the same language, start from the same baseline and build from there
- Connecting with organizations and systems where group work is key
- Recognition that the symposium will be more localized and attended by those nearby due to location and those with the ability to travel; primarily in Spanish with interpretation

Breakout #2 - How do we attract and retain people in the organization with the recognition that this year’s symposium will be in-person? How to continue to connect with people between symposia?

- Consider mentorship program and increased social media
- Expand our “ponds” - Hilda represents educators

- Looking at the structures that we already have in place and how we could explore their efficiency and accountability with each committee (are we doing enough follow-through, is work distributed with enough follow-through)
- Increased and sustained engagement: consider exposure and levels of involvement
- Building and piquing interest to retain members
- Demystify practice and learn skills and paths
- Sustain interest, especially with students and middle career professionals
- Expand board by including more students (3-4 positions)
- Funding for students to attend and stay at the symposium
- Structural issues: committees, chapters (what are chapters?), board membership (include student members), symposiums (plans to ensure reasonable attendance at various sessions)
- Have a core set of tasks for the year across all audiences with subtle modifications for each group; we could streamline the process in the way that is being discussed while being flexible with the audience
- Focus directly on building our membership (students, practice, educators, researchers, leaders, etc.), and through that lens, indirectly expanding the world of social work with groups and its importance in our world in more general terms.
- Virtual group work camps (incorporate into classes, targeted efforts to child welfare, military, interdisciplinary practice) with continuing education
- Goal: Engagement to retain interest in organization and group work overall. Sub goals: 1. Exposure (social media, advertising, word of mouth). 2. Building and piquing interest via supporting tangible skills, demystifying practice, transparency, authenticity, and identity integration. 3. Sustain interest and use of group work practice.
- How many students are staying engaged in the organization following their involvement in the organization? Emily will provide data soon.
- Create an outreach team to follow up with students
- Clarify what it means to be involved in the organization
 - Must also sustain the costs of our organization (membership, symposium, join mutual aid group)
- Survey members?
- How are we using our chapters to help engage members?
- For symposium: Have board members sign up for presentations (to ensure we have strong attendance at all presentations, especially presentations that are not in English or by well-known presenters)
 - Hilda - At our workshop weekend in Germany, people must sign up in advance. Some presentations need a minimum, some a maximum. As board members, we fill up the empty spots.
 - Also balance individual choice/preferences

Large Group Discussion: What are some possible “do-ables?”

- Provide experiential/experience in group work (committee, group work camp)
- Offer workshops (to teachers)
- Revise student board positions (BSW & MSW)
- Offer mutual aid groups (locally, internationally, in-person and virtual)
- Virtual mutual aid group for practitioners (in an area of practice) and/or students -- maybe 6 sessions include CECs and/or course credit.
- Virtual group work camp for students and educators (swk and related fields) -- also with CECs or course credit. Market these as international professional development and self-care
- Perhaps focus groups about what would draw them in from THEIR perspective is needed as a first step.
- More exposure using social media
- Group work camps

- Mutual Aid Groups
- Structural changes for the organization -- board membership, committees, chapters, etc.
- PR and Marketing - promotion of who we are

Georgia's Resource: This is the circles of involvement I use for planning with my communities:

<https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/meetings/ecidea16/CirclesofInvolvementhandout.pdf>

Breakout #3 - Based on the three areas of focus, what is our action plan?

Marketing/PR/Outreach Efforts

- Engagement & Retention
 - What is the next step once an individual becomes a member?
 - Board members connect with new presenters or members at the symposium and also follow up (have specific questions and targeted follow up with available resources/tools for next steps: support groups, research opportunities); call for follow up with data
 - Be creative with resources (e.g., communication interns, website design)
 - Use IASWG twitter, facebook page (Karla interested in serving in this area)
- Integrate marketing into all activities of the organization
- Mentorship at the symposium
- Contact Padraic if you are interested in joining the Marketing Committee

Mutual Aid Groups/Group Work Camp

- Robert will explore a mutual aid group for protective service workers (with agency professional development office and IASWG)
- Mutual Aid Group for Stressed-out Students (Será & Lorrie) - for course credit or self-care
- Expanding Mutual Aid Group for Environmental Issues (Hélène)
- Ann Bergart - peer consultation opportunity for practitioners (explore opportunities for all IASWG members, meet periodically and bring group work issues from practice and get support)
- [long term] Create Virtual Group Work Camp for target audiences
- Promote groups at the symposium (Ann Bergart)
- Ad hoc group connected with the Commission related to groups and activities related to education (Carol)

Workshops

- Form a training committee to plan and organize workshops
 - If you would like to join this committee, please let Barb know
- Survey members for a list of topics for workshops
- Host workshops starting Fall 2025 (free for members, fee for non-members, presenters receive an honorarium)
- Consider other offerings (Loyola's series) and chapters' offerings
- Have a central calendar for all events on the website

Large Group Wrap Up & Next Steps:

1. Host another planning session in late March (on Saturday or Sunday)
2. Have board meeting prior to the symposium; have a social hour for board members at the symposium (outside of the symposium schedule)
3. Feedback about today's session: liked having the breakouts, for next time have an outline of the topics/questions for those who would like time to prepare their thoughts, keep meeting to 2ish hours, enjoyed breakout rooms as it provoked thoughts, liked discussing topics and ways to move the ideas along, open to do a follow up meeting to keep us on track, connect to existing structures fit within

proposed action items, like follow up meeting in upcoming months, create actionable items with deadlines, remember the "I" in our name, thought this format was very effective

4. Final reminder: send ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING for inclusion in the newsletter to iaswg.newsletter@gmail.com