



A White Paper: *No Boundaries When it comes to Saving Lives*

**By Gregg Tyler Milligan, Author & Abuse Prevention Advocate
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<http://www.godmustbesleeping.com/>

Balancing both global and local perspectives when it comes to International Social Work (ISW) can be a tricky business. And, make no mistake – it is a business. *The business of saving lives.*

The main point of departure for international social work consists of the UN declarations on equal rights and opportunities. Important issues are the use of globalization and global standards, applying a universal view without relying solely on local contexts – the need for comparative studies is clear. This white paper argues in favor of a global or collaborative approach. I have often said that we, as humans, are part of a [collective]. Meaning, the sum should be greater than its parts because a collective approach to social work with regard to abuse of any kind should be enacted under one specific universal system. A system that is not particular to a specific political, religious, cultural or governmental agenda.

This system would also work because it supports universalism. One world. One people. One goal. Saving *one another*.

Social Work has the opportunity to capitalize on a reformation that pays closer attention to common features of the different practice traditions throughout the world and not to any particular geography. For example, with a comparative studies approach, there is potential to gain greater influence in shaping social work training to measure up to the profession at its core.

Let's talk about the (Agenda) I mention earlier in the paper. The most effective Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development begins with the foundation this is a globalized world. The agenda must also be designed by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and The Institute for Clinical Social Work (ICSW) in order strengthen the profile of social work and to enable social workers to make a stronger contribution to policy development around the world. The theme and commitment of (The Agenda) must link with the core understanding that this would be a global endeavor – in the form of an underlying tenet that is made explicit. The practical, conceptual and ethical challenges inherent in crafting global statements could then be discussed; including the need to respect local and regional diversity inherent in all nations. Therefore, (The Agenda) is made simple by concluding all social workers are responsible for helping to shape the Agenda process and the future strategies of the global bodies. This obviously would be the first opportunity to allow for complete collaboration '*working together in order to first develop (The Agenda).*'

When recruiting for the next-generation of future Social Workers, it is the students within universities who are the unsung heroes in a time of global relational warming. It is my believe these young men and women can forge the globalization in terms of what I refer to as the 'collective' for a brave new world of compassion. The time is always [in the present] when it comes to broader sweeps of compassion which extend beyond "...me and my own," and I truly believe with the right motivation we will see the same outreach the younger generation has developed in terms of gaming over the internet.

Therefore, we have our (Agenda) and a fresh pool of (Recruits) in order to establish a collaborative international learning experience with a social work students in an MSW program within the United States and abroad (while I say 'Sawat Dee Krhab!' from Thailand). I am personally writing this chapter of globalization in action through a real-life story unfolding in S.E. Asia while I delineate lessons learned by both the author/advocate and university social services programs through our international collaboration.

Headlong I go toward a borderless social work opportunity while reconsidering notions of international social work. [We] are in the process of exploring varied ideas describing the concept of international social work. Looking at international social work from the idea of globalization, [we] explore how international social work is figuratively embodied in migrations. How [we] see ourselves in international social work not only forms a dialogue that problematizes power relations in the international social arena but also provides an instructive venture into considerations of borderless social work.

The local response has been positive. I've been invited to speak at a university as part of an all day workshop, so I would surmise as such. It is [our] hope as an outcome of the workshop; there is transferability in social work education and practice. With this said, my invitation would not have been possible without first an agreement on both sides of the ocean that there is a recognition of indigenous practices and strongly valued multiculturalism. As an added benefit, it is not necessary to have agency-specific knowledge and skills. Intellect and Compassion simply work that way. Keep in mind, while some social work knowledge and skills seem to be universal, others will be locally influenced. However, regardless of academic influences, along with skills and experiences, the career of Social Welfare Services remains the same: *To help those who cannot help themselves.*

I will state again that the nature of compassion is not complex; however, it is a pre-requisite to developing realistic global social work practices. In conclusion, I hope to excite in you a clear reason to further examine the relationship between cultures, their crucial importance in learning from one another, and the concept of 'communities of practice.'

Reach across these invisible boundaries. [We] are all *'in it'* together.

Gregg Tyler Milligan is an internationally-known author and child abuse prevention advocate. He has written two books, *A Beautiful World*, detailing his childhood and the horrific suffering Milligan endured at the hands of his mother and strangers. Milligan later completed the continuation to *A Beautiful World*, describing his next eleven years. Both books are published under the same volume, titled *God Must be Sleeping*. Milligan is a member of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) Speakers Bureau and continues to spread his message of hope.

In his words, "Please remember, the reason we are here is to save one another – Break the cycle." More information can be found at godmustbesleeping.com/.