



European Conference on Social Work Education

Social Connectedness –
Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities

Mon Thu
23 **26**
JUNE
2025



A WELCOME NOTE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE & LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dear colleagues, students, and friends of social work education,

Welcome to Salzburg and the European Conference on Social Work Education 2025!

From June 23rd-26th, the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (FH Salzburg), together with the EASSW, is delighted to host this year's ECSWE under the theme "**Social Connectedness – Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities**".

The Department of Applied Social Sciences has a strong tradition of fostering international collaboration - through teaching and student mobility programmes, as well as through numerous EU-funded research and knowledge-transfer initiatives. We are deeply devoted to building global academic networks and co-creating innovative approaches in social work education.

We invite you to engage in discussions on theoretical approaches to social connectedness, its political, cultural, ecological, and technological dimensions, and on how to critically and creatively embed these themes in curricula and practice. This is your opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas, and fuel collaborative research and teaching projects.

ECSWE 2025 offers a rich program - Keynote lectures, Masterclasses, workshops, panels, and interactive sessions - designed to support meaningful dialogue and cross-national cooperation. Whether you are here as an educator, researcher, practitioner, student, or service user, your perspective adds value to our collective exploration.

Our aim for this conference is to spark sustainable partnerships and networks across Europe and beyond. Let us leverage this gathering to deepen existing ties and forge new ones - bringing international perspectives into our classrooms, fieldwork, and research.

Thank you for your passionate engagement and your contributions to the future of social work education. We wish you an inspiring, fruitful, and enjoyable conference experience in Salzburg.

With warm regards,

Martin Lu Kolbinger (Head of Scientific Committee) &
Heiko Berner (Head of Local Organizing Committee)

Department of Applied Social Sciences,
Salzburg University of Applied Sciences



FH Salzburg
Applied
Social Sciences

Opening Remarks

Corporate Responsibility
Sustainability & Diversity

First things First
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ECSWE 2025 Program

Acknowledgments &
Attendee Feedback

A WELCOME NOTE FROM EASSW PRESIDENT PROF. CHRISTOS PANAGIOTOPOULOS

Dear esteemed colleagues, dear participants,

It is a great pleasure to address the 2025 ECSWE conference hosted by FH Salzburg. The theme of the conference "Social Connectedness - Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities" could not be more contemporary nowadays. We live in a time impacted by crises, war conflicts, migration and threats to democratic values within certain states. Crises situations, phenomena of extremism and social polarisation call for actions from social and health care professionals. It is of paramount importance to acknowledge that social connectedness is the vital bond that links individuals through shared relationships, emotional support, mutual understanding, and cooperation. Social workers help individuals, families and communities feel cared for and less isolated in a fast-changing world.

Research evidence indicates the need for interventions at operational and strategic level due to the phenomena described above. Therefore, social workers, academics and practitioners, need to work together with other professionals in order to address those challenges by connecting services, professionals and service users and by developing new initiatives and knowledge necessary for strengthening social cohesion and solidarity amongst people and societies.

We need to demonstrate, that maintaining strong social ties enhances mental well-being, promotes community resilience, and creates a more compassionate society especially during times of difficulties and challenges that undermine the value of connectedness. Building and nurturing these connections is essential for personal and community growth.

I am convinced you will enjoy the ECSWE 2025 in the city of Salzburg and that you will make the best out of the conference!

Kind regards,

Professor Christos Panagiotopoulos

President of the EASSW



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ECSWE 2025 IS A GREEN EVENT!

Support Our Mission – A Climate-Responsible International Conference

At Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, we are committed to sustainability and climate responsibility in everything we do. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce our environmental impact, we are proud to host this event as a certified Green Event.

What is a Green Event?

A Green Event is organized with a strong focus on environmental protection, resource conservation, and social responsibility. This includes among other aspects:

Eco-friendly travel: We encourage all guests to use public transport, cycle, or carpool. The campus is easily accessible via the regional train (S-Bahn) (station: Puch Urstein).

Waste reduction: Please use the recycling stations provided and avoid single-use plastics. **Regional and seasonal catering:** Our food and beverages are sourced from local producers with a focus on organic and seasonal ingredients.

Energy efficiency: We minimize energy consumption through smart lighting, heating, and digital alternatives to printed materials -whenever possible.

Accessibility: We do our best to offer accessible conference sessions and program elements for all participants.

How You Can Help

You play a vital role! Here's how you can contribute:

- Bring your own reusable water bottle or coffee cup
- Choose sustainable travel options:
 - Official hotels and accommodations provide you with the „Guest Mobility Ticket“ which gives you access to all public transportation in the entire state of Salzburg
 - The conference location at FH Salzburg (Puch Urstein) is easily accessible via bus and train with minimal walking distance from the stop to the building
 - There is an elevator at the trainstop for easy access to the platform
 - There is a wonderful bike path next to the Salzach river to travel between the city center and campus with multiple options to park your bicycle.
- Dispose of waste responsibly
 - You will find recycling bins for different categories of waste across campus. If necessary, a staff member will be happy to help you
 - There is a bottle deposit of €0.25 per bottle, which you can get back when returning the bottle
- Take part in our sustainability survey
- Share your experience and inspire others to act sustainably

**Together, we can make a positive impact—one event at a time.
Thank you for supporting a greener future!**

If you have any further questions or wish to contact us on this subject, please feel free to write to:
nachhaltigkeit@fh-salzburg.ac.at.

The FH Salzburg sustainability coordinator
Daniela Molzbichler will be happy to get back to you.



OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT FH SALZBURG

As hosts of this conference, FH Salzburg is proud to reflect our institutional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity. We view social diversity as a strength—one that enriches academic dialogue, collaboration, and innovation.

In line with our mission, we actively integrate gender and diversity perspectives into teaching, research, and university life. Our Gender and Diversity Officers support students and staff on matters such as accessibility, equity, and discrimination, helping to ensure that our community is inclusive and responsive to diverse needs.

We believe that meaningful exchange -such as that fostered at this conference- benefits from a plurality of perspectives, experiences, and identities.

Should you feel harassed and in need for help at anytime during the conference, ask for LUIS*A. LUIS*A is a campaign against sexual harassment and violence.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION..](#)

If you have any further questions or wish to contact us in regard to Diversity topics, please feel free to write to:
diversity@fh-salzburg.ac.at.

The FH Salzburg diversity coordinators **Sabrina Statmann** and **Simon Hoher** will be happy to get back to you.

All About Your Stay in Salzburg!

Travel from the airport to the city:

Bus line 2 connects Salzburg Airport with the main train station. Travel time: approx. 20 min.

Discover Salzburg with the brand new (free!) Guest Mobility Ticket!

All overnight guests in the state of Salzburg receive the Guest Mobility Ticket. Your key to free travel on all public transport during your stay. This includes city buses, regional trains, S-Bahn, and even long-distance trains within Salzburg.

You'll receive the ticket digitally or as a PDF upon check-in at your accommodation. It's included in your stay through a small mobility fee and makes exploring Salzburg easy, sustainable, and convenient.

For more details, visit [guestmobilityticket.at](https://www.guestmobilityticket.at).

Medical assistance & emergency information

For your safety and peace of mind during the ECSWE Conference at FH Salzburg (Campus Urstein), here are key medical contacts and emergency services nearby:

Phone numbers:

Call 144 – Austria's emergency number for ambulance and first aid

Call 133 – Police

Call 122 – Fire brigade

Call 140 – Mountain rescue

Call 141 – Medical on-call service, non-emergency

Nearest hospitals:

Landeskrankenhaus Salzburg (LKH) – Salzburg's main public hospital

Unfallkrankenhaus Salzburg (UKH) – Specialized in accident and trauma care

Landesklinik Hallein - General hospital in the same district (Tennengau) as the conference

Krankenhaus der Barmherzigen Brüder – General hospital with various specialties

Local Doctors & Pharmacies:

Dr. Susanne Obermann (Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri: Morning / Tue, Thu: Afternoon)

Dr. Markus Lengauer (Mon-Fri: Morning / Mon, Thu: Afternoon)

Arnika Apotheke (Pharmacy) is located in the center of Puch for over-the-counter medications and advice.

Pharmacy Emergency Services (night, weekend & holiday duties)

www.apo24.at/en/pharmacies/nightduties/salzburg

Weather

Typical June weather in Salzburg is mild to warm (20-26°C) with cooler evenings and possible showers.

Money & payment

Austria uses the Euro (€). Credit/debit cards/mobile payments are widely accepted, however some cash (especially coins) is recommended for smaller shops, cafés, rural areas or some transportation

Language

The official language is German, but English is widely spoken and understood, especially in tourism and hospitality settings.

We have high-quality water!

Bring a refillable water bottle. Tap water in Salzburg is high-quality (unless noted otherwise).

Wi-Fi & Connectivity

Free Wi-Fi is available at conference venue and many public places in Salzburg.

EU visitors can use roaming as at home; check with your provider for outside-EU plans. Depending on your device, another popular option can be E-Sims.

Wifi on Campus: Veranstaltung 24/25

Password: servus@FHS!



Parking tickets and electric vehicles

Please note that parking at FH Salzburg is limited. We strongly recommend the use of public transportation or park & ride options available in city.

If you choose to park on campus, parking tickets can be validated at the registration desk.

A small number of charging stations are also available for electric vehicles.

Storage possibilities at the conference

Generally, space is limited, so we recommend only bringing the essentials to campus during the conference. There is however a limited number of lockers for secure storage of smaller items and valuables. Larger items such as suitcases can be given to our team at the registration desk and we will place it in the back office, which will mostly be occupied. Despite this, please note that we cannot assume liability for personal belongings. Finally, storage space in the back-office is also limited - so we may not be able to accommodate everything.

ECSWE 2025 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 2025 European Conference for Social Work Education in Salzburg, hosted by the **European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW)** and **Salzburg University of Applied Sciences**. Building on the success of ECSWE 2023 in Porto, this year's theme - Social Connectedness - invites us to explore how Social Work Education can foster inclusive, democratic, and socially sustainable communities, while also critically reflecting on the complexities of connection in today's world.

Here is a general overview of the four-day program. For your convenience, the schedule is interactive: in the PDF version, you can click on any session for more details or use the tabs to navigate between specific days.

Highlights of this year's conference include the Pre-Conference on Monday, three keynote lectures, masterclasses, field visits, and our Conference Dinner - all designed to inspire dialogue, learning, and connection across disciplines and borders.

We look forward to welcoming you in Salzburg for a rich and engaging experience.

MON, June 23 rd		TUE, June 24 th		WED, June 25 th		THU, June 26 th	
14:00 -16:00		08:00-09:30 Foyer		08:00-09:00 Foyer		08:00-09:00 Foyer	
Self-Care in SW SE 254 →	Coffee Corner (Continuous) SE 256	Registration & Welcome		Registration & Welcome		Registration & Welcome	
Human Rights and SW SE 255 →		09:30-10:30 HS 010		09:00-10:00 HS 010		09:00-10:00 HS 010	
Holocaust heritage.. SE 271 →		Opening Ceremony →		Lisa Große and Karsten Giertz · Keynote · →		IASSW, EASSW, FH Salzburg · Capacity Building · →	
PhD opportunities.. SE 272 →				10:00-10:15 Foyer		10:00-10:15 Foyer	
Academization,.. SE 273 →				Coffee Break		Coffee Break	
Back to a Healthy Soc.. SE 253 →		10:30-11:30 HS 010		10:15-11:30		10:15-11:30	
	Darja Završek · Keynote · →		Session IV Panels · Symposiums · Workshops →		Session VII Panels · Symposiums · Workshops →		
	11:45-13:00		11:45-13:00		11:45-13:00		
	Session I Panels · Symposiums · Workshops (concurrent) →		Session V Panels · Symposiums · Workshops →		Session VIII Panels · Symposiums · Workshops →		
	13:00 -14:00 Foyer & 1 st Floor		13:00 -14:00 Foyer & 1 st Floor		13:00 -14:00 Foyer & 1 st Floor		
	Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		
13:30 -14:45	14:30 -15:45	13:30 -14:45	14:00 -16:30	13:30 -14:45	14:30 -15:45		
Behind the Scenes: Social Work Education: International Journal HS 017 →	Caitlin Cahill · Masterclass HS 010 →	Poster Presentations I 1 st Floor →	EASSW General Assembly · for EASSW Members · HS 010	Poster Presentations II 1 st Floor (continuation) →	Irene Messenger · Masterclass HS 010 →		
	Session II Panels · Symposiums · Workshops (concurrent) →				Session IX Panels · Symposiums · Workshops (concurrent) →		
	15:30 -16:00 Foyer		15:30 -16:45 Foyer		15:30 -16:00 Foyer		
	Coffee Break		Coffee Break		Coffee Break		
16:00 Foyer	16:00-17:15	16:45-18:00		16:00-17:00 HS 010			
Field Visit Meeting Point →	Session III Panels · Symposiums · Workshops (concurrent) →	Session VI Panels · Symposiums · Workshops (concurrent) →	Behind the Scenes: Social Work Education: International Journal HS 017 →	Closing Ceremony			
	19:00 Parkhotel Brunauer						
	Conference Dinner · Additional registration required · →						

Back to Opening Remarks & more

Monday Pre-Conference

Tuesday Overview

Wednesday Overview

Thursday Overview

Monday, June 23rd Overview Pre-Conference

We warmly invite all ECSWE 2025 participants to join the Pre-Conference Session on Monday, June 23rd from 14:00 to 16:00 in Salzburg.

This day offers a unique opportunity to ease into the conference by engaging with key themes and connecting with colleagues in a more informal setting. A special focus is placed on Special Interest Groups (SIGs), offering space for exchange, exploration, and collaboration around shared areas of interest in social work.

Come, connect, and start the conference experience with inspiration and dialogue. We look forward to seeing you there!

SE 254 EASSW/SIG	SE 255 EASSW/SIG
Self-Care in Social Work	Human Rights and Social Work
SE 271 EASSW/SIG	SE 272 ogsa
Holocaust heritage for contemporary clinical social work	PhD opportunities in the field of Social Work - European perspectives, working group "Social Work Research" of the Austrian Society for Social Work (Ogsa)
SE 273 ogsa/OBDS	SE 253 Erasmus+, BASE
Academization, Professionalization and the Legal Situation of Social Work in Austria: Milestones and Further Developments	Back to a Healthy Society - Supporting older people to Enjoy a Healthier Lifestyle

Self-Care in Social Work

Zuzana Poklembova - EASSW / SIG

Room: SE 254

Self-Care is an important component of Social Work practice as well as Social Work education. It is integral to prevent burnout, vicarious trauma, and professional stress, and can help to cope with burnout. Self-Care has also been linked to professional self-efficacy and is instrumental to providing quality services to clients.

The first Self-Care Lab in Europe was established in June 2023 at *Institute of Educology and Social Work, Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov (IESP FF PU)*, Slovakia – member universities of *European Association of Schools of Social Work*. Self-Care Lab is specifically dedicated to empirically investigating self-care among helping professionals, participating also in the Global Self-Care Initiative - international research, carried out since 2018, focuses on the Self-Care of social workers in various countries of the world.

The main aim of this Special Interest Group meeting is to support and further empirically investigate Self-Care among social workers, Social Work students and Social Work educators. Establish cross-cultural partnerships between universities focused on developing Self-Care practice as a part of pre-graduate and postgraduate education in social work.

We believe that the **Special Interest Group Self-Care in Social Work** meeting at European Conference on Social Work Education 2025 in Salzburg deepens the base for further improvement of highly professional education in the field of Social Work and broadens the knowledge about Self-Care in Social Work and Social Work Education.

Human rights are one of the guiding principles of social work, highlighted among others in the Global Standards on Social Work Education & Training. The symposium is based on the activities of the Special Interest Group (SIG) "Human Rights and Social Work" within the EASSW, established in 2023.

The first part of the symposium will feature short presentations by members of the SIG. The focus is on curriculum development in social work study programs across Europe. Initially, the two SIG coordinators will present the results of a study conducted in eight European countries on various B.A. study programs, which was published in 2024 in the Social Work Education journal. Following this, Marcin Boryczko will discuss the importance of strengthening human rights education in social work, particularly in light of the growing influence of right-wing populism and post-fascist ideologies, which pose a tangible threat to European democracies. He will emphasize the dual role of social work as both a political actor advocating for systemic change and as a provider of immediate support. The third presentation by Ulrike Zöller will give personal insights into the module 'Human Rights in Social Work and Health' which was designed as a five-day face-to-face seminar. The module is available through the Erasmus Plus program under the funding category „Blended Intensive Programmes“ and serves as a framework for designing short, intensive mobility curricula in collaboration with partner universities in program countries. It has been tested, revised and further developed with Finnish, Swiss, Dutch and Czech cooperation partners. In addition to these three presentations, further short inputs might be added by other members of the SIG.

The second part of the symposium will provide ample opportunity for discussion and exchange. Key questions for consideration include: How can the integration of human rights education in social work study programs be improved? How should human rights education evolve in response to the rise of right-wing populism and post-fascist ideologies? How can human rights education in social work be enhanced to address the social and health consequences of the climate crisis? Depending on the audience size, we will facilitate small group discussions and incorporate interactive elements to ensure the inclusion of all participants. Ultimately, the symposium aims to recruit new members for the SIG and to plan future activities across Europe.

Holocaust heritage for contemporary clinical social work

Room: SE 271

Lee Greenblatt-Kimron (Ariel University, Israel); Dietrun Lübeck (Evangelische Hochschule Berlin, Germany); Hubert Kaszyński (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
Katarzyna Ornacka (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Annual Symposium of SIG objective is open invitation for all of school members interested in field of Holocaust legacy for contemporary clinical social work and other professional approach. During the symposium, the research and educational activities of SIG members to date will be briefly presented. Of particular importance will be the discussion with participants focused on their experiences with the multidimensional inclusion of the legacy of the Holocaust in social work education, which includes primarily: the history of Jewish mutual aid activities, ethical reflection based on the Shoah, and transgenerational research on the psychosocial inheritance of trauma).

Voices opening group work and discussion:

Lee Greenblatt-Kimron (Ariel University, Israel)

The Intergenerational Transmission of the Holocaust from a Social Work Perspective

Dietrun Lübeck (Evangelische Hochschule Berlin, Germany)

The importance of awareness of the Holocaust heritage from the perspective of social work students

Hubert Kaszyński, Katarzyna Ornacka (Jagiellonian University, Poland) Ron Shor (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel)

The legacy of the Holocaust in social work education: threats and challenges after 7.10.2023

Shulamit Ramon (University of Hertfordshire)

Preparing UK future social workers to engage with refugees, unaccompanied children and asylum seekers

Please find more information on [this website](#).

PhD opportunities in the field of Social Work - European perspectives, working group „Social Work Research“ of the Austrian Society for Social Work (ogsa)

Room: SE 272

Katharina Auer-Voigtländer, Johanna Muckenhuber, Moritz Reisberger,
Kathrin Bereiter

Exchange about Social Work Research PhD opportunities in different European countries

Exchange of challenges in the PhD process regarding differences in theories and empirical research methods between disciplines (in particular in case of Social Work Research PhD students with supervisors from other/ related disciplines

Maybe: discussion of Social Work Research – Research designs (and the question: what is the particularity of social work research in the research designs)PhD

Academization, Professionalization and the Legal Situation of Social Work in Austria: Milestones and Further Developments

Room: SE 273

Johanna M. Hefel, president of ogsa and Julia Pollak, managing director OBDS

Social work in Austria has a history of over a hundred years and had been taught in schools on post-secondary education level until the turn of the millennium. 2001 marked the beginning of the structural academization of Social Work in Austria.

Social Work can be studied at Universities of Applied Sciences and at a few Universities. As in some other countries (especially the so called DACH countries: Germany, Austria and Switzerland), a distinction is made between socialwork (German: Sozialarbeit) and social pedagogy (German: Sozialpädagogik) resulting in different focal points during study and training. Recently, Social Work is used as an umbrella term – comprising socialwork and social pedagogy as well, highlighting the convergence of both training programs.

In Austria two crucial elements for archiving a comprehensive academization are missing: It is not possible to complete Social Work study at PhD level at Universities of Applied Sciences, as they have no legal basis for a PhD program. Social Work is not seen as a regulated profession: a comprehensive professional law is still lacking. In the context of professionalization this means that securing the rights and duties of Social Work professionals is not fully given.

The Austrian Association of Professionals in Social Work (OBDS) has been campaigning for a professional law for more than 30 years – in the last three years strongly supported by the Austrian Society for Social Work (OGSA). From 2020 on the need to establish a law is part of the government program. In 2024 the law on professional titles in Social Work (German: Sozialarbeitsbezeichnungs-Gesetz) was established. It is considered a first step toward a professional law followed now by broad participatory processes including representatives of Universities of Applied Sciences, Universities and professional associations.

Our Back to a Healthy Society initiative developed innovative mitigation approaches to (re)connect older people to society so that they improve and enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

To reach this goal, we exploited a two-step activation process: We implemented a peer-to-peer change agent approach that engages active older people in the development of their local communities. They were trained as so-called Neighbourhood Buddies so that they can empower their peers, who have difficulties connecting and enjoying a healthy and active lifestyle. Plus, we teamed them with experienced mentors who we equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to sustainably support them. As a result, our older Neighbourhood Buddies became true anchor points in social life. They were enabled to find creative ways to help their peers to connect to local community activities and to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

We are co-funded by the European Union.

We would like to present the initiative in four steps:

- We present the initiative, its aims and its framework.
- We dig a little deeper into what is a healthy lifestyle and how to engage local community stakeholders.
- We present learnings and rich practices from our four piloting communities in Spain, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, and Lithuania.
- We like to discuss with the participants possible exploitation.

Being a dissemination event of an Erasmus funded consortium, we would love to invite participants to join our session, inform them about our approaches (which worked extremely well in 4 local communities in Spain, Netherlands, North Macedonia, and Lithuania), and to discuss how they could bring this “home” to their own organizations and communities.

Tuesday, June 24th Overview

Welcome to the first full day of ECSWE 2025! Highlights include the opening ceremony, the key-note lecture, a masterclass, an opportunity to look behind the scenes of SWE-the international journal, field visits, and the conference dinner. The schedule below is interactive - click on framed sessions for details and use the tabs to skip between conference days.

Registration & Welcome

08:00-09:30 | Foyer

Please check-in at the registration & welcome desk located in the main entrance hall. To complete your registration and receive your badge, kindly present your conference ticket - either in printed or digital form. During check-in, you will also be asked to indicate your preferences regarding photo and video consent. If you are presenting a poster at the conference, you are welcome to leave it with us at the desk—we'll take care of it until the designated setup time. Campus parking tickets can be validated at the desk. Lockers are available for secure storage, and larger items such as suitcases can be placed in the back office. However, please note that storage space is limited and we cannot assume liability for your personal belongings.

Opening Ceremony

09:30-10:30 | HS 010

Prof. Dr. Daniela Molzbichler - Head of Dept. Applied Social Sciences, FH Salzburg

Prof. Dr. Dominik Engel - Managing Director and Rector of FH Salzburg

Mag. Daniela Gutschi - Salzburg federal state minister for education, public health, women, diversity and equal opportunities

Prof. Antoinette Lombard - President IASSW, University of Pretoria

Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos PhD - President EASSW, University of Nicosia

Keynote Lecture by Darja Zaviršek

10:30-11:30 | HS 010

In a time of growing polarisation and militarisation, what role can social work play in building peace and connectedness?

Session I

11:45-13:00

IOP-Digital 01 · IOP-Divides 01 · IOP-Divides 02 · IOP-Divides 12 · IOP-Health 01 · IOP-Health 02 · IOP-Politics 06 · SYM-Digital 01 · SYM-Divides 01 · SYM-Health 01 · SYM-Politics 01 · SYM-Overall 01 · WOR-Divides 03

Lunch 13:00-14:00 | Foyer

SWE Journal

13:30-14:45 | HS 017

Attendees will gain practical insights into how to submit a successful manuscript, what reviewers look for, and more.

Masterclass Caitlin Cahill

14:30-15:45 | HS 010

How can communities resist displacement and imagine emancipatory urban futures rooted in care and solidarity?

Session II

14:30-15:45

IOP-Digital 02 · IOP-Divides 03 · IOP-Ecology 01 · IOP-Health 03 · IOP-Health 04 · SYM-Divides 04 · WOR-Divides 04

Coffee Break 15:30-16:00 | Foyer

Session III

16:00-17:15

WOR-Digital 01 · WOR-Divides 01 · WOR-Divides 02 · WOR-Health 01 · WOR-Health 02 · WOR-Ecology 01 · WOR-Ecology 02 · WOR-Overall 01 · WOR-Overall 02 · WOR-Politics 01 ·

Meeting Point: Field Visits

16:00 | Foyer

Discover local social work initiatives through guided visits in and around Salzburg. If you have pre-registered online, please gather with your group in the entrance hall before departure.

Conference Dinner

19:00 | Parkhotel Brunauer

Join us for an evening of good food, music, and relaxed conversation at Parkhotel Brunauer, close to Salzburg main station.

Darja Zaviršek

Social Work for Peace and Transnational Solidarity: Sometimes a Reality, Sometimes a Distant Dream

The atmosphere of polarisation and militarisation in which we currently live also creates divisions in social work. The existence of competing truths within the discipline, verbal or silent conflicts as students and social work academics often remember and commemorate different events and even victims, calls for social work war and peace studies. It is suggested that if militarism needs a system of war, social work needs a system of peace and connectedness. To this end, the new questions and ethical dilemmas call for new social work responses, not only concerning forced migration and deportation but also about ethical stances on conscription and gender-based violence in war. We may find some illuminating answers in the work of early social work pioneers and some examples of transnational solidarity, past and present.



Photo: Borut Krajnc

Professor Darja Zaviršek works at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work. She is the chair of the Department of Social Justice and Inclusion at the Faculty of Social Work and professor at the international MA studies 'Social Work as a Human Rights Profession' at the University of Applied Science Berlin. Since 2009 she has been a member of the Academic Network of Disability Experts (ANED), now the European Disability Experts (EDE). She serves as the president of the East European subregional Association of the Schools of Social Work, as part of the IASSW. Her research work covers disability studies, theories of gendered violence, history of social work education in East Europe, diversity studies.

Latest authored books: Family Dictionary (2021), Roma Families (2019); Coercive Care (2018); Intercountry and international Adoption: a social work perspective (2012); From Blood to Care: Social Parenthood in a Global World (2012); "With Diploma it was easier to Work!" 50th Anniversary of Social Work Education in Slovenia (2005); Disability as a Cultural Trauma (2000). From 1996 – 2013 she worked in academic teams to develop social work departments and master's degree programmes in Ukraine, Kosovo, Georgia and Republica Srbska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and was visiting professor at the Central European University, Budapest at the department for Gender Studies (1997-2004).

She has received several awards and fellowships, including: Honorary Professorship at Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin (2002); Soros Foundation, SEP, Central European University, Senior Fellowship Grant (2005); Hong Kong Polytechnic University Fellowship (2009); Japan Society for the promotion of Science- JPPS Fellowship (2009); Tunghai University Fellowship (2014); Hokenstad Lecture Award, CSWE USA (2016), Excellency in Science Award, Slovenian Research Agency (2019), Eileen Younghusband Memorial Lecture, IASSW (2022). In 2023 she became an associate member of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Art.

Masterclass: Caitlin Cahill

Love in the time of chaos: World-building, community, and critical participatory action research

Our community and the extended family with whom we research, create and work alongside are under attack, threatened with deportation, displacement, and death-dealing pollution. The crisis is not new, but amplified. Within this climate of chaos, how might we imagine an emancipatory urban future rooted in community, care, and solidarity? Inspired by love and loss, our work is situated in the carceral urban geographies of the west side of Salt Lake City, Utah, the most diverse zipcode in the city, home to immigrant working class communities. Centering the knowledge of those who are most affected, our research draws upon an archive of community struggles, research projects, and public data, to map the contours of building a better world. Engaging relational ways of knowing, our documentation includes creative strategies engaged in the fight against a freeway expansion (informed by the coalition *Over Freeways*), a place-keeping map of West Side Tesoros



(or treasures) in the face of displacement, and critical participatory action research projects developed by the Mestizo Arts & Activism Collective that connect intergenerational immigrant struggles against the “school-to-sweatshop pipeline” with “the right to the city” (Cahill et al 2019), understood as the right for us “to stay together, whatever happens” – “Estamos juntos pase lo que pase” (Reyna Rivarola, 2019), in community. Documenting stories, our research explores the possibility of communicating with others across traumatic boundaries, as we attempt to build solidarity one story at a time as part of a collective effort to shape change and imagine another future. As Michelle Billies (2016) explains “For if oppressions act in concert, so do forces of liberation, like so many hands tearing open a net.”

Caitlin Cahill is an Associate Professor of Urban Geography & Politics, and Coordinator of the Social Justice/Social Practice Minor, Pratt Institute. A community-based urban studies & youth studies scholar, for over twenty years Caitlin has collaborated with communities in cities exploring the everyday intimate experience of racial capitalism, specifically as it concerns gentrification, immigration, education, and state violence. Recent projects include community engagement for the Housing SLC plan and Thriving in Place in Utah and the exhibition Re:Play at the Center for Architecture focused on young people’s reclaiming public spaces in public housing. Critical participatory research projects include the Emancipatory Urban Futures project; the Bushwick Action Research Collective and Growing Up Policed, in partnership with the Public Science Project and Make the Road New York. In Salt Lake City, Utah Caitlin co-founded the Mestizo Arts & Activism Collective, an intergenerational social justice think tank led by the urgent concerns of young people.

Caitlin’s work has been published widely in interdisciplinary journals including: *Area*; *Cultural Geographies*; *Environment & Planning A*; *City & Society*; *Gender, Space & Culture*; *ACME Journal of Radical Geography*; *Environment & Planning C: Politics & Space*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, and *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, among others, and edited collections including *Transcultural Cities*; *The Gentrification Reader*; *A Companion to Social Geography*; and *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*. Committed to interdisciplinary, engaged scholarship, Caitlin has received several awards for her public scholarship including a special recognition from the ACLU for her work with young people on educational rights & immigration; the “Speaking Truth to Power Award for Excellence in Collaborative Research” from the Urban Research-Based Action Network (URBAN); the Gender, Place & Culture Jan Monk Distinguished Professorship of Feminist Geography; and several Taconic Fellowship awards from the Pratt Center for Community Development. Currently, Caitlin is an editor at *Metro Politics*, and on the editorial boards of *Community Development*, *Children’s Geographies*, and *Curriculum Inquiry*. Caitlin completed her doctorate in Environmental Psychology from the City University of New York, Graduate Center.

Tuesday, June 24th | 13:30-14:45 | HS010

Behind the Scenes: writing for publication

Insights, Opportunities, and How to Get Involved

Richard Ingram and Gary Spolander

Social Work Education: The International Journal—the leading journal in the field of social work education—maintains a strong reciprocal relationship with the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW). In line with this collaboration, the journal has commissioned a special issue based on the ECSWE Salzburg 2025 conference.

Supported by an international advisory board representing the UK/Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, Latin America, and the USA, the journal plays a central role in shaping global social work education discourse.

This presentation offers a behind-the-scenes look at the journal's operations, including its aims, scope, and editorial process. Attendees will gain practical insights into how to submit a successful manuscript, what reviewers look for, and how to become a reviewer themselves. This is an excellent opportunity for emerging and experienced scholars alike to engage more deeply with the journal and the international social work education community. This session will be informal and interactive, and will be of particular interest to early career researchers.



eassw.org

As part of the program, on **Tuesday, June 24th** (meeting point at 16:00, Foyer), we invite you to join one of several **field visits to local social work organizations in Salzburg**. These visits offer a unique opportunity to gain first-hand insight into Austrian social work practice, engage with professionals in the field, and experience innovative approaches in a local context.

All field visits will **depart from FH Salzburg, the main conference venue**, where participants will meet and be **accompanied by a guide via public transportation** to the respective sites. To be mindful of time when departing, we highly recommend already having your public transportation passes ready **(with the exception of the field visit to “SOS Kinderdorf”, for which a private shuttle will be organized)**. If applicable, please let us know if you have limited mobility when registering, we will give our best to cater to your needs and find a suitable travel option.

If you have not had the chance to sign up for a field visit yet, please ask our team about free spots.



VinziDach-Housing First Salzburg
Homelessness Assistance
[More infos](#)



SOS Kinderdorf
Child and Youth Welfare Services
[More infos](#)



Neustart
Offender Rehabilitations Services
[More infos](#)



Gewaltschutzzentrum
Violence Prevention and Protection Services
[More infos](#)



Treffpunkt Burgfried Süd
Community Development Work / Residential Services
[More infos](#)



BWS Lehen
Community Development Work / Residential Services
[More infos](#)



Caritas Salzburg
Social Counseling / Labor Market Integration
[More infos](#)



Verein Spektrum
Social Space related Child and Youth Work
[More infos](#)

[Spontaneously want to join a field visit?](#)
[Find the online sign-up here or ask us!](#)

Conference Dinner I | TUE 24.06. | 19:00

Join us for an evening of good food, music, and relaxed conversation at Parkhotel Brunauer, close to Salzburg main station.

Please remember to bring your ticket in printed or digital form.

