



**International Consortium for Social Development – Asia Pacific Branch, 2004 -2016:
President’s recounts, reflections and foreflections**

Manohar Pawar

Professor of Social Work Charles Sturt University, Australia and
President, ICSDAP Branch

Reviews

This article truly will provide guidance for many others, both in ICSD and its branches, and for those in other organizations that have a worldwide or regional reach and have quite limited financial resources. I especially appreciate that you are thoughtful and candid in your comments.

Prof. David Hollister, Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, USA.

You have obviously been a tremendously active scholar, internationalist and a master organizer. Your networking skills will also become evident to anybody who cares to peruse your reflective account of the Asia Pacific Branch of ICSD.

Prof. Shanti Khinduka, George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, Dean Emeritus, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University, St. Louis, USA

We need to keep records for the next generation and you have done an excellent job in providing a summary of your work with the branch over the last few years. Apart from providing a factual account of activities, it shows what excellent leadership you have provided.

Prof. James Midgley, Harry & Riva Specht Professor Emeritus and Professor of the Graduate School, University of California, Berkeley, USA

As an overall reflection I note that one person can only do so much, however, you have achieved a lot.

Dr. Bruce Valentine, Adjunct Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Charles Sturt University, Australia.

It is superb! No one else could have captured the history of ICSDAP as you have, your recounting of the history of the organization is not only excellent in its thoroughness, detail and accuracy, but it is exciting to read by those of us who have lived through some of this history. It should also be interesting and informative to those who are interested in social development and to those who study the history of organizational development. This will make an important contribution to the recorded history of the organization and to the field of social development in general.

Prof. Frank B. Raymond, III, Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Dean Emeritus, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, USA.

...you have been extraordinary as the President of the Asia Pacific branch. Your tenacity and resilience is amazing. There are great achievements here and some very fine strategic work.

Dr. A W (Bill) Anscombe, Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Charles Sturt University, Australia.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to immensely thank Charles Sturt University, School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Institute for Land Water and Society for supporting my outside professional activities. My University’s ethos ‘FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD’ and ‘YINDYAMARRA WINHANGANHA’, a Wiradjuri phrase meaning, ‘the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in’ are the driving force behind this work. Particularly, I am grateful to Mr. Mike Collingridge, former head of the school, who generously supported my participation in the 14th ICSD symposium, without which this professional development activity would not have occurred. I also would like to sincerely thank reviewers of this research report for their comments and suggestions.

The Asia Pacific branch of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSDAP) completes 12 years of its existence in 2016. I offered my voluntary services to the branch as its president from the beginning and as I plan to pass on this important responsibility to the next leaders, I thought it is important to reflect on the creation of the branch, its activities and achievements, and its increasing relevance in the region. This reflective note also provides an historical account of the branch, issues and possibilities of sustaining the branch and sheds some light on future directions and potential developments.

Birth of the ICSDAP

Having established the European branch on a strong footing, leaders of the ICSD were contemplating establishing an ICSDAP branch for some time. This noble intention was actualised in the 13th ICSD Symposium, which was held in Mumbai, India in 2003-2004, under the presidency of Prof. Shanti Khinduka and branch development leadership of Prof. David Hollister. Both were key founding members of the ICSD since its formation in the early 1970s. During the 13th ICSD (at that time it was known as IUCISD, Inter University Consortium for International Social Development), a special meeting was held to form the Asia Pacific Branch of the ICSD, which was chaired by Prof. Denzil Saldhana from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences which hosted the symposium. I was one of the participants in that

important branch formation meeting. Following some deliberations, Dr. Neela Dabir was nominated and appointed as convener of the ICSDAP branch and several provisional members were also nominated and appointed to the branch (I am not able to recollect those names), though some who wanted to come on the board did not get the chance. There was a lot of jubilation that the 13th ICSD symposium gave birth to the formation of the ICSDAP branch.

The next step

After the formation of the ICSDAP branch, I did not follow up its progress and activities. In 2004, I had a great opportunity to host Prof. Shanti Khinduka, President of the ICSD, to our Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia, which provided important space for both personal and professional interaction with him and helped to learn more about the ICSD and motivated me to engage with the activities of the ICSD. In 2005, I participated in the 14th ICSD symposium that was held in Recife, Brazil. Dr. Dabir informed me that after the branch formation no progress has been made and no response was received from the provisional board members, though the branch standing orders were developed, and invited me to come on the board and help to activate the branch. As usual, in every symposium, branch meetings are held, and on Dr. Dabir's request I convened and attended the ICSDAP branch meeting. A small group of people who were interested in the branch came together and had informal discussion as to how to progress it. One participant questioned the need to have a branch as there were so many other professional organisations. In the meeting, it was decided to explore the possibility of organizing the 1st conference in Bangkok with assistance from Prof. Yasoo Hagiwara and Dr. Miyuki Inaba from Japan and Dr. Dabir, and Dr. Goutham Menon from the USA encouraged me to assume the role of co-convener of the branch and assured me of support in the activities of the branch. This small group of well meaning colleagues were successful in persuading to me to become a co-convener and activate the branch. I was at the 14th symposium as an ordinary participant and did not anticipate this development and at that time it was beyond my imagination.

With Prof. Hagiwara's initiative, a meeting was organised with the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University on 17 October 2005. Prof. Hagiwara, Dr. Inaba and I travelled to Bangkok at our own cost to attend this meeting. A thorough discussion with Professor Apinya Wechayachai, Dean, Dr. Jitti Mongkolnchaiarunya and Dr. Woothisarn

Tanchai, Faculty of Social Administration, and plan helped to organise the first ICSDAP conference in Pattaya, Thailand.

1st biennial conference of the ICSDAP

As stated above, the first branch conference was hosted and organised by the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, under the leadership of Dr. Jitti Mongkolnchaiarunya, at their Pattaya learning facility, Pattaya, Thailand, on the 18-20 October 2006, with the support of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, CRSR/ILWS (Centre for Rural Social Research/Institute for Land, Water and Society), Charles Sturt University, Australia; Faculty of Humanities, Taisho University, Japan; and Faculty of Languages and Cultures, Kyushu University Asia Center, Kyushu University, Japan and of course, the ICSD. It is important to note that the branch was new and it had no money to organise this conference. The ICSD helped with US\$1000 to organise the conference and other support organisations also provided in kind and cash support. As the branch did not have adequate resources to organise the conference, the main strategy was to mobilise like minded organisations and people who could provide help in kind or cash. Prof. Shanti Khinduka agreed to travel to Pattaya to deliver a keynote address with minimal support from the organisers. The theme chosen by the host organisation for the conference was Globalisation, Development and Human Security in the Asia Pacific Region. As it was the first conference, it demanded a significant amount of my own time in processing abstracts and preparing the conference program in coordination with organisers. The experience of organising this three-day conference in collaboration and cooperation with several international colleagues was really heartening. In addition to several keynote speeches, over 60 papers were presented cutting across more than ten themes: poverty, social policy, community development, disasters, children, social work, human security, millennium development goals, etc. Each day a plenary session and four concurrent sessions were conducted in which over 60 papers were presented. About 150 participants from nearly 20 countries beyond the Asia Pacific region participated in the conference. In addition, three excellent field visits were organised. A strong theme emerging at the Conference concerned with Thailand's policy focus on a 'self sufficiency economy'. This new policy advocates the country's model for a modest life, resilience and the use of reasoning and knowledge to progress. The conference was not only a great success, but also laid a solid foundation for building the branch that hoped to play an active role in facilitating the implementation of the millennium development goals in the region. The presence of Prof Frank Raymond, President

of the ICSD and of Dr. Roar Sundby, president of the ICSD European branch demonstrated support for building the ICSD AP branch. Dr. Jitti is an excellent community organiser and he ensured an effective implementation of the plan and a successful conference. In the concluding session, we wanted to thank organisers with a bouquet, but as the branch did not have money, Dr. Dabir generously gave her own \$50 or \$100 to organise this.

According to the regional standing orders, in the general body meeting, the nominating committee nominated the following members and they were formally elected to the ICSDAP board.

