



***Eileen Younghusband Lecture 2021***  
***by Prof. Angelina Yuen***

**Education for Hope and Transformation:  
Reflections on a Journey in Co-constructing Local Social Work Education with  
Implications for International Social Work**

**Abstract**

Angelina Yuen-Tsang has been involved in the development of social work education in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland and Asia for over forty years. She is deeply convinced that social work education is a catalyst for social change and development and could be a powerful force in generating hope and transformation for social betterment. As our world is experiencing the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and when people in all corners of the world are engulfed by a deep sense of hopelessness and helplessness, the collective responsibility of the social work community to engender hope and transformation through education and practice is pivotal to the continuing sustainable development of our society.

In this lecture, Angelina will discuss on the centrality of hope to social work education and practice and the transformative power that it could bring. Angelina concurs with Freire's articulation that "without hope there is no way we can even start thinking about education" (Freire, 2007, p.87)<sup>i</sup>. She believes that it is only when social work education is firmly grounded on a culture of hope, and that members of the education community actively practice a "pedagogy of hope" (Freire 1994)<sup>ii</sup>, that the transformative power of education among students, teachers, and community partners could be evoked. On the contrary, a social work programme which complies with professional standards and excels in academic scholarship and state-of-art practice skills, but without an orientation of hope for the future good, then it is an education without a soul.

As a case study, Angelina will share her own trajectory of hope and transformation in her journey in co-constructing social work education in Mainland China together with her colleagues, students, and community partners. She will first provide a snapshot of the evolvement of social work in China and particularly the



drastic transformation of the system that had taken place during the past thirty years. She will then illustrate with real-life examples the ways in which the strong sense of hope and impetus for social transformation was evoked during the social work education process, and how these students and their peers demonstrated active human agency in developing social agreements between governments and the population they serve to spearhead positive social change and co-build inclusive social transformation in China.

Finally, Angelina will reflect on her thirty years' trajectory of hope and transformation in co-constructing social work education in China and reflect on its implications on partnership relationships in international social work. She believes that the sharing of common hope and vision, genuine trust and respect for diversity, the use of dialogical approach and participatory action research processes, and the practice of humility by all parties involved are pivotal to the future development of international social work.

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<sup>i</sup> Freire, P. (2007). *Daring to Dream*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

<sup>ii</sup> Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of Hope*. London: Continuum.



## Prof. Angelina Yuen-Tsang



Prof. Angelina Yuen-Tsang, was President of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) from 2008 to 2012. She was Vice President (Student and Global Affairs) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University prior to her retirement in 2018. She is now Honorary Professor of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Keswick Foundation, Co-Chairman of the Hong Kong Social Service Professional Alliance of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, Honorary President of the Hong Kong Social Workers' Association, and Honorary Advisor of the Hong Kong Academy of Social Work. She was awarded Justice of Peace in 2002, and Bronze Bauhinia Star in 2008 by the Hong Kong SAR Government.

In the Chinese Mainland, Prof. Yuen is Executive Committee Member of the All-China Federation of Women, Hon. Advisor of the China Association of Social Work Education, the Peking University-Hong Kong Polytechnic University China Social Work Research Centre, and the World Vision of China. She is also Hon. Professor of Peking University, China Women's University, Sichuan University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Xian Jiaotong University, and Yunnan University.

Prof. Yuen has long-term involvement in the development of social work and university social responsibility in the international arena. She was Hon. Secretary of



the Asian and Pacific Association of Schools of Social Work since the 1980s and was President of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) from 2008 to 2012. She was also the Founding Chair of the University Social Responsibility Network to promote social responsibility as core mission of higher education. Prof. Yuen continues to play an active role in the development of social work, social work education and university social responsibility in different parts of the world, especially in China, Vietnam and Kazakhstan on a voluntary basis.