



## FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ESSWA

### THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

The fifteenth Annual Conference of the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists (ESSWA) is **tentatively** planned to be held towards the end of **February, 2019 or first week of 2019**. Recent annual conferences of ESSWA have given adequate focus and coverage on broad areas of social change and parenting issues related to culture and agency. This Fifteenth Annual Conference will advance a new theme - ***“Rethinking on our policies and practices towards tackling social and behavioral problems of Ethiopia”***, inviting specialized research papers from professionals in the fields of Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology or other related professions.

### CONCEPT OF THE CONFERENCE

Underpinned by technological advancements, globalization is bringing together diverse cultures and societies to share commonalities and universally shared values such as respect to universally accepted human rights, democratization, and gender equality and also aspiring to common agenda in poverty reduction to achieve the sustainable millennium development goals (SDGs). Yet, there are variations among societies in achieving such universally shared agendas. This suggests that there are also cultural and social diversities within the commonalities, differences within similarities and divergence within convergence in ideas. Some people tend to label variations in cultures as stagnant (unchanged), progressive or civilized. There are also advocates of Cultural Revolution as a remedy for social conformity to change.

When we are discussing about social conformity, one question that comes out of our mind is what is the difference between social and cultural change? Some scholars suggest that the main difference between the two is, social change basically refers to the change adopted by the whole society like feminism or women empowerment which can be a type of social change integrated in society. On the other hand cultural change refers to a particular group in a society. Sociologists define society as the people who interact in such a way as to share a common culture. The cultural bond may be ethnic, racial, based on gender, or due to shared beliefs, values, and activities. On the other hand, social transformation is the process by which individual (s) or agency (ices) alters the socially ascribed social status and associated roles. When the change is a large scale, social change refers as reforms in social institutions or socio-cultural transformations.

### Socio-cultural Change and Transformation

Be it evolutionary or revolutionary, fast or slow socio-cultural changes pervasively exist in all times. We professionals in the fields of sociology, social work and anthropology have critical roles in shaping, leading and guiding such changes in a positive way. For example, positive deviance (PD) is an approach to behavioral and social change based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar



challenges and having no extra resources. On the contrary, negative deviance involves behavior that fails to meet accepted norms.

Similarly, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a change management approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. The basic tenet of AI is about the search of the best in people, their organizations, their social capital and opportunities surrounding them.

In social work practice, the strengths perspective has emerged as an alternative to the more common pathology-oriented approach to helping clients. Instead of focusing on clients' problems and deficits, the strengths perspective centers on clients' abilities, talents, and resources. In a review of individuals participating in Strengths Based Case Management, people are also identified feeling free to talk about both strengths and weaknesses as important for helping them to set goals that they wanted to achieve and to make changes to their lives.

How can we then positively contribute to the process of social change and transformation?

### **Agenda for professional debate**

The ability of societies to adapt to a fast changing world is critical for our survival and welfare. A defining feature of the 21st century is continuous advancement in technology, particularly advanced transportation and communication which have also accelerated social contacts. These developments have eroded traditional boundaries and customarily established social fabrics while they are bringing people from different cultures closer than ever, challenging in the process long established social values, norms and institutions. Thus, the ability of societies to rapidly adapt, taking advantage of new opportunities and avoiding potential threats, is essential for the welfare of the members. Professionals in the field have moral obligation to lead and provide technical guidance for the conformity of individuals and social groups in a positive way.

Accordingly, this high level conference is expected to provide participants with wealth of knowledge and information in the following topics:

- ✓ Nexus between customary socialization practices and change in technology
- ✓ Social capital formation as enabling environment for community works
- ✓ Case studies on positive deviance and conformity,
- ✓ Good practices in changing attitudes and deep-rooted norms
- ✓ Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) in conflict induced internally displaced communities
- ✓ Tackling Youth Deviant Behavior
- ✓ Current Practices in Sustaining HIV/AIDS's positive impacts and addressing the 95-95-95 goal
- ✓ Role of Social media in disciplining children
- ✓ Role of communities in disciplining children
- ✓ Role of cultural and traditional social networks in the digital world



ESSWA is looking for guest speakers, abstracts and/or research papers/briefs which have direct relevance to the theme of its Annual Conference *tentatively* planned for **27 and 28 February 2019**.

Please e-mail your preferred area of contribution i.e.:

- Submitting an abstract, Title: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sharing opinion as a guest speaker, Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sharing Research briefs, Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sharing full research report, Title and abstract: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Time Frame**

The call for conference papers pursues the following time frame proposed for all linked activities.

- Abstracts not more than **250** words should be submitted to ESSWA by **15 January 2019**.
- Selected abstracts will be notified to prepare a draft paper between **01 and 05 February 2019**.
- Deadline for submitting draft paper and ppt presentation to ESSWA is by **15 February 2019**.

Your abstract/paper should be formatted as follows:

- Title of Paper
- Author(s): List each author's Full name
- Institution(s)
- Email Address, Telephone (include all corresponding authors)
- Text: Maximum 250 words prepared in 12-point Times New Roman font

Please send your abstract in soft copy via the following address:

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