Dr. Manohar Pawar, Australia, President
Dr. Jitti Mongkolnchaiarunya, Thailand
Dr. Ernest Chew, Hong Kong, Secretary
Dr. Miyuki Inaba, Japan, Treasurer and five members at large:
Dr. Neela Dabir, India
Dr. Sharlene Furuto, USA (Hawaii)
Prof. Yasuo Hagiwara, Japan
Dr. Bambang Shergi Laksmono, Indonesia
Dr. Victor Viray, Philippines

At the end of the conference, I was informed that a new promotional laptop was lost from a presentation room, but according to the local laws nothing could be done as it did not have a specific owner. Some participants were so excited about the conference that a couple of them in person expressed interest in hosting the branch conference in future years (Prof. Prsant Ghosh, from the Department of Social Work, Shantiketan, India and Prof. Lee Ick Seop, Dean, School of Social Welfare, Yonsei University, South Korea). As part of the accountability to the branch, the conference organisers informed the branch that neither a profit nor loss was made by organising the first branch conference. In some respects, financially, it was a good achievement, but the branch remained without any money to continue its activities.

In addition to the usual outcomes of the conference, there were some specific outcomes which are worth mentioning here. First, based on the conference proceedings, two proposals were prepared for publication. One was an edited book, but it did not progress further as no

publisher came forward and contrary to the promise, some key papers were not received in their full form. Second was a special issue of a journal. On an invitation from Professor Murli Desai, former Senior Visiting Fellow, Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore, and former Managing Editor of the Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development to guest-edit a special issue of the journal, I submitted a proposal for a special issue on intervention in disasters (Pawar, 2008) as a number of papers were presented on this theme. In 2008, a special issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development, Vol 18, No. 2, pp. 3 to 94, consisting of 7 articles was published. Guest editing this special issue by working with a number of authors and developing articles to a publication standard was a herculean task. On the whole, it was academically a satisfying experience, it provided additional insights as to how to help authors publish and it was a good tangible outcome of the ICSDAP as a new branch.

As president of the ICSDAP, I received an invitation to make a plenary speech on community development in Asia and the Pacific at the biennial conference of the International association for Community Development, Hong Kong, in 2007. I was not an authority on the suggested topic, either in terms of academia or practice. However, as I liked the topic, I undertook an extensive research, drafted a paper and presented at the conference. Encouraged by the feedback in the conference, I did further research and writing, prepared a book proposal and authored a book entitled *Community Development in Asia and Pacific* (Pawar, 2010), which was published by Routledge in 2010. Had I not received this invitation, I do not think I would have seen this title.

Thoughts and efforts for the second ICSDAP conference

As 2008 was approaching, ICSD board members were actively looking for a suitable host for the second conference. While working with Professor David Cox on an international research project on *Introducing a Social Development Perspective into Social Work Curricula at All Levels* (Cox, Pawar and Picton, 1997a and 1997b), I had realised the significance of promoting social work and social development education in least developed and land locked countries and I was keen to take ICSDAP conferences to such countries to contribute towards achieving that goal. With the help of Prof Hagiwara, to continue our negotiation with South Korean colleagues, while attending the 15th ICSD symposium in 2007 in Hong Kong, I invited late Dr. Ick-Seop Lee, Dean of School of Social Welfare, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea and his team to have dinner with me (at my own cost) to discuss the possibility of organising ICSDAP second conference by their department. Dr. Lee was

supportive of the proposal in principle and agreed to communicate about it later. During the 15th symposium, I met an Indian scholar, Dr. Bala Raju Nikku, working in Nepal as head of the Department of Social Work, Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management, a non-government organisation in Kathmandu, affiliated to Purbanchal University. I explored with him the possibility his department hosting the second ICSDAP conference in Kathmandu. Both of us were taking a risk in this proposal. I did not know the institution and their people and they felt they were a new department located in a small NGO with limited resources and were not sure whether they could host an international conference. Because of my own professional beliefs and convictions, I was excited about organising the ICSDAP conference in Nepal as the conference would help to build and promote social work and social development there. I successfully persuaded them organise the conference by providing several professional incentives, as detailed below. I assured them that no financial expenses would be borne by their department as it was new and 50% of the conference profits, if realised, would be left with the department for its development and the other 50% would remain with the branch for its development. A written formal contract was not drawn up. I also assured them that the branch was not there just for the conference, but was keen to maintain a long term partnership and collaboration with them to help promote social work and social development education. After several consultations and email exchanges, the social work department and their colleagues agreed to host the conference. At no cost to the branch, I travelled to Kathmandu to attend preparatory meetings and delivered a lecture to social work students on their invitation, and also visited the conference venue.

South Korean colleagues agreed to host the conference in the future though not in 2008, but were happy to support the organisation of the conference in Kathmandu. Dr. Ick-Seop Lee invited me to visit his school in South Korea to speak to social work students in November 2007. I also recommended including Dr. Nikku, who travelled to Seoul to contribute to the seminar (and this overseas trip was one of the incentives for hosting the conference in Nepal). To Yonsei University School of Social Welfare students and staff members, I made presentations on two topics: Is there a need for community centres in the Asia-Pacific region and who can develop them?; and communities' informal care and welfare practices. It was also indirectly suggested that I consider short term teaching assignments at the Yonsei School. It was the president's role in the branch that created opportunities such as these for me. This opportunity also helped to further interact and plan with Dr. Nikku who with his

team assumed the main responsibility to host the ICSDAP second conference in Nepal with the necessary mentoring and support from the branch.

2st biennial conference of the ICSDAP

The main theme of the second biennial conference was *Social Development and Transition: Paths for Local and Global Partnerships*. Generally, the theme of the conference is selected by the host organisation in consultation with the branch, taking into consideration its own country's contexts and needs. I whole-heartedly supported this approach because organisers have to choose the theme that is relevant to them. In this case, socio-economic and political transition was an important issue for Nepal at that time and deliberating such an issue from a social development perspective was fitting. This conference was held from 25-28 November 2008, at Dhilikhel Lodge Resort, Kabre, near Kathmandu, Nepal. Keynote speakers included Mrs Medha Patker, a well known environmental activist from India and Professor Brij Mohan, Dean Emeritus, LSU School of Social Work, USA and founding Editor, *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare*, a well established Indian scholar from the USA, who delivered the Prof. David Cox International Social Work Lecture (Mohan, 2009). He met his travel costs himself. Many other distinguished scholars contributed to the success of the conference. Particularly, president of the ICSD, Prof. Frank Raymond's presence added grace to the conference and ensured ICSD's support for the branch activities. About 150 participants, including 69 international participants from 12 countries, deliberated in the conference on several critical issues such as poverty reduction, and post conflict reconstruction, climate change, disasters, human trafficking, HIVAIDS, etc. The above stated special issue of the journal was released in this conference and a free copy was distributed to most of the participants.

Along with the main conference, four additional important projects/programs were planned for the overall professional development purpose, particularly the promotion of social work and social development education and practice in Nepal and the region. First, at the time of planning, it was proposed with organisers to conduct a special workshop for all social work educators from different institutions/universities/departments in Nepal to discuss with them curriculum development options with a social development perspective. Initial enthusiasm to hold such a workshop gradually waned and organisers informed me that they were not keen

to organise this workshop as it was too difficult to get all staff members involved. There were no other schools of social work in Nepal like theirs. Towards building social work and social development profession in Nepal, I thought such a workshop would have been useful, but the cooperative and collaborative initiative has to come from within, not from the outside.

Second, in light of my experience of publishing articles in several journals and guest editing the journal mentioned earlier, I conceptualised and coordinated a Pre-Conference Symposium on Quality Enhancement of Social Work and Social Development Journals in the Asia-Pacific Region: the Role of editors and publishers. As the title of the symposium suggests, the main objective was to identify certain strategies to encourage quality writing, submissions and better dissemination of journals in the changing context of the Asia Pacific region. In some respects, it was a historic event for the branch as it brought together editors/managing editors of five reputed and well established journals, which are listed in the table 1 below, to constructively discuss a common purpose.

Table 1: Editors/managing editors of five journals

Prof. Karen Lyons, Editor-in-Chief, <i>International Social Work</i>
Prof. Brij Mohan, Editor-in-Chief, <i>Journal of Comparative Social Welfare</i>
Assistant Prof. Irene Ng, Managing Editor, Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development
Dr. Ben Hok-bun KU, a Managing Editor, <i>China Journal of Social Work</i> .
Prof. Frank Raymond, President ICSD, represented <i>Social Development Issues</i>
Prof. Ick-Seop Lee, <i>School of Social Welfare</i> , Yonsei University (on invitation).
Dr. Bala Raju Nikku, display coordinator and Head, Department of Social Work, Kadambari College of Science and Management, Kathmandu
Manohar Pawar, Coordinator of the symposium and President ICSD AP Branch

Apologies were received from: Prof. Murli Desai, Managing Editor, Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development; Prof. Mel Gray, Joint Editor, *Australian Social Work*; Prof. Joseph C. B. Leung, Editor, *Social Development Issues*; Prof. Carolyn Noble, Editor, Journal of Social Work; Prof. Angelina W. K. Yuen Editor-in-Chief, *China Journal of Social Work*.

