

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
The Fourth Conference on Advancement of Social Work in Post-Soviet Countries:
Achievements and Challenges of Social Work Education
Baku, Azerbaijan
April 26-27th, 2018

Preamble:

Social work practitioners, educators, and students from post-Soviet countries and their colleagues from other realms have been meeting annually since 2015 to discuss common challenges and opportunities. The social work profession was practically absent during the Soviet times and we all had to start from scratch to address the dire and complex social problems associated with the transition away from the planned socialist economy. The progress in advancement of social work in post-Soviet countries is uneven but we benefit from sharing our challenges, tackling common problems, and arriving at collaborative solution. This event, as the previous three conferences in Chisinau and Tbilisi is dedicated to improving social work education, taking advantage of opportunities for social progress, and building professional solidarity among social work practitioners, educators and students in the post-Soviet region. The Conference is organized by the Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Azerbaijan State Culture and Art University and National Association of Social Workers in Moldova.

Social work education in post-Soviet countries:

People expect and deserve high-quality social services that are relevant to their needs, reliable and based on the best practice. This means having a well-trained, well-supported and highly-valued workforce in social protection system. Social workers are an important part of this workforce. They need to be properly trained and equipped to carry out the increasingly challenging and complicated tasks expected from them, both now and in the future. It is crucial that their education and preparation is provided at a level that is suited to their heavy responsibilities. Social work education is new to post-Soviet countries. Although social work education was initiated before USSR, during the Soviet era it was totally abolished. Communists considered it as a tool of “bourgeois” and eliminated it as unnecessary education. Social services were delivered mostly by members of Communist Party and Trade Unions. Agencies responsible for delivering social services hired people with any background such as engineer, teacher, economist or nurse with idea that everyone can do social work. Thus, social work education did not exist at all during the Soviet legacy. After collapse of the USSR, post-Soviet countries gradually started developing social work programs. Paste of moving formal social work training to the next level, for all post-Soviet countries are different, yet there are similar challenges including achievements in all of them. During this conference the process of social work education, issues, and success stories of these countries will be discussed.

Goals:

- Identify common challenges of social work education in the post-Soviet realm;
- Promote the standards-based social work education;
- Identify and promote best models of social work education curricula;
- Create a sustainable platform for the ongoing international dialogue, exchange of ideas, curriculum innovation, and program development.

Program:

Day 1 (April 26): Presentations and panel discussions on social work education models – experiences, plans, and ideas.

Day 2: (April 27): Field visits to social service agencies and social work schools in Baku.

Conference registration:

For attending the conference, please send to our email address (postsovietconf2018@azswu.org) the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Contact information (email, phone number)
- Educational background and affiliation
- Professional background and affiliation

All the attendees should register no later than **April 1st, 2018 12 pm.** (Baku time).

Application for abstracts:

For presenting at the conference, please send to our email address (postsovietconf2018@azswu.org) the following information:

1. Personal information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Contact information (email, phone number)
 - Educational background and affiliation
 - Professional background and affiliation
2. The abstract of your presentation in English (up to 350 words)

The abstract should be submitted in DOC or PDF format before **March 15th, 2018.**

Scholarship application:

The Conference Organizing Committee is pleased to announce that **four scholarships of 250\$** are available for presenters from post-Soviet countries (through the generous support from Project Casa Mare). In order to apply for the scholarship, please fill in and submit the Funding Application Form (attached) together with your abstract and personal information.

Scholarship application form:

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Conference%202018?preview=Funding-Form.docx>

The decisions about presentation and scholarship will be announced on or before March 19th.

If you have any questions, please contact us at info@azswu.org.

For more information and updates, please check the Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union's [website](#) or follow our Facebook [page](#)

Khanbala Ahmadli

PR and Networking Coordinator, Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union

khanbalaahmadli@azswu.org