



Grand Challenges for Social Work: The Essential Role of School Social Workers

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Background

- Led by the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare (AASWSW), the Grand Challenges for Social Work is a call to action for social work researchers and practitioners to:
 - Harness social work’s science and knowledge base
 - Collaborate with individuals, community-based organizations, and professionals from all fields and disciplines
 - Work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.





Background

- AASWSW requested proposals for Grand Challenges in 2013
 - 55 proposals submitted
 - 12 proposals selected
- Selection parameters
 - grand and compelling
 - scientifically informed
 - have achievable impact within a decade
 - innovative and collaborative.

Harnessing the power of social work science



- Linking science and practice
 - Team
 - Transdisciplinary
 - Translational

Gehlert S, Hall, K, and Palinkas LA. Training our next generation scientific work force to address the grand challenges in social work. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, 2017; 8(1):119-136



Grand Challenge Themes



- Individual and Family Well-Being
- Stronger Social Fabric
- Just Society



Individual and Family Well-Being

- **Ensure healthy development for all youth**
 - Reduce the incidence and prevalence of behavioral health problems in young people from birth to age 24 by 20% from current levels and reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in behavioral health problems by 20% through implementation of tested and effective preventive interventions.



Individual and Family Well-Being

- **Close the health gap**
 - Develop a socially-oriented model of healthcare that breaks down and removes the root causes of health inequity and promotes upstream interventions and primary care prevention that will eradicate the gap that exists for marginalized populations.



Individual and Family Well-Being

- **Stop family violence**
 - Bring about a 50% reduction in child maltreatment and gender-based violence (GBV) within the next decade by promoting healthy, violence-free relationships between partners and among families.



Safe Children:
Reducing Severe and Fatal Maltreatment



Individual and Family Well-Being

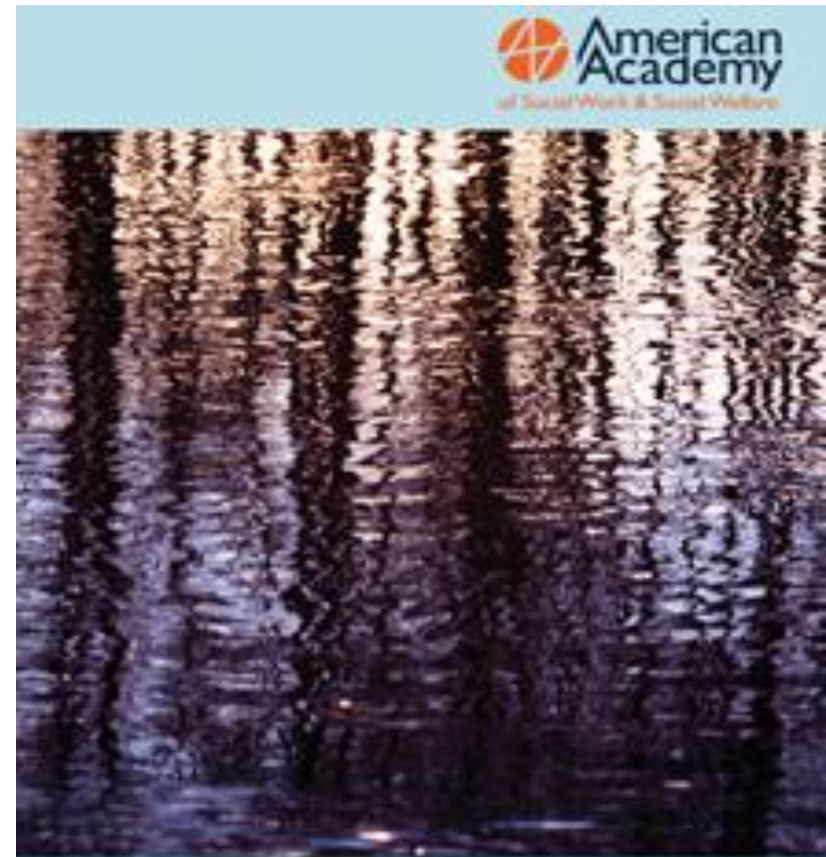
- **Advance long and productive lives**
 - Create opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and to utilize talents and resources in a variety of paid and unpaid roles that maximize health, foster economic security, provide purpose in life, and enrich families and communities.



Stronger social fabric



- **Eradicate social isolation**
 - Reduce the risk of social isolation across all populations and strengthen social ties that are a vital source of emotional strength and health improvement.



Social Isolation Presents a
Grand Challenge for Social Work



Stronger social fabric



- **End homelessness**
 - Reduce the scope of homelessness in the United States as well as the risk factors such as housing and income instability that contribute to the issue.



Stronger social fabric



- **Create social responses to a changing environment**
 - Catalyze social responses that strengthen individual and community capacities for anticipating and adapting to environmental changes, particularly for vulnerable groups, and reduce inequities in exposure to environmental risks and access to needed resources.



Stronger social fabric



- **Harness technology for social good**
 - Deploy information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the efficacy of social programs, accelerate the pace of social discovery, and transform the social work profession to respond in ways that ensure technology is ethically used to reduce the inequalities that exist today.