Their deliberations highlighted issues relating to language, translation, lack of writing culture, requirements and expectations of different journals, the review process, the role of editors

and the competition from papers submitted from the global North. Several useful strategies included helping authors to develop conference papers to a publishable standard; presentations on writing for journals; editors become more directive in their feedback rather than simply rejecting; intensive writing workshops followed by sustained efforts at local levels; co-authoring with seasoned writers; regular writing-group meetings; academics co-authoring with practitioners; and improving the blind review process (see Pawar, 2015). Third, as I had observed in several conferences, local students were often left out, though the event was occurring in the midst of them. I proposed a preconference student forum to include them in the conference and to discuss with them the idea of social development so that they are engaged with the ICSDAP in their professional formative years. The organisers readily accepted the idea and organised the inaugural ICSDAP Pre conference students' forum. The main objectives of this forum were to: enhance awareness of social development needs and issues in the Asia-pacific region; dialogue and build sustainable relationship among students and scholars; and enable participants to develop vision for strengthening social development throughout the world. With the assistance of Dr. Venkat Pulla, I prepared an application to seek funds from the AusAid's International Seminar Support Scheme (ISSS) and through that fund we invited Dr. Venkat Pulla, President, Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice, Vice President, Australian Association of Social Workers and Convenor, International Social Work Interest Group, AASW, to deliver the inaugural keynote address and facilitate the formation of the forum at the conference. Followed by the keynote address, Dr. Pulla facilitated further discussion, established the student forum while the first student convener of the forum was elected (add name if you remember). Some students continued communicating with Dr. Pulla to seek further advice and guidance.

Fourth, to build a social work and social development library of the host organisation, ICSDAP initiated a book project with the assistance of Dr. Lynelle Osburn, a colleague of mine at Charles Sturt University. The project's main objectives were to provide access to those studying social work and social development; promote social work and social development education, research and practice in Nepal; and develop the social work and social development professions. By making an international appeal, the ICSDAP raised over 100 books for Department of Social Work. To recognise this contribution, Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management decided add ICSDAP to library's name.

Generating resources for the conference

Undoubtedly, these activities and achievements were not possible without developing an extensive international professional network and without generating financial and human resources. Several organisations and individuals contributed to the success of the conference. Those providing significant financial support included the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Yonsei University, the Lila Kirilik Memorial - Social Justice Fund and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Human Services Discipline Group, Charles Sturt University, Australia, Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, the Brown School of Social Work, Washington University, USA, the University of Hawaii, Hawaii, USA and International Seminar Support Scheme (ISSS), Aus Aid, Australia. Dr. Ick-Seop Lee, who was a great friend of ICSDAP, not only provided significant financial support, but also brought 22 staff members from his school. Including participants' registration fees, Aus \$ 38,935.288 was raised for the conference of which Aus \$20,672.25 was expended and the remaining Aus \$18843.96 was saved. We were also able to offer partial scholarships for a small number of participants. It was a huge relief that the conference did not burden the host organisation financially and as hoped the college significantly gained from this experience.

The second ICSDAP conference had several outcomes both for organisers and participants. As per the branch's verbal agreement with the host organisation, a half of saved money was left with the department for the purpose of further building the social work program in Nepal. For several reasons, the host organisation did not handover the remaining half of the conference savings to the ICSDAP branch, notwithstanding several requests over the years. In view of the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015 and its impact on the college, and the college's engagement in relief and rehabilitation work, the ICSDAP board, on compassionate grounds, decided to leave all conference savings with the college to facilitate their rehabilitation activities in local communities. The host organisation also developed substantial international linkages through the conference.

Immediately after the conference, with the help of Ms Pranita Bhushan, I used one day to collect field data on community-based forestry for my above mentioned book on community development in Asia and the Pacific.

Dr. Venkat Pulla continued links with the college through research and international field education activities by placing Australian students for field placements. In addition, Dr. Pulla used these professional networks to organise another international conference later on,

conducted research and published co-authored articles. Similarly, Dr. Jitti from Thammasat University organised student visits at the college and arranged a short term teaching assignment for Dr. Nikku at Thammasat University.

As a follow up of the Pre-Conference Symposium on Quality Enhancement of Social Work and Social Development Journals and to implement some of the strategies suggested, I prepared a proposal entitled ‘Knowledge Creation and Dissemination: An action research project to enhance writing for publication skills development’. It essentially involved conducting a two day workshop for academics to help them write and publish. Prof. Karen Lyons, Editor-in-Chief, International Social Work, who kindly hosted me for a short stay in London while I was on sabbatical, helped me further refine this proposal and also agreed to join the project to conduct these workshops, which required funding for air travel and related expenses. Any experienced writer and publisher could join this project to help others. When I presented this proposal to a senior professor at the London School of Economics and asked him to join, if it interested him, his comment was that publishing articles is a very capricious activity and he wished me best of luck with it.

Dr. Jitti, M. from Thammasat University invited me to trial this project/workshop at his school for their staff members and researchers. Since there was no funding for the air travel, Prof. Lyons was not able to join. However, I travelled at my own cost and trialled this workshop at Thammasat University. It was a rewarding experience and the workshop evaluation showed encouraging results. The Bangkok pilot attested to the potential and the significance of a project that aims to address one of the most important but neglected areas of international social work research—knowledge creation and dissemination about social work research and practice in the global South and beyond.

To widely disseminate the idea and the concept of the project, I wrote an article entitled ‘Action Research on Social Work Knowledge Creation and Dissemination from the Global South’, that also drew on workshop evaluation data, and was published in the *British Journal of Social Work*. This project invites the participation of all those interested in trialing it (see Pawar, 2015).

Prof. Mohan's Prof. David Cox International Social Work Lecture, 'The entropy of developmentalism: modernity's challenge to human dignity' was published in the *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare* (Mohan, 2009).

Academic collaboration and cooperation with Prof. Lyons also helped me to join the editorial board of the *International Social Work Journal* and receive an invitation to co-edit the Sage handbook of International Social Work published by Sage publications in 2012 (see Lyons, Hokenstad, Pawar, Huegler and Hall, 2012).

Based on all this experience, I also have conceptualised a new journal entitled 'Community and Social Development Journal' that fills a significant gap in the social work field in the global south. My persistent search over the years has found a good publisher, Sage Publications, which is willing to publish it as an official quarterly journal of the ICSDAP branch. If all goes well, the first issue of the journal will be published in March 2018.

Thoughts and efforts for the third ICSDAP conference

Due to my own ideological reasons and a good cause, we were keen to organise the third ICSDAP conference in Laos, though I had no direct contact with anyone there. It is a small land locked country and the promotion of social work and social development education is very much needed to enhance the well being of people there. Dr. Jitti, M., Vice president of the ICSDAP, encouraged me to pursue this idea and promised to pass on his contacts in Laos as he had some professional connections there. Dr. Jitti also tried unsuccessfully to organise some meetings. Several colleagues helped to establish contact in Laos and I sent an email to the president of the National University of Laos (NUL) and tried to contact dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. We did not receive any response from anyone from Laos, except Mr. Saychai Syladeth, Lecturer/Researcher, Department of Sociology, Social Development and Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, but at that time he was based in South Korea for his studies. Some colleagues advised that often people encounter three issues in organising an international conference in Laos. These are the centralised bureaucratic approval system may be difficult and time consuming; language; and some local people do not take responsibility to do things on their own, though they say 'yes' for everything.

We also thought of organising the conference in Cambodia as I had a contact with an INGO, Village Focus, Dr. Nee Meas, Country Director, but we were running short of time and looking for a reliable host. While we were preoccupied with searching for a host organisation, I received an email from Prof. Murlli Desai informing me that she has assumed the new position of Professor of International Social Welfare, Department of social Welfare, Seoul National University (SNU), Seoul, South Korea, and in that role one of her assignments is to contribute towards internationalisation of the Department and connect it to international social work professional associations. Further, the email inquired about ICSDAP current activities. This email was like ‘the creeper you are searching for in a jungle, tangles your feet’ (a saying in Kannada). I immediately suggested that there is an opportunity to host the ICSDAP and it might help to internationalise the department. Prof. Desai passed on my suggestion to Prof. Bong Joo Lee, chair of the international affairs committee of the Department of Social Welfare, who was favourable to the suggestion. After several clarifications and questions, and meetings at the Department, they agreed to host the conference.

