

Strategy of the Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

Introduction

The Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

“Harmonic society” Armenian Association of Social workers NGO (currently` Armenian Association of Social workers) is a leading organization that brings together social work professionals in Armenia by uniting more than 1000 primary and associate members from academic and practical (governmental and non-governmental organizations) frameworks.

Founded in 2004 as a non-governmental, non-profit, and non-political organization, the ASSW has the aim to contribute to the improvement of the quality of existing social services, and to introduce new social technologies based on human rights by promoting the development of social work as a profession in Armenia.

Since 2005, AASW has been the member of the International Federation of Social workers (IFSW) and uses this international platform to lobby and promote the interests and rights of Armenian social workers. Through networking, the Association represents the united voice for social justice, for the protection of human rights, to spread the social work best practice, and to create cooperation between social workers and specialized organizations at a national and international level.

Our Mission

The Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is dedicated to promoting and regulating the Social Work profession in Armenia. The AASW represents Social Workers by ensuring the sustainable development of the profession, the maintenance of accountability and compliance with the social work standards, and the promotion of professional identity.

The Armenian Association of Social workers is advocating for the recognition and protection of the rights of the social work professionals and the service beneficiaries. Membership offers Social Workers the opportunity to work collectively to contribute to Armenian Society, its communities and institutions, in a way that is dedicated to improving social inclusion and social well-being.

Our Vision

The Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the lead national Association for Armenian Professional Social Workers. We set the benchmark for harmonization of professional education and practice in Social Work. We have a strong voice on matters of social inclusion, social justice, human rights and issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Armenians. We seek a close and collaborate relationship with government institutions, educational institutions, civil society organisations, other relevant professional associations and the community.

Our Strategy

It reflects the commitments of the AASW in the delivery of its policy to improve and safeguard the Social Workers profession and the social wellbeing of the people of Armenia. It also defines directions and priorities that will help build on the significant advances that have been made in the area of social work in Armenia over the last years.

Together they provide a framework that will support the AASW members and all other social workers and social work practitioners in Armenia to further develop effective interventions and services.

Successful implementation will require engagement and collaboration between the AASW, government departments, civil society organisations, employers, education providers and professional organisations as well as social workers and service users.

Through regular review of the strategy, we intend to ensure that the goals of the strategy are met.

Our Strategic Goals are:

1. Supporting Social Reforms in the Republic of Armenia
 2. Supporting the identity protection and professional development of social workers in Armenia
 3. Strengthen and develop the organizational capacity of the Armenian Association of Social Workers
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Strategic Goal 1: Support Social Reforms in in the Republic of Armenia

“The AASW will strengthen the capability of social work to influence policy decisions, practice developments and service improvements.”

Those who deliver social work services and those who receive them have important roles in informing and influencing policy decisions as well as contributing to service improvements and practice developments. AASW supports current social reforms as a precondition to introduce social work in social services.

Decisions about policy, service improvement or practice developments need to be informed by evidence as well as by people's experiences.

Good decision-making requires information and analysis of the issues to be addressed as well as a critical analysis of the evidence about what has worked in other contexts and settings to inform the way forward.

The experience and knowledge of social workers, social work practitioners and service users must be used to identify trends in demand, needs and outcomes and to inform decisions about investment in and development of social services.

This requires intelligent service design, a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and ensuring that the time social workers spend working directly with service users is maximized.

To support social reforms, the AASW will particularly focus on the following objectives and activities from 2016 until 2020:

1.1. Provision of AASWs social work expertise in developing social policy and the transition to social work services in the Republic of Armenia

- To advocate and lobby for improving current laws and procedures in the social sphere
- To contribute to the development of a new law on social work
- To lobby for the recognition of professional standards and guidelines of social work by state authorities

1.2. Contribute to developing legal preconditions to strengthen social work profession

- To develop a system of social work profession suitability crediting (for specialists operating in social field without professional social work qualification)
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- To organize and carry out awareness-raising activities among social workers and other stakeholders to provide information about the current reforms, the new laws and the new procedures

1.3. Support the development of cross-sectoral dialogue and cooperation in support of current social reforms

- To form a common platform for lobbying, presentation and discussion of professional social work issues (state authorities, local and international organizations, NGO's) like a "social work collegium", chamber, or any other type of regulating body
 - To enhance the capability of the platform to lobby for current social reforms
 - To develop multidisciplinary cooperation including other associations (i.e. doctors, psychologists, lawyers, etc.)
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Strategic Goal 2: Supporting the identity protection and professional development of social workers in Armenia

“The AASW will support the development of professional expertise and the individual accountability of social workers.”