Back to Tuesday
Overview

CONFERENCE DINNER MENUE

STARTERS

Home-made salads
seasoned with oil, vinegar and dressing

Vitello Tonnato
coled cooked Veal with tuna-cream sauce with capers

SOUP

Asparagus cream soup - VEGAN

Beef Consomme with Sherry

MAIN COURSE

Roastbeef Medallions
served with root vegetables

Deep-fry nut crusted fish fillet
served with fennel and Beluga lentils

Strozapretti Pasta
with sauteed cherry tomatos and spinach

New potatos with fresh herbs - VEGAN

Market Vegetables - VEGAN

Ebly wheat risotto - VEGAN
served with asparagus

DESSERT

Chocolate mousse - VEGAN

Panna Cotta with orange flavour

DRINKS

Mineral water (sparkling/still)

Austrian white or red wine

Date & Venue

Parkhotel Brunauer
Elisabethstraße 45a, 5020 Salzburg
www.parkhotelbrunauer.at/en/arrival-and-contact/



Session I | TUE 24.06. | 11:45-13:00

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-01 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Dr. Mohamed Elsherbiny**
Breaking Digital Barriers: AI Strategies for Enhancing Digital Inclusion for People with Disabilities
- **Dr. Effrosyni Kokaliari et al.**
Exploring AI tools in Social Work Education and Practice
- **Dr. Florin Lazăr et al.**
Can technology mediated mindfulness contribute to stress reduction and improved mental wellbeing in social worker? Evidence from a study on Romanian workforce

IOP-Divides-02 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Prof. Dr. Mandy Schulze**
Challenges of rural social work in Germany and the responsibility of universities of applied sciences
- **Dr. Oleksandr Kondrashov**
Bridging Social Divides Through Equitable SW Education: A Pan-Canadian Vision Informed by Two Decades of Practice
- **Prof. Shorena Sadzaglishvili**
Implementing Innov. Project for SW and Psychology Academic Programs

IOP-Divides-12 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Neveen Ali-Saleh Darawhsy**
Social Work Education in Conflict Zones: Supporting Diverse Student Populations in Israel
- **Edith Blit-Cohen**
Service-learning as a tool for successfully connect underrep. students in higher ed.: The case of Ultra-Orthodox Students in Israel
- **MSW, Ph.D. Haneen Karram-Elias, Yafit Sulmani-Aidan**
Ethnic Minority Identity and Its Implications for At-Risk Young Adult Arabs: Insights from Israeli Social Workers

IOP-Health-01 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Tonimaire Benaton**
The Words Jump Around: Supporting Doctoral Candidates with Dyslexia
- **Prof. Dr. Carl Heese**
Supporting Social Work Students with psychiatric diseases in the Classroom
- **Dr. Avital Weller**
Training Social Work Students with Mental Health Conditions: Insights from Educators and Fieldwork Supervisors

IOP-Health-02 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Costanza Gasparo, Ivana Acocella**
The Creation of an Integr. Governance Model for Reception and Integr. Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: ..(Tuscany Reg.)
- **Prof. Dr. Alla Koval**
"Coping Stories" as a teaching method in higher ed. and . for promoting social connect. eg. of refugee mothers from Ukraine
- **Dalon P. Taylor, Dr. Marina Morgenshtern**
Beyond Resilience: Building Inclusive, Socially Connected and Sustainable Communities for Highly Skilled Immigrants

IOP-Politics-06 | ROOM: SE 255

- **David Prades**
IIAS: Embracing tomorrow from present actions
- **Prof. Guy Shilo**
Social work education under the threat posed to democracy by judicial reforms: The 2023 Israeli case
- **Prof. Irene Carvalho**
Social workers' capabilities in policy practice

SYM-Digital-01 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Susanne Iris Bauer, Marlene Jänsch**
Blended Learning Formats in Social Work Education: the Role of Personal teaching Competence and the Teaching of Social Responsibility

SYM-Divides-01 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Dr. Lisa Henglien Chen, Dr. Ann Anka, Dr. Michael Wallengren Lynch, Prof. Einav Segev**
Decolonising Social Work Field Education: Co-creating a Podcast for Global Transformation

SYM-Health-01 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Gordana Berc, Emma Ciglar**
Psychosocial support after an earthquake and personal experiences in difficult life conditions

SYM-Politics-01 | ROOM: SE 274

- **Prof. Uso Anucha, Sinthu Srikanthan, Carol Wade**
The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action: Beyond Anti-Black Racism Training to Transformational Action

IOP-Divides-01 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Shabnam Ahmed MBE**
Promoting Connectedness in Social Work Supervision: An Exploration through the Lens of South Asian Women in England
- **Dr. Mary Goitom, Shamette Hepburn**
Duoethnographic Encounters: Advancing Social Connectedness in Decolonial Social Work Education in Canada
- **Lara Campanharo, Francislaive Alves Nogueira de Almeida, Maria Lúcia Teixeira Garcia**
The debate of the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population in to Social Work curricula in Brasil
- **Dr. Sushri Sangita Puhana**
Illuminating the cultural connectedness in international adoptees in closed adoption

SYM-Overall-01 | ROOM: HS 054

- **Prof. PhD Annamaria Campanini, Wing-Hong Chui**
Advancing Global Standards in Social Work Education: Strategies, Innovations, and Collaborations

WOR-Divides-03 | ROOM: HS 017

- **Dr. Carol S. Cohen, Assist. Provost Cudore L. Snell, Assist. Prof. Jorūnė Vyšniauskytė-Rimkienė**
Groupwork in Social Work Education Today: Working Together to Promote Social Connectedness

Session II | TUE 24.06. | 14:30-15:45

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-02 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Francesca Irene Ferro, Elisa Fornero, Gaspare Musso**
Social Connectedness in ICT: an analysis among social work students
- **Assoc. Prof. Irene Katsama**
The importance of experiential learning in distance education
- **Susanne Machin-Autenrieth, Iris Altenberger, Laraine d'Antin, Thomas Dierker**
Ethical Tensions and Opportunities: Evaluating AI's Role in Social Work Student Education

IOP-Divides-03 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Dr. Phil. Friedegard Foeltz**
Promoting Social Cohesion and Inclusion through Foster Care for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Medical Fragility in Germany
- **Urszula Pado, B.A.**
Stigma in Social Work as a Barrier to Social Connectedness: Insights from Foster Families in Poland
- **Giulia Turrina**
How do we educate social work students in child protection interventions regarding social inequalities?
- **Dr. Ann Anka, Dr. Lisa Henglien Chen, Michael Wallengren Lynch, Prof. Einav Segev**
Unveiling Global Injustices: A scoping review of decolonising Social Work Field Education

IOP-Ecology-01 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Jan Kaňák**
Emphasising sustainability as a potential barrier to social connectedness in HEIs and as a challenge for school social work
- **Prof. Dr. Dieter Kulke, Melanie Werner, Ingo Hettler**
Successfully mastering the introductory phase for all students? Factors of social integration based on social and individual heterogeneity of students in different social work programmes in four universities in Germany
- **Prof. Carla Pinto, Maria Irene Carvalho**
Interconnections in the creation of a Master in Social Work and Sustainability

IOP-Health-03 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Assoc. Prof. Carina Henriksen**
Self-harm as a Social Phenomenon – The Importance of Social Connectedness
- **Dr. Penelopia Iancu**
Breaking social isolation and loneliness of families living with mental health problems: The role of social work
- **MMag. Dr. FH-Prof. Johanna Muckenhuber**
Addressing the social dynamics and psychodynamics of a circulus vitiosus of complex post-traumatic stress disorder and social isolation

IOP-Health-04 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Prof. Dr. Aristi Born**
Self-Development and Social Connectedness in Social Work Education from the Graduate Perspective
- **Kellee Thorburn McCrory, Miriam Landsman, Ph.D.**
Building peer professionals' advocacy skills through social connectedness
- **Prof. Einav Segev, Dr. Limor Gadot**
"It's hard for me to be compassionate for myself": Perceptions and practices of self-compassion by social work students

SYM-Divides-04 | ROOM: SE272

- **Dr. Erika Laredo, Shirleecia Ward, Petra Salisbury**
Dear Daughter: Exploring the experiences of Black British mother

WOR-Divides-04 | ROOM: HS 018

- **Veerle De Schrijver**
Training multi-perspective thinking through photography: an educational tool for social work

Session III | TUE 24.06. | 16:00-17:15

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

WOR-Digital-01 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Prof. Dr. Andrés Arias Astray, Prof. Dr. David Alonso González**
Co-Designing for Connectedness: Exploring the Role of Warm Experts in Technology Adoption for Older Adults

WOR-Divides-01 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Jolanda Berends, M.A. PhD student, Dr. Carlotta Mozzone PhD**
Interprofessional collaboration within the socio-educational domain

WOR-Divides-02 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Abigail Joseph-Magwood, Stefanie Kurt**
International Social Work education: Connectedness beyond national borders

WOR-Health-01 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Dr. Rita Vercas, Maria Isabel Sousa**
MIRROR CARE: Professional Selfcare in Social Work. A contribution to the Organizational Culture of CAFAP

WOR-Health-02 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Dr. Lori Sirs, Julie M. Meek**
Connecting Bodies, Connecting Minds: Community and Self-Care Through the Flow Arts

WOR-Ecology-01 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Ben Eggink, Clary van der Veen, Rick Schellingerhout**
Eco-social work and climate justice

WOR-Ecology-02 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Virag Havasi**
Deep adaptation workshop

WOR-Overall-01 | ROOM: SE 017

- **Marcin Boryczko, Madew Melinda, Linda Harms-Smith, Wendy Derynck**
Decoloniality as Radical Social Work Education and Practice

WOR-Overall-02 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Julia Kosztka**
Experiential and adventure therapy methods in social work education

WOR-Politics-01 | ROOM: SE 257

- **FH-Prof. Mag. (FH) Andrea Pilgerstorfer, DSA**
Teaching EMPOWERMENT to Social Work Students

Wednesday, June 25th Overview

Day 2! Today's program is packed with exciting opportunities to connect, learn, and engage. Highlights include a keynote lecture, the EASSW General Assembly, the poster presentations, and another chance to meet-the-editor. Dive into a variety of academic sessions—one of which will be recorded live as a podcast! The schedule below is interactive—click on framed sessions for more information.

Registration & Welcome

08:00-09:00 | Foyer

Please check-in at the registration & welcome desk located in the main entrance hall. To complete your registration and receive your badge, kindly present your conference ticket - either in printed or digital form. During check-in, you will also be asked to indicate your preferences regarding photo and video consent. If you are presenting a poster at the conference, you are welcome to leave it with us at the desk—we'll take care of it until the designated setup time. Campus parking tickets can be validated at the desk. Lockers are available for secure storage, and larger items such as suitcases can be placed in the back office. However, please note that storage space is limited and we cannot assume liability for your personal belongings.

Keynote Lecture by Lisa Große and Karsten Giertz

09:00-10:00 | HS 010

How can Social Work meaningfully engage those who withdraw from connection due to complex trauma and mistrust? This keynote explores relationship-based approaches in Clinical Social Work and the structural conditions needed to reach those most isolated.

Coffee Break 10:00-10:15 | Foyer

Session IV

10:15-11:30

IOP-Digital 03 · IOP-Divides 04 · IOP-Divides 08 · IOP-Ecology 02 · IOP-Health 05 · IOP-Health 09 · IOP-Politics 02 · IOP-Politics 03 · SYM-Digital 02 · SYM-Divides 02 · SYM-Health 02 · IOP-Overall 02 · WOR-Divides 05

Session V

11:45-13:00

IOP-Digital 04 · IOP-Divides 06 · IOP-Divides 07 · IOP-Health 07 · IOP-Health 08 · IOP-Politics 04 · SYM-Digital 03 · SYM-Politics 04 · IOP-Overall 03 · IOP-Overall 04 · WOR-Divides 06 · WOR-Divides 07

WOR-Digital 02: Live EASSW Podcast Recording! Michael Wallengren-Lynch & Richard Ingram in Room SE 017
Join an interactive discussion with a panel of guests on key issues in social work education.

Lunch 13:00-14:00 | Foyer

Poster Presentations I

13:30-14:45 | 1st Floor

Explore our poster gallery showcasing academic contributions related to social connectedness and its subthemes. Posters will be on display throughout the conference, with presenters available for discussion during scheduled time slots.

EASSW General Assembly

14:00-14:45 | 010

Attend the EASSW General Assembly to hear updates on the association's work, engage in key discussions, and take part in shaping the future of social work education in Europe. Open to all members and invited guests.

Coffee Break 15:30-16:45 | Foyer

Session VI

16:45-18:00

WOR-Ecology 04 · WOR-Health 03 · WOR-Health 04 · WOR-Divides 10 · WOR-Divides 11 · WOR-Ecology 03 · WOR-Overall 04 · WOR-Overall 03 · WOR-Politics 03 · WOR-Politics 04 · SYM-Politics 03 · SYM-Politics 06

Behind the Scenes SWE: The International Journal

16:45-18:00 | HS 017

Learn about Social Work Education: The International Journal, its mission, the development of special editions, and the launch of the upcoming ECSWE 2025 conference edition. With insights from editors and contributors, this session highlights opportunities for scholarly engagement and collaboration.

Back to ECSWE 2025
General Program Overview

Monday Overview
Pre-Conference

Tuesday Overview

Wednesday Overview

Thursday Overview

Lisa Große and Karsten Giertz

Hard-to-reach - reasons of being unconnected and necessity of embedding work

Clinical Social Work is often characterised by clients with multiple problems (so-called hard-to-reach clients). Clients have made often hurtful interpersonal experiences. Clinical Social Work therefore focuses on professional relationship and embedding work as part of an understanding approach in order to identify needs and implement appropriate interventions on this basis. The close connection between behaviour and relationships in the genesis and treatment of problems also requires an examination of structural and social barriers. The lecture provides an insight into the current debate on hard-to-reach clients, uses empirical findings and theoretical discussions to show the necessity and procedure of professional relationship and network design and at the same time addresses the necessary framework conditions at the institutional and structural level.

As Social Workers, Karsten Giertz and Lisa Große have repeatedly worked with (mainly mentally ill) people who have lost their social embedding for various reasons: They were and are virtually isolated, have acquired mistrust towards support persons and at the same time are dependent on social support due to their complex needs. Theoretical and empirical studies in recent years have shown that hurtful interpersonal experiences can lead to a wide range of target groups (young people with challenging behaviour, homeless people, refugees, people with mental illness) withdrawing from social connectedness in order to protect themselves. In order to meet this need, specific considerations are therefore required (description of the phenomenon of hard-to-reach, professional relationship work, psychosocial diagnostics, etc.), which we constantly discuss within the framework of Clinical Social Work with specialised colleagues in publications, work contexts and further training.

Lisa Große: Social Worker (B.A.), Clinical Social Worker (M.A.), 2011 to 2019 Social Worker in „Sozialpsychiatrischer Dienst“ (low-threshold counselling and support for people with (severe) mental illnesses and their relatives, crisis intervention), 2019-2022 research assistant at Alice Salomon University Berlin (project TraM - Understanding and supporting traumatised minor refugees - with the aim of a target group-specific psychosocial diagnostic model), PhD student at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences and the University of Vechta on the topic of social support processes for young refugees, 2023-09/2024 research assistant at the „Landesverband für Sozialpsychiatrie Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.“ (planning and implementation of further education programmes). e.V. (planning and implementation of further training for qualified assistance and on the topic of hard-to-reach clients), from 10/2024 guest lecturer at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin, since 2020 board member of ECCSW e.V.



Karsten Giertz: Master of Arts (Social Work), 2017 to 2020 Social Worker and project manager in integration assistance in the field of psychosocial support for people with mental illnesses, since 2020 Managing Director of the „Landesverband für Sozialpsychiatrie Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.“, since 2020 Board member of the European Centre of Clinical Social Work e. V. and Board member of the „Institut für Sozialpsychiatrie Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V.“, member of the expert groups Section Clinical Social Work and Case Management of the German Society for Social Work e.V., member of the DVSG e.V., member of the association EX-IN Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.. He is doing his doctorate at the University Medical Centre Greifswald on the psychosocial care of borderline patients and has several teaching assignments at various universities and institutions for Social Work.

Social work education and podcasts: live recording of the EASSW podcast from the conference

Michael Wallengren Lynch (Malmö University, Sweden) & Richard Ingram (University of Dundee)

In this workshop, we will record a live episode of the EASSW podcast, featuring a panel of guests, most likely the keynote speakers, who will reflect on the last six episodes and explore key topics relevant to social work educators. Audience participation will play a central role, fostering active engagement and input throughout the recording. Podcasts are increasingly playing a pivotal role in the facilitating the connectedness of ideas and networks globally within the social work education community. By integrating creative and inclusive methods into both the discussion and the dissemination of knowledge, this workshop offers an innovative approach to enhancing social work education, specifically within an academic conference setting.

Check us out on Spotify!



Social Work Education podcast

Welcome to the Social Work Education podcast brought to you by the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW). In this podcast, we explore social work education from all directions - East, West, North, and South - to listen to the voices, experiences, and histories of social work educators across the EASSW network. Hosted on Acast.

Check out the previous episodes. Links lead to the podcast profile on Spotify, all short descriptions are copied from there.



Social work education in Greece and Cyprus

In this episode, we turn our attention to the development of social work education in Greece and Cyprus. We'll delve into the historical evolution of social work education in these two countries, the challenges faced by both students and practitioners, and the influence of migration, conflict, and policy on the profession.



Eco-social work

Environmental issues challenge social workers globally, leaving many feeling overwhelmed and uncertain about how to act. This episode explores how an eco-social work perspective reshapes our role in the Anthropocene, offering fresh insights for students, practitioners, and educators alike.



Social work education in UK

Welcome to the third episode in the EASSW series on social work education across our network. Later in the episode, Richard will chat with Dr. Janice Nuss from Gwynedd Mercy University in the United States about her recent article. But first, we'll take a look at social work education on this side of the pond, specifically in the United Kingdom.



Social work education in Spain

In this episode, we will examine the trajectory of social work education in Spain, and we will also focus on a selected article from the Social Work Education Journal, the affiliated journal of the EASSW.



Social work education in post-communist countries

In this episode, we will examine the trajectory of social work education in post-communist countries, located in Eastern Europe, and we will also focus on a selected article from the Social Work Education Journal, the affiliated journal of the EASSW.

Wednesday, June 25th | 16:45-18:00 | HS010

The journal, special editions and the launch of the conference special edition.

Richard Ingram, Gary Spolander, Eric Chui, Zuzana Poklembova, Urban Nothdurfter

The aims and objectives of Social Work Education: The International Journal closely align with those of the EASSW and ECSWE Conference. The journal serves as a vital platform for the global social work education community to share research, ideas, dilemmas, and innovations. It is dedicated to highlighting both the synergies and the unique dimensions of social work education across diverse contexts.

This session will begin with a brief overview of the journal's mission and scope, followed by a focused presentation on the development of special editions. We will explore how individual

ideas or communities of practice can evolve into themed special issues, enriching the academic discourse within the field.

Professor Eric Chui will share reflections from his experience co-editing the Asia Social Work Education special edition, offering insights into the editorial process and regional collaboration.

Finally, we will officially launch the upcoming special edition linked to the ECSWE Conference in Salzburg, providing details on its theme, submission process, and opportunities for engagement.



eassw.org

Session IV | WED 25.06. | 10:15-11:30

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-03 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Dr. Suchetana Ghosh**
Through Digital Lenses: A Memoir of Metamorphosed Pedagogy during Covid 19 Pandemic in India
- **Eleonora Melchiorre, et al.**
Youth mental health promotion (..) learning from online peer-to-peer support projects in Italy
- **Prof. George Palattiyil, Dr Dina P Sidhva**
Digital Tools as Bridges: Enhancing Social Connectedness for Families of Care Home Residents in Scotland during COVID-19

IOP-Divides-04 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Romain Jammal-Abboud**
Culturally-Sensitive Supervision for Arab Social Work Students in Israel: Social Connectedness - Challenges and Opportunities
- **Dr. Siwar Makhoul Houry**
Experiences of Arab Social Workers in Israel During Wartime
- **Dalit Yassour-Borochowitz, Hadass Dickmann**
Ethical Challenges in Social Work Field Training During Times of War

IOP-Divides-08 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Karen Meixner**
Including the Voices of Forcibly Displaced Individuals in Social Work Education
- **Dr. Gabriela Novotna**
Leveraging Social Connectedness Through Praxis and Transformative Learning for Social Work Education
- **Prof. Ana Maria Oliveira, Inês Guerra**
Bridging Divides: Using Project-Based Learning and Critical Reflectio to Foster Cross-Cultural Social Connectedness in Social Work Education

IOP-Ecology-02 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Dr. Prof. Christoph Bördlein**
Behavioral Community Interventions - How to get involved successfully
- **Dr. Prof. Dieter Kulke, Vathsala Aithal**
Ensuring Connectedness: An innovative research-cum-teaching project on Social Work inspiring Sustainability Initiatives
- **Christophe Texier**
Social workers in the city: (re)connecting social work and urban planning through a European experiment

IOP-Health-05 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Dr. Agnes Bezzina**
Fostering Connection: Nurturing Student Mental Health in Social Work Education
- **Mgr. Hana Donéová**
Preparing Social Work Students to Combat Isolation and Loneliness
- **Kate Turcotte, Laura Krishnan-Mackie, Dr. Russell Medbery**
(Virtual) classroom connectedness: modeling use of the therapeutic space in online, graduate settings

IOP-Health-09 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Araceli Muñoz (Garcia)**
The Liar Rosario Endrinal: A feminist Communal Housing First model against homelessness and social isolation
- **Ayelet Makaros Ph.D., Dr. Drorit Levy**
Teaching social connectedness when the university is closed due to a national crisis
- **Oleksandr Kondrashov**
Designing a Ceremony-Based Course on Gender Diversity: The 9Genders Framework in Social Work Education

IOP-Politics-02 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Dries Dingenen**
Participation in social work – The role of social professionals as frontline workers
- **Prof. Ph.D. hab. Ewa Teresa Kantowicz**
Concept of social and educational activity/activation as the inspiration for social connectedness
- **Prof. Hussni Nasr**
“The Role of Digital Media in Fostering Political Connectedness and Enhancing Democratic Participation in Sultanate of Oman”

IOP-Politics-03 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Dr. Rolf Ahlrichs**
Voice-Resonance Walks in Social Work Education
- **Oliver Brockmann**
Fostering Social Connectedness through Critical Pedagogy in Social Work Education: Transgressing Traditional Boundaries
- **Dr. Beth Martin, Dr. Melissa Redmond**
Public library pivots: Maintaining social connectedness in a time of crisis

SYM-Digital-02 | ROOM: HS 054

- **Prof. Dr. Alexandra Engel, Jennifer Petry MSc, Kikko Neubert MA, Jessica Duda MA**
Action-oriented learning spaces on a hybrid campus to strengthen socio-emotional and collaborative learning processes in social and health sciences

SYM-Divides-02 | ROOM: SE 274

- **Prof. Dr. Kristel Driessens, Sascha van Gijzel**
Integrating experiential knowledge in social work education: findings from a European project

SYM-Health-02 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Samuel Kok, BA, MA**
How Housing First works in Salzburg – Impact analysis of Housing First in Salzburg based on three impact dimensions

IOP-Overall-02 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Mgr. Linda Koshi**
Between Duty and Love: The Impact of Informal Family Care on Young Caregivers
- **Dr. Doris Rosenlechner-Urbaneck**
Recognition, Care, and the Path to Social Connectedness
- **Thomas Schmid, Tobias Kindler**
From Social to Spatial Connectedness: The Influence of Housing on the Well-Being of Young People in Residential Care

WOR-Divides-05 | ROOM: HS 017

- **Prof. Dr. Sandra Fietkau**
Support Circles as a modern form of voluntary, person-centered collaboration in a “citizen-professional mix”

Session V | WED 25.06. | 11:45-13:00

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-04 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Araceli Muñoz**
Challenges of digital inclusion: NIDUS, a tool for people experiencing homelessness
- **Dr. Oleksandr Kondrashov**
Stand with Ukraine: A Global Digital Solidarity Movement

IOP-Divides-06 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Prof. Dr. Alla Koval, Prof. Dr. Dietrun Lübeck**
Social connectedness despite intersectional differences: Biographical approach as a method for (..)
- **Assoc. Prof. Linda Sjøfjell**
Social work students' experiences of social and cultural connectedness during Internships in the Global South
- **Dr. Karen VanDeusen, Dr. Dee Sherwood**
(Re)Constructing Competency, Cultural Humility, and Professional Identity: Post-Disaster Service Learning in Puerto Rico

IOP-Divides-07 | ROOM: SE 274

- **Romain Jammal-Abboud, Dr. Erga Kapolnik**
Connectedness in a Multicultural Academy: Challenges of Social Work Students on Their Way to Completing Their Bachelor's Degree at a Peripheral College: Zefat Academic College
- **Amra Šabić Ph.D.**
Community creation in a new neighbourhood

IOP-Health-07 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Oksana Boyko, Assoc. Prof. Nadiia Kabachenko PhD**
Supporting social connectedness during the wartime in Ukraine
- **Dr. Liat Shklarski**
Therapists' Experiences Treating Trauma Survivors Working in a War zone, while manag. Personal Trauma: Proposed Approaches(..)
- **Dr. Liat Shklarski**
Compassion Fatigue Among Israeli Therapists After the October 7th Attack: Challenges in Treating Bereaved and Hostage Families

IOP-Health-08 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Dr. Lukas Fellmann, Jana Osswald**
Effects of transitions on the personal networks of young people in residential care. A longitudinal comparison of three transition types
- **Miri Kestler-Peleg**
The central role of social connectedness in reducing psychological distress among mothers of NICU hospitalized preterm infants
- **Jitka Navrátilová Ph.D**
Enhancing Social Connectedness for Children of Incarcerated Parents
- **Dr. Prince Agwu**
'Whole-of-Health-Systems' Approach for Effective Protection of Rights to Quality Healthcare for School-Aged Children in Nigeria(..)

IOP-Politics-04 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Prof. Shorena Sadzaglishvili, Prof. Dr. phil. Mandy Schulze**
Navigating Social Awareness and Social Cohesion: The Role of SW in Post-Communist Communities of Georgia and East Germany
- **Dr. Prof. (FH) Irene Messinger**
Forging Connections Across Time: Historical Lessons from Persecuted Viennese SW in Resistance against the Nazi Regime (...)
- **Anikó Vida, Ph.D., Prof. Eva Grigori, Prof. Dr. Christine Krüger**
The impact of far right on social work practice
- **Prof. Dr. Francis Seeck**
Anti-classist political Education: Strengthening Connectedness in Social Work

SYM-Digital-03 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Dries Dingenen**
Participation in social work – The role of social professionals as frontline workers
- **Prof. Ph.D. hab. Ewa Teresa Kantowicz**
Concept of social and educational activity/activation as the inspiration for social connectedness
- **Prof. Hussni Nasr**
"The Role of Digital Media in Fostering Political Connectedness and Enhancing Democratic Participation in Sultanate of Oman"

SYM-Politics-04 | ROOM: HS 054

- **Prof. Dr. Rolf Ahlrichs**
Voice-Resonance Walks in Social Work Education
- **Oliver Brockmann**
Fostering Social Connectedness through Critical Pedagogy in Social Work Education: Transgressing Traditional Boundaries
- **Dr. Beth Martin, Dr. Melissa Redmond**
Public library pivots: Maintaining social connectedness in a time of crisis

IOP-Overall-03 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Janine Noorloos**
Photovoice as a Participatory Method to Address Social Connection for People Living with Lymphatic Filariasis in Ghana: (...)
- **Dr. Prospera Tadam**
Visualising racism and anti-racism in social work

IOP-Overall-04 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Dr. Michal Inbar**
cultural translation: teaching strategies in multicultural social work classroom
- **Dr. Michelle Newcomb**
Coddling or Connecting? Rethinking Trigger Warnings in Social Work Classrooms
- **Drs. Frieda va Brug, Karin Klaver**
Student Sense of Belonging

WOR-Divides-07 | ROOM: HS 019

- **Dr. Agnes Kriszan**
Empowerment by co-creation: improving efficacy of participation processes with LEGO® Serious Play®

WOR-Divides-06 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Lucia Galková,**
Storytelling as a Tool for Building Connectedness in Social Work Education

WOR-Digital-02 | ROOM: HS 017

- **DSW Michael Wallengren-Lynch, Prof. Richard Ingram**
Social work education and podcasts: live recording of the EASSW podcast from the conference



Poster Presentations | WED 25.06. & THU 26.06. | 13:30 - 14:45 | 1st Floor

Explore our poster gallery showcasing academic contributions related to social connectedness and its sub-themes. Posters will be on display throughout the conference, with presenters available for discussion during scheduled time slots. Below is a brief overview of the featured posters, titles may have been shortened.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

- POS-Digital-01
- **Aurora Castillo Charfolet, Virginia Jiménez Rodrigez**
Gender Bias and Artificial Intelligence in University Social Work Education

- POS-Digital-02
- **Peter Gallo, Iveta Bendulová**
Exploring the use of AI in social work education

- POS-Digital-03
- **Mgr. PhD. Livia Pastrnáková, PhD. Veronika Kmetóny Gazdová, PhD.**
Through Digital Lenses: A Memoir of Metamorphosed Pedagogy during Covid 19 Pandemic in India

- POS-Digital-04
- **Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeffer, Daniela Weil**
Social Work in a Globalised World

- POS-Digital-05
- **Natália Vranková, Beáta Balogová**
Digital interconnection of algorithmic tools in the lifestyle of social workers

- POS-Divides-01
- **Dr. Tamar Darvish, Dalit Yassour-Borochowitz**
Maintaining Our Academic Community in Times of War

- POS-Divides-02
- **Prof. Dr. Benjamin Fuchs**
Can social work programmes increase the social connectedness of young clients at the school-to-worktransition?A quantitative multilevel analysis

- POS-Divides-03
- **Jeroen Knevel, PhD**
Quartermaking: bridging separate worlds

- POS-Divides-04
- **Mirial Landsman**
Strengthening connectedness among rural social workers

- POS-Divides-05
- **Dr. Yael Lavy**
Reflection on Teaching Social Work in Binational Classrooms in Wartime

- POS-Divides-06
- **Osamu Miyazaki**
Rethinking Social Work for Indigenous Peoples in Japan: From the Perspective of Settler Colonial Studies

- POS-Divides-07
- **Dr. Liat Shklarski**
My DNA is on Fire: Exploring the Complex Intersections of Identity, Trauma, and Global Conflict in Social Work Education

- POS-Divides-08
- **Prof. Ester Zychlinski, Head of the School of Social Work**
The experience of single mothers by choice in Israeli Jewish society

- POS-Divides-09
- **Dr. Marjolijn Schouten, Diana van Dijk, Noah den Breems, Zowi van Woudenberg**
Equipping future social workers: diversity-sensitive education and navigating classroom challenges

- POS-Health-01
- **Stela Richnavská, Doc. Mgr. Michaela Skyba, PhD**
Holistic connectedness of trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practice of social work and self-care in solving social isolation and loneliness of migrants with an emphasis on improving their health

- POS-Health-02
- **Dr. Tamar Darvish, Hadass Dickmann**
Participatory self-in-field study method: A supervision model for social work field

- POS-Health-03
- **Marta Mikołajczyk**
Crisis of Homelessness and Social Isolation. Experiences of Polish Homeless People

- POS-Health-04
- **Assoc. Prof. PhD Zuzana Poklembová, Beáta Balogová**
Social barriers of Self-Care among Community Social Workers

- POS-Health-05
- **Prof. Ester Zychlinski, Head of the School of Social Work**
Connectedness among Older Adults: Mediating Roles of Optimism, Loneliness, and Psychological Distress between Sense of Community and Meaning in Life

- POS-Health-06
- **Prof. Agapi Kandylaki**
1. Creative Teaching on 'clinical and trauma informed social work': Using narratives on life experiences and a digital serious game for school social group work to enhance students' knowledge and competence in social connectedness and well being

- POS-Overall-01
- "Future Skills": qualifying social workers and teachers to empower the citizens of tomorrow

Poster Presentations | WED 25.06. & THU 26.06. | 13:30 - 14:45 | 1st Floor

Explore our poster gallery showcasing academic contributions related to social connectedness and its sub-themes. Posters will be on display throughout the conference, with presenters available for discussion during scheduled time slots. Below is a brief overview of the featured posters, titles may have been shortened.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

- **POS-Overall-02**
- **FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer**
Promote sustainable relationships (with both human societies and the natural world) through an International Social Work Perspective

- **POS-Overall-03**
- **Dr. Diana van Dijk**
Integrating the Capability Approach in social work education: The case of refugee integration in India

- **POS-Politics-01**
- **Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Zuzana Heinzová**
Preparing Civic-minded Professionals in Social Work – The Role of Service-Learning in Social Work Education

- **POS-Politics-02**
- **Flavia Allajbeu**
Repoliticizing Pedagogy: Resisting Post-Truth Drift in Canadian Social Work Education

Session VI | WED 25.06. | 16:45-18:00

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

WOR-Ecology-04 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Mag. Christina Pürgy**
RECONNECT: Holistic Facilitation Methods towards Earth Democracy, Empowerment and Resilience for Groups and Participatory Settings in Ecosocial Work Fields

WOR-Health-03 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Dr. Kris Atkinson**
"All of my professors felt more like humans:" Trauma-informed educational practices to promote social connectedness

WOR-Health-04 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Dr. Marinei Herselman**
The Sound of Silence Speaks Loud. Bridging the gap between trauma and social disconnection through a trauma-informed care programme for social workers in Eastern Cape, South Africa.

WOR-Divides-10 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Dr. Christine Tronnier, Laura Krishnan-Mackie**
Connecting through Learning and Learning Through Connection: Engaged Pedagogy in Global Social Work Education

WOR-Divides-11 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Dr. Diana van Dijk, Marjolijn Schouten, Eva Groenewegen, Noa den Breems, Zowi van Woudenberg**
Fostering diversity-sensitive practices in social work education: a co-creative approach to bridging social divides

WOR-Ecology-03 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Josien Hofs**
Eco-social work as promotor of justice

WOR-Overall-04 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Dr. Peter Schaefer**
Skills development in social work and teacher training: where are we and where are we going?

WOR-Overall-03 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos**
Connecting practitioners, students and educators through Enhancing Crisis Intervention Skills in European Social Work Education (SISWEC): Presenting an online training tools

WOR-Politics-03 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Jeroen Knevel Ph.D., Charlotte Kemmeren**
Connecting practitioners, students and educators through Enhancing Crisis Intervention Skills in European Social Work Education (SISWEC): Presenting an online training tools

WOR-Politics-04 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Prof. Dr. Francis Seeck**
Challenging Classism in Social Work Education: Towards Inclusive Pedagogy

SYM-Politics-03 | ROOM: SE 017

- **Michael Rasell, Mette Romer, Agnieszka Naumiuk, Anna Rurka**
Democratising social services: lessons for education and training from research across Europe

SYM-Politics-06 | ROOM: SE 017

- **Maria Brown, Carmel Borg, Denise Mariella Farrugia, Maria Mercieca,**
Chair: Thomas Galea
Reclaiming Connection: Emancipatory and Community-Rooted Practices through the Lens of Social Pedagogy

Thursday, June 26th Overview

The final day of ECSWE 2025! Today offers a keynote lecture, another masterclass, a capacity building workshop on global Social Work Education by the IASSW and FH Salzburg, a last round of academic sessions, reflections, and opportunities to connect before we close the conference. The schedule below is interactive—click on framed sessions or use the day tabs to explore more details.

Registration & Welcome

08:00-09:00 | Foyer

Please check-in at the registration & welcome desk located in the main entrance hall. To complete your registration and receive your badge, kindly present your conference ticket - either in printed or digital form. During check-in, you will also be asked to indicate your preferences regarding photo and video consent. If you are presenting a poster at the conference, you are welcome to leave it with us at the desk—we'll take care of it until the designated setup time. Campus parking tickets can be validated at the desk. Lockers are available for secure storage, and larger items such as suitcases can be placed in the back office. However, please note that storage space is limited and we cannot assume liability for your personal belongings.

Cross-Regional Dialogue in SWE by IASSW, EASSW & FH Salzburg

09:00-10:00 | HS 010

The aim of the workshop „On the way to international connectedness“ is to strengthen social work education and practice standards globally through cross-regional sharing and comparison of curricula and educational activities

Coffee Break 10:00-10:15 | Foyer

Session VII

10:15-11:30

IOP-Digital 01 · IOP-Divides 01 · IOP-Divides 02 IOP-Divides 12 · IOP-Health 01 · IOP-Health 02
IOP-Politics 06 · SYM-Digital 01 · SYM-Divides 01 · SYM-Health 01 · SYM-Politics 01 · SYM-Overall 01 · WOR-Divides 03

Session VIII

11:45-13:00

IOP-Digital 01 · IOP-Divides 01 · IOP-Divides 02 IOP-Divides 12 · IOP-Health 01 · IOP-Health 02
IOP-Politics 06 · SYM-Digital 01 · SYM-Divides 01 · SYM-Health 01 · SYM-Politics 01 · SYM-Overall 01 · WOR-Divides 03

Lunch 13:00-14:00 | Foyer

Poster Presentations II

13:30-14:45 | First Floor

Drop by to connect with editors from leading social work journals and explore publishing opportunities.