3st biennial conference of the ICSDAP

Under the leadership of Prof. Bong Joo Lee and Dr. Joan Yoo, the third biennial conference of the ICSDAP was successfully held at Seoul National University, Seoul, 10-12 November 2010. In consultation with the ICSDAP, the theme chosen for the conference was “Vision for Social Development in the Globalised Asia: Commonality and Diversity”. Over 85 abstracts were submitted and more than 100 participants from over 15 countries registered for the conference. As Prof. Ross Chambers, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Charles Sturt University, Australia, was in South Korea for his own professional activities, I invited him to deliver a keynote speech at the conference, which he kindly did and as well as released my book entitled, *Social Development: Critical themes and perspectives*, published by Routledge in 2010 (Pawar, 2010). This strategy also helped to save the international travel costs of one keynote speaker. The second Keynote Speech and Prof. David Cox International Social Work lecture was delivered by Dr. Meas Nee, Village Focus Director, Cambodia, who I had earlier collaborated with to implement an international research project. The third Keynote Speech was delivered by Prof. Neung Hoo Park, Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Kyunggi University, South Korea. The presence of the ICSD President, Prof. Barbara Shank was great support for the conference. In six concurrent sessions, participants presented papers on various social development issues such as poverty, gender, children, elderly, human

trafficking, community development, public health, social work education, etc. In addition, there were several poster presentations. Two tours were organised for participants as well.

As part of the conference, with the support of UNESCO, I had organised a special workshop on water and social policy in which, Mr. Sachin Warghade from India, Dr. Jitti M. from Thailand, Dr. Balaraju Nikku from Nepal, and myself presented papers on various aspects of water and some in specific country contexts.

Resources to organise the conference were mobilised from multiple sources. Financial contributions came from the ICSD, Charles Sturt University, SNU, Ministry of health and Welfare, and registration fees. In kind contributions came from both local and international organising committees. Some participants also received partial support to attend the conference. On the whole, it was a very well organised conference by one of the top ranked and leading universities in South Korea.

The conference had several clear outcomes and led to concrete follow up activities. First, the ICSDAP conference contributed to internationalising the Department of Social Welfare, SNU, as there were participants from nearly 20 countries. Second, with the help of the Ministry's funding support, Prof. Bong Joo Lee and Dr. Joan Yoo completed a multi country poverty study by involving a few international participants.

Some ground work had already occurred to organise the fourth biennial conference (details provided below) and we had received a letter of intent from the Indonesian professional social work associations and the ministry of welfare to host the 4th conference in 2012 in Indonesia. Both the Board and General Assembly approved this proposal and preparation for the next conference began.

To consider the publication of conference papers in an edited book form and/or a special issue of a relevant journal, a publication committee consisting of Prof. Bong Joo Lee (Korea), Prof. Vidya Rao (India), and Dr. Bala Raju Nikku (Nepal) was constituted. Similarly, as some participants suggested that ICSDAP play the role of advocating for policy changes at the macro level, the assembly appointed an Advocacy committee consisting of Professor Jitti M. (Thailand), Prof. Vidya Rao (India), Prof. Bong Joo Lee (Korea) and Prof. Juni Thamrin Sarkawi (Indonesia), and Dr. Troy Whitford (Australia) as an advisor to the committee to

develop some advocacy strategies.

Partly drawing on the water and social policy workshop and by undertaking further research, I prepared a manuscript on water and social policy to be published by the UNESCO's publication division. Thanks are due to Dr. Shahbaz Khan, Prof of Hydrology and Chief of the Water and Sustainable Development Section, who was instrumental in facilitating the project.

As UNESCO lost a publication grant, this publication plan did not materialise. Finally, Palgrave Macmillan commissioned this book under their Palgrave Pivot program and after the peer review and further revisions to the manuscript, published it in 2014 (see Pawar, 2014). To some extent the book has the potential to play the role of policy advocacy for universal access to water.

I initiated the process of electing a new board in July 2010 and invited members to get ready for it. As the current ICSDAP board completed its first term, by discussing in the ICSDAP Board meeting and in the General Assembly, a nominating committee (Dr. Joan Yoo, SNU and Seoul National University, and Irene Hyojung Kwon, Seoul Welfare Foundation) were appointed to elect the new board. As I completed my term I was very willing to step down and open up the opportunity for other colleagues to lead the organisation, hoping that Dr. Jitti, M. would agree to be nominated for the role of president. I was prepared to support the branch by remaining outside the board. Contrary to my hope, I was asked to re-contest and told if I withdrew at this stage, the progress of the branch may be hampered. Having contributed to building the branch thus far, I accepted my colleagues' nomination for one more term, though I really wanted someone else to fill in. The nominating committee and the returning Officer, Prof. David Hollister helped to elect the following new board.

President: Prof. Manohar Pawar, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Vice President: Prof. Bong Joo Lee Seoul Naton.University, South Korea

Secretary: Dr. Ernest Chui, Hong Kong

Treasurer: Dr. Miyuki Inaba, Japan

Members at Large:

Ms Yolanda Ealdama , Uni. of the Philippines, Philippines;

Mr.W. Gunawardane, Com.Dev. & Training Institute, Sri Lanka, M. M. Neaz Makdum. (Masum), Justice for Social Dev. Found. Bangladesh; Mr.Siroj Sirojudin, S. H. State Islamic University, Indonesia; Prof. D. Sungkawan Thammasat University Thailand
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The conference organisers had maintained a clear account of the conference and submitted the expenditure report which indicated that they were able to save \$1893, which can be used for future branch activities. This money is in the ICSDAP conference account in South Korea, that being the only branch account we have. Whenever I requested Prof. Bong Joo Lee, Prof. Lee promptly replied showing his willingness to transfer the money to an appropriate suggested account for future branch activities. I have resisted using this money for the subsequent two conferences as it may be needed for some branch activities where no funding is available. As it was we were able to mobilise alternative funding.

Thoughts and efforts for the fourth ICSDAP conference

While attending the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development in June 2010, I was at a book counter and so pleased to see Prof. James Midgley, Harry & Riva Specht Professor, School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, USA, who introduced to me to Mr. Sirojudin Abbas and suggested that Mr. Sirojudin would be good contact person for the next ICSDAP conference.. After an initial conversation, on Prof. Midgley's initiative, we made time to meet together at a hotel. In the meeting, I was informed that Indonesia was keen to host the next ICSDAP conference in 2012 and Mr. Sirojudin was willing to undertake the necessary ground work for that and Prof. Midgely would be happy to come for the conference and help us. After the conference, I followed it up with Mr. Sirojudin, who liaised with the Ministry of Social Affairs and several professional bodies and established a local organising committee, which formally submitted a letter of intent to organise the ICSDAP conference in 2012. As stated above, this was approved in the board meeting and General Assembly in 2010 in Seoul. I had also met another person (president of the Free Trade Union Development Centre) in the conference from Sri Lanka, who later emailed expressing interest in organising an ICSDAP conference in Sri Lanka. Although I responded, I did not follow up this contact as we had made a significant progress with Indonesia.

The local organising committee invited ICSDAP board members to participate in a planning and preparatory meeting in Indonesia in October 2011 as part of the ASEAN Social Welfare Conference. Four ICSDAP board members presented papers in the ASEAN conference and attended the planning meeting, in which detailed plans for the conference, including keynote speakers, were considered. Travel support was provided to these members with an expectation/condition that they will attend the ICSDAP conference. Followed by this meeting, as per Mr. Sirojudin's advice, I provided further guidance and support to the local organising committee through emails. Initially, the Indonesian Social Work Consortium had formed the local organising committee and was coordinating with several agencies to organise the conference. Later, the Ministry of Social Affairs took significant interest and the main responsibility for hosting the conference, though the local organising committee continued to play their role and Bandung College of Social Welfare assumed the administrative responsibility for the conference.

While the conference preparations were in progress, Mr. Sirojudin, as a member at large of the ICSDAP, made a written submission to the board suggesting we introduce two ICSDAP Presidential Awards – one for a senior scholar and another for an emerging scholar- to recognize individuals who have demonstrated a significant contribution to shaping the social development school of thought in social work/social welfare education, policy and practice as evidenced by their scholarly work. Any ICSD-AP member may nominate individuals for these awards and ICSD board will take the final decision to present them at biennial conferences. Dr. David Androff also contributed to the organisation of this conference. Organisers were also encouraged to continue the tradition of the ICSDAP student forum.