Just society



- **Promote smart decarceration**
 - Reduce the prison and jail population by 1 million people in the next decade.



Just society



- **Build financial capability for all**
 - Engage social work and allied professionals in building financial capability and assets to improve financial well-being for all.



Financial Capability and
Asset Building for All



Just society



- **Reduce extreme economic inequality**
 - Innovation that focuses on increasing the income of the poor, building income and wealth stability, and changing policies and mechanisms that concentrate wealth solely among the wealthy can reduce the current disparities.



Just society



- **Achieve equal opportunity and justice**
 - Addressing racial and social injustices, deconstructing stereotypes, dismantling inequality, and exposing unfair practices will lead to the full social, civic, economic, and political integration of these marginalized groups.



Increasing Success for African American Children and Youth



Grand Challenge activities

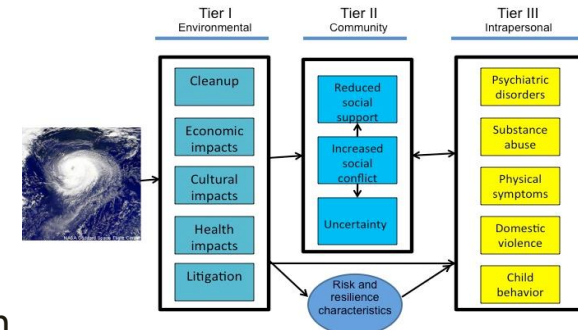


- Developing organizational capacity
 - Subcommittees tasked with research, training, and policy
- Building networks
 - Within social work
 - Across disciplines
- Publications and presentations
 - Journal articles and book chapters
 - Policy briefs
 - SSWR/CSWE symposia
- Lobbying

Update on Grand Challenge to Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment

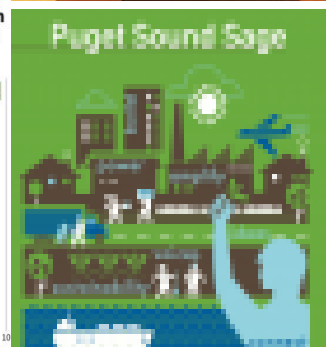
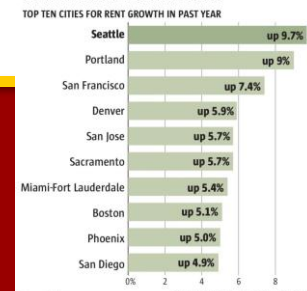


- Dissemination of Grand Challenge
 - International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health – Singapore
 - SSWR – Washington DC
 - CSWE – Atlanta GA
 - International Social Work Conference - Manila
 - 6th European Conference for Social Work Research – Lisbon
 - 4th Annual Global Health Conference-2016 – Kaoshung, Taiwan
 - People and Climate Change: Vulnerability, Adaptation Social Justice – St Louis
- Disaster Preparedness and Response
 - Trainings in South Korea and Philippines using 3-tier model
 - Modeling of health impacts of disasters on Gulf Coast
- Partnerships
 - International Rescue Committee
 - Ayala Foundation



Seattle leads the nation in rent growth

From June 2015 to June 2016, monthly rents in Seattle soared four times faster than the national average.



Relevance to school social work



- Utilize networks and resources of Grand Challenges to promote school social work research and practice
- Utilize social social work practitioners and settings to achieve Grand Challenge goals and aims

Relevance to social social work



Barriers to academic success

Behavioral and mental health problems

Poor health

Child maltreatment

Limited parental engagement

Relevant Grand Challenge

Insure healthy development for all youth

Close the health gaps

Stop family violence

Advance long and productive lives

Relevance to social social work



Barriers to academic success

Bullying by peers

Residential instability and homelessness

Disaster-related trauma

Lack of data-driven decision making

Relevant Grand Challenge

Eradicate social isolation

End homelessness

Create social responses to a changing environment

Harness technology social social good

Relevance of social social work to broader social problems



Social problem

High rates of juvenile and adult incarceration

Poverty

Limited household income

Racism and discrimination

School social work response

Special education and counseling programs for JJ-involved youth

Reduce role of education and wealth in education system at all levels

Extension programs on asset building for low-income caregivers

Eliminate exclusionary disciplinary practices in schools

Relevant Grand Challenge

Promote smart decarceration

Reduce extreme economic inequality

Build financial capability for all

Achieve equal opportunity and justice



How to participate in Grand Challenge initiatives

- Reach out to Grand Challenge participants
 - AASWSW leadership
 - Grand Challenge co-leads
- Join Grand Challenge networks
- Encourage focus on school social work issues by every Grand Challenge



How to participate in Grand Challenge initiatives

- Develop workforce in schools of social work
 - Training in social work science
 - Training in grand challenges approach to addressing social problems
 - Training in grand challenges approach to addressing specific school-based problems

How to participate in Grand Challenge initiatives



- Integrate Grand Challenges in school settings
 - Use of Grand Challenge resources and networks to solve specific school-based problems (e.g., barriers to academic success)
 - Use of schools as a laboratory for solving broader social problems



Thank you

- For more information, contact
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