Masterclass Irene Messinger

14:30-15:45 | HS 010

A look at how marginalized biographies—especially of women in early 20th-century Vienna - challenge dominant narratives in the history of social work.

Session IX

14:30-15:45

IOP-Digital 02 · IOP-Divides 03 · IOP-Ecology 01 IOP-Health 03 · IOP-Health 04 · SYM-Politics 03 · WOR-Divides 04 · WOR-Politics 05

Coffee Break 15:30-16:00 | Foyer

Closing Ceremony

16:00-17:00 | 010

The ECSWE 2025 Conference concludes with a moment of reflection appreciation and forward-looking dialogue. Together, we celebrate the connections made and the insights gained over the past days.

Back to ECSWE 2025
General Program Overview

Monday Overview
Pre-Conference

Tuesday Overview

Wednesday Overview

Thursday Overview

Keynote Lecture |

Originally planned for Thursday morning, alternative arrangements are underway and will be announced soon.

Ruth Wodak

The normal common sense - the normalisation of a politics of emotions

Crises cause and trigger fear, panic, uncertainty, and insecurity. Crises polarize, frequently insurmountable (ideological) positions face each other. Currently, in 2024, we are confronted with a polycrisis (@ Adam Tooze). Therefore, dealing with continuous huge uncertainty challenges everyone involved, in the European Union and beyond. Everyone expects instructions, planning, explanations and ultimately security, i.e., adequate crisis communication, crisis management, and – more specifically – plausible and adequate solutions. (Wodak & Rheindorf 2022; Krzyżanowski, Wodak, Bradby, et al. 2023; Wodak 2024)

In fact, however, we are frequently confronted with scaremongering, simplifications, a range of different legitimization strategies and fallacies, victim and hero narratives, and a search for scapegoats.

In such exceptional (crises) times, self-interests and appeals to common-sense - after initial expressions of solidarity - are often placed before community interests, national or even local interests, before European or international treaties, and the validity of human rights is increasingly challenged.

In this lecture, I will discuss some salient legitimization strategies linked to a range of argumentation schemes, in respect to recently proposed “common sense” solutions (f. ex., to European migration and asylum policies, and to a “normal nationalism”), while analyzing EU policy papers, speeches of, and interviews with, politicians and the subsequent media reporting. It seems as if disinformation is dominating and appeals to common-sense (“the arrogance of ignorance” @ Wodak 2021, 2022) and to negative emotions are overriding fact-based reasoning.

Ruth Wodak is Emerita Distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies at Lancaster University, UK, and affiliated to the University of Vienna. Besides various other prizes, she was awarded the Wittgenstein Prize for Elite Researchers in 1996, an Honorary Doctorate from University of Örebro in Sweden in 2010, and an Honorary Doctorate from Warwick University in 2020. She is past-President of the Societas Linguistica Europaea. 2011, she was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver for Services to the Republic of Austria, and 2018, the Lebenswerk Preis for her lifetime achievements, from the Austrian Ministry for Women's Affairs. She is member of the British Academy of Social Sciences and member of the Academia Europaea. In March 2020, she became Honorary Member of the Senate of the University of Vienna. In June 2021, she was awarded the Bruno Kreisky Prize for her lifetime achievements, in November 2022 she received the Paul Watzlawick Ehrenring of the Medical Society + City of Vienna. She is member of the editorial board of a range of linguistic journals and co-editor of the journals *Discourse and Society*, *Critical Discourse Studies*, and *Language and Politics*. She has held visiting professorships in University of Uppsala, Stanford University, University Minnesota, University of East Anglia, and Georgetown University. 2008, she was awarded the Kerstin Hesselgren Chair of the Swedish Parliament (at University Örebro). In the spring 2014, Ruth held the Davis Chair for Interdisciplinary Studies at Georgetown University, Washington DC. In the spring 2016, Ruth was Distinguished Schuman Fellow at the Schuman Centre, EUI, Florence. 2017, she held the Willi Brandt Chair at the University of Malmö, Sweden. 2018/2019 and 2021, she was a senior visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna (IWM). Her research interests focus on discourse studies; gender studies; identity politics and the politics of the past; political communication and populism; prejudice and discrimination; and on ethnographic methods of linguistic field work. Ruth has published 12 monographs, 29 co-authored monographs, over 60 edited volumes and special issues of journals, and ca 420 peer reviewed journal papers and book chapters. Her work has been translated into English, Italian, French, Spanish, Hebrew, Portuguese, German, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Polish, Arabic, Russian, Czech, Bosnian, Greek, Slovenian, and Serbian. Recent book publications include *Identity Politics Past and Present. Political Discourses from Post-War Austria to the Covid Crisis.* (Exeter University Press 2022; with M. Rheindorf). *The Politics of Fear. The shameless normalization of far-right populist discourses* (Sage 2021, 2nd revised and extended edition); *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Migration Control* (Multilingual Matters



2020; with M. Rheindorf); *Identitäten im Wandel.* (Springer 2020; with R. de Cillia, M. Rheindorf, S. Lehner); *Europe at the Crossroads* (Nordicum 2019; with P. Bevelander); *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics* (Routledge 2018, with B. Forchtner); *Kinder der Rückkehr* (Springer 2018, with E. Berger); *The Politics of Fear. What Right-wing Populist Discourses Mean* (Sage, 2015; translated into the German, Russian, Bosnian, Chinese, and Japanese); *The discourse of politics in action: 'Politics as Usual'* (Palgrave, revised 2nd edition 2011; translated into the Chinese); *Methods of CDS* (Sage 2016, with M. Meyer; 3rd revised edition, translated into the Korean, Spanish, and Arabic); *Migration, Identity and Belonging* (LUP 2011, with G. Delanty, P. Jones); *The Discursive Construction of History. Remembering the German Wehrmacht's War of Annihilation* (Palgrave 2008; with H. Heer, W. Manoschek, A. Pollak); *The Politics of Exclusion. Debating Migration in Austria* (Transaction Press 2009; with M. Krzyżanowski); *The SAGE Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Sage 2010; with B. Johnstone, P. Kerswill); and *Analyzing Fascist Discourse. Fascism in Talk and Text* (Routledge 2013; with J E Richardson).

See <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/Ruth-Wodak> for more information.

Irene Messinger

Contested Memories: Writing the History of Social Work through Marginalised Biographies

Around the turn of the 20th century, the emergence of social work as a profession marked a significant transformation across European societies. Its development was closely intertwined with the women's movement with women founding institutions, shaping theories, and entering the public sphere as welfare professionals. Whose story is being told when writing the history of social work? Recent critiques from the US of the "whitewashing" of the profession's past have highlighted the dominance of White and upper-class narratives, overlooking the diverse contributions of marginalized women.

Following the First World War, Vienna became a laboratory for ambitious municipal reform. The period of "Red Vienna" (1919–1934) saw a rapid expansion of public welfare infrastructure — from health care and housing to youth welfare and professional training. Both public authorities and private, often denominational institutions contributed to a dense network of social provision.

With the rise of Austrofascism in 1934 and the National Socialist regime in 1938, this development was violently interrupted. While many public welfare workers remained in service and aligned themselves with the new regimes, others — particularly Jewish and leftist women — were dismissed, persecuted, or forced into exile. Their biographies offer alternative, intersectional narratives that challenge dominant accounts and reveal social work's historical entanglement with oppression and resistance.

Dr. Irene Messinger is a social scientist and professor at the University of Applied Sciences for Social Work in Vienna. She holds a PhD in political science from the University of Vienna, with a dissertation on the politics and criminalisation of so-called "Aufenthaltsehen" (marriages of convenience), which received multiple research awards. She has also studied marriages with foreign nationals during the Nazi era as a survival strategy for persecuted Jewish women and curated the exhibition *Persecuted. Engaged. Married.* Her research focuses on the intersections of gender, migration, biography, and social work, critically engaging with questions of power, marginalisation, and historical memory. Her current habilitation project on the persecution of Austrian social workers under Austrofascism and National Socialism will be published in two open access books in 2026. She teaches BA and MA students in social work at the University of Applied Sciences Vienna and in history at the University of Vienna. Prior to her academic career, she worked as a social worker in an independent NGO with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants — an experience that has profoundly shaped her research perspectives.



- Verfolgung und Widerstand von Fürsorgerinnen aus Wien 1934-1945. Kollektivbiografische Studie zur Geschichte Sozialer Arbeit, Baden-Baden: nomos Verlag (Open Access, 1.1.2026).
- Pionierinnen und Grenzgängerinnen der Sozialen Arbeit. 80 Biografien verfolger Fürsorgerinnen in Wien 1934-1945, Baden-Baden: nomos Verlag (Open Access, 1.1.2026).
- Intersektionale Sozialarbeitsgeschichte in der Hochschuldidaktik. Selbstzeugnisse von Fürsorgerinnen des Wiener Jugendamts in den 1930er Jahren. In: ÖZG 3/2024: Intersektionalität. Perspektiven aus Geschichtswissenschaften und Geschichtsdidaktik, 58-80. > article as PDF <
- Biographische Beiträge zum Ausstellungskatalog „Who cares? Jüdische Antworten auf Leid und Not“ Familienbiographie Teleky (Ludwig and Gisella Teleky, Dora Teleky-Brücke, Elsa, Anna Teleky) Einzelbiographien: Marianne Prager, Senta Tschelnitz
- Transfer of knowledge: A case study of two Viennese social workers in British exile. In: Bulletin of the Social Work History Network, Kings College London, vol 8, nr. 1, March 2022, 25 – 35.
- Tracing Persecuted Social Workers during the 1930s in Vienna. In: ERIS Journal 4/2021. Social Work History, Summer 2021, 36-52.
- Tracing Persecuted Social Workers during the 1930s in Vienna. In: ERIS Journal 4/2021. Social Work History, Summer 2021, 36-52.
- Co-publisher in AG Migrationsgesellschaft (Hg.) (2021) Soziale Arbeit in der Postmigrationsgesellschaft. Kritische Perspektiven und Praxisbeispiele aus Österreich. Weinheim/München: Beltz Juventa Verlag.
- Die ersten 50 Jahre: Ausbildungen in der Fürsorge 1912 bis 1962. In: Josef Bakic, Alexander Brunner, Verena Musil (Hg.) (2020): Profession Soziale Arbeit in Österreich – ein Ordnungsversuch mit historischen Bezügen (Buchreihe Basiswissen Soziale Arbeit Band 1), Wien: Loecker Verlag, 40-53.

On the way to international connectedness
Cross-Regional Dialogue in Social Work Education

IASSW Capacity Building Workshop

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the European Association of School of Social Work (EASSW) and Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (FH Salzburg) invite you to participate in a jointly convened Capacity-Building Workshop on global social work education.

This workshop aims to strengthen social work education and practice standards worldwide, by facilitating cross-regional exchange and comparison of curricula and educational practices.

Program
<p>Welcome: „Social Work Education in Austria“ by Prof. (FH) Dr. Martin Lu Kolbinger Chair of Scientific Committee, Program Director Social Work / University of Applied Sciences Salzburg, Austria</p> <p>Welcome: „Social Work Education at a global perspective“ by Prof. Antoinette Lombard IASSW President, University of Pretoria, South Africa</p>
<p>Presentations moderated by Prof. Janestic M. Twikirize, IASSW Secretary and Chair Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Work Education (SWE) in the Asia Pacific Region by Prof Pamela Singla IASSW Board Member, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, India• SWE in the African Region by Prof. Shahana Rasool IASSW Board Member, Department of Social Work University of Johannesburg, South Africa• SWE in the North American and Caribbean Region by Prof. Colam Mathbor IASSW Board Member, Interim Dean and Professor School of Social Work, Monmouth University, USA• SWE in the Latin American Region by Prof. Nélida D. Ramírez Naranjo Representing President of Latin America, School of Social Work, The Catholic University of Maule (UCM), Chile• SWE in the European region by Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos IASSW Board Member, EASSW President, Department of Social Sciences/ Social Work Program School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Nicosia, Cyprus
<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p>
<p>Concluding remarks by Prof. Zuzana Poklembova EASSW Board Member, Department of Social Work/ University of Prešov, Slovakia</p>

Session VII | THU 26.06. | 10:15-11:30

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-05 | ROOM: SE 253

- **DI BEd MLS Ursula Müllner, Mag.a Mag.a Maria Clarissa Canete**
The use of artificial intelligence in the social economy: potentials and challenges
- **Dr. Michelle Newcomb**
Risk vs. Reward: Navigating the Dual Nature of Generative AI in Social Work Organisations
- **Andrea Rogi-Lins**
Organizational Culture in Social Instit.: Digital Challenges and Cultural Change as Future Perspectives for Organizational Develop.

IOP-Divides-05 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Dr. Yael Itzhaki-Braun**
Fostering inclusivity: community social work in religious contexts
- **Zoltan Gabor Lukacs**
An opportunity to rise(?) – Examining marginalised untouchables in South Indian society
- **Samah Mahamid, Haneen Elias-Karram**
'I Was Like a Man in the Home': Resilience Processes Facilitating the Transition to Adulthood Among At-Risk young adults Arab in Israel

IOP-Divides-09 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Raghda Alnabilsy**
In the shadow of multiple barriers- economic violence against Arab-Palestinian women in Israel: recommendations for implementing context-aware intervention
- **Dr. Mmaphuti Percy Dipela**
The role played by Northern Sotho (Sepedi) Idioms and proverbs towards oppression and abuse of women by men
- **Vasileia Papadaki, Vasiliki Karaligka, Vasileianna Kantourou**
Connectedness to the Department and the University: LGBTQ+ social work students speak out

IOP-Ecology-03 | ROOM: SE 274

- **Shabnam Ahmed, MBE, Stephen Bahooshy**
Fostering Social and Workplace Ecology: How Compassionate Leadership could help Address Systemic and Socialised Bias in Social Care
- **Atefeh Safarabadi Farahani**
An ecosocial approach to traditional water management

IOP-Health-06 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Prof. Dr. Katrin Liel,**
Teaching on loneliness
- **Ayelet Makaros, Tomer Shuv Siboni**
Have we been socially connected enough to rural communities in a crisis?
- **Dr. Lea Zanbar**
"Nothing about us without us": Factors contributing to community activists' empowerment and success in promoting accessibility for people with disabilities

IOP-Health-10 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Dr. Gabriela Novotna**
Social Connectedness Across Diverse Recovery Approaches: The Experiences of Professionals with Lived and Living Experience
- **Dr. Pervez Dina Sidhva, Prof. George Palattiyil**
Rethinking Social Bonds and Connectedness: Insights from Carers of Care Home Residents during COVID-19 (..) in Scotland for SWE
- **Dr. Lori Sirs**
Harnessing the Healing Power of Community: Embodied Learning as Pedagogy

IOP-Politics-05 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Dr. Karen VanDeusen, Dr. Dee Sherwood**
Constraints on Academic Freedom: Democratic Ideals, Reproductive Rights, and Care Work in the Academy
- **Prof. Katarzyna Ornacka, et al.**
Psychosocial protection of social workers and people affected by humanitarian crises from the perspective of Polish-Israeli research.
- **Karel Rezac Ph.D, Jan Kaňák Ph.D.**
Kindness in context of the social connectedness as possible topic of social work education – Case study from Czech Republic
- **Maria Lúcia Teixeira Garcia, Francislaine Alves**
Challenges and Student Support for Black Women in Brazilian Higher Education

IOP-Overall-05 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Dr. Heiko Berner**
Social Work and Social Cohesion
- **Kendal David**
Invisible, abandoned, and ignored: Disabled people's experiences receiving social assistance "allowances" in Canadian institutions
- **Prof. Yan Zhao, Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås**
Rethinking social work education in the context of Nordic welfare state: A collaborative perspective

SYM-Digital-04 | ROOM: SE 271

- **Joshua Weber**
The Dynamics Between Social and Digital Connectedness: Pathways in Social Work Education

SYM-Divides-03 | ROOM: HS 054

- **Prof. Dr. Christos Panagiotopoulos, Rasha Nagem, Urban Nothdurfter PhD, Prof. Dr. Markus Pausch**
Enhancing Crisis Intervention Skills in European Social Work Education: Findings from the SISWEC Erasmus+ Project

SYM-Health-03 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Prof. Dr. Anna Lena Rademaker, Kerstin Krottendorfer**
Enhancing social connectedness in diagnosis in social work – empirical results and considerations about quality in social diagnosis from the trinational research group "QuaSoDia"

SYM-Politics-02 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Dr. Heinz Stapf-Finé, Prof. Dr. Daniela Molzbichler, Janette Otterstein**
Threat to democracy – contributions of social work towards greater social cohesion

WOR-Divides-08 | ROOM: HS 017

- **Dr. Prof. Hannah Reich**
International Social Work Acting in Crises: Alleviating symptoms or structural transformation?

Session VIII | THU 26.06. | 11:45-13:00

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

IOP-Digital-06 | ROOM: SE 274

- **Prof. Vandana Chaudhry**
Connection or Control: Navigating the Landscapes of Digitalized Social Work
- **Prof. Tiziana Tarsia, Tindaro Belliniva, Carmela Lo Presti**
Digital tools and the democratization of social service information: enhancing agency and access
- **Dalon P. Taylor, Dr. Derval Prince II**
Creating virtual pathways of immersive experiences for racialized populations in social work through extended reality

IOP-Divides-10 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Dr.in phil. Kathrin Bereiter**
(Dis)connected!? Agency in the Austrian preventive detention
- **Gisela Negron-Velazquez, Janice Fernández-Alicea**
Title IV-E Social Work Training Program (PROCATS IV-E): Effective partnerships to improve connectedness across social and cultural divides
- **Prof. Dr. Jolanta Pivoriene**
Applying Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory to Social Work and SWE: insights from Nepal, Germany, and Lithuania

IOP-Divides-11 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Dr. Angela Rein, Diminik Bodmer, Jana Osswald**
Intersectional perspectives on doing parenthood of care leavers
- **Amra Šabić**
Underage drug users: ethical dilemmas or simply the implementation of social work principles
- **Prof. Dr. Martina Tissberger**
Power and Difference in Social Work. How social connectedness across social and cultural divides can be promoted.

IOP-Health-11 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Dr. Pnina Dolberg**
Role Perception and Challenges among Home Care Workers for Older Adults: A Qualitative Study
- **Noa Parizian Steinberg**
Who will take care of the senior citizens? Factors associated with the intention to work with older adults among first year social work students
- **Dr. Dina Pervez Sidhva**
Supporting Social Connectedness in Dementia Care: Insights from South Asian Family Carers in Scotland

IOP-Health-13 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Vânia Cavacas Pires**
The relevance of SWE in addressing the invisibility and discrimination experienced by trans persons, an integrative review
- **Karl Mason**
Liminal (dis)connectedness and the relational needs of people who are homeless
- **Chaya Possick, Ph.D.**
Kin Foster Care: Supporting Social Workers in Their Efforts to Empower Extended Families to Enhance Social Connectedness for Kin Foster Children

IOP-Politics-01 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Raghda Alnabilsy, Siwar Makhoul-Khoury, Hanin Mordi**
Identity Crisis, Coping Strategies, and Help-Seeking among Arab-Palestinian Adults in Israel Following the 7 October War
- **Paola Limongelli, Francesca Corradini**
Teaching and learning inclusive and anti-oppressive social work practices: the Unconventional Practice Placements experience.
- **Sabina Meiling**
Empowering families; the role of law and order in out-of-home placement
- **Dr. Sagit Lev**
Managing Crisis: Perspectives of Social Workers on management role during violent political crisis

IOP-Overall-06 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Tanja Koskinen (Doctoral researcher)**
Social Connectedness through the Involvement of Experts by Experience in Social Work Education
- **Prof. Elizabeth Lightfoot**
The role of doctoral education in preparing social work educators to teach students about inclusive democracy
- **Dr. Georgiana-Cristina Rentea**
How challenging is it to conduct an experiment in social work research? Evidence from a study on Romanian workforce
- **Joanna Santos-Petiot, et al.**
Social Work Doctorates: Exploring the challenges for Brazil and Scotland

IOP-Overall-07 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Assist. Prof. Molly Driessen, Dr. Lynette M. Renner**
Increasing Social Work Knowledge and Readiness to Respond to Interpersonal Violence
- **Dr. Panagiotis Pentaris**
Searching for social work in queer activism and the tackle of social death: the case of Greece
- **Kacper Wcislo**
Habitat of Cracov's homeless in the age of migration – critical analysis in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory.

SYM-Digital-05 | ROOM: HS 054

- **Nadine van der Meulen**
Stress and Relief Factors from Digitalization in Social Work

SYM-Politics-05 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Prof. Dr. Janine Linßer, Prof.in Dr.in Barbara Rink, Dennis Galanti**
Connectedness in politics and democracy – how young people are involved and future social workers are trained through cooperation between university, municipal administration and youth work

SYM-Overall-02 | ROOM: SE 273

- **Prof. Dr. Johannes Kloha, Dr. hab. Mariusz Granosik, Anna Jarkiewicz**
Connecting Social Work Education through Transnational Learning Concepts

WOR-Divides-09 | ROOM: HS 017

- **Viktoria Stifer**
Research and Practice United: Political and Transformative Social Work within the Uni4Equity Framework

Poster Presentations | WED 25.06. & THU 26.06. | 13:30 - 14:45 | 1st Floor

Explore our poster gallery showcasing academic contributions related to social connectedness and its subthemes. Posters will be on display throughout the conference, with presenters available for discussion during scheduled time slots. Below is a brief overview of the featured posters, titles may have been shortened. [Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

- POS-Digital-01
- Aurora Castillo Charfolet, Virginia Jiménez Rodriguez
Gender Bias and Artificial Intelligence in University Social Work Education

- POS-Digital-02
- Peter Gallo, Iveta Bendulová
Exploring the use of AI in social work education

- POS-Digital-03
- Mgr. PhD. Livia Pastrnáková, PhD. Veronika Kmetóň Gazdová, PhD.
Through Digital Lenses: A Memoir of Metamorphosed Pedagogy during Covid 19 Pandemic in India

- POS-Digital-04
- Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeffer, Daniela Weil
Social Work in a Globalised World

- POS-Digital-05
- Natália Vranková, Beáta Balogová
Digital interconnection of algorithmic tools in the lifestyle of social workers

- POS-Divides-01
- Dr. Tamar Darvish, Dalit Yassour-Borochowitz
Maintaining Our Academic Community in Times of War

- POS-Divides-02
- Prof. Dr. Benjamin Fuchs
Can social work programmes increase the social connectedness of young clients at the school-to-worktransition?A quantitative multilevel analysis

- POS-Divides-03
- Jeroen Knevel, PhD
Quartermaking: bridging separate worlds

- POS-Divides-04
- Mirial Landsman
Strengthening connectedness among rural social workers

- POS-Divides-05
- Dr. Yael Lavy
Reflection on Teaching Social Work in Binational Classrooms in Wartime

- POS-Divides-06
- Osamu Miyazaki
Rethinking Social Work for Indigenous Peoples in Japan: From the Perspective of Settler Colonial Studies

- POS-Divides-07
- Dr. Liat Shklarski
My DNA is on Fire: Exploring the Complex Intersections of Identity, Trauma, and Global Conflict in Social Work Education

- POS-Divides-08
- Prof. Ester Zychlinski, Head of the School of Social Work
The experience of single mothers by choice in Israeli Jewish society

- POS-Divides-09
- Dr. Marjolijn Schouten, Diana van Dijk, Noah den Breems, Zowi van Woudenberg
Equipping future social workers: diversity-sensitive education and navigating classroom challenges

- POS-Health-01
- Stela Richnavská, Doc. Mgr. Michaela Skyba, PhD
Holistic connectedness of trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practice of social work and self-care in solving social isolation and loneliness of migrants with an emphasis on improving their health

- POS-Health-02
- Dr. Tamar Darvish, Hadass Dickmann
Participatory self-in-field study method: A supervision model for social work field

- POS-Health-03
- Marta Miłośajczyk
Crisis of Homelessness and Social Isolation. Experiences of Polish Homeless People

- POS-Health-04
- Assoc. Prof. PhD Zuzana Poklembová, Beáta Balogová
Social barriers of Self-Care among Community Social Workers

- POS-Health-05
- Prof. Ester Zychlinski, Head of the School of Social Work
Connectedness among Older Adults: Mediating Roles of Optimism, Loneliness, and Psychological Distress between Sense of Community and Meaning in Life

- POS-Health-06
- Prof. Agapi Kandylaki
1. Creative Teaching on 'clinical and trauma informed social work': Using narratives on life experiences and a digital serious game for school social group work to enhance students' knowledge and competence in social connectedness and well being

- POS-Overall-01
"Future Skills": qualifying social workers and teachers to empower the citizens of tomorrow

Poster Presentations | WED 25.06. & THU 26.06. | 13:30 - 14:45 | 1st Floor

Explore our poster gallery showcasing academic contributions related to social connectedness and its subthemes. Posters will be on display throughout the conference, with presenters available for discussion during scheduled time slots. Below is a brief overview of the featured posters, titles may have been shortened. **To read the full abstract, please select the poster.**

- POS-Overall-02
- FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer
Promote sustainable relationships (with both human societies and the natural world) through an International Social Work Perspective

- POS-Overall-03
- Dr. Diana van Dijk
Integrating the Capability Approach in social work education: The case of refugee integration in India

- POS-Politics-01
- Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Zuzana Heinzová
Preparing Civic-minded Professionals in Social Work – The Role of Service-Learning in Social Work Education

Session IX | THU 26.06. | 14:30-15:45

This is a compact overview. If necessary, co-authors have been replaced with „et al.“ and contribution titles have been shortened in some form.

[Find all abstracts in the Abstract Reader - please use search function](#)

IOP-Digital-07 | ROOM: SE 254

- **Dr. Liat Shklarski**
AI in Social Work Education: Balancing Innovation and Ethics
- **Susanne Machin-Autenrieth, Iris Altenberger**
Safeguarding in the Digital Age: Social Work Education and Online Harm
- **Miriam Schilling**
Perceived connectedness of social workers with youth in online counselling interventions

IOP-Overall-01 | ROOM: SE 257

- **Vanja Branica**
Practice teaching in social work as an investment of professional connectedness: the perspective of practice teachers
- **Boróka Fehér, Méabh Savage**
Raising the voices of women in homelessness – an example of the co-creation of knowledge through participatory action research
- **Valentina Kozjak, PhD Student**
Social Connectedness through Participatory Action Research: Progress and Challenges in Social Work in Croatia

IOP-Ecology-04 | ROOM: SE 256

- **Geraldine Graham, Karen Meixner, Iris Altenberger**
The Social Work Practitioner Role: Connecting with Environmental Justice.
- **Dr. Issie Jacobs**
A Framework to Cultivate Environmental Social Work and Environmental Citizenship

IOP-Health-12 | ROOM: SE 255

- **Dr. Pnina Dolberg, Dr. Sagit Lev**
Relationship Between War-Related Stress and Caregiver Burden in Adult Children of Aging Parents
- **Dr. Royce Hutson**
Idaho Health Communities Challenge: A Public Health Model for Preventing Violent Extremism
- **Mgr. Wioletta Jóźwiak-Majchrzak**
Social work supervision for social support teams. Practice and education.

IOP-Politics-08 | ROOM: SE 018

- **Prof. Dr. Judit Csoba**
“Social empowerment or social dependency” Redefining the goals and tasks of social work and social education in an authoritarian power structure (Hungary)
- **Duygu Korkmaz, M.A.**
Kurdish Women’s Movement: Source of Connection and Empowerment in the European Diaspora?
- **Assoc. Prof. Dee Sherwood, Dr. Linda Reeser**
Subversion of Neoliberal Austerity Agendas within the Academy: Implications for Social Work Education, Solidarity, and Democratic Ideals

IOP-Overall-08 | ROOM: SE 253

- **Turati Maria**
Ethics of social work professional supervision
- **Turati Maria**
Teaching and Learning Professional Writing in Social Work: Perspectives of students and teachers in Two Italian Universities
- **Prof. Dr. Jolanta Pivorienė, Prof. Dr. Irena Žemaitaitytė**
Building Social Connectedness via Co-designing a Training Course with Older Learners

WOR-Politics-02 | ROOM: SE 019

- **Prof. Kataryzna Ornacka**
The legacy of the Holocaust in social work education: threats and challenges related to “moral revisionism” after 7.10.2023

WOR-Overall-05 | ROOM: HS 017

- **IASSW & FH Salzburg**
Prof. Dr. Martin Lu Kolbinger, Prof. Antoinette Lombard, Prof. Janestic M. Twikirize, Prof. Pamela Singla, Prof. Shahana Rasool, Prof. Golam Mathbor, Prof. Prof. Névida D. Ramírez Naranjo, Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos, Prof. Zuzana Poklembova

Cross-Regional Dialogue in Social Work Education

WOR-Politics-05 | ROOM: SE 272

- **Maria Brown, Carmel Borg,**
Assess, Reflect, Connect! A participatory workshop to reflexively assess your organisation’s or community’s journey towards inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable social connectedness

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the planning and realization of this conference.

Hosting a large-scale international conference for a relatively small department would not have been possible without the strong support and close collaboration of numerous service departments, colleagues and students.

Our appreciation goes to the reviewers who generously volunteered their time to support the scientific program and help ensure its quality and integrity.

[A full list of reviewers is available here.](#)

This conference is made possible with the financial support of the following partners:



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Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-01

Breaking Digital Barriers: AI Strategies for Enhancing Digital Inclusivity for People with Disabilities

Dr Mohamed Elsherbiny

Sultan Qaboos University (Oman)
Oman

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) presents significant opportunities for enhancing digital inclusivity, particularly for people with disabilities, who often face unique challenges in digital environments. This study investigates how AI can be utilized to address these digital barriers, focusing on both the challenges they encounter and potential AI-driven solutions. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, this research combines a social survey of 65 students with disabilities from the College of Arts and Social Sciences with in-depth interviews with seven academic experts.

The finding indicated many barriers, such as limited accessibility of online platforms, lack of adaptive tools tailored to different disabilities, barriers in communication, cultural barriers and inadequate support for digital literacy skills. These barriers, as reported by students, often hinder their ability to engage fully with digital learning resources, academic services, and campus activities. In response, expert interviews focus on proposing targeted AI-driven strategies to mitigate these challenges, suggesting solutions that are directly aligned with the identified barriers. Some mentioned strategies include the development of adaptive user interfaces that can be personalized to meet diverse accessibility needs, AI-powered assistive tools that facilitate seamless interaction with digital content, and AI-enabled personalized learning applications designed to enhance digital literacy and empower users.

Digital Inclusion, Disabled students, Artificial intelligence

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-01

Exploring AI tools in Social Work Education and Practice

Dr Effrosyni Kokaliari Co-Author(s): Dr.Effrosyni Kokaliari, Arianna Susi Social Worker, Dr. Joyce Taylos

Springfield, United States

This seminar aims to engage faculty and introduce key AI tools and strategies for integrating them into teaching and practice. Ethical concerns, such as, equity, bias, and confidentiality, will be addressed throughout the session. We will also explore the concept of plagiarism and potential ways to tackle it. Participants will engage in hands-on activities and discussions to discover AI's potential challenges, and opportunities. By the end of the seminar, participants will have gained experience using tools like ChatGPT-4 and 5, Otter.ai, Synthesia, Menti-meter, and how to present bilingually. We will also explore mental health bots that offering therapy and promising examples in child protection. These tools can enhance teaching, streamline administrative tasks, and provide innovative approaches and safety.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the benefits and challenges of AI in social work education and practice.
2. Explore and use tools, including ChatGPT and other AI applications relevant to social work.
3. Understand ethical considerations involved in AI use, such as privacy, equity, and relational practice.
4. Develop strategies for responsible AI integration aligned with social work values and ethics
5. Brainstorm innovative ways to apply AI for promoting social justice and academic integrity, with a special focus on the creation of alternative assignments, podcasts, videos, to enhance learning, reduce administrative tasks, and boost productivity.

By the end of the seminar faculty will have initial knowledge on integrating AI into teaching, research and practice, within a context for enhancing social justice and equity.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-01

Can technology mediated mindfulness contribute to stress reduction and improved mental wellbeing in social workers? Evidence from a study on Romanian workforce

Dr Florin Lazr

Co-Author(s): Mihai, Anca; Luca, Adrian

University of Bucharest,
Romania

Social workers are trained specialists supporting service users to respond to the challenges of low opportunities and marginalisation, sometimes in the context of growing wealth and inequality, as it is the case of the countries of the Global North. In our presentation we aim to engage in the conversation concerning the role of digital connectedness and (new) technologies in promoting healthy working conditions, democracy, public health, and human rights. We present results from an experiment in which social workers participated in two group mindfulness sessions, one of which was mediated online. The data was collected through an online survey before and after (immediately after, three and six months after) in which participants self-reported the level of stress and mental wellbeing. We used two scales to assess the level of stress (Perceived Stress Questionnaire) and the level of mental wellbeing (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale). The preliminary results show that even though the mental wellbeing increased and stress decreased for the group which participated in mindfulness online, the reverse happened for the group which participated in-person. Further research is needed to investigate the reasons for these observations; it nevertheless determined us to consider the advantages of online group interventions, such as flexibility and perceived control over one's time, which are discussed in the concluding remarks.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-02

Social Connectedness in ICT: an analysis among social work students

Francesca Irene
Ferro Co-Author(s): Gaspare Musso, Elisa Fornero

Università di Torino, Italy

How ICT in Social Work (SW) became an integral part of education has long been the subject of studies (Guidi & Cellini, 2024); the pandemic experience then caused a major boost which manifested itself through the proliferation of remote teaching experiments, the development of digital tools and the consequent expansion of theoretical contributions on the subject. In the post-pandemic period, a more relaxed phase of organic reflection on the use of ICT has begun, which led to the recognition of how these are a reality in terms of integration with traditional teaching and training tools (Guidi & Spatscheck, 2024). These reflections explore the ways in which ICT are used and their educational value; less investigated seems to be, though, the dimension of the dynamics and connections generated in the field of the student social fabric.

This paper focuses on this, taking as a starting point the identification of the main formal and informal digital information channels used within the student community. The dynamics and phenomena that emerge during the interactions mediated by technologies, both within the student group and with the university institution will be investigated, asking some questions: whether and how these new digital tools contribute to generate, amplify and strengthen social connections and what opportunities and risks they present.

The cognitive objective is pursued through a research involving social work students from a university in northern Italy. The methodology adopted combines qualitative and quantitative tools, drawing empirical material from the administration of a questionnaire and from semi-structured interviews.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-02

The importance of experiential learning in distance education

Irene Katsama, Associate Professor, DUTH
Dr Olga Katsiani, PhD in Social Work DUTH Co-Author(s): OLGA KATSIANI

Democritus University of Thrace,
Greece

This study focuses on Experiential learning and its importance in education. The learning process includes creativity, reflection, efficiency, personal involvement, and strong motivation. Experiential learning is a process of acquiring knowledge through experience and the search for personal meaning in it. The above-described process promotes the enhancement of individuals' skills but also their awareness of social problems and issues concerning human relations while relying to a great extent on the active involvement of the individuals themselves, their self-management, participatory responsibility, and interaction. Accordingly, the achievement of learning is largely based on the active involvement of the participants themselves. The aim of the present study was to investigate the participants' perceptions regarding the objectives and effectiveness of experiential learning in distance education. Twenty-five (25) students of Social Work Department of Democritus University of Thrace took place in the research. Discourse analysis was carried out using qualitative research methodology. This was followed by the analysis of the findings, the identification and highlighting of thematic units.