Resources and support for the conference were mobilised from several sources. The main hosts of the conference were the Ministry of Social Affairs, Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian Social Work Consortium, which was chaired by Mr. Toto Utomo, secretary general of the Indonesian ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry channelled its funds through the Bandung School of Social Welfare, which contracted some of the activities to a private event-organizer. Other supportive organisations included: the Indonesian Association of Social Workers, the Indonesian Association of Social Work Education, the Indonesian National Council on Social Welfare, Bandung School of Social Welfare, University of Indonesia and the State Islamic University, Yogyakarta. Several overseas universities also formally supported the meeting. They were Charles Sturt University, Australia, School of

Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, Centre for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis and School of Social Work, McGill University, Canada and the Asia-Pacific Association of Social Work Education (APASWE).

4st biennial conference of the ICSDAP

Before the conference began, I attended a press conference with the Honourable Minister of Social Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, Dr. Salim Segaf Al-Jufri, in Jakarta on 25 June 2012, and I believe it had a good media coverage. This was followed by the 4th ICSD-AP conference which was successfully held at the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel in the City of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 27 -30 June 2012. The main theme of conference was “*Envisioning New Social Development Strategies Beyond Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*,” which was timely as there was considerable debate in national and international communities about the future of MDGs. The conference had attracted over 200 abstracts, of which 140 were accepted following the peer review process and finally 112 papers were presented at the conference representing 21 countries beyond the Asia Pacific region. Over 300 participants attended the conference and majority of them came from 34 Schools of Social Work, several government organizations, National/International NGOs, research institutes and religious organizations in Indonesia. Cutting across the main theme of the conference, several papers on poverty, education, gender, child and youth welfare, health, environmental sustainability, social work and social policy were presented.

Followed by the main keynote speech on the limits and challenges of achieving MDGs, by Prof. James Midgley, there were six plenary presentations. One of the plenary sessions was Prof. David Cox international social work lecture on human right approaches to global justice by Prof. Linda Briskman from Curtin University, Australia. Prof. James Lee from Hong Kong Polytechnic University presented his expert views on housing and asset-based social policy. The other four plenary sessions included the Indonesian President Special Envoy for MDGs; Dr. Makmur Sunusi from the Ministry of Social Affairs; Prof. Haryono Suyono, chairman of the Indonesian National Council on Social Welfare; and Dr. Yuniyanti Chuzaifah, chairwoman of the Indonesian National Commission of Anti-Violence Against Women. The presence of the ICSD president is important on these occasions while Prof. Barbara Shank was there to welcome, support and thank.

At the ICSD-AP conference dinner, the ICSD-AP President, Prof. Manohar Pawar and Dr. Salim Segaf Al-Jufri, the Minister of Social Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, presented the first ICSDAP Presidential Senior Scholar award to Prof. James Midgley in recognition of his most outstanding contribution to the advancement of social development school of thought in social work and social welfare research, education and practice in the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

As part of the conference, a student forum consisting of several discussion sessions was organised for social work students at the State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, where about 45 students from about 20 schools of social work in Indonesia participated. One of the sessions was facilitated by Dr. Nilan Yu, a social work educator from University of South Australia.

Inviting select participants, an evening event was organised at the State Islamic University to discuss social work education and curriculum issues for the benefit of local social work programs.

In addition three field visits and a cultural program were organised as follows: Conditional Cash Transfers Program, Pos Daya (family-based social development program), a women empowerment center, and visits to temples and a Ramayana dance.

The conference had several tangible and intangible outcomes and follow up activities. As the Social Affairs Ministry was involved in organising the conference, the conference had a high profile and attracted some media attention, which raised awareness of MDGs and the ICSDAP. If I understood correctly, among other things, the conference provided a platform for the Minister to make a case for the government granting more funding to the Ministry. This was my first opportunity to meet the Minister in person in his office, to sit with him in a press conference, while I sat next to him in the conference dinner. During the dinner, the minister expressed an interest in having more collaboration with universities to enhance training and education capacities of their staff members.

When I travelled to attend the preparatory meeting in Jakarta, Mr. Arif Rohman, a Ministry official, who I did not know, met me in the ASEAN Social Welfare conference and expressed interest undertaking PhD study under my supervision. Mr Arif followed it up later and

became my full time student at Charles Sturt University (CSU). To explore research and training collaborative activities with CSU, Australia, three delegations have visited CSU and they are in the process of developing and signing a memorandum of understanding.

The organisers of the conference have put together conference proceedings consisting of papers and abstracts, which may be used as sources of reference material for citations and references. This compilation is important because there is a general dearth of social work/social welfare/social development literature in Indonesia.

Since the conceptualisation of the conference theme, Prof. James Midgely and I had contemplated bringing out an edited volume on future directions in social development. During my sabbatical, I visited Prof. Midgely at University California, Berkeley and further worked on this proposal. We also made a plenary presentation on the book at the 19th ICSD conference in Singapore in 2015. Although the idea for the book originated from the 4th ICSDAP conference, it underwent some revisions due to publishers' feedback and drew on other contributors due to practical reasons. This joint edited book, *Future Directions in Social Development*, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017 (Midgely and Pawar, 2017).

In recognition of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Republic of Indonesia contribution to the ICSDAP and the conference I invited the president of the ICSD, Prof Barbara Shank, to offer free ICSD membership to the Ministry for a year, which Prof. Shank generously did.

In respect of the financial aspects of the conference, the acting secretary's report indicated that most of the funding was from the Ministry of Social Affairs, administered through the Bandung School of Social Welfare, which might have provided a financial report to the government, but about which the branch has no information. The Indonesian Social Work Consortium managed only the funds from registration fees and sponsorship, which was less than US \$ 6000 which was used to pay for expenses relating to the website, student forum and scholarships to local and international participants. Despite my request, neither the branch nor I received an income and expenditure statement from the organisers.

Due to health reasons, Dr. Ernest Chew resigned from the position of the Secretary of the ICSDAP. The resignation was approved in the board meeting and the board appreciated Dr. Ernest's contribution to the branch. The board and general assembly approved the

appointment of Mr. Sirojudin as the acting secretary of the branch. In June 2013, Prof Decha S and Dr. Miyuki Inaba as nominating committee members helped to formally elect Mr. Sirojudin as the secretary of the ICSDAP branch.

Although unconnected to the 4th conference, in 2012, a successful application was made to gain acceptance of the ICSDAP profile as a NGO recognised by the UN Dept of Economic and Social Affairs Civil Society. Through this recognition, I participated as an observer in the Third Session of the Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons, 21 to 24 August 2012 at the United Nations North Lawn Building (NLB) in New York.

Thoughts and efforts for the fifth ICSDAP conference

Unlike the fourth ICSDAP conference, we did not have a ready host for the fifth one and were actively looking for a willing host. In August 2013, Dr. Sirojudin passed on contact details of Prof. Shin Yamada, Hiroshima Shudo University, Hiroshima, Japan and I had a few email exchanges to explore the possibility of organising the conference in Japan, but it did not lead any further. Dr. Sirojudin also tried to help me establish contact with The University Utara, as they have a social development program. With the Malaysian contact we did not make progress. During the world social work conference in 2014, in consultation with Prof. Bong Joo Lee, Vice President ICSDAP, we had some discussion with Dr. Nikku and a few staff members of Nepal School of Social Work and they were very keen to host the conference for a second time so that they can clear their pending payment to the ICSDAP. Despite the history of broken trust with them, in good faith, dialogue continued to explore the possibility of organising the conference in Nepal. In view of their contractual conditions and complications, the ICSD advised us not to enter into any contract with them. Given their history with the ICSDAP, any such contracts may not be in the best interests of the ICSDAP.

While this communication was occurring, I received an email from the Department of Social Work, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan, West Bengal, India that they were organising a national seminar on Human Development and Sustainability: Challenges and Strategies for Rural India. I immediately recalled that Prof. Prasant Ghosh in the ICSDAP first conference had informally expressed to me that their department would be willing to host the ICSDAP conference in the future. I wrote Prof. Ghosh proposing the possibilities converting their seminar from a national to an international focus and organising it with the ICSDAP branch.

After some discussion and consultation with their faculty and university officials, they agreed to host the fifth ICSDAP conference. Prof. Prasant Ghosh was the director of the seminar, Prof Asok Kumar Sarkar was the organising secretary and I liaised with both them and helped to develop the conference program.

Financial and in kind resources for the conference were mobilised by the organisers and ICSDAP branch. Financial contributions of about \$6000 came from participants' registration fees, support by Charles Sturt University and ActionAid, Kolkata.