Social work education in Armenia is ahead of the actual social work practice. Harmonization of practice and education is a key component in ensuring social workers develop the expertise necessary to improve outcomes for service users. Identity protection and professional development has to be planned in ways that support the progressive acquisition and development of skills and expertise, linked to changing needs, job roles and career structures.

Social work expertise has to be deployed in ways that enable social workers to deliver greatest benefit.

To support the identity protection and professional development of social workers, the AASW will particularly focus on the following objectives and activities until 2020:

2.1 The current needs for the professional development of social work practitioners in Armenia are identified and activities to improve their capacities are initiated and/or implemented

- To assess current training/further education needs of qualified social workers and staff working in the social sector
- To carry out training activities to enhance the professional capacities of social workers
- To establish a social workers' club, an informal assembly with the purpose of creating/supporting dialogue and discussions, and support their further education

2.2 Activities aimed at the improvement of social work education and promotion of the creation of opportunities for continuing education are initiated and implemented

- To contribute to the development of necessary preconditions for the introduction of the Social Work Ph.D. program
 - To develop together with the University and other experts a curriculum for initial and further trainings in accordance with the SW standards and guidelines, the draft law on social work and the accreditation system to be developed
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- To create and replenish the resources needed at AASW for professional growth (literature, electronic library and etc.)
- To promote the development of distance learning courses on social work

2.3 Effective rights protection mechanisms for social work professionals are developed and implemented

- To develop an advocacy procedure for social workers based on existing legislation and professional standards together with experts from the state authorities
 - To make the professional community aware of their rights and rights protection mechanisms, as well as about the sanctions which are being applied in the case of violations of rights
 - To develop sanctions for violating rules of professional conduct
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Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen and develop the organizational capacity of the Association

“We will ensure the sustainable development of the AASW, as the professional body supporting and representing the social work profession in Armenia.”

The sustainable organizational development of the AASW will be ensured through enhancing the governance capability of the board and the organization as a whole.

We believe that direct and proactive investment in both organizational and technical capacity building leads to increased levels of organizational efficiency, local ownership, sustainability and more effective service provision.

This approach will help us to align our mission, vision and structure to enact democratic principles of power sharing.

The strengthening of AASW can only happen through strengthening its members and increasing its member base.

To strengthen and develop the organizational capacity of the Association, the AASW will particularly focus on the following objectives and activities until 2020:

3.1. Develop internal policies and procedures (financial, administrative, HRM, documents)

- To review and update the organizational structure of the AASW
- To review and update the AASW human resource regulation
- To review and update the current procurement procedure
- To introduce an effective document management system

3.2. Develop and introduce AASW membership criteria and benefits to social workers

- To develop a membership system, involving new members and supporters
- To create a package of services provided to AASW members and supporters
- To introduce and promote a reward system in order to promote the members participation and to define different categories for awarding social workers

3.3. Development of fundraising strategy to ensure AASW's financial stability.

- To develop a fundraising strategy
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3.4. Ensuring the visibility and awareness about AASW activities among AASW members and the wider community

- To develop, discuss and approve the AASW PR and image strategy and the action plan
- To create a common platform e.g. Association website, pages on social networks, etc. for professional communication
- To organize awareness campaigns on the activities of the Association

Conclusion:

The Strategy of the Armenian Association of Social Work represents the shared values at the core of our working relationships. These values provide guidelines for our strategic approach and support in handling our everyday professional lives.

An overarching action plan for the timeframe of 2016 until 2020 will be developed, which will be reviewed and updated periodically with a focus on achieving outcomes and monitoring the impact of the strategy.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will require dedicated and strong commitment and sustained effort and drive over the next few years in order to realize the strategy's full potential.