In this study, the possibilities and benefits of experiential learning in distance education, as well as the challenges and difficulties are thoroughly examined. All of this is thoroughly presented, indicating educational benefits for students along with implications for social work education. At the same time, the major contribution of digital technology in Higher Education is highlighted.

Experiential learning, distance education, skills, group work.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-02

Ethical Tensions and Opportunities: Evaluating AI's Role in Social Work Student Education

Susanne Machin-Autenrieth

Co-Author(s): Dr Iris Altenberger and Laraine d'Antin

Robert Gordon University,
United Kingdom

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly relevant in social work practice, and therefore for social work students. This study critically examines the use of AI tools by social work students at a Scottish university through role play of service users' interactions, with a focus on ethical considerations and alignment with social work values. As AI technologies are increasingly integrated into human services, understanding their implications for service user engagement, confidentiality, and professional ethics is paramount.

This research involves a role-play scenario in which social work students conduct a face-to-face meeting with a role play service user, using AI software to record and analyse the interactions. Through this controlled environment, we explore students' experiences with AI-supported practice, their reflections on ethical challenges, and potential impacts on the therapeutic relationship.

Key areas of focus include opportunities and challenges such as confidentiality, informed consent, and the potential for AI to influence decision-making and rapport with service users. We assess whether AI's analytical capabilities offer valuable insights without compromising social work values such as empathy, respect, and autonomy. Additionally, we evaluate how AI's involvement might affect power dynamics and the student's accountability in the service users' relationships and decision making. The data will give qualitative insights into students' perceptions of the ethical and practical challenges posed by AI in social work.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-03

Through Digital Lenses: A Memoir of Metamorphosed Pedagogy during Covid 19 Pandemic in India

Suchetana Ghosh, Ph.D.

Bankura University,
India

The general notion is that digital connectedness has revolutionised the social, economic, cultural, emotional and other spheres of human interactions by bringing distant to near and transforming human civilization, especially, since the beginning of the twenty first century.

However, whether the digital world is enhancing social connectedness, prosperity, peace and collectivization of human beings or creating further alienation, divides, violence and unhappiness are matters of academic research, debates and led to formation of discourses surrounding the positive and negative impacts of such technologies.

Much has been said and written on Covid 19 pandemic and its various impacts on our physical and mental lives. In this paper, I have made an attempt to discuss certain issues and concerns through a personal memoir, i.e., my experience of imparting social work education to post graduate students through digital platforms during the Covid 19 pandemic. The paper also ventures if such modes of pedagogy is in consonance or in contradiction with the values, goals, principles and methods of social work in general. It also attempts to analyse if teaching through virtual mode can bring better connectedness in pedagogy of the oppressed, especially in distant regions and to people with limited resources.

The methodological approach of this paper is primarily grounded on experiences of imparting education through digital classrooms as a social work educator. In addition, methods such as discourse analysis, content analysis, secondary literature reviews and interviews have also been adopted.

Digital-Pedagogy-Social Work Education (SWE)-Covid19 Pandemic-Social Connectedness-Alienation

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-03

Youth mental health promotion by connecting with young people's needs and lifeworlds: learning from online peer-to-peer support projects in Italy

Eleonora Melchiorre

Co-Author(s): Maria Alessandr Mois, Urban Nothdurfter

Free University of Bozen,
Italy

The presentation shares findings from empirical research on online peer-to-peer support projects in Italy and their integration into outreach strategies of social and health care services highlighting potentials as well as the challenges faced by both peers and professionals. The study contributes to discussions on youth distress and digital connectedness.

The growing distress among adolescents and young adults is linked to emotional, social, and psychological challenges, exacerbated by socioeconomic pressures and, lately, also by social media exposure. With mental health concerns affecting 14% of youth globally (WHO, 2021), online platforms have emerged, however, as dual influencers, both a source of stress and a means of support. While excessive internet use can increase distress, it also offers spaces for youth to seek mental health resources, peer support, and a sense of belonging.

This presentation draws on case studies of online peer-to-peer projects, using interviews with peers and professionals, observations, and textual analysis of interactions between both service users and peer supporters and peer supporters and professionals. Data analysis is oriented by a constructivist grounded approach.

Findings highlight challenges and potentials of online peer-to-peer support programmes, contingent upon adequate training and supervision by professionals. Particular attention is given to: interaction between different forms of knowledge (technical, disciplinary, experience-based); skills and support needs of young volunteers, professionals? roles in related training, supervision and promotion activities as well as implications for social work education. The study underscores the importance of re-negotiating spaces, roles and relationships to better connect with young people's needs and life-worlds.

youth mental health, digital technologies, peer-to-peer support, outreach work, supervision

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-03

Digital Tools as Bridges: Enhancing Social Connectedness for Families of Care Home Residents in Scotland during the COVID-19 Lockdown

Prof George Palattiyil
Co-Author(s): Dr Dina P Sidhva

The University of Edinburgh,
United Kingdom

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for digital solutions to maintain social connectedness, especially for families unable to visit loved ones in care homes. This study examines how digital tools helped bridge the gap created by pandemic restrictions, lessening the psychosocial impact of isolation on family carers and care home residents. Drawing on social support and communication theories, the research used a mixed-methods approach, involving in-depth interviews with 36 family carers, group discussions with care home staff, and a survey of 444 family carers across Scotland.

Findings from this Chief Scientist Office (Scotland) funded research show that using digital tools, such as video calls, online meetings, and messaging platforms, helped maintain essential family bonds, reducing distress associated with separation. Regular digital updates from care staff also strengthened family trust in care, offering emotional reassurance. However, for residents with cognitive impairments, digital connection alone proved limited, suggesting a need for more tailored approaches.

Aligned with the sub-theme „Digital Connectedness and (New) Technologies“ this study highlights the importance of digital skills in social work education. Preparing future social workers to support and critically assess digital communication in care settings is essential, ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces genuine connection. These insights advocate for a balanced approach that combines digital and in-person interactions, fostering resilience in care relationships to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

digital connectedness, social work education, COVID-19, care home residents, family carers

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-04

Stand with Ukraine: A Global Digital Solidarity Movement

Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov

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Canada

Background: Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a remarkable global solidarity movement emerged, connecting communities from Kamloops to Lisbon through both physical gatherings and digital platforms. The „Stand with Ukraine“ movement demonstrates how social media, particularly Facebook, has enabled unprecedented coordination of international support and advocacy for human rights in Ukraine.

Approach: This research examines Stand with Ukraine peaceful gatherings in Lisbon, Portugal, and Kamloops, Canada, alongside other international communities. Through site visits and digital ethnography, the study documents how social media platforms facilitate real-time coordination, information sharing, and community building across borders.

Relevance: By analyzing the intersection of physical protests and digital activism, this research illuminates how modern social movements leverage technology to amplify community voices, coordinate actions, and build transnational solidarity networks.

Outcomes: Findings reveal how Facebook groups and digital platforms serve as crucial infrastructure for: (1) coordinating simultaneous worldwide protests, (2) sharing authentic Ukrainian voices and experiences, (3) mobilizing humanitarian support, and (4) countering disinformation. The movement demonstrates innovative use of digital tools to bridge physical gatherings with global advocacy efforts.

Conclusion: This study highlights how digital connectedness enables new forms of global solidarity and community-rooted activism. The Stand with Ukraine movement exemplifies how social media can amplify grassroots voices, facilitate cross-border collaboration, and support human rights advocacy through a combination of virtual and physical organizing strategies.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-05

The use of artificial intelligence in the social economy: potentials and challenges

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Central requirements for professional and sustainable social work and the social economy are to be able to identify relevant transformation and technological developments at an early stage and respond appropriately.

In the context of a research project, the opportunities, possible applications and concerns regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence in social work and social economy are being analysed. For this purpose, the opinions, experiences and fears of students of the Master programme in Social Economy and Social Work were collected (using online surveys and written papers as part of lectures) and analysed in a qualitative content analysis.

In addition, the study identifies which innovations in education are subsequently required in order to enable students to deal with the challenges associated with artificial intelligence and technological developments in a constructive and future-oriented manner. Knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of AI is a precondition for students to be well-prepared for this change, thus setting the course for comprehensive understanding, responsible co-designing, and integration of digital innovations to improve working conditions and overcome social challenges. Professionals in the fields of social work and social economy can then actively participate in the process of technological development instead of just reacting to external changes. This enables the targeted use of technological innovations such as artificial intelligence and ensures that technological developments are not only used efficiently, but also fulfil the fundamental ethical values of social work, particularly with regard to social justice, inclusion and participation.

social work, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, training, innovation

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-05

Risk vs. Reward: Navigating the Dual Nature of Generative AI in Social Work Organisations

Dr Michelle Newcomb

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Australia

The emergence of Generative AI presents both opportunities and challenges for social work agencies facing significant resource constraints. While some agencies are beginning to explore its potential as a solution for time pressures, social work students and recent graduates may be drawn to the allure of quick and seemingly appropriate information and practice advice. However, the integration of Generative AI into service delivery remains largely untested, raising concerns about its adherence to the ethical standards inherent to social work.

This presentation will share findings from a multidisciplinary qualitative study conducted in Brisbane, Australia, involving social work and computer science researchers. We engaged 25 social work managers and senior executives from non-clinical, community-based organisations in an innovative 'techshop' methodology—an interactive forum designed to facilitate collaborative exploration of technology's role in practice. Data was collected via a pre-event survey and reflective observations during the techshops, revealing a growing trend of Generative AI utilisation for non-client-facing tasks, such as policy writing and administrative functions. However, some participants reported concerning instances where junior staff employed AI for client notes and reports without obtaining necessary consent. The implications of this research underscore the increasing trend of Generative AI use within social work, often occurring without adequate ethical guidance. As Generative AI becomes more prevalent, our findings offer essential insights for ensuring its safe and ethical application within the field, thereby informing educators about its integration into the classroom.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-05

Organizational Culture in Social Institutions: Digital Challenges and Cultural Change as Future Perspectives for Organizational Development

Andrea Rogi-Lins

Hochschule RheinMain,
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The digital transformation significantly impacts social work, influencing both practice and organizational development. Current discussions explore how digital formats can complement traditional services, and how to engage specific target groups through digital streetwork on platforms like social media and gaming. New technologies require not only technical skills but also adaptive professionals equipped to handle these changes. In response, flexible and innovative organizational structures, informed by concepts like New Work and Industry 4.0, have started to take hold in social work. These frameworks underscore the importance of organizational cultures that are both inclusive and adaptive.

Against this backdrop, the study explores the organizational culture preferences of 331 future professionals in social work and care (data collection: 01.10.23-28.02.24), using the Organizational Culture Inventory© (OCI©). The results reveal a strong preference for constructive cultural styles, with notable differences by gender and study field (care vs. social work). This presentation will provide insights in the results and implications of the study, and will also give an outlook on a qualitative follow-up study. Findings contribute to the understanding of organizational culture as a critical factor for social connectedness, particularly in the face of digital transformation, aiming to foster adaptive environments where employees are empowered to embrace change and leverage new technologies constructively.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-06

Connection or Control: Navigating the Landscapes of Digitalized Social Work

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United States

Globally, governments have rapidly accelerated digitalization of their welfare systems, promising better connectivity, outreach, and regulation through the adoption of big data, AI and algorithmic regimes. However, these promises have produced paradoxical effects, conflating connection with control and surveillance. Located at the intersection of Social Work, Disability Studies, Anthropology, and Science and Technology Studies, my ethnographic project examines the digitalization of disability welfare systems within the context of neoliberal austerity and digital governance in India. Drawing on recent work on big data and algorithms, I ask what effects these interconnected technologies have in creating new digital regimes, disabled subjectivities, and citizen-state relations. I examine how the promise of connectivity and efficiency through digital governance generates contradictory experiences of differential inclusion, surveillance, and digital precarity for disabled people and marginalized communities. In doing so, my research highlights the need to integrate a digital justice perspective in social work education, advocating for the voices and rights of marginalized communities within emerging digital landscapes. Whilst harnessing the potential of digitalization, social workers must simultaneously safeguard minoritized groups from algorithmic harms and biases, datafication and financialization. By extension, my research prompts us to design curricula that proactively engages with the prospects and challenges of digitalization that are rapidly upending social welfare policy and programs. Navigating these paradoxes would require us to create inter-professional collaborations, wherein social workers can spearhead initiatives for justice based technological solutions by collaborating with communities and tech professionals alike.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-06

Digital tools and the democratization of social service information: enhancing agency and access

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This abstract presents research that explores the connections between three separate projects in a Southern Italian city. The first project focuses on studying first-level access to services, while the second and third projects map both public and private social-welfare services. These mappings aim to create web applications for social workers and service users, particularly the homeless (Greeson et al., 2020; Beresford, 2016).

Researchers and students conducted analyses of social workers' practices, along with interviews and participatory workshops. For the mapping task, interviews were held with organizations managing the services. The app design process involved a group of five users, utilizing an ethnographic method (Consoli and Meo, 2020; Bianciardi and Albano, 2022).

Initial evidence suggests that digital tools can enhance professional work in territorial social services, facilitating processes of emancipation and empowerment. The democratization of access to information, enabled by IT tools, can help consolidate users' agency (Rice et al., 2012; Rhoades et al., 2019; Buraw0y, 2008).

Social work degree students participated in these processes, learning how involvement in social research can foster shared spaces of reflexivity among students, researchers, and social workers.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-06

Creating virtual pathways of immersive experiences for racialized populations in social work through extended reality

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Discussions about the use of technology in social work focus on ethical, practical and professional challenges to engage clients on various platforms due to privacy and confidentiality issues. Among the areas more often discussed are confidentiality issues regarding the use of technology to deliver services, store client data and the use of online platforms to deliver service. Little attention is given to exploring how extended reality (ER) technology for example, can create opportunities to enhance the client-experience in social work practice and at the same time maintain client privacy and confidentiality. Moreover, little attention is given to the potential for the use of ER to help foster bias-free, judgement-free and discrimination-free environment in direct social work practice for individuals who typically face discrimination.

This presentation uses an intersectionality lens to highlight the potential for social work to engage ER to respond to the unique needs of individuals whose experiences are shaped by interconnecting social categories such as race and gender. The presentation engenders discussion on the potential for ER technology to enhance client experience and reduce encounters of discrimination in accessing services. It puts forth considerations for the use of technology, beyond the privacy and confidentiality concerns that currently exist in social work. The presentation explores avenues to create immersive experience for clients and increase their options for customized treatment. In conclusion, the presentation highlights key points on the potential for ER to support especially racialized clients and increase their access to service.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-07

AI in Social Work Education: Balancing Innovation and Ethics

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United States

This exploratory mixed-methods study examines the integration of artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, in social work education. As AI rapidly evolves, educators face the challenge of harnessing its potential while maintaining academic integrity and preparing students for ethical practice. Through surveys (n=78) and semi-structured interviews (n=16) with social work instructors, the study reveals four key themes:

- The need for a new academic integrity framework addressing AI use
- The importance of unified institutional messaging on AI integration
- The value of open discussions with students about AI
- Concerns about AI creating a false sense of mastery among students

The findings of this study have significant implications for the future of social work education. While 55.1% of participants currently use ChatGPT, a staggering 78.2% report a lack of institutional guidelines. Instructors with a deeper understanding of AI are more receptive to its use in education. The study underscores AI's potential to enrich learning experiences, but it also raises concerns about plagiarism, critical thinking skills, and students' potential overreliance on AI.

Recommendations include developing clear institutional policies, providing faculty training on AI integration, and redesigning assignments to leverage AI while fostering critical thinking. The study emphasizes the need for social work education to adapt to AI's presence, ensuring students are prepared for a technology-driven practice environment while upholding professional ethics.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-07

Safeguarding in the Digital Age: Social Work Education and Online Harm

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United Kingdom

In a world dominated by the internet and social media, children and young people are increasingly exposed to online abuse and exploitation (IWF 2024). There are several national and international initiatives to combat this phenomenon, including the recent Online Safety Act 2023 in the UK and the Digital Services Act for Europe aiming for safer online experiences. Social work is well positioned to identify, analyse, and respond to risk and harm towards children and young people (Featherstone, White and Morris 2014). However, the social work voice is limited in policy and practice discussions around online abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, child protection models often fail to respond to online abuse (May-Chahal and Kelly 2020). Even in models of contextual safeguarding that move beyond individualised approaches to safeguarding through community-based initiatives (Firmen 2020), the online world remains under-researched.

This pilot study draws on a small sample of interviews with social workers from Northeast Scotland. It explores the extent to which social workers feel equipped to respond to the harm posed by digital developments. The aim is to evidence that social workers need to be better equipped for working in an increasingly digital world to safeguard children and young people. In particular, this paper focuses on whether the sample group feels their educational background has equipped them for dealing with online harm and assessing risk in virtual spaces. Data from this pilot will be used to develop potential strategies for pedagogical interventions that could be implemented in social work curricula or professional training.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Digital-07

Perceived connectedness of social workers with youth in online counselling interventions

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Deutschland

In social services in Germany, online counselling has been developed in recent years as an additional way to interact with young people. It is important to differentiate this from e-therapy, as online counselling focuses on guidance and support rather than therapeutic intervention. A key characteristic of online counselling relationships is that the young users are often only known virtually to the social counsellors. This leads to specific expectations regarding the counselling process provided by social workers. The focus on connectedness and developing strategies for counselling interventions is also a significant aspect for the Social Work Education (SWE). Against this backdrop, the paper addresses the following research questions: How do social workers create digital connectedness, and how do they build relationships with youths in a solely online counselling setting? To explore this, the implied research project uses grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1996) and is based on a sample of 12 expert interviews with professional online counsellors for youths in Germany. The data has been analysed using the approach of Strauss & Corbin (1996). The analysis indicates the requirement for the social workers to provide online interventions for youths, who are often affected by various mental health issues. According to the results, online counselling facilitates access to further social or therapeutic services for the users and might have a positive impact on youths.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-01

Promoting Connectedness in Social Work Supervision: An Exploration through the Lens of South Asian Women in England

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Supervision in social work serves as a critical mechanism for professional growth, reflective practice, and emotional support. However, for South Asian women in adult social care in England, supervision often falls short of its transformative potential due to intersecting barriers of racism, sexism, and systemic inequality. This study investigates how supervision can foster connectedness, empowerment, and equity by addressing these unique challenges and embracing relational and anti-oppressive approaches.

The study highlights the importance of reimagining supervision as a relational and dynamic process that centres on equity, psychological safety, and mutual accountability. It explores how a more nuanced, culturally competent understanding of supervision can enable South Asian women to navigate systemic barriers and progress in their careers, creating a space for genuine connection and growth.

Methods

This qualitative research employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight South Asian women employed in adult social care departments within local authorities in England. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's ethics board. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically to uncover shared experiences and insights about the challenges and opportunities within supervision.

Findings

The findings reveal that traditional supervision models often fail to address the complexities of minoritised identities and lived experiences, inadvertently perpetuating systemic biases. Participants reported that supervision spaces frequently lacked cultural humility, relational depth, and an understanding of how their intersecting identities shaped their professional experiences. For example, South Asian women described facing barriers to career progression that are compounded by both overt and covert discrimination, echoing broader patterns of inequality within the social work profession. Data from the profession shows that a White male is six times more likely to become a Senior Manager than a Black female and twice as likely as a White female in social work across England.

The study argues for the adoption of supervision models that centre equity and inclusion while fostering relational connection. Such models are not only beneficial for South Asian women but for all women, as systemic barriers to career progression in social work disproportionately affect women across various backgrounds. The study was informed by converging both standpoint and trans-national feminism thinking.

Conclusions and Implications

The research highlights the need to reframe supervision as a transformative tool to empower minoritised supervisees and dismantle systemic inequalities. It advocates for relational supervision approaches that prioritise connectedness, equity, and psychological safety, enabling supervisees and supervisors to work collaboratively toward inclusive and supportive professional environments.

One such approach is the 6 Rs of Supervision a relational framework previously developed by the doctoral researcher. This model incorporates six key principles: Regular, Reflective, Realistic, Responsibility, Reciprocal, and Relational. While not the sole solution, the 6 Rs offer a structured yet flexible framework for addressing intersectional discrimination, fostering relational depth, and promoting professional growth. By embedding these principles into supervision, organisations can move closer to creating equitable and inclusive environments that empower South Asian women and other minoritised professionals to thrive.

Social work Supervision, South Asian Women, Equity, Career progression, Relational

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-01

Duoethnographic Encounters: Advancing Social Connectedness in Decolonial Social Work Education in Canada.

Doctor Mary Goitom

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Canada

Africa and African diasporic peoples continue to experience the effects of neocolonialism as produced through the ideological inculcation of misconceptions, ignorance, and stereotypes as fostered by an education system that operates to maintain the construction of the world through the prism of Western reality and myths of exceptionalism. This paper presents the experiences of two social work educators in the African diaspora in the post-secondary landscape of Canada who engage in the challenging work of deconstructing neocolonialism within classroom communities as it concerns students from Continental Africa and the English-speaking Caribbean for the purposes of fostering social connectedness across misconceived differences. Employing a duoethnographic methodological framework, this presentation centres polyvocality to disrupt metanarratives about Africans and African peoples in the diaspora in the curriculum. Duoethnography is regarded as an embodied methodology that highlights modes of action, reflection and reflexiveness in its practice. The methodology is utilized as a dialogic process that allows for transformation to occur in learning processes and/or communities of inquiry. The presentation draws on Pohlhaus Jr.'s (2012) insights on dialectical relations of situatedness and interdependence and how their application can influence subjectivity and interpretations of lived experience. It foregrounds Critical Discourse Analysis as a mode of decolonial pedagogy that supports the active engagement of continental and diasporic students processes of deconstruction, construction and reconstruction of racial discourses that abound Canada's multicultural milieu; for the purposes of building an inclusive, healthy learning environment that facilitates future practitioners' ability to acquire skills for advancing a socially sustainable society.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-02

Bridging Social Divides Through Equitable Social Work Education: A Pan-Canadian Vision Informed by Two Decades of Practice

Dr Oleksandr Kondrashov

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Canada

Background: Drawing from twenty years of teaching experience across five Canadian universities, this visionary educational framework emerges from extensive work in Northern, rural, and Indigenous communities. This depth of multi-institutional experience, spanning online and in-person formats, reveals how traditional models perpetuate systemic barriers while highlighting unprecedented opportunities for transformation.

Approach: Our innovative on/off cohort BSW model synthesizes best practices from diverse educational contexts across Canada. Developed through sustained engagement with communities from coast to coast, this approach integrates sophisticated online learning technologies with land-based wisdom, creating a flexible framework adaptable to varied regional contexts while maintaining cultural authenticity and academic rigor.

Relevance: This comprehensive model, refined through implementation at multiple institutions, demonstrates how social work education can systematically address social disconnectedness. By leveraging both digital platforms and place-based learning, the program creates powerful opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and relationship building that transcend geographical and institutional boundaries.

Outcomes: The evolved curriculum model, tested across diverse Canadian contexts, delivers proven strategies for:

- Harmonizing online and in-person delivery methods across institutional settings
- Building inter-university collaborations that enhance educational access
- Creating sustainable networks linking urban and remote learning communities
- Integrating diverse knowledge systems within standardized academic frameworks

Conclusion: This extensively tested approach, validated across multiple Canadian universities, offers a blueprint for transforming social work education. The model demonstrates how institutional collaboration, technological innovation, and deep community engagement can create more equitable and inclusive pathways for preparing the next generation of social workers.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-02

Implementing Innovative Project for Social Work and Psychology Academic Programs: ?Learning Labs for Equal Rights?

Professor Shorena Sadzaglishvili

Ilia State University,
Georgia

This paper demonstrates a project „Learning Labs for Equal Rights“ at Georgian universities: Ilia State University and Gori State University designed to offer multiprofessional practical experience for social work and psychology students. The initiative involves creation of eight laboratories where individuals with special needs are provided with supported employment. Innovative teaching methodologies are used for students that enhance their learning processes. The main focus is on providing supported environment for people with disabilities where social work and psychology students work together in inter disciplinary teams. It is argued that collaboration between social work and psychology programs foster innovation in service delivery and intervention strategies.

Adopting innovative student-centered teaching methods can significantly enhance the human rights approach for people with disabilities. By prioritizing active engagement, critical thinking, and personalized learning experiences, educators can better prepare students to understand, internalize, and apply human rights principles in their future practice. This project (CIF-2023-04) is funded by Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project „Georgia I2Q“.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-02

Challenges of rural social work in Germany and the responsibility of universities of applied sciences

Prof. Dr. Mandy Schulze

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Germany

It is not only the challenges of socio-ecological change that have significantly changed the importance and functions of rural areas in recent decades. Demographic change, securing social services, dealing with migration and agreeing to democratic participation are also particularly rural challenges in Germany. Although social work is responsible for all of these issues, there is a lack of differentiated consideration. What exactly are rural areas? Who are the relevant actors in and for social work? Since the social contexts are very different, research must differentiate and take into account the cultural and historical contexts of the regional challenges. The individual contribution aims to strengthen the research perspective on rural areas and demonstrate the relevance of universities of applied sciences, particularly in eastern Germany, for the discourse on regional social work and transformation.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-03

Unveiling Global Injustices: A scoping review of decolonising Social Work Field Education

Dr Ann Anka

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United Kingdom

This oral presentation will disseminate the findings of an international scoping review focused on decolonising social work field education. The review, conducted by a team of international researchers, employed decolonising methodologies to examine existing literature and identify key themes related to decolonisation in social work field education.

The presentation reports on three key findings from the scoping review:

First Nations, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (FN & BAME) knowledge inclusion is essential: Social work field education must actively incorporate and value knowledge systems and practices from these communities, challenging the dominance of Western epistemologies.

Need for Spaces & Curriculum Reconstruction: Reconstructing learning spaces and curricula is crucial to create culturally safe and inclusive environments for students from marginalised communities.

Decolonisation as Unlearning and Critical Reflection: Decolonisation requires ongoing critical reflection and unlearning of colonial ideologies embedded within social work education and practice.

The presentation will explore the implications of these findings for social work educators, field supervisors, and students. It will discuss practical strategies for incorporating Indigenous knowledge, reconstructing curricula, and promoting critical reflection in field education settings.

This presentation will contribute to the ongoing dialogue on decolonising social work education, highlighting the importance of bridging social and cultural divides to create a more just and equitable field, and it will complement the symposium *Decolonising Social Work Field Education: Co-creating a Podcast for Global Transformation?* which explores the co-creation of a podcast series on the same topic.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-03

Promoting Social Cohesion and Inclusion through Foster Care for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Medical Fragility in Germany

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Theologische Hochschule Friedensau,
Germany

Children with disabilities in Germany who are in need of Out-of-Home-Care are mostly cared for in residential homes. Familial care through foster care for them is a somewhat rare situation. The German child and youth welfare system can still be described as excluding, even with recent legal improvements.

The purpose of the study was to understand how caregivers manage their lives with a child or youth with extra needs and meet the challenges of assisting them adequately. A follow-up study explored how the families were doing after 9-18 years.

The qualitative research design comprised 19 in-depth interviews with caregivers. Within the framework of Grounded Theory, a theoretical structure of the strategies used for coping was developed. For the follow-up study, 58% of the sample of caregivers were revisited.

Results show that caregivers apply an Action-, Resource- or Reflection Strategy based on their own personal biographic experiences and their worldview. Results also show that the families and dedicated persons build strong relationships with the children and among partners in the support net. The connections and relationships built with the children in their care often last for a lifetime. It brings about social connectedness in the familial nucleus and in society. It means a plus of mental and physical well-being for the children.

Students should know that connecting through social parenting of children affected by disability and medical fragility reveals to have a great potential to support, protect, care and advocate for the children and to have an inclusive impact on society.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-03

Stigma in Social Work as a Barrier to Social Connectedness: Insights from Foster Families in Poland

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Jagiellonian University
Poland

The foster family occupies a unique role as both provider and recipient of social services, therefore analysing it offers valuable insights into social work practice. My research involved in-depth interviews with professional foster parents and social workers in Poland to identify factors that support or disrupt foster family functioning. These factors can be analysed through Goffman's stigma theory and Honneth's concept of recognition. I address them at three levels: policymaking, the institutional environment (including the foster care and social services system, educational institutions, healthcare, NGOs), and the local community.

The study has found stigma and lack of recognition to be the underlying problem for the disruptions on all three levels. Stigma surrounding foster care and social work stems from stereotypes about foster families and children and the negative perception of the welfare system. However it is also intertwined with broader issues such as classist attitudes and gendered biases that undermine the recognition of childcare and reproductive labour as a legitimate profession. Notably, this stigma not only affects foster parents and social workers but is also perpetuated in their interactions with foster children and biological families.

Enhancing the foster family's struggle for recognition could be supported through social work education, particularly by raising awareness about foster family dynamics to combat stigma and classism. This awareness is crucial to create social connectedness, which I identify as the main factor supporting the functioning of foster families through promoting unbiased, non-hierarchical partnership with social workers, schools, professionals working with children and the local community.

foster family, stigma, social recognition

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-03

How do we educate social work students in child protection interventions regarding social inequalities?

Giulia Turrina
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HU,
GERMANY

A longstanding concern in the field of child welfare is that children of ethnic minorities are overrepresented in the child welfare system compared to the overall child population, a phenomenon commonly referred to as racial/ethnic disproportionality. It has long been established in North American research that Black children are overrepresented at every level of the child welfare system, and that Hispanic and Asian children tend to be underrepresented (Dettlaff, 2021). In the US racial discrimination is the most reported factor associated with this overrepresentation (C,nat et al., 2021).

In Europe different theoretical paradigms were used to analyze the disproportionality, among them „bias model“, „risks model“ (Fluke, 2011) and the „child welfare inequalities“ framework (Bywaters, 2015). According to the last one, the „inverse intervention law“ incorporates both elements of the binary bias vs risk debate and is used to illustrate the complex ways in which a range of factors interact to produce intervention rates. Bywaters (2015) examines how social determinants (e.g., poverty, housing, employment) are key to understanding the issues faced by individuals and communities and he advocates for social workers to address these structural influences to improve long-term outcomes for marginalized groups.

The use of a child welfare inequalities lens can provide the catalyst for such a reinvigoration of conversations about the need to revisit ideas of social work practice that both works with the „personal troubles! of families, but also places them in their structural context in a way that has perhaps been lost in recent times (Elliot, 2020).

This paper introduces a research project focused on examining the curriculum in social work education, with an emphasis on two central dimensions. First, it investigates the extent to which the curriculum incorporates a structural approach that encourages students to consider broad social conditions alongside case-specific and individual factors. Secondly, how much the curriculum integrates an approach that considers ethnic and racial differences.

This analysis will provide insights into the values and perspectives that shape future social workers, impacting their approach to practice and their ability to cultivate critical awareness and engage effectively with diverse populations and complex social issues.

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ethnic disproportionality, child welfare inequalities, social work curriculum, critical awareness, anti-discriminatory practice

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-04

Culturally-Sensitive Supervision for Arab Social Work Students in Israel: Social Connectedness - Challenges and Opportunities

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In Israel, Arab social work students must deal with conflicting cultural values during their professional entry into social work education: often feeling inadequately prepared for the nature of cases they encounter within the Arab community. Arab students must attempt to reconcile differences between collectivistic values of Arab communities with predominantly individualistic social work approaches taught in Israeli educational establishments. This attempting takes place in the training process that accompanies the students in their practical training through expert supervisors for social work. This article presents findings from a qualitative study that has examined the tensions and inner conflicts which arise through the supervising process for Arab social work students. The study is based on fifteen in-depth interviews with student's social work supervisors with at least five years of experience in the field of supervision.

In this study, I discuss and illustrate the tensions and inner conflicts which arise for Arab social work students, and suggest a model which takes into account the complexity of multicultural situations and the challenging process of professional socialization of Arab social work students in Israel from the perspective of the supervisors. This model also promotes Arab students' cultural competence, helping them to reflect upon different value systems, to bridge between conflicting values, and teaches them how to provide adequate professional help and care in multicultural fields of social work practice.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-04

Experiences of Arab Social Workers in Israel During Wartime

Dr. Siwar Makhoul Khoury

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Israel

Background and Purpose: This study explores the experiences of Arab social workers in Israel during wartime, with a focus on how they navigate a dual identity while fulfilling their professional role. Given the conference's aim to critically examine social connectedness, this research highlights the tension between connection and disconnection in the context of conflict and dual belonging.

Methods: Using a qualitative-phenomenological approach, we conducted in-depth interviews with 20 Arab social workers in Israel employed in mixed Jewish-Arab workplaces during the Israel-Hamas War.

Findings: Three main themes emerged: shifts in the professional landscape during the war, insecurity in openly expressing opinions about the war, and the emotional complexities Arab social workers face. Participants reported significant challenges, including altered workplace relationships, fears around self-expression, and the intensifying emotional toll of maintaining connection amidst tension. Through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, findings reveal the impact of heightened job demands and diminished resources on social connectedness.

Conclusions and Implications: This study provides critical insights into the unique position of minority-group professionals working in conflict zones, underscoring the complex dynamics of

connectedness and disconnection they must navigate. The findings highlight the need for inclusive workplace policies, targeted interventions, and national strategies that support Arab social workers in balancing their dual identities. Such measures can enhance resilience and professional effectiveness in serving diverse communities.

This research emphasizes the importance of fostering environments that not only promote connection but also recognize the legitimacy of strategic disconnection, especially in challenging contexts. These insights contribute to Social Work Education (SWE) by offering a nuanced understanding of connectedness, encouraging the development of curricula, policies, and practices that address both the positive aspects and inherent tensions of connectedness for minority professionals in conflict settings.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-04

Ethical Challenges in Social Work Field Training During Times of War

Dalit Yassour-Borochowitz
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Israel

Social field training is a critical component of social work education that allows students to apply ethics and values to real-world practice situations. However, field training during war presents unique and heightened ethical challenges for students, field instructors, and social work education programs. We will examine some key moral issues and dilemmas that arise when providing social work field training in our Social Work department during war-affected times and areas and try to outline ethical dilemmas and a decision-making framework for navigating the complex moral terrain of wartime field training.

The framework emphasizes the need to ground decisions in core social work values, consider contextual factors, engage in critical reflection, and refer to situated social work ethics. Key ethical challenges discussed include protecting student and client safety, maintaining professionalism and upholding human rights, and social justice in a politicized environment. We will give examples that are drawn from our department's experience in the past year (2023-2024) in which Israel was at war, and argue that a situated ethics approach, drawing on virtue, care, and relational perspectives is especially suited to the embedded, interpersonal nature of field training.