5st biennial conference of the ICSDAP

The 5st biennial conference of the ICSDAP was hosted by the the Department of Social Work, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan, West Bengal, India, January 16-18, 2015, in collaboration with Charles Sturt University, Australia and Action Aid, Kolkata. The main theme of the conference was “Human Development and Sustainability: Challenges and Strategies for the Asian Century”. The conference was organised by using the department facilities on the university campus in a rural setting. Sriniketan, the venue of the conference was unique as it has been associated with Nobel Laureate Ravindranath Tagore, who had initiated rural development and environmental sustainability activities in the early 20th century. Of the 126 abstracts received, 72 were selected to present on a range of developmental topics relating to indigenous people, rural areas, sustainability, poverty, gender, children, health, social work education, and development in 15 concurrent sessions, addressing the main theme of the conference. Altogether over 80 participants registered, including students, while more than 100 people attended the seminar. Participants from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Singapore and USA made the seminar truly international.

Following the inaugural address by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sushanta Dattagupta, Prof, Achin Chakraborty, director of the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, in his keynote address identified a synthesis of views between human and sustainable development. The President of the ICSD, Prof. Barbara Shank, while welcoming the delegates, released my new book, *Social and Community Development Practice*, published by Sage Publications in 2015 (Pawar, 2015). Other plenary presentations included *Asian Sustainable Development* by Prof. A. K. Ghosh, Slum rehabilitation by S. K. Garain and the Prof David Cox international Social Work lecture by Prof. P. R. Balgopal.

I conferred the second ICSDAP Presidential Senior Scholar award on Prof. Tan Ngho Tiong, Professor and Dean, School of Human Development and Social Services, SIM University, Singapore, in recognition of his most outstanding contribution to the advancement of social development school of thought in social work and social welfare research, education and practice in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Prof. Tiong spoke on social leadership and sustainable development. In another plenary session, I invited Prof. Balgopal to join me in presenting the first ICSDAP Presidential award to Mrs Urmi Basu, Founder, and Executive Director, New Light, for her distinguished social development practice. Mrs Urmi Basu has made an outstanding contribution to social development and the social welfare of children and women in difficult circumstances in Kolkata and beyond.

All cultural activities at the conference were conducted by students of the department of social work and their performance was outstanding. For select participants, a visit to AmarKutir, where handcrafts were made by forming a kind of cooperative society, was arranged, though it was not part of the formal program.

As per the branch standing orders, the board meeting and general assembly were organised, though I was the only member present from the board. Prof. Shank, Prof. Tiong, Prof. Ghosh and Prof. Sarkar joined the meetings on invitation. Among other things, low level participation of the board members, expiry the current term of board members and the appointment of the nominating committee to elect the next board were discussed. Dr. Sirojudin was appointed as a nominating committee member to conduct elections.

Several activities and outcomes followed the fifth ICSDAP conference. I believe all participants significantly benefited from the conference. Prof. Tiong and Prof. Ghosh organised conference bags from AmarKutir for the 19th ICSD symposium which was held in Singapore. It was a mutually beneficial commercial activity for the ICSD and Amar Kutir society. A few staff members and students were given partial scholarships to attend the 19th ICSD symposium in Singapore. As part of this arrangement, Shantiniketan students presented an outstanding cultural program at the symposium.

By further working on a part of proceedings and by mobilising publication grants, Prof. Asok Kumar has put together a co-edited book, *Human Development and Sustainability: Challenges and Strategies*, to be published by Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi.

Dr. Sirojudin, a nominating committee member called for nominations to elect a new ICSDAP board. As president of the ICSDAP, I had communicated to all branch members that a new board needs to be elected and to take interest in the board and ICSDAP activities. Despite this early communication and efforts of Dr. Sirojudin, no nominations were received. We handpicked some members and nominated them for the elections. I was very keen to relinquish my role as it is important to pass on this opportunity to others. As no one came forward, I was again nominated for the president's position. No nominations came for the treasurer's and two members at large positions. In July 2015, the new board was elected as follows and it was announced in 19th ICSD symposium.

President: Prof. Manohar Pawar, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Vice President: Prof. Asok Kumar Sarkar, Visva-Bharati

Secretary: Dr. Sirojudin A. Indonesia

Treasurer: vacant

Members at Large:

Prof. Swapan Garain, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Prof. Miyuki Inaba, Kyushu University, Japan

Mr. Habibur Rahman, The People's University, Bangladesh

Two members at large - vacant

The conference organisers submitted an income and expenditure statement, which indicated that neither a profit nor loss was made. It appears, there was a small deficit, but the organisers indicated that they would take care of it.

Although I was in a winding up mode from the ICSDAP, the election for the third term again engaged me in finding a host for the sixth conference of the ICSDAP.

Thoughts and efforts for the sixth ICSDAP conference

As there was some interest in organising the conference in Malaysia, Prof. Tan Ngho Tiong tried some contacts in Sarawak to help me organise the conference there. But at that point of time further progress was not possible. In the 19th ICSD symposium, I met Prof. Dr. Ismail Baba, School of Social Development, University Utara, and asked him to consider hosting

ICSDAP conference in Malaysia. Our member at large, Mr. Habibur Rahman also discussed with Prof. Baba to see whether they can host a conference and asked me to contact him. I also made some telephone calls to directly discuss this with Prof. Baba. The School of Social Development of University of Utara had already announced their second social development conference and they asked ICSDAP to sponsor it. Like previous conferences, the ICSDAP was keen to be the main organiser of the conference rather than just sponsoring it. Since they were well advanced with organising their conference, I thought that the chances of organising the conference with them were minimal, though there was still potential to hold a conference with them in the future.

Some time back, Dr. Sarath Gamlath, an old acquaintance of mine, had expressed interest in organising the ICSDAP conference in Sri Lanka and I contacted him to explore that possibility. Dr. Gamlath discussed this matter with their Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya. In my conversations, I had promised them that ICSDAP would help to mobilise some funds for initial expenses, but that the event needed to be self managed based on registration fees with any savings to be equally shared between their department and the ICSDAP. After several consultations, the head of the Department, Dr. Abey Rathnayake, wrote to me expressing interest in organising the conference at their university. The ICSDAP board approved their proposal to organise the sixth ICSDAP conference in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Through several skype meetings and discussions preparation occurred and the conference was organised.

Financial and human resources for the conference were mobilised by approaching several supporters of the ICSDAP. As we agreed to organise a special workshop for research purposes, my colleague Dr. Troy Whitford provided A\$2000 for the conference. Prof Goutham Menon from the University of Nevada, Reno, USA, arranged to transfer US\$500. The School of Social Work, National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka, contributed SLRs.30,000. In kind contributions came from University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and Charles Sturt University, Australia. Dr. Rathnayake and Dr. Gamlath approached the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare, Sri Lanka, which agreed to support the conference. For some participants, conference registration fees were reduced. The organising committee members and the student community also contributed to the organisation of the conference.

An unexpected development- A new role

While we were engaged in preparing for the 6th ICSDAP conference, unexpectedly, I received an email in February 2016, from the ICSD Secretary General, Prof. Goutham Menon suggesting that they would like to nominate my name for the position of president of the ICSD and they were optimistic about me accepting it. My immediate thought was – “it is not for me” -, particularly when I was in a winding-up mode from the ICSDAP. I drafted a declining letter and slept on it for a few days. My response to Prof. Menon was as follows:

...At this stage of my life with a number of commitments, I am not sure whether I should take this role. Let me consult with my colleagues and see what kind of support is there. I also feel that there are better people to lead this organisation...

And his response was:

I understand the feeling. But I would still like to push you to take on the task. I am really wanting the organization to be inclusive and not be a North American focused one, when most of SD work is being done outside of the US. You will make a great president of ICSD. We are all there to help.

Later I thought, it is not just about me becoming the president of the ICSD, but wondered, whether there was any public good to be achieved through that process? I consulted my colleagues and university to see what their thoughts are on this proposal. Although they said, the ultimate decision rests with me, they were happy to support the proposal, including my university, if I decide to allow my name to go forward as a nominee. I discovered that my good friend and colleague, Prof. Vijayan Pillai was also nominated for the same position. Both of us offered to withdraw and support each other, but Prof. Pillai was successful in withdrawing. Finally, ICSD members have unanimously voted me for the president-elect position of the ICSD in April 2016, and I am looking forward to assuming this role in July 2017 and working with ICSD colleagues across the globe.

6th biennial conference of the ICSDAP

Keeping this development in the background, I continued to work with the host organisation for the 6th biennial conference of the ICSDAP. Hosted by the Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya, under the leadership of Dr. Rathnayake and Dr. Gamlath, it was held from 29 September to 1 October, 2016, in Kandy, Sri Lanka. The main theme of the conference was “Social Work - Social Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. The prevailing local and global socio-economic and political contexts made the

theme of the conference compelling and more so because the University of Peradeniya's sociology department was initiating a new social work and social development program.

The conference attracted over 100 abstracts, which were reviewed by several scholars including, Dr. Galmlath, Prof. Asok Sarkar, Dr. Rathnayake and myself, and only 79 abstracts were selected for presentation. The conference was attended by 274 registered participants. Following the ICSDAP president's welcome address, the conference was inaugurated by the honourable Minister, Mr. Dissanayake, Minister of Social Empowerment and Welfare, Sri Lanka, and graced by Prof. Upul Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya and other dignitaries. The president of the ICSDAP invited the honourable minister and other dignitaries to join him in conferring the third ICSDAP Presidential Distinguished Senior Scholar award on Prof. Vijayan K. Pillai, School of Social Work, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, USA and Editor, Social Development Issues, in recognition of his most outstanding contribution to the advancement of social development school of thought in social work and social welfare research, education and practice in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The second ICSDAP Presidential Distinguished Practitioner award was conferred on Mr. Ganesh Velautham, founder of the Shivan Foundation and Shivan New Labour Union, and Reverend Pastor Kumar Rasiah, Child Rights Executive Director for Fridsro, for their outstanding contribution to welfare and social development of children and communities in Sri Lanka.

The first keynote address on 'social development – a search for conceptual linkages' by Prof. Vijayan K. Pillai was outstanding and the second keynote address delivered as Prof. David Cox International Social Work Lecture on 'Divineguma – Poverty alleviation Program in Sri Lanka' by Mr. M. Ramamoorthy, Director (Planning), Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare, Sri Lanka, was equally impressive. In 19 concurrent sessions, several papers on a range of topics such as environment and social development, SDGs, poverty, gender and development, health and social work, social policy and NGOs were presented, including in Sinhalese and Tamil languages. In addition, a focused workshop on socio-political research and assessment for INGOs/NGOs was led by Dr. Troy Whitford and Dr Henry Pruncun. ICSD President Prof. Barbara Shank and Secretary General, Prof. Goutham Menon were there to support the conference and branch activities.

Encouraged by the ICSDAP Nepal book project, a similar book project was initiated with the help of Dr. Lynelle Osburn to mobilise books for the social work program at University of Peradeniya. Participants have generously contributed 15 books to the Department of Sociology to build their social work library. I hope others will join in further building it.

Financially, the conference was organised in a responsible way, meeting all its costs within its budget and a small savings was achieved (about US\$480) to further support the activities of the social work program and the branch.

A few planned activities did not materialise. The UNDP Country Director, Mr. Mr. Joern Soerensen, in the last minute, without any notice, withdrew his commitment to deliver a keynote address. A suggested social work curriculum workshop and ICSDAP student forum did not occur, though a large number of student volunteers participated in the conference. Originally, it was planned to hold the conference on the University of Peradeniya campus, but due to logistical reasons the venue moved to the Oak-Ray Regency Hotel in Kandy.

Several outcomes and follow up activities are expected from the sixth ICSDAP conference. The conference has contributed towards establishing social work and social development program at University of Peradeniya. The department of sociology has expanded its international linkages and collaborative activities, and is contemplating to establish a social development research centre and ongoing link with the ICSD. The department may also gain additional research projects from the Ministry. The book project may help increase the collection of social work books. Depending upon the quality and quantity of papers presented at the conference, an edited book and or a special issue of the journal may be possible. As it is the first year of the implementation of SDGs, the conference contributed to creating an enabling environment towards achieving SDGs. More members from Sri Lanka may join the ICSD as historically more members have joined from the country where conferences were held.

Reflections and forereflections

Reflective recounting of ICSDAP activities and outcomes over a period of 12 years is a demanding and overwhelming exercise. Readers and members may feel that most of the ICSDAP activities were preoccupied with finding a host and organising biennial conferences. There are certainly both tangible and intangible outputs and outcomes. What purpose do these

conferences achieve? Is it worth doing it? How do these conferences differ from other conferences? How does it help ICSD vision and mission? How does it help social development thinkers and practitioners? These and similar questions need to be critically reflected to forereflect about the ICSDAP in the coming years. My reflections may not address all these questions in a comprehensive way, but may facilitate similar reflections by other social development scholars. Nevertheless, I have organised my reflections in terms of admissions, weaknesses and strengths.

Admissions

I would like to sincerely express my deep sense of gratitude to all international colleagues, whether members of ICSD or not, for trusting me and joining hands with ICSDAP to work together as a wonderful team to organise all the above listed activities and outputs and outcomes. Hundreds of colleagues in many countries have contributed to the existence and success of the ICSDAP. It is not an individual's work. Without cooperation, collaboration and team work, ICSDAP, for that matter any entity, cannot exist. So, I am indebted to all those colleagues and organisations, who have helped me and the ICSDAP.

I often felt that there are better qualified, talented and capable professionals to lead the ICSDAP. Thus the constant question is, am I doing the right thing and doing enough? I have learnt to do things in my own way. Initially, I tried to imitate Prof. Frank Raymond and tried to communicate regularly to ICSDAP members through emails. In the later years, I have not been able to do so. Compared to every previous year, I have found relatively less time for my work with the ICSDAP due to other increasing professional commitments. However, I have not compromised my commitment to organising biennial ICSDAP conferences, despite many challenges. Although I have sacrificed a lot of my own time for the ICSDAP, I always felt that I need to be more systematic and organised in building this branch.

In some respects, I am not sure, whether I have failed and have been unsuccessful in developing a good or better team around ICSDAP, which will participate more and continue branch activities. I would have liked to see more participation of members and handover the branch leadership to others and that did not happen. Did I do anything wrong? Did I fail to inspire and lead the team? Did I fail to develop a succession plan?

Weaknesses

I have seen diminishing volunteerism in both professional and community organisations. Whenever elections are called for, generally people are not willing to come forward to take responsibilities voluntarily. This seems to be a common trend. I have experienced this thrice when we called for ICSDAP elections. In the third term, the treasurer's position and two members at large positions were not filled. There is no point in pushing people, volunteering has to come from within. Generally, there seems to be reduced interest in assuming responsibilities in professional bodies or similar organisations. Why? Is it not valued in contemporary times? Have people become more self-centred? Have paid work pressures squeezed out volunteerism?

Some people raise their hands, get elected and then absolutely disappear from the scene. Sometimes people push other to get elected with a promise that they help them, but when the actual help is needed they are not there. This trend is a serious weakness in any organisation. I did experience and observe it in my two and half terms with the branch. It is important to address this weakness to improve the branch functioning.

Most of the time, the branch functioned without any money. The branch does not have its own account. Although for every conference we effectively mobilised resources, not having adequate budget allocation for the branch activity limited its functioning. Whenever a request was made, the ICSD did transfer money to the conference organiser. As President of the ICSDAP, I remained arms length from financial matters of the branch, which perhaps was my weakness. Six conferences were organised, but I did not use a single cent from the branch, except some basic in-kind local hospitality arranged by organisers. Financial literacy and management skills are very important for any organisation and I did not have that. The branch earned some money from conference organising, but lost it as a formal contract was not drawn and trusted professionals who entered into verbal agreements did not keep their word.

It is difficult to attract participants from developing countries generally, due to cost and differences in currency exchange rates. Due to the financial situation of the branch, often it was not possible to provide adequate scholarships for international participants. It is important to look at alternative strategies to overcome this hurdle (Moore and Pawar, 2007).

The membership of the organisation keeps fluctuating and it has implications for the strength of the branch. Sometimes, ICSDAP members were as low as 10 to 12 and sometimes over 20. Not only ordinary members, but even board members do not renew their membership. This is an important but easily rectifiable problem.

Strengths

Effective Functioning of organisations does not need a large number of people. But a small number of committed people are certainly needed to keep the organisation alive and thriving. The ICSDAP is a good example of that, I think. Although in the elections of the ICSDAP board there was inadequate participation, when organising conferences we did come together to address specific tasks, irrespective of whether we are members of ICSD or not. There are committed professionals who are keen to support the cause of the ICSD. The six ICSDAP conferences and their outcomes clearly demonstrate this.