The examples we would discuss refer to four essential values of social work in general and fieldwork education in particular: 1) Diversity - how to manage the Jewish-Palestinian hostility during wartime. 2) Responsibility - can we send students to do fieldwork in dangerous bombed areas? 3) Moral distress - How can students manage political and personal moral dilemmas between them and their field instructors? 4) Freedom of speech - In wartime is it still appropriate to express every opinion?

We aim to stimulate further research and scholarship at the intersection of social work ethics and training in contexts of war and armed conflict. It contributes to ongoing conversations about developing ethical and educational approaches tailored to the complexities of 21st-century international social work professional education and practice.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-05

Fostering inclusivity: community social work in religious contexts

Dr. Yael Itzhaki-Braun

Tel-Aviv University,
Israel

There is a growing interest among social workers in culturally sensitive treatment, but little data exists on communal interventions in this area. Community social workers are particularly needed in religious communities, such as the Jewish Ultraorthodox community, where they address significant issues related to excluded groups. Drawing on the author's experience managing a community social work department in an Israeli city with a 95% Ultraorthodox population, alongside discussions with colleagues from similar backgrounds, this work aims to integrate practice and theory to illuminate the role of community social work in fostering connections for these excluded groups.

Religious communities are characterized by strong solidarity and mutual support; however, members who violate community norms, such as those dropping out of educational systems, engaging in addictive behaviors, or experiencing divorce, face exclusion and loss of resources. Using Rothman's models for community practice, the presentation will outline core principles for social workers to enhance social connectedness among excluded groups. Key strategies include: understanding the religious community's perspective on excluded members; collaborating with spiritual leaders to bridge gaps between them and professionals; creating new spaces for empowerment among excluded individuals; and increasing awareness of their needs within the community's leadership. Through these approaches, community social workers can promote inclusivity and support for marginalized members in religious contexts.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-05

An opportunity to rise? Examining marginalised untouchables in South Indian society

Zoltan Gabor Lukacs

University of Debrecen,
Hungary

In my research, I examine the situation of the Tamil Dalits, a marginalised section of South Indian society, the untouchables outside caste. They are people, typically living in abject poverty, who have little or no means of upward mobility, of social connectivity, and whose fate can be one of timeless immobility.

To explore the plight of the deep-poor untouchables in more depth, I will present their socio-cultural background, contextualise their role in society, give a brief overview of the major processes of dismantling the caste system in India and the changes in the present.

In order to catch up, a handicap-based quota system is used where lower social strata are given preference. This offers opportunities for upward mobility, but leads to the reproduction of deeper social problems, and on the surface exposes emerging outcasts to tense situations.

I will illustrate this with the tools of participant observation and in-depth interviews.

The transformation and transformation towards justice of millennia-old ordering principles and customary systems is a long and complex process. Current research in a region with millennia of experience in studying and helping the very poor can contribute to understanding this important social problem and to expanding the development options available.

Zoltan Lukacs Gabor

University of Debrecen, Doctoral School of Human Sciences, Doctoral Programme in Sociology and Social Policy, PhD in Sociology, 1st year

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-05

?I Was Like a Man in the Home?: Resilience Processes Facilitating the Transition to Adulthood Among At-Risk young adults Arab in Israel

Samah Mahamid

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Tel-Aviv University,
Israel

Background: At-risk young Arab adults in Israel constitute a minority group that faces social and economic exclusion, resource scarcity, and social discrimination. However, a growing body of research highlights the emergence of resilience among at-risk young adults during emerging adulthood, demonstrating that some individuals achieve positive outcomes despite challenging or adverse circumstances. This study, therefore, aims to develop a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms that foster resilience during the transition to adulthood, with a particular focus on at-risk young Arab adults in Israel.

Method: The study involved in-depth interviews with thirty-five at-risk young Arab adults. A semi-structured interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions. Analysis included theoretical thematic analysis.

Results: Two major themes emerged from the young adults' descriptions. The first theme, „Personal resilience processes“ included three subthemes: breaking cultural norms, self-reliance in addressing challenges, and reflexivity. The second theme, „Contextual resilience processes“ encompassed two subthemes: the supportive role of mothers in encouraging young adults to pursue higher education, and the role of social workers as a source of guidance and emotional support.

Conclusions and implications: The results are interpreted within the framework of the multisystemic theory of resilience. This approach recognizes that exposure to risk among young adults from ethnic minorities may enhance both individual resilience as they navigate challenges inherent to their minority group context, and their utilization of contextual resources such as traditional and community-based coping mechanisms. Drawing from these findings, practical recommendations include developing interventions for social workers that employ strength-based and resilience approaches when working with at-risk young adults from minority groups.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-06

(Re)Constructing Competency, Cultural Humility, and Professional Identity: Post-Disaster Service Learning in Puerto Rico

Dr. Karen VanDeusen

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Western Michigan University,
US

Puerto Rican communities continue to leverage social connectedness, empowerment, and solidarity to cope with cultural devaluation, economic extraction, political subordination, and climate-related disasters. Within the context of disaster responses, social workers play vital roles in facilitating social connectedness within families and communities following destruction of communication networks and damage to infrastructure and built environments. Disasters may exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly among marginalized communities. Moreover, disaster responses may fail to recognize a community's shared knowledge, expertise, values, and agency. This qualitative study examined the reflections of nine graduate social work students from a public university in the Midwest region of the U.S., following a service-learning course focused on disaster relief work in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The course linked critical reflection and service activities in the *Caño Martín Peña* communities located in the center of San Juan. Service activities included debris removal and painting of a community building that served as a hub for communication and distribution of food, water, medicine, and supplies. Students also engaged in dialogue, daily group debriefings, and journaling. Following completion of the course, students shared written critical reflections to examine their assumptions, experiences, and learning processes. A qualitative analysis of students' narratives revealed four themes in student learning: (1) cognitive processes, (2) affective processes, (3) demonstration of cultural humility, and (4) professional identity development. Findings support the use of critical reflection as a valuable pedagogical tool to teach students how to practice reflexivity, advocacy, and prepare for the complexities of professional practice.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-07

Connectedness in a Multicultural Academy: Challenges of Social Work Students on Their Way to Completing Their Bachelor's Degree at a Peripheral College: Zefat Academic College

Romain Jammal-Abboud
Co-Author(s): Kapolnik Erga

Zefat Academic Coolege,
Israel

The criticality of connection across social and cultural gaps in the reality of multiculturalism that characterizes the State of Israel, takes on a particularly high importance when it comes to social work students in peripheral colleges. The percentage of students who choose to study social work in peripheral colleges in Israel is constantly increasing, especially students who live in the periphery. Despite this, few studies focus on student characteristics, connections across social and cultural challenges and ways of coping in the experience of the academic socialization process in peripheral colleges from a critical multicultural perspective in social work. This qualitative study aims to bridge the gap in knowledge, where the data collection was done through fifteen semi-structured in-depth interviews of female graduates of the School of Social Work at Zefat Academic College, on the topic: connections, challenges and coping methods of social work students on their way to completing their degree at a peripheral college. The purpose of the research is: to describe, conceptualize and create a new body of knowledge that relates for the first time to the experience of social work students in peripheral colleges in the reality of multiculturalism. The contribution of the research is at an academic, political and practical level for those engaged in social work studies in institutions of higher education and for students.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-07

Community creation in a new neighbourhood

PhD. Amra Šabić,
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University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social work,
Slovenia

Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, like all other cities in the world, is confronted with increasing urbanisation. In recent decades, we have witnessed the transformation of the city and the gentrification process, which reflects the contradictory aspirations of private and public investors in housing business. Expensive and private housing is being built close to the city centre or in the city centre, while public housing is being built in the suburbs with less infrastructure. At the same time, all these new construction investments significantly restrict and reduce public space, and even more, the public space that would be accessible to all residents is disappearing. We present the situation in the new suburban neighbourhood Novo polje, which was built in response to the lack of affordable housing for young families, socially vulnerable families and individuals. The research was carried out as part of the activities of the Erasmus+ project URGE - Urban Age Ethics and Social Inclusion. The focus of the research was on the values of the residents and their needs and views about the community in which they live. We used a mixed methods approach using ethnographic, narrative and participatory research methods and analysed different types of data. Based on the results obtained, a method of antirepulsive communication is developed to intervene in a community in such a way that conflicts of values do not lead to tensions but are resolved by finding common goals and interests that form the basis for a more harmonious life.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-08

Including the Voices of Forcibly Displaced Individuals in Social Work Education

Karen Meixner
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FH Joanneum,
Österreich

Social workers increasingly engage with the complex challenges arising from global forced migration, addressing the acute needs of refugees and asylum seekers. It is essential that social workers understand and actively listen to the voices, life stories, and trajectories of these service users to prevent misunderstandings that may hinder effective support. This presentation details a three-day transnational workshop conducted as part of an IASSW-funded project. The project aimed to connect refugees, people seeking asylum, social work students, and educators, fostering mutual understanding and gathering insights to inform social work curricula. Furthermore, it promoted international collaboration, enriching the educational framework by addressing the legal, cultural, and emotional dimensions of migration.

The presentation specifically highlights the first day of the workshop which specifically focused on connecting forcibly displaced individuals with social work students. In this setting, students, educators, and refugees collaborated to examine the needs, challenges, and lived experiences of displaced individuals. This initiative exemplifies a replicable model for social work education, equipping students with critical skills to support and advocate for refugees and migrants effectively across social and cultural divides.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-08

Leveraging Social Connectedness Through Praxis and Transformative Learning for Social Work Education

Dr. Gabriela Novotna

University of Regina,
Canada

Transformational pedagogy is a powerful tool for instilling values of active citizenship, fair treatment and equal opportunities for all. This presentation calls for social work education to enhance social connectedness among individuals and communities by drawing on Freire's critical consciousness and praxis concepts while considering the role of diverse socio-economic, political and educational contexts.

Over the past thirty years, Eastern European countries' neoliberal capitalism prompted significant economic and social transformation with the free market, deregulation and privatization of state-owned enterprise. At the same time, the nations that had emerged from the authoritarian past have been expected to embrace the notions of individual freedom and personal agency, as well as religious, gender, class, and ethnic diversity. These profound changes have sparked both social connectedness and divisions. Social work scholars in many Western democracies have increasingly become critical that, in neoliberal socio-economic systems, individual liberty and personal responsibility for one's wellbeing have been often used to justify reducing health and social services spending and economic austerity and thus reinforce inequity. Additionally, while diversity continues to be celebrated and upheld as beneficial to society, a critique has emerged about diversity becoming commodified and marketized for its monetary value rather than for contributing to equity and fundamental human rights.

By integrating critical consciousness and praxis into social work curricula, social work students will be better prepared to navigate the challenges of the changing and divisive narratives while honouring the unique historical realities of emergent and established democracies, ultimately enriching their learning experience.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-08

Bridging Divides: Using Project-Based Learning and Critical Reflection to Foster Cross-Cultural Social Connectedness in Social Work Education

Prof. Ana Maria Oliveira

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Universidade Catolica Portuguesa,
Portugal

At a time when social and cultural divisions are deepening globally, this paper presents an innovative pedagogical framework that prepares future social workers to build meaningful connections across social and cultural boundaries. Through systematic integration of project-based learning (PBL) and structured reflection, we demonstrate how social work education can actively contribute to bridging societal divides while developing culturally competent practitioners. The research investigates the experiences of 3th - 4th social work students (n=65) who engage in collaborative efforts with communities that have historically been divided by social, cultural, and economic barrier.

The methodology employs a unique „Cultural Bridge-Building Framework“ featuring structured partnerships, cross-cultural dialogue sessions, critical reflection protocols, and participatory evaluation. Key innovations include collaborative project designs that center marginalized voices and assessment tools measuring social connectedness impacts.

Key findings demonstrate significant advancements in students' abilities to comprehend and engage with cultural differences. Students developed enhanced skills in facilitating meaningful dialogue, recognizing systemic barriers, and developing culturally responsive community engagement approaches. The study highlights the importance of promoting sustainable connections among previously isolated social groups and validating diverse cultural methodologies.

The research provides educators with evidence-based strategies to foster intercultural competence, emphasizing experiential learning techniques. By offering practical tools for bridging social and cultural divides, the framework equips future social workers with essential skills for establishing meaningful connections across varied cultural contexts.

The findings have significant implications for how social work education can actively contribute to building a more interconnected society, particularly across existing social and cultural divides.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-09

In the shadow of multiple barriers- economic violence against Arab-Palestinian women in Israel: recommendations for implementing context-aware intervention

Raghda Alnabilsy

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Ruppin Academic Center,
Israel

Theoretical Background: While most research on gender-based violence focuses on its physical, sexual, or psychological forms, this paper highlights the economic abuse faced by Arab-Palestinian women in Israel. Economic abuse, a critical aspect of women's financial rights, is especially relevant in traditional-patriarchal societies.

Methods: The study follows a qualitative approach, using semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in 2022, alongside data analysis from legal cases (n=21).

Findings: The research identifies three key themes. First, the centrality of marriage and motherhood in society often leads women into marriages where economic abuse is inherent. Second, it explores the lives of married women suffering from economic abuse. Third, it addresses the challenges faced by divorced women survivors of such abuse as they attempt to rebuild their lives. Economic abuse is shaped by patriarchal structures, including social institutions, family dynamics, and abusive partners, and is exacerbated by the women's marginality and civic exclusion.

Implications to social work: Gender awareness and recognition of the needs of women from an intersectionality perspective, understanding their distinct locations and the ways their lives are hurt by economic abuse, is the starting point to formulating appropriate intervention, policy and offering the right assistance to these women. Indeed, the contribution of this study is not only theoretical but also related to policy and context aware treatment in social work. The study emphasizes the importance of assimilating the subject in education and training in social work for the treatment of women victims of violence in general and those from minority groups in particular.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-09

The role played by Northern Sotho (Sepedi) Idioms and proverbs towards oppression and abuse of women by men.

Dr Mmaphuti Percy Dipela

University of South Africa,
South Africa

The paper seeks to investigate the role of Northern Sotho (Sepedi) idioms and proverbs in perpetuating gendered oppression and abuse against women in South African society. In African culture, language shapes cultural identity and social norms, and proverbs often encapsulate values that reinforce the dominant perspectives within a culture. In Northern Sotho-speaking communities, idioms and proverbs have long been educational tools, guiding individual behaviors and interpersonal relationships. However, certain proverbs and idiomatic expressions implicitly support patriarchal ideals that restrict women's autonomy and perpetuate gender inequality. These expressions often reinforce stereotypes that uphold male authority and normalize female subservience, contributing to a cultural climate where gender-based violence (GBV) can thrive. Despite increasing awareness and efforts to promote gender equality, there is a lack of scholarly research specifically examining how culturally embedded language influences and perpetuates attitudes that tolerate or even encourage the subjugation of women. This paper aims to fill this gap by analyzing Northern Sotho proverbs and idioms to identify linguistic patterns that support oppressive gender roles and how these expressions intersect with attitudes toward women's rights and autonomy. The study's objectives include analyzing common Sepedi idioms and proverbs to reveal underlying gender biases and assessing the potential of these expressions to reinforce power imbalances and normalize abuse. The researcher believes that by addressing these objectives, the paper will unearth significant ways language contributes to gender inequality, proposing insights into how cultural expressions can be reshaped to support empowerment and respect for women. Ultimately, the paper will contribute to the broader discourses on gender and cultural transformation by examining the relationship between language and gender-based violence, offering a foundation for culturally sensitive interventions that align with efforts to reduce gender oppression and GBV in South Africa. The desktop research was conducted to guide the insights of the paper.

Culture; Idioms; Proverbs; GBV; Northern Sotho

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-09

Connectedness to the Department and the University: LGBTQ+ social work students speak out

Vasileia Papadaki

Hellenic Mediterranean University,
Greece

Connectedness to the University and/or the Department refers to students' subjective sense of overall fit within the University and/or the Department where they study and their perception that they are accepted and supported by others. An important component of University/Department connectedness is the sense of belonging; lack of social connectedness can be observed in the presence of heterosexism or transphobia in higher education.

This presentation is based on the findings of a larger qualitative study which, using thematic analysis, explored Greek LGBTQ+ social work students' perceptions of their Department microclimate[1]. The 21 students who were interviewed (4 cis men, 1 trans man, 14 cis women, 2 gender-questioning individuals) associated connectedness to the Department with the curriculum and with peer and faculty interactions and support. Connectedness to the Department was not predictive of connectedness at the institutional (University) level. In order to be able to connect and build social bonds despite their „different“ identities, students stressed the need for further inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in the curriculum and for establishing specific LGBTQ+ student groups and services. The findings highlight the need for a whole-institutional approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion to promote curriculum inclusivity and for anti-discrimination policies that would further embed a positive campus climate.

[1] Papadaki, V., Kantourou V. & Karaligka, V. (2024). „I just want them to respect what I am“ LGBTQ+ social work students' perceptions of their Department microclimate, *Social Work Education*, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2024.2324919

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-10

(Dis)connected!? Agency in the Austrian preventive detention

Dr. in phil. Kathrin Bereiter

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Österreich

In the Austrian justice system, individuals who have violated the law due to a mental illness are placed and cared in specialized forensic-therapeutic centers. Women are a statistical minority in this system, which affects their living realities in various ways. It is theoretically assumed that the enforcement of measures/preventive detention is structured as a microcosm of society, based on intersectional social categories, such as gender, race* and class, which subsequently generate power relations such as racisms, heteronormativisms, and classisms (see Collins, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020; McCall, 2005; Meyer, 2017; Walgenbach, 2012; Winker & Degele, 2009). These intersectional power relations shape the living conditions of women in the enforcement system and influence how socially (dis)connected they are. However, the affected individuals are not determined in their actions by these power relations. They develop agency - strategies to navigate these intersectional conditions and remain capable subjects.

This presentation introduces a qualitative study that examined these intersectionally intertwined power relations affecting mentally ill female offenders. Narrative biographical interviews with female offenders were analysed, using the intersectional multi-level analysis method by Winker and Degele (2009). The focus of the presentation is to explore, how the affected women navigate these power relations and what social work can contribute to make agency and empowerment possible - even within this restrictive system.

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Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-10

Title IV-E Social Work Training Program (PROCATS IV-E): Effective partnerships to improve connectedness across social and cultural divides
Effective partnership between the University of Puerto Rico and the Administration of Children and Family Services in Puerto Rico

Gisela Negron-Velazquez

Co-Author(s): Janice Fernandez-Alicea

TITLE IV-E SOCIAL WORK TRAINING PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO,
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The Title IV-E Social Work Training Program (PROCATS IV-E), is the result of a historic alliance between the University of Puerto Rico and the Administration for Families and Children Services (ADFAN), which began on July 12, 2023. Through this Program, social work students are recruited to join the ADFAN workforce once they complete their studies, in exchange for scholarships that include a monthly stipend and full payment of their tuition, which represents a vital National Project to achieve the greatest well-being for our children and their families. PROCATS IV-E provides professional education and financial support to undergraduate and graduate social work students who intend to pursue or continue a career in the field of child welfare services and have a genuine desire to develop their professional practice in this field. The mission of this program is to facilitate and support partnerships to educate and train social workers who ensure the provision of culturally appropriate, effective, and high-quality social and health services for the people of Puerto Rico. This national project represents a connectedness across social and cultural divides, because it is an essential tool to trained a new generation of social workers who choose to pursue careers in the field of child welfare. In addition to increase the number of social workers in Puerto Rico with BSW and MSW degrees who join ADFAN workforce, PROCATS IV-E offers curricular content related to the welfare of children and their families; and uses scientific research to enhance this historical partnership.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-10

Applying Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory to Social Work and Social Work Education: insights from Nepal, Germany, and Lithuania

Prof. dr. Jolanta Pivoriene

Co-Author(s): Roberta Gilyte, Mykolas Romeris university

Mykolas Romeris university,
Lithuania

Due to globalization and rapid technological advancement, social workers encounter people from different cultures almost daily. Consequently, understanding how various cultures react to and interact with others is crucial. This presentation utilizes Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, which posits that each culture can be assessed across six dimensions, facilitating cross-cultural comparisons. Furthermore, this theory helps predict how people might respond to social support, which is increasingly relevant as cultures intermingle daily through mixed families, expatriates, refugees, and more. Thus, a basic understanding of cultural dynamics is essential not only for social workers but for everyone.

The presentation explores the history of social work and social work education in Nepal, Lithuania, and Germany. Through Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, it examines how social work and its education have evolved in these countries, highlighting the impact of cultural factors. It also seeks to address why social work is more prominent in some countries than others and what cultural dimensions or factors may have influenced its adoption. Secondary data indicate that not all cultural dimensions directly influence the development of social work and its education. For Nepal, the individualism-collectivism dimension most aptly explains its trajectory, while for Germany and Lithuania, the dimensions of power distance and motivation are more significant.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-11

Intersectional perspectives on doing parenthood of care leavers

Prof. Dr. Angela Rein

Co-Author(s): Dominik Bodmer, MA; Jana Osswald, MA

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In social work discourse and research, parenthood among care leavers is often considered a risk factor. The risks mentioned include early parenthood, or the risk of transgenerational transmission of child maltreatment. However, how care leavers shape their parenthood, which biographical experiences are associated with it, and how social work structures influence the parenthood of care leavers has hardly been investigated in German-speaking countries.

Based on an ongoing research project, involving participant observation and biographical-narrative interviews, we examine how experiences as care receivers and structural disadvantages are reflected in the practice of parenting by care leavers, and which structural and societal conditions make parenting easier or more difficult for care leavers in Switzerland. Theoretical and methodological considerations of the intersectionality of doing parenthood among care leavers and preliminary empirical findings will be presented. We discuss the ways in which the intersectionality of parenthood among care leavers has been overlooked in social work service structures. In addition, we discuss implications for how social workers can foster a greater sense of connectedness among care leaver parents and how an intersectional lens can help address the unequal vulnerabilities they face.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-11

*Underage drug users: ethical dilemmas or simply the implementation of social work principles
Community creation in a new neighbourhood*

Dr. Amra Šabić

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social work,
Slovenia

In the theory and practise of social work, ethical questions and dilemmas that arise in the context of practitioners' daily practise are increasingly being discussed. The issues become even more sensitive when it comes to dealing with underage drug users under the age of 15. In most countries, dealing with them and working with them presents professionals not only with the dilemma of ethical conduct in social work, but also with the question of respecting fundamental principles in the process of helping individuals. Practitioners' experience shows that this is a particularly vulnerable group of young people, who usually come from families with many problems that do not provide a safe and supportive environment for young people. They also tend to come from families where one or more forms of social problems are present (e.g. social disadvantage, violence, substance abuse, etc.). Involvement in the family, as provided for in the legislation and also in accordance with the ethical principles of social work, can potentially lead to a deterioration of the situation in the family and at the same time affect the working relationship with the social worker. The conditions described often present practitioners with the challenge of finding alternative approaches that both protect the young person from the consequences of deteriorating family dynamics and enable the creation of a safe space in which to work. This paper presents the practises of social workers in the field of harm reduction when working with adolescent drug users.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-11

Power and Difference in Social Work. How social connectedness across social and cultural divides can be promoted.

Prof. Dr. Martina Tissberger

University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria,
Austria

In the course of neoliberal social upheavals since the 1990s, social work has increasingly focused on the individual and the promotion of his or her „resilience“ in times of crisis. Discriminatory social structures such as racism, sexism, heteronormativity, classism and ableism are given little attention. However, the latter are responsible for the plight of most social work users. This paper sheds light on perspectives in the education of social workers that focus on the nexus of subject and society in the context of global power relations. This nexus is characterized by the historical amnesia of various processes of exploitation, such as colonial racism, which divides people into social and cultural groups, marking hierarchical differences between them and thus making their social ties invisible. In order to realize and restore social connectedness, the interdependencies of the relations of exploitation and prosperity must be analyzed. In this context, both the positioning of the emerging professionals, who in Europe still mostly belong to the white* majority society, and the increasingly racialized service users, in the matrix of intersectional power relations are important. The paper elaborates on how critical whiteness and decoloniality can contribute to raising awareness in the post-migration society and how gender and queer theory can strengthen critical thinking of gender relations. The paper thus aims to show ways in which social work students can be accompanied in their professionalization process towards critical solidarity as a basic attitude in social work.

Intersectional power relations, fostering social connectedness.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-12

***Social Work Education in Conflict Zones: Supporting Diverse Student Populations in Israel
Professional and Personal Attitudes Toward Discussing Sexuality and Degree of Religiosity***

Neveen Ali-Saleh Darawshy

Bar-Ilan University,
Israel

I will present a course that was developed for the School of Social Work at an Israeli University to address the needs of international and Arab society students in undergraduate programs where Hebrew is their second or non-native language. These students face unique challenges as they navigate unfamiliar cultural norms while pursuing a field that demands high linguistic and cultural competence. Language proficiency is crucial for social work practice, affecting both client communication and professional development. These students often struggle to balance academic expectations with their cultural identities, leading to feelings of alienation. The recent war and ongoing national crises in Israel have added another layer of complexity to these students' educational experiences.

The course integrates individual supervision and group sessions to provide targeted support and culturally adapted strategies for working and learning in Hebrew. Through this dual approach, students can process both personal and collective trauma while developing their academic skills and strengthening their sense of belonging and emotional resilience. This experience of

By supporting international and Arab students in an Israeli academic context, the course demonstrates key ethical principles essential to the social work profession. This framework ensures that students develop both the professional skills and ethical awareness needed to serve diverse populations effectively, while maintaining appropriate boundaries and respecting cultural differences. The course faces the unique challenge of operating in a war-torn context, where external events impact academic performance. Educators must adopt innovative and compassionate approaches to help students process their experiences in this setting.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-12

Service-learning as a tool for successfully connect underrepresented students' in higher education: The case of Ultra-Orthodox Students in Israel

Edith Blit-Cohen

Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
Israel

This study examines community engagement programs involving Social Work students from the Jewish Ultra-Orthodox society in Israel, a minority group that is clearly underrepresented in the higher education system in Israel. Ultra-orthodox students constantly cross social and cultural boundaries, and their choice to enroll in higher education is often delegitimized in their communities. Community engagement of students takes varied forms. One common form is service-learning, which is a course-based educational experience in which students engage in activities that meet community needs and promote student learning and development. The study was based on 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ultra-Orthodox Social Work students who during their studies participated in a social involvement program with people with disabilities. It analyzed how Ultra-Orthodox students experience their community engagement and perceive its effects on them personally and on their communities. The findings illuminate how the students' social interactions during their volunteer work enhance meaningful learning despite considerable challenges and dilemmas. Their ability to contribute to their communities through community engagement programs helps justify their decision to pursue an academic education and empowers them in the challenging liminal state between the ultra-Orthodox society and academia. This study proposes that service-learning can be an effective pedagogical tool to promote underrepresented students' engagement with both university and community since it allows students to connect academic knowledge to the practical concerns in their communities and their culture of origin, thus serving as agents of societal change.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Divides-12

Ethnic Minority Identity and Its Implications for At-Risk Young Adult Arabs: Insights from Israeli Social Workers

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In this qualitative study, we aimed to examine the role of minority identity in constructing the experiences of at-risk young-adult Arabs in Israel. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather insights and perspectives from 39 Arab and Jewish social workers and Head of social work departments regarding their experiences in working with at-risk young-adult Arabs specifically concerning the role of their minority ethnic identity in relation to risk. Analysis of the data yielded three main themes referred to challenges to minority ethnic identity: 1) confused identity, 2) alienated identity, and 3) injured identity. The first profile involved confusion among at-risk young adult Arabs, who struggled with the contrast between their traditional culture and Western influences in Israeli society. The second profile involved a sense of alienation from the Jewish-majority state, including feelings of not belonging, being outside the State's responsibility, and lacking identification with Israel. The third profile, injured identity, reflected the negative impact on self-esteem, emotional development, and relationships with the majority, leading to frustration, neglect, and a desire for retribution. These profiles are interconnected and often overlap in various experiences. The study's findings demonstrate that social workers should recognize the impact of national and ethnic identity on these young adults and understand its implications for their well-being. In terms of practitioner education and training, we emphasize the need to educate and train social workers working with minority groups in anti-oppressive methods.

Haneen Karram-Elias, PH.D. Head of Social Work Department, Ruppin Academic Center
Yafit Sulimani-Aidan, Associate Professor- The Bob Shapell School of Social Work Tel Aviv University

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 01

Emphasising sustainability as a potential barrier to social connectedness in HEIs and as a challenge for school social work

Jan Kaňák
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Czech Republic

Sustainability has been extensively studied within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) over time. With the growing importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and pressing environmental concerns, integrating sustainability into both teaching and institutional practices of HEIs appears essential. However, the role of agency (active roles of different peoples at HEIs) within this context remains underexplored. This paper applies the Theory of Structuration (specifically modalities of structuration), to examine how students perceive their agency in implementing sustainability initiatives at a selected university in the Czech Republic.

Through a qualitative study, comprising five focus groups with 35 students and using descriptive coding and pattern identification, we identified a fundamental tension between sustainability values and individual freedom. Based on the outputs we explore theoretically the possibility of school social work in supporting implementation of sustainability.

We conclude that school social work can effectively bridge the need for regulations that promote sustainability with the needs of students on the basis of working with values discrepancy as well as on the basis of suggested practical steps. For social work education, addressing sustainability is increasingly vital for fostering application of these values within HEIs. In a broader sense, aligning value orientations fosters coexistence, collaboration, and social cohesion.

The paper concludes with recommendations for school social work practice and curriculum development in social work education.

Sustainability; HEIs; School Social Work; Freedom; Values

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 01

Successfully mastering the introductory phase for all students - Factors of social integration based on social and individual heterogeneity of students in different social work programmes in four universities in Germany

Prof. Dr. Ina Conen

Co-Author(s): Prof. Dr. Dieter Kulke, Prof. Dr. Melanie Werner

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Numerous studies highlight that certain groups face disadvantages in accessing and succeeding in higher education. People with disabilities, those from non-university-educated families, and individuals with migration backgrounds are notably underrepresented and often lack a sense of belonging. These inequalities persist throughout their studies. Bosse et al. (2019) explore how differences intersect with study expectations and the availability of support services, influencing study success. However, limitations exist, as these findings do not fully apply to social work programs. Our study seeks to address this gap and explore social integration in higher education. For example: Is there a sense of belonging for first-year students, and how does it develop for marginalized groups in relation to their social and family backgrounds?

A collaborative research project, involving four types of Universities of Applied Sciences, explores these issues. Through a panel survey, social work students are questioned about their backgrounds, study motivation, organization, stress sources, support networks, and sense of belonging. These students are surveyed in their first, third, and sixth semesters, with over 1,000 first-semester students participating in winter 2024.

This study aims to initiate discussions about key factors in social work studies, crucial for preventing the reproduction of social disadvantages. The diversity within the profession is vital for effectively tackling challenges such as racism and classism. In our oral presentation, we will present the results of the first survey and discuss them in relation to factors of social belonging specifically in social work programmes in higher education.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 01

Interconnections in the creation of a Master in Social Work and Sustainability

Professor Carla Pinto
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Portugal

This communication aims to discuss and reflect on the importance of social connections in creating an innovative master's degree in social work and sustainability, focusing both on the process that led to the creation of the programme and on the contents of the programme.

Social work curricula, especially those of advanced training at master's level, are currently called to action to promote the theoretical and political framework of sustainability. Social workers are challenged to address social and ecological injustices and inequalities, and to advocate for human rights, as well as the rights of non-humans and the natural environment. The new master programme tries to answer this call for action and aims to prepare professionals with the skills and knowledge to respond proactively and with leadership to global challenges, and to promote the transition of societies to a paradigm of sustainability.

Interconnections played a major role in preparing and encouraging the faculty to engage in the creation of programme, namely the connections to the major international social work organizations, the experience with an Erasmus Mundus master degree where a module in ecological social work and sustainable development was offered, and the interest of professionals on the issues of sustainability.

The contents of the programme also focus on social interconnections. The courses offered emphasize social-political and community practices, ecosocial policies and citizenship, collective action and social and ecological justice, social responsibility and peace building. Teaching and assessment are based on participatory and active approaches, group work, project design and close collaboration with practice organizations and projects.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 02

Behavioral Community Interventions - How to get involved successfully

Prof. Dr. Christoph Bördlein

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Germany

Many of the challenges of our time, climate change, the pandemic, environmental protection in general, also call for a change in behavior. This is not about the behavior of individuals or a specific group of people. What needs to change is the behavior of many or all members of our society. Young people and students in particular are very committed to environmental protection and social improvements. However, they often do so in a way that is unlikely to be effective (e.g., distributing flyers) or can trigger reactance (e.g. demonstrations). Behavioral Community Interventions (BCI) are dedicated to understanding and influencing the behavior of people in public spaces. The author will briefly explain what BCIs are and then present some examples of student projects that aimed to „make the world a better place“ by influencing the behavior of people in public spaces through BCIs. For example, student projects persuaded smokers to stop throwing cigarette butts on the ground, cyclists to wear helmets and canteen guests to disinfect their hands. The projects were largely successful and at the same time taught students how to get involved effectively.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 02

Ensuring Connectedness: An innovative research-cum-teaching project on Social Work inspiring Sustainability Initiatives

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The aim of the research-cum-teaching project was to explore the connections between sustainability, social work and political action, mainly at the local level in the city of Würzburg with 130.000 inhabitants with a strong student population and increased awareness on sustainability. In class, critical discussion of the models of sustainability, SDGs, the modes of living in the Global North, poverty and social inclusion, policy changes through social work and sustainability actors laid the foundation for students' research. To investigate the nexus sustainability-social work-political action the students conducted qualitative interviews with six representatives of sustainability initiatives at the management level. The data were analyzed with thematic analysis and contextualized in the current debates on sustainability. The students conducted expert interviews with sustainability initiatives (SI) in Würzburg (for zero package, sustainable agriculture, veganism, food-sharing, repair-caf,) on the topics: history of the organization, political action and networking, biographical connections to sustainability and social work, cooperation between social work organizations and sustainability initiatives. In addition, results of the expert discussion with the Climate Mayor of the City of Würzburg were integrated into the analysis. With the visit to Environmental Education Center of the City of Würzburg (Umweltstation) ideas on strategic networking were developed. The self-commitment of the students on one behavioral change in everyday life towards sustainability was reflected upon at the end of the course. By integrating sustainability topics into social work education it is intended to promote teaching for socio-ecological transformation. The paper addresses the conference-theme: Connectedness in Ecology and Sustainability but is also linked to the overall theme „Social Connectedness“.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 02

Social workers in the city: (re)connecting social work and urban planning through a European experiment

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France

In the current context of general changes in European urban development, social workers are facing new challenges. The different welfare states developed in the 1900's became a main resource in tackling urban poverty and conflicts. The term „welfare cities“ has been used to describe how the public sector planned, and sometimes built, its way out of urban social problems such as poor housing, health, and infrastructure. However, today we face a different situation. The private sector is a powerful player in urban development, and we observe a transition from welfare cities towards „wealth cities“ (Barnheim et.al 2020). Too often, the public is not coproducing cities (Sennett 2018). At the same time, urban social problems such as poverty, loneliness, substance abuse, etc. are dealt with as individual problems rather than as expressions of structural injustice. Thus, social workers face an ethical challenge in the development of cities. Such issues are directly addressed by institutions of social work. In their Social Work & Social Development Framework for 2020-2030, the International Federation of Social Workers states that „Social work and social development practitioners and educators have an essential role to connect people, communities and systems; to codesign and co-build sustainable communities and to promote inclusive social transformation.“ From ethnographic research previously carried out in four European cities (URBAN SOS), it has been identified that social workers lack of access to communicative spaces where decisions about urban development are being made. For social workers, who are ethically bound by the mandate to strengthen inclusive, sustainable communities (IASSW, 2018), this is a genuine problem.

This proposal is based on the interim results of a European project¹ involving 5 European cities² with academic and fieldwork partners. It aims to understand:

- What are the values that the social work profession must promote to co-produce sustainable cities?
- What are the ethical dilemmas involved in promoting a sustainable post-growth urban development agenda?

In this paper, these questions will be considered from the dual perspective of social work research and education. In line with the theme „Connectedness in ecology and sustainability“, the aim will be to present the results of the research, conducted on an ethnographical approach and pedagogical experiments carried out on the French fieldwork (Lyon/Rilleux-la-Pape) as part of this project. The final objective of this project is to enable future social workers to become agents of change and to participate in building sustainable urban communities.

Erasmus+ Strategic partnership, Urban Age Ethics ? URGE, 2023-2026
Copenhagen, Lyon, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Amsterdam

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 03

Fostering Social and Workplace Ecology: How Compassionate Leadership could help Address Systemic and Socialised Bias in Social Care

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In the evolving ecology of social care, systemic and socialised biases, rooted in gender and ethnicity, continue to shape the experiences of social workers and those drawing on care. Despite the increasing awareness of anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices, significant barriers persist in fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the workforce. This abstract synthesises findings from two UK-based doctoral studies to explore how these biases influence decision-making in care, career progression, and workplace dynamics, advocating for compassionate leadership as a sustainable solution.

The first study investigates the barriers South Asian women face in career progression within social work, highlighting the intersection of racism, gendered expectations, and societal stereotypes. The second examines the influence of gendered perceptions in social care, noting the disproportionate number of female carers and the implicit biases shaping professional judgments and opportunities. Together, these studies shed light on the structural and interpersonal challenges that compromise workplace equity and service delivery.

Methods

Ethical approval for each study was gained via the universities' ethics boards and the interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis methodology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 social care practitioners (including a diverse sample of 17 practitioners in the gender study and 8 South Asian women in the ethnicity study). All participants were employed within an English local authority adult social care department at the time of interviewing.

Findings

Both studies indicate how systemic biases can perpetuate inequities. These biases affect practitioners' access to opportunities, the quality of care provided, and decisions made about carers and people drawing on care.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings converge on the urgent need for compassionate and relational leadership in social care. By fostering psychologically safe environments, supporting reflexive practice,

enabling positive risk-taking, and maintaining manageable workloads, leaders can address systemic inequities. Compassionate supervision emerges as a key strategy to support practitioners in navigating tensions, reducing the impact of biases, and promoting equitable practices.

These studies emphasise the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity in social work, revealing that no geographical or professional region is immune to systemic and socialised biases. Addressing these biases is not only essential for achieving a more diverse and representative workforce but also for delivering fair, inclusive, and sustainable social care services. The authors argue for integrating anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-misogynistic approaches into leadership and supervision frameworks to advance equity and justice within social work practice.

Gender, Ethnicity, Equity, Supervision, Compassionate leadership, Social workers, Carers

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 03

An ecosocial approach to traditional water management

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Water scarcity has emerged as a critical environmental concern in recent years. Water is a basic human necessity and plays a vital role in sustainable development. Water scarcity exacerbates the challenges faced by marginalized and disadvantaged populations. Social work is associated with water management, highlighting core values such as social and environmental justice, human and planetary well-being, and societal welfare.

This presentation is derived from a PhD dissertation at the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Work. This is a qualitative study conducted in Oman, a country facing water scarcity challenges.

The traditional water management system of Oman, known as Falaj, has been regarded as a local and sustainable response for water scarcity for centuries. This water management system is a linear infrastructure that transports groundwater from the mountains to residential areas. This structure requires a social organization to oversee water management and sustain its functionality. Moreover, social coherence influences the system's functionality, as all responsibilities associated with the system are collective actions that necessitate social coherence.

The ecosocial approach serves as the primary theoretical framework of the thesis. This framework, emphasizing social justice, sustainability, and collective action, tackles the complicated relationship between social and environmental elements. Integrating social work with an ecosocial approach can facilitate the development of socially and environmentally sustainable water solutions.

The data was analyzed using the thematic analysis method, and one of the main themes that emerged is „Social sustainability and Falaj.“ The data shows the reciprocity of social sustainability and the durability of this water management system. Although climate change and social transition have changed the social dynamics around the system, Falaj is still used as the main water management system in Oman.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 04

The Social Work Practitioner Role: Connecting with Environmental Justice.

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This is a collaboration between Social Work academics from The University of West Scotland, Robert Gordon University in Scotland and FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences in Austria. In this presentation, we seek to showcase the evidence from two qualitative empirical research projects in Scotland and Austria that investigated the connectedness between social work practitioners and climate change. The presentation will focus on the similarities and differences between frontline social workers practising in Scotland and Austria whose perspectives will be conveyed through anonymised quotations and visual representations that have been created by the research participants, with their explicit permission.

Collaborating academics utilised art-based methods to engage participants in a series of interviews with social work practitioners on the role of social work in climate change. This study expands on Graham's (2024) paper advocating that there was a moral imperative for addressing the climate emergency in social work education by exploring the knowledge base in social work practice.

To date, there has been limited evidence of how social work practitioners have engaged with climate change. In this wider collaboration, we aim to enhance knowledge and activism within the field of social work in response to climate change.

Environmental social work; Climate anxiety; Climate change; climate justice, art-based research

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Ecology 04

A Framework to Cultivate Environmental Social Work and Environmental Citizenship

Dr Issie Jacobs

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South Africa

It is believed that the social work profession once again is at a crossroad where a possible paradigm shift is needed if it not only wants to match the rapid changes of the 21st century, but also wants to stay relevant in its service delivery to individuals and communities. The paradigm shift will need to involve an expansion of already mastered social work skills and responsibilities to include environmental social work and the cultivation of environmental citizenship (EC) and sustainable development. The European Network for Environmental Citizenship motivates why EC is non-negotiable, especially in the context of Environmental Social Work (ESW). Environmental Citizenship encourages citizens to engage in responsible, pro-environmental behaviours. By acting as agents of change in both private and public spheres, individuals and groups can address contemporary environmental issues, prevent new ones from arising, and work towards sustainability. This approach emphasizes the importance of fostering a healthy relationship with nature, with efforts extending from the local to the global level. It is believed that social workers as change agents, could in the context of their scope of practise, be tasked with the responsibility to cultivate EC and sustainable living. A framework which incorporates Boettho's Transformative Eco-Social Model was developed for such a paradigm shift as it contains characteristics such as ecological literacy, social and environmental justice, indigenous perspectives, eco-feminism and criticality, the incorporating of global perspectives, a focus on sustainability and de-growth, and rethinking the concept of well-being.

Paradigm shift, social work education, environmental social work, environmental citizenship, sustainable development

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 01

The Words Jump Around: Supporting Doctoral Candidates with Dyslexia

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Abstract: Dyslexia is a misunderstood condition that significantly impacts educational outcomes, with limited research on supporting doctoral candidates with dyslexia. This small-scale qualitative study employs critical auto-ethnography to examine the barriers and enablers through reflective accounts during a doctoral study in social work. The thematic analysis identified five main themes: complexity of everyday processes, the written thesis challenge, translating into neuro-diversity, affective and emotional processing, and technological developments and support.

Theoretical Background: This study is grounded in the social model of disability and the affirmation model of disability. The social model emphasizes that societal barriers, rather than individual impairments, disable individuals. The affirmation model focuses on positive social identities and a disability-first identity, presenting a non-tragic view of disability and impairment. These models challenge individualised and medicalised approaches to dyslexia, advocating for inclusive educational practices that recognize and support the unique cognitive profiles of individuals with dyslexia.

Applied Methods (Methodology): Using critical auto-ethnography, the study captures personal narratives and reflexive accounts to explore the lived experiences of doctoral candidates with dyslexia. Thematic analysis is employed to identify key themes and insights. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of individuals, highlighting the interplay between personal challenges and broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts. The methodology emphasizes the importance of personal narratives and reflexivity in understanding the complexities of dyslexia in doctoral education.

Importance of the Topic for Social Work Education: This research highlights the necessity of inclusive educational practices that address the specific needs of neuro-diverse students. By fostering a supportive academic environment, social work education can mitigate the risks of social isolation and enhance the overall well-being of students with dyslexia. The study underscores the importance of tailored support systems and the integration of inclusive practices in social work curricula to promote social connectedness and reduce isolation. It also emphasizes the role of social work education in bridging academic and support silos, ensuring that neuro-diverse students receive the necessary resources and accommodations to succeed.

Subtheme of the Conference: Social connectedness as a social, mental, and physical health issue. The study explores how social work education can address the challenges faced by neuro-diverse students, promoting social connectedness and reducing isolation. It examines the impact of dyslexia on social and academic connectedness and the role of social work education in fostering a supportive and inclusive academic culture. The research aligns with the conference theme by addressing the social, mental, and physical health implications of social connectedness for individuals with dyslexia.

Auto-ethnography, dyslexia, doctorate, thematic analysis, inclusive education.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 01

Supporting Social Work Students with psychiatric diseases in the Classroom

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Epidemiological studies of the mental health of young adults have shown that approximately 20% suffer from a mental illness. Spot studies have shown that this is also true for social work students. In order to support students with mental health problems, universities around the world, depending on the resources available, have now established support services for those affected. These services are designed to help affected students maintain contact with their peers and keep them engaged in their studies. Typically, these services complement the study program, for example, through campus counseling services, self-help groups, or tutorials. From the perspective of participant-centered adult education, however, it is also necessary to consider how the special needs of these students can be methodically addressed in courses. There are few suggestions in the literature on higher education pedagogy.

This article attempts to break new ground and is based on the cognitive neuropsychological deficits associated with mental impairments, which have now been extensively researched. Methodological conclusions are derived from the cognitive deficit profiles, which could be used to compensate the problems with learning and understanding common in psychiatric disordered students.

The qualification requirements and effectiveness of this approach are discussed, as are issues of acceptance and evaluation.

Mental illness, college students, teaching, neuropsychological rehabilitation

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 01

Training Social Work Students with Mental Health Conditions: Insights from Educators and Fieldwork Supervisors

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Israel

Background: As part of their role of preparing students for practice, social work educators serve as gatekeepers of the profession, responsible for the complex task of safeguarding and ensuring students' suitability for the profession. In the absence of clear guidelines for assessing suitability, this task becomes particularly complex when dealing with students who have mental health conditions. While educating students with mental conditions may pose challenges for social work educators due to the complex dual responsibilities of supporting students and gatekeeping, there is a lack of empirical research and professional discourse on the subject. Thus, the study aims to explore how social work educators and fieldwork supervisors perceive and cope with the challenges of training students with mental health conditions.

Methodology: Three focus groups were conducted with twelve social work educators and fieldwork supervisors.

Findings: Data analysis yielded three themes related to the experience of social work educators: (1) The dual responsibility of educators to support students while also ensuring they meet the requirements of the profession (2) Navigating blurred boundaries between educators' gatekeeping responsibilities and upholding social work's core values of equality and rights. (3) Insufficient policy frameworks, guidelines, and mechanisms for inclusive social work education for students with mental health conditions.

Importance for social work education: Based on the research findings, a working model aims to enhance an inclusive attitude towards social work students with mental health conditions is proposed, and guidelines for its implementation.

Student mental health, fieldwork education, gatekeeping, disability; professional suitability

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 02

The Creation of an Integrated Governance Model for Reception and Integration Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: The Role of Social Workers in SAI Projects in the Tuscany Region

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This paper explores the development of an integrated governance model for the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Tuscany, Italy. At the heart of this model are two main features: (a) multi-professional teams and (b) a multidisciplinary approach engaging local associations, institutions, and resources (Gori 2019). This approach aligns with the 2017 White Paper on Reception Policies for Asylum Seekers and International or Humanitarian Protection Holders, which set the foundation for coordinated reception policies across Tuscany.

The model's implementation has involved pairing individual municipality-led SAI (System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) centers with collaborative governance structures through Unions of Municipalities and Health Societies. This paper examines three governance models within the SAI framework: those managed by individual municipalities, those led by Municipal Unions, and those overseen by Health Societies. Each governance approach aims to enhance resource sharing and service integration to foster a more cohesive reception system.

Focusing on the role of social workers and local social services in SAI teams, the study underscores their role in bridging SAI interventions and local welfare services. Drawing on qualitative research and in-depth interviews with key figures from SAI across Tuscany, this study highlights variations in resources, operational flexibility, and strategic roles across governance models, identifying best practices and challenges. This research is part of the Horizon project 'Global Social Work and Human Mobility: Comparative Studies on Local Government and Good Social Work Practices in the Euro-Mediterranean Region' (Global-Answer ? H2020-MSCA-RISE-GA-872209).

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 02

„Coping Stories“ as a teaching method in higher education and a practical method for promoting social connectedness at the example of refugee mothers from Ukraine

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Germany

The presentation is based on the reconstructive analysis of biographical-narrative interviews (Schütze 1983; 1984) conducted with mothers who fled to Germany with their underage children after 2022. In the first step, the specific nature of social isolation and loneliness due to trauma in the context of war and forced migration is explored from the perspective of the interviewed Ukrainian mothers. They live in transnational spaces where a temporary situation is increasingly becoming a permanent state. Next, the biographical coping strategies that the interviewees developed to overcome their social isolation in Germany are analyzed.

In a second step, the „Coping Stories“ method is introduced. This self-developed method is based on the biographical approach (Ruhe, 2014; 2012; Miethe, 2014). The presentation explains how and why using this method in group social work can help promote social connectedness when supporting people in similar life situations.

Finally, experiences with the application of this method in social work education are presented. This method provides insight into the phenomenon of social isolation, using the example of a specific target group. Additionally, students reflect on their own social connections. Sharing their personal coping stories in a small group can help students recognize their biographical resources and promote emotional connectedness within the learning group.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 02

Beyond Resilience: Building Inclusive, Socially Connected and Sustainable Communities for Highly Skilled Immigrants

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Canada

The concept of resilience is increasingly emphasized in discussions about immigrant integration, highlighting immigrants' ability to overcome challenges in host countries. While individual resilience is important, it places undue responsibility on immigrants, overlooking the role of the host society. Immigrants face systemic barriers, including a lack of local experience requirements, devaluation of credentials, and employer biases. These challenges often lead to feelings of exclusion and alienation, impacting their mental and physical well-being.

In this presentation, we argue that focusing solely on resilience is counterproductive for creating inclusive and sustainable communities for highly skilled immigrants. It shifts blame onto immigrants for their employment struggles and ignores the host society's responsibility to mitigate these barriers. Effective integration requires a whole-community approach that values the local context and addresses structural inequalities.

Drawing on findings from two empirical research studies, we advocate for redefining integration as a community-building process that requires participation and full engagement from the whole society and intentional action of creating a welcoming context where immigrants are valued and empowered. We conclude with the calls for action, developed by the participants in both studies, for fostering social connectedness and inclusion when creating a welcoming, democratic, socially healthy and sustainable societies. We frame immigrant integration as a social justice issue. To ensure equity and inclusion, communities must actively work to eliminate discrimination and oppression, providing immigrants with the support they need to thrive.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 03

Self-harm as a Social Phenomenon - The Importance of Social Connectedness

Associated Professor Carina Henriksen

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Norge

In the education of future social workers, it is important to provide them with knowledge about how self-harm can also be understood as a social phenomenon. At Nord University, we established a dedicated course three years ago called „The Social Body“ where the focus is for students to learn that mental health issues must always be viewed in relation to a social context.

Today, self-harm is considered a major public health issue, and there has been a significant national increase in self-harming behaviors, with the largest rise occurring among women. Self-harm is complex and influenced by many factors. The causes of self-harm will always be composed of psychological, biological, and social conditions, but in research contexts, the social context is often overlooked. Research on self-harm largely comes from a psychiatric or medical perspective, where the focus is often directed toward treatment. New perspectives on self-harm are essential for gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, which seems to be on the rise, and sociological research can provide a different explanation than studies rooted solely in biomedicine and/or psychology.

Self-harm has rarely been studied by social work researchers, even though it has become a „common“ phenomenon in today's society. A social work perspective can provide a different understanding of the behavior, where self-harm is not primarily viewed as an individual pathological issue but as a way for youth to cope with a complex social context. A social work understanding of self-harm can serve as both a counterbalance and a supplement to psychological and medical perspectives. A social perspective on self-harm highlights how societal structures influence individuals who self-harm, and to gain a deeper understanding of self-harm, this perspective must take a prominent place in research, practice, and in the education of social workers.

Many individuals who self-harm experience loneliness and a lack of social relationships. Self-harm is a stigmatized behavior, and those who self-harm often feels a great deal of shame. They wish to hide their bodies from others, which leads them to exclude themselves from many social situations and experience social isolation. Therefore, social connectedness to society becomes important for individuals who self-harm.

I pose the question: How can self-harm be understood as a „social phenomenon“? To explore this, empirical data is drawn from individuals who blog about their experiences with self-harm. Findings show that self-harm can be understood as a social phenomenon influenced by changes in family dynamics, stress, and social media. Therefore, an approach beyond the psychological/medical perspective is crucial for understanding this complex phenomenon. Individuals who self-harm are always part of a cultural and social context, making a social work approach especially important in understanding this increasingly prevalent issue. To shed light on how self-harm can be understood as a social phenomenon, this article applies Hartmut Rosa's theory of social acceleration and Axel Honneth's theory of recognition.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 03

Breaking social isolation and loneliness of families living with mental health problems: The role of social work

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University de Moncton,
Canada

Mental health of children and youth is a topic of interest for numerous studies. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (2022), 1 in 4 hospitalizations among children and youth was due to mental health issues. In this context, parents are a central pillar of support by playing a key role in their child's recovery (Simpson et al., 2018). Although parents' participation in care decisions is important given their parenting experience, they often feel excluded from decision-making processes (Bonin et al., 2014). Furthermore, they experience social isolation and lack of informal support due, in part, to the stigma surrounding mental health problems and limited social interaction (Dobener et al., 2022, Tranchant et al., 2019).

The research presented here aims to understand the complexity of parents' experiences with care services and family transformations related to their child's mental health problems. A qualitative exploratory approach rooted in an interpretive-comprehensive paradigm has been used. Participants are parents from New Brunswick, Canada, having one child living with mental health issues. Semi-structured interviews (10 completed) are used for data collection. Preliminary findings emerging from thematic analysis (Paill, & Mucchielli, 2016) show parents' experience with the services received for their child and changes within the family. This study gives parents opportunities to talk about a reality that is often experienced in silence and social isolation. The proposed topic has important implications for SW education by preparing students to address mental health issues, stigma and social isolation when working with families.

Families, mental health, social isolation, health care services

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 03

Addressing the social dynamics and psychodynamics of a circulus vitiosus of complex post-traumatic stress disorder and social isolation

MMag.Dr. FH-Prof. Johanna Muckenhuber

FH Joanneum, Institute for Social Work,
Austria

Addressing social isolation and loneliness among vulnerable, traumatized individuals requires a nuanced understanding of its social and psychodynamics. Experiences of complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) often lead to a self-perpetuating cycle of shame, feelings of worthlessness, and social withdrawal, creating significant barriers to reconnection and support (Herman, 1992; Briere & Scott, 2015). Trauma-informed social work education can intervene by equipping students with the skills to recognize and address these underlying psychodynamic factors, facilitating an empathic approach to care that fosters trust and social connectedness (Knight, 2015; Cloitre et al., 2012).

To prepare students for practice, trauma-informed social work education should incorporate learning methodologies, such as reflective practices, role-playing, and case supervision including self-reflective techniques that help students understand and disrupt the isolation often rooted in trauma-induced shame (Bath, 2008; Levenson, 2017). Integrating insights regarding traumatic transference (Holderegger, 1993) as well as the central role of inscriptions of traumata in the body (Van der Kolk, 2015) further provides students with tools to enhance clients' social bonding capacity, supporting long-term social re-integration. In addition this approach helps to ensure health and wellbeing of social workers who are engaged with traumatized individuals.

In the talk I will present the approach for teaching trauma informed social work, which has been chosen in the new curriculum for the Social Work Master in Graz.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 04

Self-Development and Social Connectedness in Social Work Education from the Graduate Perspective

Prof. Dr. Aristi Born

Evangelische Hochschule Berlin,
Deutschland

In this ongoing study, the focus is on graduates' perspectives on their self-development during their studies and the role of social connectedness within this process. So far, 15 graduates of the Bachelor's program in Social Work at the Protestant University of Applied Sciences Berlin participated in a semi-structured interview addressing their views on identity exploration and the significance of others. The study examines the decision for social work education and self-development throughout the course of study.

The responses are analyzed in the scope of two psychological theories. Based on Marcia's identity status theory (Marcia et al., 1993), Luyckx et al. (2008) describe adaptive functions for commitment making and identifying with them as well as for exploration in depth and in breadth. Self-determination theory by Ryan & Deci (2017) takes an interactive view on the „me“-self. In this tradition the focus is on people`s perceptions about themselves and the factors that shape it, with a focus on the needs for autonomy, competence and social connectedness.

The study seeks to understand how students describe and explore their identity and in which ways social connectedness is experienced as a challenge or stressor in this process. Furthermore it provides insights for social work educators to strengthen social connectedness as a resource for self-development. These insights may help to understand the impact of meaningful others for an adaptive identity development as a factor of social and mental health.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 04

Building peer professionals' advocacy skills through social connectedness

Kellee Thorburn McCrory

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Peer professionals (people with lived experience with mental health and/or substance use disorders, living well in recovery) use their experiences as service users to engage and assist others with similar struggles to move toward stability and recovery. Peer professionals' personal understanding of shared struggles makes them unique and effective clinical team members.

Peer professionals are often paid poorly and may be marginalized when working with clinical interdisciplinary teams. Social workers may not understand the peer role in helping clients in their recovery. Peer professionals are often disconnected from other peers in their field, limiting opportunities to collaborate, organize, and advocate for themselves. They can lack access to power structures, within and outside their organizations, that make decisions about their pay, workload, and other work conditions.

This presentation describes our School of Social Work's efforts, with the Iowa Peer Workforce Collaborative (IPWC), to strengthen social connectedness among peer workers statewide. Methods include training programs, continuing education opportunities, Iowa Peer Interconnect, a web-based platform for connection and ongoing professional education, advocacy training to prepare peers to advocate with organizations and at local and state levels, and participation in a legislative day at the state capitol to meet with legislators. Through practicum seminars, we enhance social connectedness between peers and social work students by educating students about peer professionals and their work in clinical teams. As social work students prepare to enter the workforce, they better understand, value, and connect (collaborate) with peer professionals in the workplace.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 04

„It's hard for me to be compassionate for myself“: Perceptions and practices of self-compassion by social work students

Dr Einav Segev

Sapir Academic college,
Israel

While self-compassion has been found to be highly significant for social work students and practitioners, the literature on self-compassion practices within social work curricula and students' perceptions of the concept is limited and in light of the importance found in the use of self-compassion as a means of enhancing connections and serving as a bridge between the self and others. Methods: This qualitative study examines how self-compassion is perceived in theory and practice. Based on 30 reflective journals used by final-year social work students to document their fieldwork training, The findings indicate contradictory perceptions. Self-compassion was seen as highly beneficial for coping with professional challenges and developing a professional identity. However, barriers to its practical application were also described. The following themes were identified: (1) Self-compassion as essential for addressing professional challenges and for professional identity development; (2) Contradictory perceptions of self-compassion and barriers to its practical application. The findings suggested that through reflective journal writing, students engaged in self-dialogue regarding self-compassion, highlighting both the challenges of its practical application and the benefits of practicing self-compassion as professionals. These results underscore the importance of integrating self-compassion into social work education and incorporating discussions about its complexity in theory and practice into the curriculum. Additionally, further research on the barriers that make it difficult for students and professionals to apply self-compassion is crucial.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 05

Fostering Connection: Nurturing Student Mental Health in Social Work Education

Dr Agnes Bezzina

University of Bristol,
United Kingdom

There is growing evidence indicating an upsurge in mental health distress among university students, with international data suggesting that one-third of students enter university with signs of a common mental health issue (Osborn et al., 2022). A consideration of the mental health of students in helping professions, such as social work, unearths further complexities. Firstly, background factors, including experiences of adversity and trauma, can influence career choices in the helping professions. Indeed, there is a high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among social work students (Esaki & Larkin, 2013), and a strong connection between childhood adversity and mental health difficulties later in life. Moreover, the academic and emotional demands of university social work programmes can adversely affect students' mental well-being.

A rapid literature review was carried out to explore what strategies are adopted by Health and Social Care (HSC) professionally-regulated education programmes to support student mental health, to draw out learning for social work education (SWE) in England. The review highlighted the importance of creating educational environments where students feel they can talk about their mental health. Mental-health-sensitive SWE must foster self-care and self-compassion, where seeking help for mental health distress is normalised. Educators should discuss openly, with social work students, the professional requisites of self-awareness, and its relevance to the development of an 'integrated' and 'whole' professional identity. Students' wellbeing benefitted from connectedness with each other and with academic staff, which connections could be nurtured through student mental health strategies coproduced in dialogue between staff and students.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 05

Preparing Social Work Students to Combat Isolation and Loneliness

Mgr. Hana Don, eov

Co-Author(s): Dr. Veronika Zv novcov

University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
Czech Republic

Social isolation, defined as an objective lack of social contacts, and loneliness, a subjective feeling of this lack, are critical challenges in social work. These phenomena are influenced by social exclusion, life events, and health problems, affecting future social workers. From the perspectives of social psychology and sociology, these factors are analyzed to elucidate the causes and consequences of social isolation.

The study employs a qualitative methodology, specifically case studies and in-depth interviews, to examine the isolation of female students in Zambia during their practical internships. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results highlight the causes of isolation, its impacts, and coping strategies, with practical experiences from internships enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, enhancing their readiness for future careers as social workers.

This topic benefits social work education by equipping students with the tools and knowledge to address social isolation and loneliness. Modern technologies, such as virtual reality and simulations of real situations, along with culturally specific training, language courses, and mentoring, support their preparation. Online platforms facilitate the sharing of experiences with experts from developing regions.

This contribution provides a comprehensive view of the importance of internships and practical education, which are critical factors in preparing students to address social issues like isolation and loneliness effectively.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 05

(Virtual) classroom connectedness: modeling use of the therapeutic space in online, graduate settings

Kate Turcotte

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USA

In this presentation professors in online, hybrid synchronous/asynchronous online Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Exercise Science programs in the United States will describe their use of the online classroom setting as a platform for modeling and exploring therapeutic spaces. Further, presenters will describe how the creation and maintenance of an educationally-framed therapeutic alliance can support students as they acclimate to graduate-level coursework and clinical settings, encounter barriers and challenges of varied type, aids those who must be counseled out of graduate programs, and assists students in developing their own therapeutic spaces as professional clinicians. Presenters will enter into dialogue with attendees in a discussion and brainstorm of additional benefits and challenges to the online classroom-as-therapeutic setting model.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 06

Teachings on loneliness

Prof. Dr. Katrin Liel

Co-Author(s): Prof. Dr. Michael Noack

Hochschule Landshut,
Germany

Liel and Noack jointly present the role of social work in the design of measures to prevent and alleviate loneliness. They then go on to discuss how this role is reflected upon and trialled in social work teaching.

At the University of Applied Sciences Landshut Social Connectedness and Mental Health is taught across three study programs. Students explore the subject of social connectedness and loneliness. They learn about the importance of positive social relationships for personal well-being and quality of life, which are key objectives of social work. The course emphasizes identifying sources of strong relationships and different forms of social support. In addition, specific needs of social work clients are discussed, such as how isolated individuals can rebuild relationships or how closeness and connectedness can be restored.

Noack from the Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences discusses the project study format. This teaching format serves the simultaneous teaching of theoretical and conceptual basics concerning the role of social work in the context of loneliness and its application in selected practice centres in social work. Noack focuses in particular on how two central challenges can be taken into account when designing loneliness prevention and loneliness reduction measures: dealing with information barriers that lead to lonely people not being aware of support services that could be helpful for them. Secondly, how to deal with loneliness shame, which leads to people not seeking out support services that are intended for them because they are ashamed of their experience of loneliness.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 06

Have we been socially connected enough to rural communities in a crisis?

Ayelet Makaros

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Luis and Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work in Bar Ilan University,
Israel

Theoretical background

In rural Israel, community leaders coped nearly alone with COVID-19. The rural communities have a special, two-tier form of government: the regional council responsible for all communities and the community leaders responsible, among other things, to manage their community in a crisis. The study examined the coping of community leaders with COVID-19, given the literature showing that in a crisis, service providers are also distressed and find it difficult to function.

Methodology

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with twelve participants in charge of dealing with the pandemic within their communities.

The importance of the topic for social work education

Community leaders paid a high physical and emotional price. They found it hard to enforce state guidelines and suffered from loneliness and the inhabitants' criticism. In social work training processes, it is important to develop a work and support model for rural community leaders in a crisis. Four main elements can help: transition to teamwork, social support, a permanent framework, and coordination with the local authority.

The subtheme of the conference

The findings raise questions on relationships and social commitment: Can a community leader handle a complex crisis over a long time? What is the regional council's duty to him? Has the state shown enough social commitment and connectedness to its rural communities?

We also present recommendations for social workers on how to prepare for crisis in a rural community and how to support its leaders.

national crisis, rural communities, community leaders, support model, social commitment.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 06

„Nothing about us without us“: Factors contributing to community activists? empowerment and success in promoting accessibility for people with disabilities

Dr. Lea Zanbar

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School of Social Work, Hadassah Academic College and School of Social Work, University of Haifa, Israel

Recent years have seen growing recognition of the need to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities and involve them in decision-making processes. Promoting accessibility is generally undertaken by community social workers working with activists from this population. Despite the importance of this activity, however, its effectiveness and the benefits to activists have yet to be investigated. The present study aims to identify factors that predict this effectiveness and contribute to the activists' empowerment and efficacy.

Drawing from the literature, we hypothesized that personal background factors (sociodemographic characteristics, experience as activist, and activist's position), and activity factors (familiarity with accessibility regulations, level of activist participation as determined by social workers, and the extent to which the activists represent the community) would contribute to explaining the variance in the dependent variables: activity effectiveness and the empowerment and efficacy.

Quantitative questionnaires were completed by 212 activists. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that activist's position and all activity-characterizing factors predicted high percentages of the variance in activity effectiveness, activists' personal empowerment, and their self-efficacy (56%, 49%, and 33%, respectively).

The findings highlight the need to train community activists to increase their knowledge of accessibility regulations, and the importance of high participation by social workers, which also ensures that they faithfully represent their communities. The findings also highlight the need to educate social workers to ensure that activists meet these requirements. Finally, they stress the need to motivate individuals with disabilities to participate in community activity to promote both accessibility and their own empowerment and self-efficacy.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 07

Supporting social connectedness during the wartime in Ukraine

Ms Oksana Boiko

Co-Author(s): Nadiia Kabachenko, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv, Ukraine

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy,
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There are two opposite tendencies observed in Ukraine in terms of social connectedness within the context of the full-scale war in Ukraine. Firstly, the number of citizens involved in the activities of public and charitable organizations, volunteer activities has increased significantly. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine for 2021-2023, the number of such organizations has increased by more than 50%, and the number of citizens who communicate, support each other and solve problems together has increased accordingly.

At the same time, the number of people for whom the level of social connectedness has significantly decreased is quite large, amongst which there are IDPs, elderly people, children and youth. Their support networks have been destroyed or significantly limited during the war, as relatives and friends are abroad, in other cities, at war or in the occupied territories. Due to constant massive rocket attacks, lack of electricity and communication, interruptions in transport and infrastructure, in general, the ability to communicate with friends, classmates, neighbors or other community members and spend time together is significantly reduced and many people find themselves in a situation of socially disconnectedness.

Social workers are currently dealing with the limited resources available to support clients. Moreover, they share similar war context and challenges. An important issue is the lack of social work professional social connectedness.

Social work education and training are important for enhancing social connectedness. Modification of the School of Social Work curriculum in terms of addressing professional social connectedness is relevant and presented in details.

Ukraine, social connectedness in wartime, social work education, professional social connectedness

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 07

Therapists' Experiences Treating Trauma Survivors Working in a War zone, while managing Personal Trauma: Proposed Approaches for Social Work Education

Prof. Yael Latzer
Co-Author(s): Liat Shklarski

Hunter College ,
USA

Objective: This study examines the experiences of mental health providers (MHPs) working in war zones, focusing on their perspectives on compassion fatigue (CF) while treating trauma survivors, bereaved families, and reserve soldiers. It explores the unique challenges these therapists face in managing personal and professional trauma.

Method: A qualitative approach was utilized, with semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 MHPs in Israel, selected for their involvement in trauma care for individuals affected by ongoing conflict. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify shared experiences and coping mechanisms.

Results: Analysis revealed three main themes: blending personal and professional trauma, collapse of routines, and activation of historical trauma. Therapists expressed profound feelings of helplessness, particularly when working with bereaved families and those with loved ones in captivity. Some reported dissociation as a coping mechanism, yet many found deep satisfaction in their work as a meaningful responsibility and source of compassion satisfaction.

Discussion: The findings highlight the need for mental health training that addresses compassion fatigue risks, focusing on self-awareness, resilience-building, and emotional regulation strategies. Specialized training in treating bereaved and kidnapped families is essential due to the unique emotional toll of these cases. Implementing a dedicated course on compassion fatigue in social work education is crucial for preparing students for field-work, including practicing scenarios in diverse populations and national crisis situations.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 07

Compassion Fatigue Among Israeli Therapists After the October 7th Attack: Challenges in Treating Bereaved and Hostage Families

Dr. Liat Shklarski

Hunter College,
USA

Background: The October 7 Hamas attack, the subsequent hostage-taking of civilians, and the ongoing conflict have heightened the demand for mental health services in Israel. This study examined compassion fatigue and satisfaction among therapists working in these conflict zones, assessing how common these experiences are and identifying factors such as the populations they treat that predict compassion fatigue and satisfaction.

Method: An online survey was conducted with 223 Israeli therapists treating survivors and their families. Professional and personal demographics were collected. Additionally, the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) scale and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) were employed to assess compassion satisfaction, fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress.

Results: 44.7% of therapists had moderate levels of burnout, 83.6% had average levels of secondary traumatic stress, and 64.8% had moderate to high levels of compassion satisfaction. Regression analyses indicated significant variations in compassion fatigue, based on the populations treated. Therapists working with bereaved families and families of hostages reported higher anxiety and secondary traumatic stress whereas those working with reserve soldiers and their families reported lower anxiety and greater compassion satisfaction. Public sector therapists exhibited higher levels of burnout, secondary traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression compared to those in the private sector.