Not having money, or adequate money, is often used as a justification for not doing anything. Our ICSDAP experience demonstrates that without money a lot can be achieved. Not having money is no reason for not doing anything, or not doing something. By employing our community development knowledge and skills, we were able to develop task oriented teams and mobilise financial and human resources to conduct branch activities, mostly conferences. Maintaining the ability to mobilise resources is the perennial strength of the branch and that ability needs to be further strengthened.

Each member can contribute innovative ideas and help build the branch. Although some members were not able to come to conferences, they contributed to them by reviewing abstracts. Though it appears a small task in the whole scheme of things, every activity counts in building the branch. For example, Dr. Sirojudin helped to introduce ICSDAP presidential awards. Dr. Osburn helped to develop the library project. Prof. Hagiwara and Prof. Midgley introduced right contacts. Such contributions make for a worthy 12 years track record for the ICSDAP.

The current level of readily available information and communication technology (ICT) is a great strength for organising ICSDAP activities in any part of the Asia Pacific region. Access

to emails, Skype and similar technologies can be employed to conduct the branch activities effectively. I have significantly used these means to organise all six conferences.

During my terms at the branch, all ICSD presidents, Prof. Khinduka, Prof. Raymond, Prof. Shank, and other ICSD board members, particularly, Prof. Hollister provided significant support. They are big people with big responsibilities, yet they assumed significant roles in the ICSD. There are many pioneers in the ICSD, their work and their contributions are real strengths that should really inspire us to do more.

Although I would have liked to see a greater degree of participation from all members and board members, I focused on the task and worked with the people who participated. Some people promised that they would help, but some of them disappeared when help was needed. One cannot blame them. Once you take the decision and assume roles, it is your responsibility and should be committed to it. There is no point in focusing on what is not there or spending energy on negative things. With a team, I focused on what can be done or what I believed what can be done. This approach has given me reasonable outputs and outcomes for the branch.

While delivering voluntary services and contributing to professional development, I also gained in my own personal and professional development. Not that one consciously takes these positions to gain in this way, but my experience demonstrates that offering voluntary services and contributing to professional development serendipitously helps to develop one-self, and I did. This professional voluntary activity can be a legitimate activity of one's own professional job. In most universities, contributing to communities and professional development is one of the important performance indicators/job descriptions or expected standards in academic jobs. My engagement with ICSDAP was an officially approved outside professional activity. So, it counted in my job and contributed to my development while achieving professional and public good.

Foreflections

In my earlier work, I coined the words foreflect and foreflections to refer to reflections about the future (Pawar, 2015). After serving the branch for 12 years and at the time of leaving it to assume the role of the ICSD president, it is crucial to foreflect on how and where the branch

should advance in the future. Such forereflections may have implications for the other ICSD branches as well.

Drawing on the experience of leading the branch for 12 years, I believe, despite some weaknesses, it should focus on the strengths discussed above. Each one of these strengths should help the branch go from strength to strength. Identifying committed people, skilfully mobilising resources, encouraging and recognising every member's contribution, small or big, using ICT, finding inspiration from ICSD pioneers' work, focusing on the positives and what one believes in and synthesising ICSDAP activity in one's job, to the extent possible, should help advance the branch further.

There are practical difficulties in enhancing the participation of colleagues from developing countries, where currency exchange rates are unequal, in international conferences. Often ICSD board members and others were not able to attend the ICSDAP branch conference for this reason. When and if practical, the branch may encourage small local level activities at the school or provincial/regional levels within a country. Further brain storming is needed to explore this idea.

Given the difficulties in finding host organisations, should the branch biennial activities continue? The future branch board should contemplate this question and take its own decision. My experience suggests that despite difficulties, it can be done. If it helps to achieve the philosophy and purpose of the ICSD, I would encourage the future board to continue this practice.

To reduce the cost of organising branch conferences, we identified local people to deliver keynote addresses, unless international participants are willing to meet their own travel cost - and some are quite happy to do so. It is also important to invite local well known practitioners or activists to deliver keynote speeches.

To remain true to the spirit of social development, a conscious effort needs to be made to engage multi disciplinary professionals in our gathering and discussions. So far it is mostly dominated by social work and welfare related professions/disciplines. Social development and ICSD philosophy allows for multi disciplinary contributions and we should capitalise on this.

Although it is comfortable and convenient, there is no expectation that these conferences are organised in five star or expensive hotels. Of the six conferences, three were organised on university campuses and one was in a very simple hotel, while another one was held in a mix of a university hall and a hotel. Only one conference was organised in a five star hotel as it was the Ministry's choice. We have consistently kept the registration fees low and that has helped to attract 60 to 80 abstracts and about 100 participants. I am hesitant to advise anything precisely and would leave it to the board to take appropriate decisions depending upon the cultural and socio economic circumstances.

A few times we selected conference dates according to the convenience of overseas participants, but that approach did not result in good number of international participants. Thus, it may be a good idea to choose conference dates that work well for the host organisation and local participants as majority of participants come from local places. It is important to prevent date clashes with other conferences.

There is no need to aim for large size conferences as the current size of the conference is conducive for enhanced interpersonal interactions and developing quality professional networks.

Although ICSD has transferred funds owing to the branch when requested, this transfer best occurs in a proactive way, at least a statement, so that the branch knows what resources it has.

Equally important is that the branch should be financially independent through raising its own resources. The branch has demonstrated this approach in the past, though it does not have any significant surplus budget, except small savings from a few conferences.

In accordance with ICSD objectives, the branch should promote more research publications in social development, particularly access to social development issues and citation of its articles. My aim was to publish all Prof. David Cox International Social Work lectures in book chapters or journal articles, but only one lecture of Prof. Brij Mohan was published (Mohan, 2009). I did not see final version of papers presented by the others. This is a worthwhile aim to pursue.

I still strongly feel that the branch's conferences or meeting venues should be deliberately located in least developed and land locked countries and where new social work and social development programs have begun. When it is safe and adequate support is available, it is worth exploring possibilities of collaborating with reliable organisations/institutions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. Equally important is that the branch should engage more with China and India, which have changed from donor recipient status to donor status.

Even if someone casually expresses interest in hosting the conference or any kind of branch activity, take it seriously and collect all contact details and keep in touch with them. Although nothing may be possible immediately, one never knows when a casual offer may turn serious. When really desperate, all contacts will lead to something.

Time tested wisdom is that contacts work and are helpful. So keep looking out for them. Board members may not themselves have any contacts, but networking with those who have is important. That connection/relationship to strike things is necessary. On the other hand, possibilities can also be explored without any connections. It is an unknown risk one has to take; I did, though slightly burnt my fingers and learnt a lesson in the process.

To be on the safe side, it may not be a bad idea to develop some simple contractual documents to be signed between the host organisations and ICSDAP to prevent any unlikely complications or issues. It may make things transparent and may help build better trust, if it works. In some cultures it may not work at all.

On the whole, I concur with Raymond and Cowger (2012) that ICSD branches need to establish and expand. Given the portrayal of the Asian Century in socio-economic terms, the existence and expansion of the branch is more relevant than ever before.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to recount and reflect on the beginning of the ICSDAP branch, how I came to activate and unexpectedly lead it for a period of 12 years as president. I have narrated my thoughts and efforts relating to each activity of the branch and what outcomes were achieved followed by each conference. I have organised my reflections in terms of admissions, weaknesses, strengths and forefections. If someone else had led the branch, they

would have done it differently, or done more or less, or better. However, my experiences suggest that there is scope to do more and better. I hope this paper helps to achieve that, though it has some limitations. It is based on notes from email correspondence, ICSDAP branch minutes of board meetings and general assembly, conference announcements and program schedule, my own memories of experiences of the organisation and events, and my interaction with colleagues. Since I am recounting and reflecting on 12 years of ICSDAP, I might not have covered all events that were important to the branch and might have unintentionally omitted some colleagues' names who contributed to the branch as memory has its own limitations. The way I have reflected and interpreted may also have bias as its very nature is subjective, though I have tried to develop the paper from facts and evidence. The main purpose of placing this branch history and my experience of leading the branch in the public space is to share with colleagues and professional communities about what we have done and how we have worked as a team so that they will inspire and encourage others to voluntarily assume responsible roles in professional bodies and community organisations. This will contribute to their own personal and professional development, and the development of the profession and communities. As my recounts and reflections show, I have gained a lot from the ICSDAP branch and from colleagues, nationally and internationally, and in turn contributed to developing the branch in whatever little way. I humbly and sincerely invite colleagues to contribute to these and similar activities according to their interest and passion. I am sure, you will experience both personal and public good in it.

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