Implications: The study points to the critical importance of addressing the emotional and psychological toll taken on therapists working in conflict zones, particularly those who, like their clients, are continuously exposed to trauma. The findings highlight the significant association between populations treated and various outcomes.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 08

Effects of transitions on the personal networks of young people in residential care. A longitudinal comparison of three transition types

Dr. Lukas Fellmann
Co-Author(s): Jana Osswald

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland,
Switzerland

Social connectedness describes the basic human need of feeling close and connected with other individuals or groups. Research has stressed that personal networks play an important role in fostering social connectedness. In residential child and youth care, young people's personal networks are embedded in a dynamic social context caused by their own transitions, but also by the constant changes in the residential group constellation. This makes it more challenging to form close relationships that last over time. The current study examined the changes in young people's personal networks that are related to three typical transitions in residential care: (1.) change of the residential care facility or group, (2.) family reunification, and (3.) leaving care. The network changes were measured in terms of the composition, size and structural characteristics in a longitudinal design with two measurement points one year apart. The sample consisted of 415 young people who lived in residential care in the German-speaking part of Switzerland at least in the first wave of data collection. The data were analyzed using a series of linear regression models with change scores ($t_1 - t_0$) as dependent variables while controlling for age and gender. The results show several significant changes in the personal networks that vary between the three transition types, including changes in network size, contact frequency, support, conflict, share of family members, share of friends, and share of professionals. The results provide implications of how the personal networks of young people can be prepared and supported depending on the upcoming transitions.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 08

The central role of social connectedness in reducing psychological distress among mothers of NICU hospitalized preterm infants

Miri Kestler-Peleg
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Ariel University,
Israel

Preterm birth is a major stressor that might cause maternal psychological distress due to high-risk and traumatic birth; hospitalization of the infant in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU); forced distance between mothers and their babies; and actual danger of infant morbidity and death. The proposed presentation describes collaboration between NICU social workers and University researchers to promote better interventions for preterm mothers. Using three theoretical models, we examined the role of social connectedness as critical resources in reducing psychological distress among mothers during NICU hospitalization.

Model 1 explored the association between spousal support and psychological distress, and the role of maternal self-efficacy in mediating this association. Model 2 explored the association between social support (from spouse, family, and friends) and peripartum depression, and the role of optimism in mediating this association. Model 3 explored support from informal (spouse, family, and friends) and formal (medical staff) as explaining maternal psychological distress.

A sample of 128 Israeli mothers of 214 NICU hospitalized infants completed self-report questionnaires regarding background and model's variables. NICU's medical staff provided health indicators.

The three theoretical models were confirmed. Accordingly, maternal self-efficacy mediated the negative effect of spousal support on psychological distress, optimism mediated the effect of social support on peripartum depression, and support from informal (spouse, family, and friends) and formal (medical staff) explained maternal psychological distress.

The findings demonstrate the importance of social connectedness as targets for social workers' intervention with mothers during NICU hospitalization, in order to reduce maternal psychological distress.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 08

Enhancing Social Connectedness for Children of Incarcerated Parents

Ph.D. Jitka Navr tilov

Co-Author(s): Jitka Navr tilov , Ph.D., Doc., PhDr. Pavel Navr til, Ph.D.

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Our presentation aims to show how parental incarceration affects key dimensions of the parent-child relationship (trust, communication and proximity) and how these changes can be understood in the context of the child's development of relational skills. Children of incarcerated parents are at high risk of disrupted relational attachment, which can have long-term negative effects on their psychological development and social integration. Previous research on these impacts has built primarily on attachment theory, which focuses on the dynamics of parent-child relationships but often neglects the broader social context and the specific obstacles these children face. In our research, we combine attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/82; Poehlmann-Tynan & Dallaire, 2021) with the capability approach (Biggeri & Karkara, 2014) to provide deeper insight into the social environment of these children and their potential for social connectedness. We conclude by reflecting on how fostering these children's relational capabilities and social connectedness can contribute to their inclusion, thereby strengthening the foundations for a healthier and more socially sustainable society.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 09

Teaching social connectedness when the university is closed due to a national crisis

Ayelet Makaros

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Israel

In a national crisis, many state systems become paralyzed. One of the systems suspended during the recent national crisis in Israel is academia. However, although the university was shut down, we, the staff of the Social Work School, went on to provide training and even expose our students to trauma. In the presentation, we describe an emergency community intervention, in collaboration with the local authority. This intervention focused on victims helping whom not „popular“, for whom economic and human resources were not allotted.

Methodology

Two faculty members and a student led each intervention. The intervention served three main populations: (1) social workers in need of emotional support; (2) locals who experience anxiety and loneliness and need social connectedness; and (3) evacuees who had stayed in hotels and needed preparation before returning home.

The importance of the topic for social work education

The joint activity highlighted the importance of social commitment and connectedness and the need to address all circles of harm. It inspired students, who experienced commitment to every person and provided real help during the crisis.

The subtheme of the conference

The activity increased social connectedness. In all meetings, the participants were free to express loneliness and anxiety. They interacted and supported one another. They received a clear message: the community cares for you and recognizes the harm done to you, even if it is less direct and dramatic.

teaching social work, national crisis, community intervention, social connectedness, emotional support

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 09

Designing a Ceremony-Based Course on Gender Diversity: The 9Genders Framework in Social Work Education

Michael Parsons
Co-Author(s): Oleksandr Kondrashov

Dalhousie University,
Canada

This presentation outlines an innovative course design that integrates the 9Genders framework into social work education through ceremony-based pedagogy. Drawing from the recently published *Embracing 9Genders: A Global Perspective on Gender Diversity*, we present a detailed curriculum model that moves beyond traditional classroom approaches to create a transformative learning experience centered on Ancestral understandings of gender using fire to gather participants.

The course design uniquely weaves together three key elements:

- Ceremonial practices that ground learning in spiritual traditions
- Academic content exploring nine distinct gender identities
- Experiential activities that connect theory to practice

The curriculum structure includes:

- Weekly themes exploring each gender identity through multiple lenses
- Integration of land-based learning activities
- Reflective practices that honor personal and ancestral knowledge
- Assessment methods aligned with Ancestral ways of knowing

This model addresses critical gaps in conventional gender education by:

- Centering Ancestral knowledge systems
- Incorporating spiritual dimensions of gender identity
- Providing practical tools for working with gender-diverse communities
- Creating space for personal transformation and professional development

The presentation will share concrete examples of course materials, learning activities, and assessment strategies while discussing implementation challenges and solutions.

curriculum design, gender education, ceremony-based learning, Indigenous pedagogy, social work education

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 10

Social Connectedness Across Diverse Recovery Approaches: The Experiences of Professionals with Lived and Living Experience

Dr. Gabriela Novotna

University of Regina,
Canada

The involvement of persons with lived and living experience (PWLE) of addiction in professional roles within substance use services is a worldwide phenomenon. In Canada, substance use treatment services have roots in abstinence-based groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, while more recently, PWLE have increasingly become employed in harm reduction services. However, understanding how PWLE balance their professional responsibilities with their personal recovery experiences is limited. This paper will discuss PWLE experiences by framing recovery as a continuum of improved health and wellbeing and exploring how social connectedness evolves and expands one's social circles over time.

Using Constructivist Grounded Theory, 22 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with PWLE working in substance use intervention services. Participants included 13 women and 9 men, aged 30-64, with educational backgrounds in social work, social justice or addictions. Data analysis revealed that their lived experience and social networks significantly motivated their entering the field as professionals, with journeys marked by personal growth and learning. Participants also faced challenges such as managing recovery setbacks, stigma, lack of accessible confidential services for personal recovery support, and complex workplace dynamics. One of the key themes suggests that those with individual self-efficacy and community ties were more adept at managing their dual roles.

The findings highlight the importance of the unique experiences of professionals with lived and living experience of addiction. Specifically, understanding how social connectedness contributes to wellbeing and recovery can enhance the social work curriculum and inform clinical social work supervision of the emerging and experienced SW professionals with lived or living experience of addiction.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 10

„Rethinking Social Bonds and Connectedness: Insights from Carers of Care Home Residents during COVID-19 Lockdown in Scotland for Social Work Education“

Dr Dina Pervez Sidhva

Co-Author(s): Prof George Palattiyil

The University of the West of Scotland,
United Kingdom

This research explored the psychosocial impact of enforced social distancing on families of care home residents during COVID-19, framing social connectedness as a critical social, mental, and physical health issue. Grounded in theories of social support and trauma-sensitive care, it addressed how the pandemic disrupted essential family bonds, shedding light on mental health implications and the complex role of social work in such crises. Methodologically, this mixed-methods study employed qualitative interviews, café-style sessions, and a quantitative survey (GHQ-12), engaging family carers and care staff across Scotland's care homes. Thematic analysis and quantitative insights from 444 responses reveal both personal and societal consequences of isolation, emphasizing the need for policies that foster meaningful connection without enforcing uniformity.

The findings highlight social work education's role in preparing practitioners to address these issues with sensitivity, promoting connectedness where it supports health and recognizing disconnection as valid in certain contexts. By integrating trauma-sensitive frameworks and rights-based approaches, social work education equips future practitioners to navigate these dynamics thoughtfully.

This abstract aligns with the subtheme: Social Connectedness as a Social, Mental, and Physical Health Issue, merging theoretical perspectives with practical implications for social work education. Ultimately, this study advocates for reflective, inclusive policies that balance connection with autonomy, fostering a more health-conscious approach to social work practice.

social connectedness/bonding, trauma-sensitive care, care homes, COVID-19, social work education

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 10

Harnessing the Healing Power of Community: Embodied Learning as Pedagogy

Dr. Lori Sirs, DSW, LICSW

Centralia College,
United States

Theme: Social Issue (education)

In a world that is seemingly more „connected“ via global communication and constant information streaming, loneliness and isolation remain at an all-time high. Despite dependence on technology, we yearn for human connection. Educators and students remain trapped in a cognitive-heavy paradigm that decenters human connectedness.

Theoretical Background:

Knowledge is socially constructed. Students bring embodied selves to learning environments; we must acknowledge that some bodies in our classroom have reaped the benefits of privilege, while others do not feel safe even in the „brave spaces“ we create to discuss emotionally loaded topics. This can either create invitations or barriers to interaction. This is perhaps the heart of embodied pedagogy, acknowledging and making explicit what is implicitly felt by us and our students whenever we are sharing space in the learning and helping environments.

Relevance to SW Education:

Social work as a profession embraces social justice, agency, and recognizing the dignity and worth of the person. However, our learning environments do not always reflect these values. An embodied approach to learning sets the backdrop for a different way of being with colleagues, clients, and community stakeholders.

Methodology:

The author shares the rationale, process, and lessons learned from creating an embodied learning-focused course in a BSW program. This innovative course centered students' embodied experiences as lifelong learners, examining ways knowledge is acquired. It incorporated flow arts as a means of connecting students to their embodied selves. Embodied pedagogy, then, is holistic in recognizing the whole person - mind-body-spirit.

Embodied Pedagogy, Flow Arts, Embodied Cognition, Social Work Education

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 11

Role Perception and Challenges among Home Care Workers for Older Adults: A Qualitative Study

Dr. Pnina Dolberg

Co-Author(s): Dr. Ronit Even-Zahav, Dr. Yael Sela

Ruppin Academic Center,
Israel

Theoretical Background:

This study explores the role perception and challenges of home care workers (HCWs) for older adults, within the global context of „aging in place?“ (Bigonnesse & Chaudhury, 2020). With rising public long-term care needs, HCWs face complex role boundaries and evolving expectations (Assiskovich, 2017; Mabry et al., 2018).

Methodology:

Fifty-eight HCWs from diverse backgrounds participated in six focus groups, bringing perspectives across ages, nationalities, and caregiving experiences. Thematic analysis identified common themes and unique insights into their roles and professional challenges.

Findings:

Three themes emerged: complexities in role perception, managing relationships with stakeholders (patients, families, employers, and the state), and core caregiving values. HCWs reported both satisfaction and meaning in their work but highlighted significant physical, emotional demands, limited professional recognition, and tensions between formal and informal role expectations.

Significance for Social Work Education and Social Connectedness:

The study calls for systemic improvements to enhance HCWs' well-being and quality of care. Addressing social isolation and fostering connectedness within caregiving roles can improve outcomes for both caregivers and clients. These insights support the theme of „Social Connectedness“ by showing how social work education can prepare professionals to create supportive, connected work environments in caregiving fields.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 11

Who will take care of the senior citizens? Factors associated with the intention to work with older adults among first year social work students

Noa Parizian Steinberg

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Israel

Two decades after gerontological social work was defined as a unique field, studies continue to reveal a consistent lack of motivation among social work students to specialize in aging, despite the growing population of older adults. This shortage of skilled social workers emphasizes the need to better understand the factors shaping students' intention to work with this population.

This study developed and tested a theoretical model based on Terror Management Theory (TMT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), integrating cognitive and emotional aspects to explain students' intentions. The model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from 356 first-year social work students in Israel.

Findings show that TPB's three components, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, were directly related to students' intention to work in aging. Additionally, prior relationships with older adults (family and non-family) were linked to TMT's emotional constructs—fear of older people and anxiety about aging—which, in turn, shaped the cognitive structures of TPB. Together, these variables explained 63% of the variance in students' intentions to pursue gerontological social work.

These results underscore the importance of combining cognitive, emotional, and social factors to understand intentions in this field. Practically, the findings highlight the need for targeted training programs that enhance students' sense of control, improve attitudes toward aging, and address fears about the aging process, thereby preparing motivated and skilled gerontological social workers.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 11

Supporting Social Connectedness in Dementia Care: Insights from South Asian Family Carers in Scotland

Dr Dina Pervez Sidhva

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The University of the West of Scotland,
United Kingdom

Social connectedness is essential in caregiving, particularly within ethnic minority communities where cultural, religious, and social ties form a vital support system. This research explored the lived experiences of South Asian family carers in Scotland who care for relatives with dementia, focusing on how culturally rooted values shape their caregiving roles. Grounded in theories of social capital and culturally competent care, this research addresses how the presence (or absence) of social connectedness impacts the caregiving journey, influencing both carers' well-being and the quality of care.

Employing a qualitative methodology, this small-scale study engaged 12 South Asian carers through semi-structured interviews across seven local authority areas. Recruitment took place via community and religious organizations, using convenience sampling to capture a varied range of experiences. Interviews provided insights into carers' motivations, challenges, and needs, highlighting how cultural beliefs and personal coping strategies sustain carers amid emotional and physical demands. Key findings reveal that, while religious and moral values foster resilience, carers face significant social disconnection due to gaps in culturally sensitive support services.

Aligned with the conference subtheme „Social Connectedness as a Social, Mental, and Physical Health Issue,“ this study underlines the importance of cultural competence in social work education. By integrating training focused on cultural sensitivity, mental health awareness, and community engagement, social work education can better prepare practitioners to support diverse carers, addressing social isolation and reinforcing inclusivity within care systems. These findings advocate for a more responsive social work curriculum that champions inclusivity and enhances social cohesion within caregiving contexts.

Keywords: social connectedness, cultural competence, dementia care, South Asian carers, social work education

social connectedness, cultural competence, dementia care, South Asian carers, social work education

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 12

Relationship Between War-Related Stress and Caregiver Burden in Adult Children of Aging Parents

Dr. Pnina Dolberg
Co-Author(s): Dr. Sagit Lev, Dr. Maya Kagan

Ruppin Academic Center,
Israel

Theoretical Background:

Family caregiving is often accompanied by significant burden, which intensifies in wartime. Filial piety (respect, gratitude, support, and responsibility towards parents) and resilience are known to reduce caregiver burden, yet their roles during crises are underexplored.

Methods:

This study surveyed 398 Israeli adults, aged 40 and above, who care for aging parents following the October 7, 2023 attacks. Participants completed online questionnaires assessing war-related stress, caregiver burden, resilience, and filial piety. A moderated mediation model was applied to analyze these relationships.

Findings:

War-related stress directly increased caregiver burden, with filial piety partially mediating this relationship. Resilience did not directly moderate the impact of war-related stress on either filial piety or caregiver burden, but did moderate the relationship between filial piety and caregiver burden.

Significance for Social Work Education and Social Connectedness:

The findings highlight the role of resilience and filial piety in managing caregiver burden in crises, suggesting that fostering these traits could enhance caregiver support during emergencies. This research aligns with the conference theme „Social Connectedness“ by promoting family cohesion as a protective factor against extreme stress.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 12

Idaho Health Communities Challenge: A Public Health Model for Preventing Violent Extremism

Dr. Royce Hutson
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USA

Acts of hate crime and targeted violence are on the rise in the US. Over the past 15 years, a growing number of experts have advocated for public health models for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE).

In August 2023, a collaboration between Boise State University and the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights initiated the Idaho Healthy Communities Challenge (IHCC). This initiative set to organize eight Idaho counties to create public health consortiums tasked with designing and implementing plans of action to prevent youth/young adults from adopting violent extremist ideology.

The objective of the study was to test the feasibility of utilizing a public health framework for PVE. We hypothesized that, in one year, we would be able to form six of the eight planned consortiums, conduct localized needs assessments, develop theories of change, and logic models.

In twelve months, three of the consortiums developed their logic models and completed needs assessments. Two of the counties are located in northern Idaho and one in southern Idaho. One county has yet to convene meeting despite best efforts of a full-time organizer. The three others met between 2-5 times, but without consistent representation from participants.

Preliminary analyses suggest that the perceived drivers to violent extremism are localized. In one county, 'hate churches' was the primary driver, while another was overt and institutionalized racism against migrant workers and refugees. In a third, the perceived driver was coarseness of public dialogue, online recruitment, and media literacy from legacy and social media.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 12

Social work supervision for social support teams. Practice and education.

Józwiak-Majchrzak, Wioletta mgr

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES /Department of Applied Sociology and Social Work Faculty of Economics and Sociology University of Lodz, Poland

Legal context of social work supervision in Poland ? certified social work supervision has been operating in Poland for 7 years, the number of supervisors ? 129, 11% of social workers participate in supervision

Supervision functions: educational, administrative and support

The importance of supervision in the development of communication competences of social workers and social work students

The role of supervision in building interdisciplinary teams working in the areas of trauma with single mothers and their children experiencing homelessness, violence and health crises.

The author will present her research on the supervision of a team supporting single women in the crisis of homelessness. Research conducted using qualitative methods ? participatory action research and autobiographical research. The supervision model selected during the research and currently implemented in the Single Mother's Home in will be presented.

The author will present references to her practice in the field of education and support for social work students education for social work supervision, functioning of the Crisis Intervention Point, supervision for graduates of social work.

The presented topic is related to the role of self-care, compassion, prevention of oppression and burnout in the field of trauma-sensitive social work.

supervision, social work, trauma-informed approach, single moterhood

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 13

The relevance of Social Work education in addressing the invisibility and discrimination experienced by trans persons, an integrative review

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ISCTE - Instituto Universit rio de Lisboa,
Portugal

Trans people, frequently perceived as violators of societal norms regarding gender identity, are often neglected, and Social Work's knowledge and skills are hardly at the frontline of this scourge. The ongoing struggle against invisibility and discrimination negatively impacts the mental health and well-being of trans individuals. Studies have shown higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide among this community due to societal stigma and lack of support. The cisnormative system continuously upholds gender binary and cisgender norms, harming trans and gender-diverse persons by denying their rights and subjecting them to prejudice, discrimination, restricted access to healthcare, or social isolation, all of which may affect their mental health and general well-being, resulting in outcomes aligned with a lack of Social Connectedness as a social, mental, and physical health issue.

When designed to question and challenge conventional and crystallized cisgender narratives, education and curricula in Social Work are essential for equipping professionals to assist marginalized communities. This includes fostering an understanding of gender diversity and intersectionality and offering tools for tackling mental health issues while cultivating cultural and humility competences. These skills will enable future social workers to deliver comprehensive and high-quality care for trans persons in a holistic and sensitive manner.

In conclusion, engaging in self-reflection, building empathy, and acknowledging personal prejudices are crucial to develop humility and cultural competencies when dealing with transgender people. This can lead to more comprehensive and supportive social work practice, helping to foster change, promote visibility and social justice for all the transgender community.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 13

Liminal (dis)connectedness and the relational needs of people who are homeless

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United Kingdom

This presentation considers the social (dis)connectedness of people who are homeless and living in hostel accommodation, adopting the concept of „relational liminality“ as the theoretical framework. It draws on four months of research fieldwork at a „complex needs“ hostel in England which gathered the perspectives of 21 residents and 25 staff through about their needs. Most residents were actively using substances, experienced significant mental distress and had experiences of childhood adversity or had been in care, which shaped their social connections. Against this backdrop, this presentation will focus on the ways that relational needs were understood, negotiated and met (or not). Liminality refers to „in-between“ states where usual rules may not apply. From a relational standpoint, this theoretical framework supported observations about fractured and thin relationships on a background of traumatic experiences. Important peer support relationships were developed amongst residents in the hostel, but these connections often shifted between supportive and exploitative modes. Relationships with staff and external social work support were both embraced and avoided given these experiences of trauma and competing demands related to their complex needs. These findings point towards flexible, trauma-informed social work approaches that manage a balance between person-centred, slower paced relational work and a sensitivity to risk and harm within relationships. Social work education needs to support students to develop more nuanced understandings of social connectedness as non-linear and complex for people who have complex needs. This presentation links to the conference sub-theme of social connectedness as a social, physical and mental health issue.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Health 13

Kin Foster Care: Supporting Social Workers in Their Efforts to Empower Extended Families to Enhance Social Connectedness for Kin Foster Children

PhD Chaya Possick
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This qualitative research study presented seeks to empower kin foster care families and social workers by enhancing client-professional partnerships to better meet foster children's needs for social connectedness in the wake of family trauma. The research was the basis of a doctoral dissertation that encouraged a senior social worker in the foster care system to embark on critically reflective practice research.

The qualitative research examines the experiences and perceptions of 12 foster care social workers and 12 kin foster parents regarding successful kin foster care. We will address the professional dilemmas social workers face surrounding the need to enhance social connectedness for the child by enabling a stable base within his extended family while dealing with the trauma embedded in the family as a whole.

A phenomenological approach was employed. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Themes from the results include:

1. Kin foster parents often feel like involuntary clients when first engaging with social workers.
2. Kin foster social workers need to be trained to address trauma experienced by the whole family.
3. Social workers need to learn how to accept a dialectical approach which can contain both poles of ethical dilemmas in kin foster care.

Conclusion: Kin foster care differs profoundly from non-kin foster care, requiring specialized education and supervision for social workers. A useful theoretical framework may be 'moral injury' experienced by both kin foster parents and social workers and the potential for healing this injury within the family-professional system.

kin foster care, moral injury, family trauma, practice research, professional dilemmas

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 01

Practice teaching in social work as an investment of professional connectedness: the perspective of practice teachers

Vanja Branica

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Practice teachers have important role in social work education, they are the link between theory and practice for students during placements. That process is important for students and their connection with profession and one step in the path of professional identification. So, the practice teachers are significant figures in educational process, without whose invested time, experience, commitment and connectedness to students, experiential learning would not be possible. In Croatia we have witnessed a top-down reform process in social care system driven by government which has not evolved not even a minimal collaboration with the professional community. One of the consequences of this reform is a significant drop of motivation to work in the social care system as well as a lack of potential practice teachers who wants to participate in the field practice. This presentation considers how we might enhance shared responsibility and realize a co-owned approach to professional learning to motivate experienced social workers to be practice teachers. Results of qualitative research with 15 practice teachers will be presented. Majority of participants worked at the department for children, youth and family, average age of 44 years with 17 years of service form different parts of Croatia. Results of thematic analysis show how practice teachers understand their role and mentoring process, what motivate them and challenges they face. Based on the results, suggestion for improvement of mutual collaboration and communication that enhance practice teaching will be presented and discussed regarding responsibility of the academic and the professional community.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 01

Raising the voices of women in homelessness - an example of the co-creation of knowledge through participatory action research

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BMSZKI,
Hungary

Homeless women's needs and voices are frequently invisible in the design and delivery of policy and service/practice responses to homelessness. This is because of the persistence of male centric norms shaping homelessness responses (Savage 2016; 2022; Fehér-Lengyel 2023; Bretherton 2017; Reeve 2018). Women's invisibility from service development can compound the often hidden nature of their homelessness, leaving women ineligible for the essential welfare services needed to support them out of homelessness (Bretherton 2017). This can prolong their experiences of homelessness and the depth of traumas they often experience (Savage 2022, Fehér-Lengyel 2024).

In light of the invisibility of women's voices from service design and delivery, this presentation will introduce how a participatory action research method (adapted from photo voice, Wang 1997) is being used as part of a transnational project, Women's Voices, to gather qualitative data on the needs and experiences of women in various situations of homelessness. Homeless service providers from several European countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, and Slovenia), a grassroots organization from Portugal (created by and for homeless women) and FEANTSA, the European Network of Homeless Service Providers shall use the data from the project to co-create a training package for students of social work as well as staff of health and social services. The training will be co-produced by those with lived and learned experience (users of services and staff) of homelessness.

The outputs of the Women's Voices project, which will include photo narrations, will be produced through a series of participatory research workshops (approximately 14, which will take place from January to March 2025) facilitated by nominated staff trained in the methodology. These will take place with peers and then separately with women. Recommendations will then be gathered through further workshops with staff facilitating the local workshops, allowing for the sharing of key practice and service insights (of staff and women).

The aim of the project is to enhance local services for women in homelessness, co-creating its content, and so put the women's voices at the centre of service development and delivery. The service providers involved in this project come from a variety of backgrounds and work with women in different situations - mothers with children and/or who are pregnant, women-only daytime services, night shelters in mixed services, supported housing etc. Photo narrations will be completed by several groups of women in each country. The results as well as the method of co-creation will be included in various courses of social work education in partner countries.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 01

Social Connectedness through Participatory Action Research: Progress and Challenges in Social Work in Croatia

Assistant, PhD Student Valentina Kozjak

Co-Author(s): Assoc. Prof. Marijana Kletečki Radović, PhD

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Social connectedness, a fundamental determinant of community well-being, thrives when individuals are empowered to actively participate in shaping the social services that impact their lives. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is one tool that enables this by fostering inclusion and community engagement. Although PAR is not yet widely implemented in the field of social work in Croatia, significant progress has been made in shift from dominantly quantitative researches to qualitative research, with making service users' perspectives central and the most important. This shift represents an important step towards a more participatory framework, though much remains to be done before fully realizing PAR in practice.

The presentation will show two qualitative studies that incorporate the perspectives of underrepresentation groups (children in poverty and homeless people), illustrating how user involvement has contributed to a deeper understanding of social needs and strengthened social connectedness within Croatia. While these examples fall short of full PAR, they demonstrate the growing acknowledgment of participation, collaboration, and shared ownership in both research and practice. The discussion will provide critical insights into the potential of PAR to further enhance social connectedness and contribute to more inclusive, responsive social services. Furthermore, it will underscore the role of PAR in bridging the gaps between policy, research, and practice, thereby offering valuable contributions to the promotion of social connectedness across diverse social contexts.

social connectedness, participatory action research, social work, Croatia

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 02

Between Duty and Love: The Impact of Informal Family Care on Young Caregivers

Mgr. Linda Koshi

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Czech Republic

Young people represent a large yet unrecognized group of family caregivers, frequently involved even in intimate care. This study aims to examine how providing care to a family member impacts young caregivers' lives, allowing me to give recommendations for social work practice and new services creation aligned with the needs of this target group.

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with caregivers aged 15-26 who care for a family member to achieve this goal. Through the lens of capability theory, thematic analysis was used to understand their lived experiences and categorize the effects of caregiving on their lives.

Initial findings indicate that care, based on its intensity, significantly affects all areas of young caregivers' lives. It is associated with higher levels of stress and the tendency to prioritize the care recipient's well-being over their own needs and desires. Their eating and sleeping patterns are often disrupted; their interests, social activities, relationships, and academic and work commitments are put aside. Nonetheless, they also described caregiving as enriching, enhancing their practical skills and emotional maturity.

Finally, social connectedness is a cornerstone of family caregiving. Close bonds with care recipients and support from the immediate environment often motivate young caregivers to continue caregiving despite its challenges. However, it is crucial to expand their support networks to enable them to shape their lives freely, without lasting effects from caregiving demands. Education of social workers in this area is essential for developing support networks that allow young caregivers to balance caregiving responsibilities with personal growth.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 02

Recognition, Care, and the Path to Social Connectedness

Dr. Doris Rosenlechner-Urbaneck

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Österreich

This oral presentation explores the question of how to foster social connectedness, beginning at the interpersonal level. Experiencing social connection depends on the fundamental condition that those involved in an interaction are actively seeking to experience it. Drawing on A. Honneth's Theory of Recognition (1995, 2005/2015), I argue that any interpersonal encounter aimed at successfully establishing a feeling of social connection must be grounded in the recognition of the other as a „fellow human being.“ This entails, firstly, recognising the other as an equal moral being, endowed with equal worth and rights in the shaping of the relationship, and secondly, adopting an attitude of existential „Zugewandtheit“ (Honneth 2005/2015, 39), expressed through care for, interest in and a willingness to understand the other. Empirical examples from a two-year-long participatory action research project with forced migrants will demonstrate how such mutual recognition of the other as a fellow human being can manifest in practice.

For Social Work Education, this could mean integrating theories of recognition/critical theory into curricula. On the skills level, this could involve strengthening teaching methods that promote self-reflection (of one's own biases and normative assumptions) among social workers, while also developing their ability to encourage self-reflection in those being addressed by social work interventions.

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Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 02

From Social to Spatial Connectedness: The Influence of Housing on the Well-Being of Young People in Residential Care

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Switzerland

The subjective well-being of young people in residential care has been studied extensively in recent years. Research in this area is well advanced, e.g. studies on social networks or perceived social connectedness. The factor of spatial connectedness, and thus the socio-spatial arrangements of young people in residential care (RC), has received much less attention in both research and teaching. Our study addressed this gap by focusing on the spatial aspects of RC. The two central questions were (1) how young people experience housing in RC and (2) to what extent this experience affects their well-being. To answer these questions, we tested a theoretical model which hypothesized that young people's agency, physical-material provision, and emotional attachment to RC affect their well-being.

Path analysis indicates that these spatial factors significantly influence well-being, both directly and indirectly. Specifically, agency ($\beta = .46, p < .001$) and physical-material provision at RC ($\beta = .34, p < .001$) directly impacted emotional attachment to RC, which in turn strongly predicted well-being ($\beta = .38, p < .001$).

The study is one of the pioneering efforts to assess the well-being of young people in residential care. Our results highlight the importance of spatial factors, particularly housing, in efforts to improve the well-being of this vulnerable population. These findings have implications for social workers and social work students: We argue for a broader perspective in child and youth services, beyond psychological and social aspects, and will reflect on how to further strengthen spatial connectedness in social work practice and education.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 03

Rebuilding Trust: The Role of Social Work in Strengthening Community Bonds in Albania

Juliana Ajdini

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Albania was under a dictatorship for approximately 45 years, a period marked by significant social challenges. The communist regime fostered a controlled and isolated society, suppressing freedom of speech, press freedom, and human rights. Many individuals were persecuted for their opinions, and families often faced repercussions due to their political activities. Albania was one of the most isolated countries in the world, which adversely affected social development. Following the fall of the regime, society began to undergo profound transformations, but the scars of this period are still felt today. This study aims to analyze these scars, focusing on social connections at the societal level through a qualitative research method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 23 individuals, using purposive sampling that included scholars from the humanities in Albania. The study reveals that a culture of fear has been established in Albania, leading to a pronounced social indifference inherited from the communist era. Albania was seen as a large prison, where even the walls had ears. It is highlighted that the sense of belonging and community solidarity has deteriorated. Social work professionals can play a crucial role in addressing the social consequences of the dictatorship in Albania in several ways identified by this study. They identified the importance of being more active in educating and raising awareness in communities about human rights, democracy, and civic engagement, alongside actions such as advocacy, promoting diversity, and engaging in community activities.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 03

Photovoice as a Participatory Method to Address Social Connection for People Living with Lymphatic Filariasis in Ghana: The necessity for cross-cultural arts-based methods and One Health in social work education

Janine Noorloos
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Canada

Lymphatic filariasis (LF) is a mosquito-borne disease causing disfiguration and swelling of the limbs, breasts, and genitals. LF affects 120 million people globally, and prevalence is disproportionately higher in communities with poverty situated near water. The impact of the disease is significant and includes the loss of social connectedness, increased stigma, shunning and isolation, and, in some cases, refusal of care from healthcare professionals. Photovoice and elicitation were used in nine rural Ghanaian communities. This allowed the research to be conducted in a participatory and equalitarian way, respecting power imbalances and privileging the knowledge and lived experience of people living with LF.

Photos taken by the participants informed in-depth interviews and body mapping to more deeply understand their experience of the disease to develop culturally appropriate and sensitive health promotion and prevention approaches. While the method of using photos was unfamiliar to the participants, the photos fostered a collection of personal accounts of the multi-faceted and intersecting dimensions of local culture, existing healthcare practices, and personal/community values. This resulted in developing community programming interventions from an Ubuntu lens to increase connectedness.

A transnational social work research team took this novel approach to examine a health condition increased by climate change, causing challenges with social connectedness. A cross-cultural approach to arts-based methods took place, which is new and needed in social work education to increase the diversity of perspectives. This project also underscores the need to incorporate One Health and climate change into social work education to address global social injustices.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 05

Social Work and Social Cohesion

Dr. Heiko Berner

FH Salzburg,
Austria

Basis of the discussion is a European project (RAD2Citizen, <https://metropole.toulouse.fr/rad2citizen-en#results-project>), that included the investigation of several urban districts of Toulouse/France. The study used an adapted model of social cohesion that combines statistical data with qualitative data. The aim of the study was to describe the living circumstances in the districts in detail and to compare specific risks and protective factors in these territories. It could be shown that matching policies or social interventions may be developed depending on the specific situation of each territory. Especially different perceptions of safety, the meaning of „feeling at home“, and the identification of inhabitants with their neighbourhood play an important role in terms of social cohesion and thus should be fostered. The model has been published in an article in a scientific journal (Berner/Bertrand 2023; <https://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/813>).

The current contribution adapts this investigation into a general model that allows to describe social cohesion in any urban district resp. smaller territory. The idea is to use it for a lecture on social inequality in the MA Social Innovation at Salzburg University of Applied Sciences. Together with community work practitioners of the respective territories, students may reflect the actual needs of inhabitants in the districts.

The presentation will introduce the model as elaborated in RAD2Citizen. Additionally, it discusses its innovative potential for a teaching concept that includes recommendations for community work.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 04

Student Sense of Belonging

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How to connect students academically and socially to their Social Work education? The 100 days program „Start & Stay“ and the concept of Student Sense of Belonging at Windesheim University of Applied Science, department of Health and Wellbeing, Zwolle, The Netherlands.

„Although student life, with all its new experiences and challenges, is often referred to as a very positive period in life, many students, in fact, experience it as a difficult and stressful time. Starting university is a key life transition that takes place in a crucial developmental period when students make the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood (Dopmeijer, 2021)“. As lecturers we see that there is an increased risk amongst students on dropping out, disappearing from the classrooms and losing social and academic connection. From the perspective of the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), students have three basic psychological needs: autonomy (behavior with a full sense of volition), competence (the experience of mastery and efficacy) and relatedness (the need to feel connected to other students -and lecturers- in a meaningful way). Research shows that the first hundred days at the University are crucial for academic success (KBA Nijmegen 2022).

Social Connectedness starts within the University and the way future professional Social Workers are educated. What can we as lecturers and educators contribute? How do we work on social and academic bonding, inside and outside the classroom (sticky campus)? What are our best practices to keep students connected to each other, to the University program, their future profession and the world around them (internationalization)? How do we contribute to intrinsic motivation and connection in our lessons (learning activities) and outside these activities?

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Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 04

cultural translation: teaching strategies in multicultural social work classroom

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Israel

This paper introduces the concept of „cultural translation“ and offers a novel perspective on cross-cultural professional encounters. While most social work literature refers to translation as linguistic re-expression, cultural translation describes a process of cultural exchange and knowledge transformation between members of different cultural communities. Our paper illustrates the concept of cultural translation based on analyzing data from interviews with secular social work educators teaching ultra-Orthodox students. This intercultural encounter involves a clash between two distinct epistemological traditions: one rooted in liberal ideology and ethics associated with Western culture, while the other relies on conservative and strict interpretations of Jewish religious law.

The findings reveal two primary strategies of cultural translation adopted by the lecturers: (1) emphasizing similarities and masking differences, and (2) acknowledging differences between the two types of knowledge, challenging power dynamics, and creating hybrid space for mutual learning.

While these strategies offer diverse interpretations, they highlight the importance of embracing uncertainty and complexity in cross-cultural encounters.

This research offers a unique framework for understanding and addressing cross-cultural challenges in professional education, particularly in contexts marked by significant cultural and epistemological differences. We propose cultural translation as a valuable method for addressing cross-cultural challenges in social work education and practice.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 05

Invisible, abandoned, and ignored: Disabled people's experiences receiving social assistance „allowances“ in Canadian institutions

Kendal David

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Background and purpose

While low-income people with disabilities living in market or subsidized housing in Canada may be eligible to receive income support from provincial social assistance programs, people in institutional settings like group homes and long-term care get „personal needs allowances“ instead. These allowances provide minimal income support (around 10% of the rate of payments received by recipients in community), and they remain ignored and unexamined in Canadian poverty research.

This study begins to address this gap by focusing on institutional allowances in Canada's most populous province of Ontario via the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The study asks: 1) How is institutionalization discursively constructed within the program? And, 2) What do the experiences of allowance recipients tell us about how ableism is manifested through ODSP?

Methods

This doctoral dissertation research uses critical discourse analysis, a methodology grounded in critical linguistics and sociological theory used to examine the relationships between power and discourse, and how these relationships shape social practices, processes, and phenomena (Meyer, 2011; Wodak, 2011). Data include transcripts from interviews with allowance recipients living in various types of institutions in Ontario. Data collection and analysis (grounded in feminist disability theory) are ongoing at the time of abstract submission. The presentation will include preliminary findings from at least 15 interviews.

Findings

In this presentation, I will focus on findings from interviews with allowance recipients which highlight how their experiences of state-enforced abject poverty impacts their connections to friends, family, communities, and the state. In addition to the restrictions on social connectedness inherent to institutionalization, study findings demonstrate the ways that forced chronic poverty severs recipients' access to the material goods necessary to foster social connection, including basic communication technologies and transportation. This forced disconnection is experienced by recipients as abandonment by their social assistance caseworkers and by the state at large.

Conclusions and implications

I conclude by reflecting on how these findings can inform social and political change. This research can combat neoliberal narratives of „personal responsibility“ and the public neglect of disabled persons living in institutions. Advocacy can help make disability social assistance schemes more accessible, less restricted and restricting, and more supportive.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 03

Visualising racism and anti-racism in social work

Dr Prospera Tadam
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University College Dublin,
Ireland

The research project Visualising Racism and Anti-Racism in Social Work explores the potential of objects as tools for understanding and articulating experiences of racism and anti-racism within the field of social work. Drawing on Professor Mark Doel's Social Work in 40 Objects initiative, this study invited social work students, practitioners, and educators globally to reflect on their understanding, personal and professional encounters with racism and anti-racism through an object of their choice

Preliminary findings reveal how objects can act as bridges across social and cultural divides, fostering deeper connectedness by visualising and contextualising shared and individual experiences. The project enhances critical dialogue on racism and anti-racism, providing a platform for meaningful reflection around the theoretical underpinnings and contributing to more inclusive practices in social work.

Aligned with the broader objective of advancing anti-racist practices, this study offers timely insights into equity and inclusion within the profession. It also reinforces the importance of participatory and creative approaches to understanding systemic inequities and building connections across divides.

This presentation will discuss the study's methodology, early findings, and implications for social work education and practice, highlighting its role in fostering connectedness and empathy in a culturally diverse field.

Co-Author(s): Emeritus Professor Mark Doel
Presentation mode: Individual oral presentation

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 05

Rethinking social work education in the context of Nordic welfare state: A collaborative perspective

Professor Yan Zhao

Co-Author(s): Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås

Nord University,
Norge

The consequences of neoliberalism to social work have increased individualization, standardization, and evidentialism in service provisions. Meanwhile, societal changes and recent crises e.g. wars in and outside Europe, economic and climate crisis, have created new needs for social work intervention. This paper addresses whether a collaborative approach to social work can strengthen the discipline's capacity to respond to these changes, which also sheds light on the question of social connectedness. The analysis and discussions are based on our many years' engagements in two practice fields in social work: the integration of migrants/refugees and the youth work, as researchers, educators and activists. The changes in these practice fields demonstrate the increasing need for collaboration with civil society and local communities, which entails new roles for frontline social workers. Building on theoretical perspectives on co-creation, social innovation, and mobilization we argue for a collaborative approach, which is in contrast to an instrumentalist approach in social work practice and education. This highlights a demand of new knowledges, skills and competences for social workers in terms of network building, resources mobilizations at both political and community levels, liberating local knowledges and promoting participants' capacities. Consequently, we argue for a need for rethinking social work pedagogy. We can not only tell students about collaborative approaches to social work, but give them opportunities to participate in and experience it. This actualizes the conflict of interest between social work education as individualized or collective-oriented, and between education in social work, and education for different social work services.

Collaborative approach, mobilization, co- creation, integration of migrants, youth work

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 06

Social Connectedness through the Involvement of Experts by Experience in Social Work Education

Doctoral researcher Tanja Koskinen
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University of Helsinki,
Suomi

Experts by experience involvement has become integral to social work education, with the UK leading as the only country where its use is regulated and obligatory. The presentation summarizes preliminary findings from a systematic literature review on experts by experience in social work. The research addresses two main questions:

From what perspectives has expert by experience been researched in social work previously?
What kind of phenomenon is expert by experience?

The review includes 24 international, peer-reviewed articles published between 2012 and 2024. Prior research has explored experts by experience from the viewpoints of social work education and practice.

Experts by experience appear as a phenomenon that contains various tensions. On one hand, the phenomenon is seen as empowering, dismantling power dynamics, stigmas, and stereotypes, and expanding the knowledge base of social work. On the other hand, it appears as a form of governance, creating new power tensions, reinforcing stigmas and stereotypes, and producing one-sided experiential knowledge. Experts by experience activity in social work is still undefined and partly project-based, and the activity contains ethical challenges that need to be considered in its development.

The presentation aims to demonstrate how to foster social connectedness through the involvement of experts by experience in social work education. This research is a part of ongoing doctoral research on expert by experience involvement in child protection and is part of the LURA research project trust building towards child protection social work.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 06

The role of doctoral education in preparing social work educators to teach students about inclusive democracy

Professor Elizabeth Lightfoot
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Arizona State University,
United States

Social work doctoral programs are integral in preparing the next generation of social work educators. For social work educators to be able to lead students in exploring the role of social workers in the development of democracy, it is important that they themselves have a solid theoretical background in political and social systems. However, social work doctoral education in North America, which differs from European doctoral programs in its heavy emphasis on coursework, has become increasingly focused on training highly skilled researchers. The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) Guidelines have emphasized rigorous research methods since the 1990s. This presentation will present findings from a recent study of the curricula of all GADE affiliated programs in the United States (n=85). In this study we found that while North American PhD programs offered roughly 6 advanced research and statistics courses, most only offered one course in theory. Only half offered a policy class, one-quarter offered a history course, and few offered courses in ethics or values. These findings correspond with an earlier study that showed that relatively few North American social work doctoral courses and doctoral dissertations in the United States focused on social policy. In the presentation we will ponder if the emphasis on advanced research skills of doctoral students has affected social work faculty members' ability to lead students in nuanced explorations of how the political system shapes social work practice and how social workers can contribute to a more inclusive democracy.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 06

How challenging is it to conduct an experiment in social work research? Evidence from a study on Romanian workforce

Dr. Georgiana-Cristina Rentea
Ni?? (Gaba) Daniela; Crivoi, Silvana Elen

University of Bucharest,
Romania

Dealing with complex social problems with limited resources, social workers are exposed to high levels of professional stress and dissatisfaction which lead to turnover, making quality social services expensive. In Romania, since 2015 there has been sustained effort in researching the social work workforce. The good interdisciplinary collaboration and desire to stimulate connections, the new research project aimed to not only collect data but offer interventions to social workers practitioners. Therefore, an experiment aiming to identify ways to reduce negative consequences of work life such as stress and burnout and to improve mental well-being and resilience was designed. Social workers were invited to fill in a self-reported questionnaire which served as baseline. From the 324 social workers, those who agreed to take part in interventions were randomly assigned in one of the five groups: (1) mindfulness in person, (2) mindfulness online, (3) neurofeedback, (4) mindfulness online and neurofeedback and (5) control group. Implemented by a team of psychologists and social workers, the project lasted three years. We highlight the implementation difficulties, as those posed by (i) in-person interventions which implied a lower number of participants because of location constraints, or (ii) the difficulties of organising parallel interventions, or (iii) ensuring adherence to the intervention for the entire period, or (iv) collecting survey data from the participants. The aim of the presentation is to reflect on the c

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 07

Increasing Social Work Knowledge and Readiness to Respond to Interpersonal Violence

Assistant Professor Molly Driessen
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United States

Worldwide, nearly one-third of women ages 15-49 years old experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV is associated with negative outcomes related to mental and physical health, material hardships, and socioemotional relationships. Social workers encounter IPV when working with individuals in various settings, yet many Master of Social Work (MSW) programs do not include courses focused on IPV.

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of MSW students who completed an elective course that was designed to support knowledge and readiness to respond to interpersonal violence. Content included foundational theory on intersectionality, socio-ecological systems, critical feminist perspectives, and generational trauma.

Methodology

Data was gathered between the fall 2022 and spring 2023 academic semesters at a small, private university in the United States (U.S.). Data included student responses to pre and post-test surveys, a review of course assignments, and interviews with students. Students reported increased knowledge and preparation to screen and respond to IPV, and articulated the importance of social work curricula including violence-focused content.

Importance for Social Work Education and Overall Conference Theme

The findings could be used to create change in academic programs, which could positively impact the safety, wellbeing, and social connectedness of individuals and families impacted by violence. Social workers are at the forefront in responding to interpersonal violence. Yet, neither the U.S. Council on Social Work Education nor the International Federation of Social Workers endorse educational requirements focused on including interpersonal violence in social work graduate or undergraduate curricula.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 07

Habitat of Cracov's homeless in the age of migration ? critical analysis in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory.

Kacper Wcisło

Jagiellonian University,
Polska

The main motivation that has led to the creation of this paper was the unprecedented migration of Ukrainian refugees to Krakow, some of whom unfortunately became affected by homelessness. This situation has raised a question about how will the homeless migrants cope with their new circumstances and how the government organs should react to this new situation, unique in the Polish context.

The first objective of the research was a thorough description of the habitat of Krakow's homeless. The appearance of aliens was used here as a „contrast“ of sorts, allowing for a better analysis of some typically hidden mechanisms of this environment. To further deepen the study, theoretical concepts of field and doxa by Pierre Bourdieu have been used. During the analysis of the gathered empirical material such theoretical concepts like social exchange by Marshall Sahlins or cultural hegemony of Antoni Gramsci have also been applied.

Another objective of the paper was to thoroughly examine the process of interactions between individuals affected by homelessness crisis and the institutions responsible for providing them with social aid. In this aspect, Pierre Bourdieu's theory has again been applied, specifically the concept of symbolic violence, focusing the analysis on identifying potential signs of discrimination and exclusion.

Lastly, an attempt has been made to discover the attitudes of the Polish homeless towards the homeless migrants. The aim was to examine how the interactions between the two groups could be expected to develop, while also attempting to look for potential mechanisms of exclusion, examining the hypothetical phenomena of „discrimination amongst the discriminated“.

To fulfill all of the above research objectives, a number of qualitative research methods have been used: eight interviews with individuals affected by homelessness, two expert interviews with local social workers and two observations. The respondents for the interviews were recruited outside of social work institutions, which was hoped to create a counter balance for other research projects, which often recruited respondents through the organizations that provided them with aid, thus potentially affecting their responses.

In its concluding chapter the paper theorizes on how, in the light of acquired knowledge, the situation of homeless migrants in Kraków might further develop and how both local and foreign homeless could participate in the creation of a beneficial and sustainable solution to the issue.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 08

Ethics of social work professional supervision

Maria Turati

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Italy

In Italy, this is a pivotal moment for professional supervision in social work: in fact, it has been introduced in the essential levels of social services. It is therefore important to have an adequate theoretical reflection as a basis for an effective supervision practice. Ethics in social work supervision is an area of concern that includes the responsibility of supervisors to guide their supervisees through complex situations. This issue seems to be less explored in the literature and this paper aims to reflect on this topic, starting from two main questions: What are the ethical aspects embedded in the relationship between supervisor and supervisee? How can supervisors deal with the ethical dilemmas that can arise from this relationship and its context? The paper is based on a preliminary analysis of some ethical and deontological codes of social work in order to assess what guidance, if any, they can provide. It also considers some situations of conflict of interest that may affect the supervisory relationship, which involves not only the supervisee and the supervisor but also other stakeholders, in particular service managers, policy makers, the profession, local communities and service users. Circumstances are discussed in which the interests of different stakeholders have come into conflict because of the values of professional integrity, social justice, respect for professional autonomy, confidentiality, protection of the reputation of the profession. Finally, possible strategies for developing moral reasoning that supervisors can put into practice to deal with ethical issues are suggested.

social work supervision; ethics of supervision; social work values; professional supervision

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 08

Teaching and Learning Professional Writing in Social Work: Perspectives of students and teachers in Two Italian Universities

Maria Turati

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The contribution aims to offer a reflection on the topic of teaching and learning professional writing in social work (specifically social report writing) through a research that analyses the experiences from the perspectives of students and lecturers of 3 writing courses carried out in two different universities in Northern Italy. Professional writing is receiving increasing attention in the social work debate and is recognised as very important in social work education (Björktomta et al., 2024; Lillis, 2023), but in the Italian context it still lacks attention in education. The study involved students from 3 BA programmes in social work at 2 universities who had participated in writing courses over the last three academic years, and their respective lecturers. The activities are characterised by a common theoretical approach, but the structure and teaching methods differ due to the context, time available and the embedding of the teaching in the curriculum. A survey of students and a focus group to collect data from lecturers were used to explore the research questions. Themes explored from the students' perspective are perceived effectiveness of teaching methods, consistency with placement experience and relevance of content proposed. Questions from the lecturers involved: challenges of teaching, most critical issues, coherence between the educational proposal and professional practice. The first results highlight the need to develop strategies and reflections that strengthen the educational alliance between the professional community and the university in the development of writing skills.

professional writing, social work report, writing skills, social work research, practice education

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 01

Identity Crisis, Coping Strategies, and Help-Seeking among Arab-Palestinian Adults in Israel Following the 7 October War
In the shadow of multiple barriers- economic violence against Arab-Palestinian women in Israel: recommendations for implementing context-aware intervention

Raghda Alnabilsy

Dr. Siwar Makhoul- Khoury- Social Work Department, Research Center for Innovation in Social Work (RCISW), Tel Hai Collage, Upper Galilee, Israel. Dr. Hanin Mordi-Sapir Academic College, Israel.

Ruppin Academic Center,
Israel

Theoretical Background: Adolescents in conflict zones, particularly Arab-Palestinian youth in Israel, face unique challenges during wartime that significantly impact their identity formation, sense of belonging, coping strategies, and attitudes toward formal services. As members of a marginalized, collectivist minority, they experience inequalities that shape their views on support systems. This lecture examines the experiences of Arab-Palestinian adolescents exposed to violence following the events of October 7, 2023, and how these experiences influence their identities and coping strategies.

Methodology: The study involved six focus groups with 34 Arab teenagers, varying in age, religion, gender, and geographic location.

Findings: Three key themes emerged: 1) Identity Crisis, initially, adults felt a sense of belonging to Israeli society, but as the conflict escalated, they increasingly identified with the Palestinian people due to their marginalization. 2) Coping Strategies, this identity crisis was accompanied by feelings of fear, persecution, and silencing, leading to disappointment regarding coexistence with Jewish society. 3) Alienation and Lack of Support, many Arab adults feel alienated and unaware of formal support systems, leading them to avoid seeking help from institutional sources.

Implications to social work: This research highlights how socio-political contexts influence identity formation among Arab adolescents from a marginalized minority group and reveals their coping mechanisms in the absence of appropriate formal resources. The study underscores the importance of developing knowledge, training, and intervention methods tailored to these socio-political contexts. Such efforts are essential for enhancing the well-being and mental resilience of Arab-Palestinian adolescents during times of war and political conflict.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 01

Teaching and learning inclusive and anti-oppressive social work practices: the Unconventional Practice Placements experience.

Paola Limongelli

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This paper presents a practical learning experience called Unconventional Practice Placements (UPPs), that the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Italy has been offering from 2008. The educational proposal refers to the Service-learning approach (Petracchi et al., 2016), Anti-oppressive social work (Dominelli & Campling, 2002) and the Relational social work method (Folgheraiter, 2004; 20-24).

In UPPs, social work students help people to improve their living conditions and, at the same time, people help the expert to implement jointly developed coping strategies. In UPPs, students work with a network of people (professionals, volunteers, community members, service users and practitioners) to facilitate collaboration in addressing shared community problems. The outcomes of UPPs are usually community social work projects based on a common concern emerging from the communities.

The experience will be presented from the findings of an online survey, which started in April 2019 and is still ongoing, involving all students on undergraduate and masters courses in social work in the academic years between 2015 and 2024.

The findings show that more than 600 UPPs have been implemented in the last ten years, involving more than 5,000 people. Different types of projects have been implemented: self-help groups, social events, practical or emotional support and awareness-raising initiatives, etc.

The presentation is linked to the conference sub-theme „Connectedness in Politics and Democracy“ because the research shows that UPPs promote connectedness between citizens and welfare organisations through social participation, dialogue and empowerment. Our experience and the survey show the usefulness of UPPs for teaching democratic approaches and anti-oppressive practices in social work.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 01

Empowering families; the role of law and order in out-of-home placement

Sabina Meiling

Fontys University of Applied Science,
Nederland

The Netherlands is an out-of-home placement factory! states Van der Helm (2021). What signal does this powerful statement send? Do government policy and implementation have the desired result? Assistance to families in need is under great pressure in the Netherlands. As a result, good intentions of interventions and legislation do not deliver the desired results. Dutch social care has added a unique concept to child protection measures; the so called „drang traject“ roughly translated as an „urged procedure“. Formally, parents have a role to play and the process is voluntary. In practice, many parents feel powerless. We are talking about thousands of families in compulsory procedures (Koolschijn & Konijn, 2021; Du Chattel, 2020).

Based on literature and case studies, this contribution examines how coercive processes arise and the difficulties encountered. The Dutch system of youth assistance is protocol-based and reactive rather than preventive. By the time help is at hand, a family has already run into problems. The step from voluntary to compulsory care is therefore small. An out-of-home placement is seen internationally as an extreme measure (Defence for Children, 2022). The question that arises here is; how does this compulsion towards parents arise and what can we learn from this Dutch example?

The „urged procedure“ appears to be voluntary but it is not. These pathways move in a twilight zone between a voluntary and an involuntary pathway. In a comparative study, the same case was presented to 800 social workers from four different countries. Aid workers find it difficult to separate facts from opinions. Personal factors and beliefs also play a role in arriving at a decision for an out-of-home placement. Experienced social workers are generally less likely to decide on an out-of-home placement. Critical social workers towards an out-of-home placement are more likely to consider help in the home situation (Harder et al., 2020). Parents experience the offered help, the out-of-home placement, as imposed (Du Chattel, 2020; Haans, 2017; Koolschijn & Konijn, 2021; Van der Zon, 2020). Judicial review is needed precisely to avoid this coercive advice. In practice, a team of social workers takes the decision to proceed with out-of-home placement without court intervention. In this sense, coercive counselling affects parents' rights and parents often feel disenfranchised (Roso, 2018). A judicial review of facts and circumstances is therefore important (Defence for Children, s.d.). The lack of such a test is therefore a risk to the democratic process; after all, there is no equality and freedom of choice in the case of compulsory care, even though the aid should be aimed at strengthening the position of parent and child.

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Empowering families; the role of law and order in out-of-home placement

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 02

Participation in social work - The role of social professionals as frontline workers

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Hogeschool PXL Hasselt,
Belgium

User involvement and client participation have become integral to the international social work lexicon. As an alternative way of organizing social work, participatory practices offer numerous opportunities to address complex social issues and often have transformational ambitions aimed at empowerment and emancipation. However, involving service users comes with challenges at the individual, organizational, and policy levels. Efforts to align with participation's emancipatory goals are frequently undermined by context conditions in the form of personal and structural power mechanisms. Emerging research suggests that participation is inherently ambiguous. While participation can foster transformation and emancipation, it can also reinforce the status quo.

To navigate this duality, social professionals need to cultivate a nuanced understanding of public participation. However, in the professionalizing and commercializing landscape of public participation, its democratic intentions often become secondary. This dynamic places social workers in a challenging position, given that empowerment and emancipation, as core values of social work, are at risk of being overshadowed by a purely methodological focus. The presentation will point to the responsibility of social professionals, as frontline workers, to actualize participatory policies. Therefore, it is crucial to equip them to foster social connectedness and solidarity in and by means of participatory processes. An outline of the theoretical framework of our study will be presented in which public participation is considered a Janus-faced practice. A better understanding of the multilayered nature of participation and of the complex relationship between participation and power is an important step in the road to a more inclusive democracy.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 02

Concept of social and educational activity/activation as the inspiration for social connectedness

Prof. PhD. hab. Ewa, Teresa Kantowicz

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Poland

In the European context related to many common socio-educational issues, also in Poland we are discussing both similarities and differences in concepts, research and practices for social support and social education, solving social problems and creating better life of individuals and groups. Social pedagogy is the discipline which is closely tied to the educational thinking in reflecting on socio-educational issues and in gearing towards understanding social education and social support as a key of social connectedness. In social pedagogy we find attempts at theoretical reflection on the perception of social and educational work in the aspect of social and educational activity (S.Kawula 1997; E.Kantowicz 2011,2012; E.Marynowicz-Hetka 2003,2019;). This approach situates the human being as a subject of action and a participant in activity, who is both able to act and sometimes in a situation of danger and expecting support or help. The activity of the subject(s) in the field of practice acquires the qualities of social action through the construction of an intersubjectively shared experience of clients and professionals. This concept of social and educational activation is extremely interesting from the perspective of the academic education of social professionals and creating competences for social change, social activation and supporting the development of the individuals and groups in the process of help.

Referring to traditions of social pedagogy in Poland related to the concept of social and educational activity, the aim of the presentation is to discuss some axiological, epistemological and practical dimension on social in its pedagogical meaning, focused on the social education, social activation and supporting development of people in all kind of activities and all periods of life for social connectedness.

social and educational activation, professional education, support, connectedness

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 02

The Role of Digital Media in Fostering Political Connectedness and Enhancing Democratic Participation in Sultanate of Oman

Professor DR. Hussni Nasr

Sultan Qaboos University,
Oman

This study explores how digital media platforms (social media, blogs, online forums, and news websites) influence political connectedness, engagement, and democratic participation in Oman. The research focus on how digital media empowers Omani citizens to engage with political discourse, mobilize social movements, influence public opinion, and hold political leaders accountable. The Key Research Question is how do digital media platforms enhance political connectedness and civic engagement in Oman as a developing state? In addition, to what extent do digital platforms facilitate political participation among traditionally underrepresented or marginalized groups? How do online communities and social media campaigns affect the mobilization of social movements and policy change in that Arab Gulf State?

The study use a Survey method to measure Sultan Qaboos University students' perceptions of connectedness and political efficacy via digital platforms and a case study of the recent Shura Council (The Parliament) election conducted in 2023.

This research will contribute to understanding the evolving role of digital media in shaping modern democratic engagement in the Arab World. It will shed light on whether digital platforms strengthen democratic participation by increasing connectedness or, conversely, undermine it by fostering disinformation and polarization.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 03

Voice-Resonance Walks in Social Work Education

Prof. Dr. Rolf Ahlrichs

Protestant University of Applied Sciences
Ludwigsburg, Germany

The individual oral presentation presents a method for local-level deliberations that is centred on walking and has been tested in four pilot walks in a contested urban territory, Leonhardsviertel, Stuttgart. The district is subject to significant pressure from both anticipated transformation and gentrification processes. By focusing on the most controversial of the four walk-centric deliberations carried out by social work students in 2022, namely prostitution, Peter Ehrström and I have developed a walk-centric deliberative method, entitled Voice-Resonance Walks, which is specifically designed for vulnerable and marginalised groups in contested urban spaces under pressure of transformation and gentrification. It is proposed that Voice-Resonance Walks represents a low-threshold method that has the potential to enhance the level of interest in participating and provide a voice for vulnerable and unheard groups. This may facilitate social connectedness between individuals and the public sphere through participation, inclusion and, subsequently, dialogue with local politicians. The dominance of more vocal, resourceful, and powerful interest groups in setting the agenda for urban transformation and the purpose of such transformation leads to disengagement from weaker-positioned groups. The application of social work can serve to reduce the threshold for participation and encourage engagement in deliberations that are theoretically advanced, particularly among participants representing vulnerable citizen groups that are often absent or silenced in urban transformation debates. The initial outcomes of this approach are encouraging.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 03

Fostering Social Connectedness through Critical Pedagogy in Social Work Education: Transgressing Traditional Boundaries

Oliver Brockmann

University of Galway,
Ireland

This presentation explores how critical pedagogy in social work education can serve as a Pedagogy of Connection, acting as a foundation for building social connectedness. While social workers are essential in promoting inclusive democracy and social and political participation, they themselves operate within and are shaped by the same alienating political, social and economic structures they seek to challenge. Grounded in the idea of praxis, it is contended that the experience of social connectedness, social relations of reciprocity, community and trust within the social work education classroom will position prospective social workers to enact these values in their own professional practice. This presentation contends that critical pedagogy can transform social work classrooms into „locations of possibility,“ (hooks, year) spaces where students and educators can experience and build authentic social relationships, grounded in empathy, care, vulnerability, and community. Drawing on personal teaching experiences, theoretical insights, and a framework grounded in Freirean and engaged pedagogy, this presentation highlights how dismantling rigid teacher-student distinctions and reimagining classroom boundaries can cultivate genuine social connectedness. Finally, an in-progress comparative critical ethnographic research project in Germany and Ireland, exploring these pedagogical possibilities empirically and examining how socio-cultural and institutional contexts shape critical pedagogy's enactment, will be delineated. By understanding these processes, this research seeks to provide evidence-based insights for educators aiming to build socially connected learning environments in social work education, contributing to a prefigurative approach where social work classrooms model the inclusive, democratic values that social workers aim to foster in society at large.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 03

Public library pivots: Maintaining social connectedness in a time of crisis

Dr. Beth Martin

Co-Author(s): Dr. Melissa Redmond

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Canada

When the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic in March 2020, community agencies immediately closed their doors and attempted to reimagine their services without face-to-face interactions. This presentation looks at the unique role of public libraries in meeting community social service needs during that time of crisis. We argue that public libraries are rare democratically accessible spaces that continue to promote social connectedness in the contemporary world.

We collected data from five urban Canadian library systems, in three stages. These included (1) libraries, social media posts immediately preceding and following the pandemic declaration; (2) survey data from frontline library staff (n=161); and (3) individual interviews and focus groups with library workers and administrators (n=25). We examine how libraries' distinctive characteristics enabled successful and relatively quick pivots, to continue to offer connection across social and cultural divides.

Our findings are important to social work education as they provide a view into how social service agencies can respond to social crises and how those responses influence service providers and recipients. Drawing on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), we identify the ways in which public libraries were able to quickly respond to the needs of their local patrons impacted by global forces, with crucial lessons for other agencies providing community services. This resonates most closely with the conference subtheme of connectedness across social and cultural divides, whilst also touching on digital connectedness (as an approach used by libraries during the crisis) and connectedness in democracy (with libraries as a key space representing democracy).

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 04

Forging Connections Across Time: Historical Lessons from Persecuted Viennese Social Workers in Resistance against the Nazi Regime for Contemporary Social Work Education

Dr. Prof.(FH) Irene Messinger

FH Campus Wien,
Austria

During the fascist era in Austria (1933-1945), particularly under the Nazi regime from 1938, social work was often complicit in exclusion, victim selection and systematic murder. While many social workers supported or tolerated these regimes, a small minority actively resisted, using their professional and personal connections to challenge state oppression. Incorporating these historical examples of persecution, and humanitarian and political resistance into the history of social work, as I do through biographies in my upcoming book, also requires thoughtful consideration of how to integrate this topic into contemporary social work education.

Through case studies, the presentation explores how professional and personal networks enabled acts of resistance, such as secretly helping Jewish colleagues, supporting political prisoners and their families, or using professional roles for subversive purposes. These examples illustrate how social connectedness - between colleagues, friends, and allies - served as both a resource and a strategy for resisting fascism.

Building on these historical narratives, the presentation argues for their integration into contemporary social work education. This approach encourages critical reflection on ethical dilemmas, professional values, and the dual mandate of social work, balancing state authority and advocacy for marginalised groups; and now including a third mandate of the profession itself. It also highlights the persistent risks of political instrumentalisation and complicity, and calls on social work professionals to actively defend human rights and democracy.

By connecting past and present, this presentation emphasises ethics and human rights as foundational to social work's professional identity, drawing on historical lessons.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 04

Navigating Social Awareness and Social Cohesion: The Role of Social Work in Post-Communist Communities of Georgia and East Germany

Professor Shorena Sadzaglishvili

Co-Author(s): Mandy Schulze

Ilia State University,
Georgia

This paper delves into the intricate relationship between „woke minds“, social cohesion, and the unique role of social work within communities, with a specific focus on post-communist countries like Georgia and East Germany. „Woke minds“ denote a heightened awareness of social injustices, such as racial and gender inequality and other systemic disparities (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). This heightened awareness, while a catalyst for positive social change, also carries the potential to foster polarization if not carefully managed. Social cohesion, the binding force that unites communities through shared values and trust, is particularly crucial for community resilience and stability in post-communist societies grappling with the historical legacies of authoritarianism and social fragmentation (Chan et al., 2006). The role of social work, a professional field dedicated to empowering vulnerable populations and advocating for social justice, becomes even more significant as social work plays a pivotal role in managing the tensions between increasing social awareness and maintaining social harmony.

Qualitative research can provide deep insights into how emerging social awareness impacts social cohesion and community dynamics (Offe, 1996). It can help illuminate the role of social work in fostering inclusive dialogue and addressing the unique challenges faced by post-communist communities. This paper will provide a model of research that could better understand how social awareness, activism, and social work intersect to strengthen or challenge social cohesion in post-communist societies. Research outcomes can support social justice and cohesive community development in these transitioning regions by integrating social awareness into constructive community-building efforts.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 04

Anti-classist political Education: Strengthening Connectedness in Social Work

Prof. Dr. Francis Seeck

TH Nürnberg,
Germany

This presentation examines political education from a classism-critical perspective, emphasizing the importance of fostering connectedness in social work education. Classism, the discrimination based on class background or class position, disproportionately affects working-class and impoverished communities, as well as individuals in manual or non-academic professions (Kemper/Weinbach 2009; Seeck/Theiál 2020; Roáhart 2016).

Political education is closely tied to class dynamics, influencing both access to knowledge and the framing of educational authority (Pohlkamp/Carstens/Nagel 2023). In order to strengthen connectedness across class divisions, social work education must confront and dismantle class-based exclusions. As a human rights-oriented field, social work holds the responsibility to adopt classism-critical approaches, ensuring that marginalized voices are not silenced in democratic and human rights education (Seeck/Steckelberg, forthcoming).

In this presentation, we will share findings from a developing research project that explores the potential of classism-critical approaches to enhance connectedness in political education. We will critically assess how addressing classism can bridge socio-economic divides and foster more inclusive, equitable learning environments in social work. The presentation invites educators, practitioners, and students to reflect on the role of classism in education and to explore strategies for promoting solidarity and inclusivity across different class backgrounds.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 04

The impact of far right on social work practice

PhD Anikó Vida,
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Union of the Social Professional Organisations,
Magyarország

The presentation aims to introduce the theoretical background, as well as the empirical research dilemmas, of the first international, German-Austrian-Hungarian comparative study on far right influences on social work practice. Based on the methodology of empirical studies conducted in two German federal states (Gille/Jagusch 2019; Gille/Krüger/Weber 2022), the ongoing mixed-methods research examines the impact of far right influences on social work practice. The comparison of German, Austrian, and Hungarian conditions and welfare state embedding of social work is challenging by the fact that, until 2024, in Germany and Austria, political actors of the far right have been influencing social work, especially its topics and funding, as part of political opposition. (Several actors in the pre-political sphere also show a notable far-right influence on social work, without this being recognised as such by many of the practitioners. However, empirical research studies expose this influence as anti-constitutional, inhumane, racist, antisemitic and discriminatory - in line with the broad social consensus and applicable law in both EU countries.) In Hungary, however, the government has been pursuing radical right-wing policies since 2010. Exclusionary positions previously advocated by far-right parties and movements have increasingly found their way into mainstream social policy. The Constitution, the Social Act and other relevant regulations legitimate forms of exclusive solidarities and the promotion of hostility and exclusion such as xenophobia towards LGBTQ+, sanctioning of homeless and exclusion of Roma.

The presentation provides an overview of dilemmas of the ongoing comparative research project. This is followed by the results of a pilot study in Hungary, where the questionnaire was tested in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with social work professionals. Finally, considerations and initial findings on specific challenges for research in Austria in the face of the FP™'s strength are discussed.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 05

Psychosocial protection of social workers and people affected by humanitarian crises from the perspective of Polish-Israeli research

Professor Katarzyna Ornacka

Co-Author(s): Hubert Kaszyński (Jagiellonian University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Liraz Cohen (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

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Polska

The focus of the presentation will be to demonstrate – based on findings from independent research conducted in Poland and Israel – the specificity of social work during humanitarian disasters. Polish research conducted using a qualitative method among key social workers involved in the management of the 2022 mass migration from Ukraine focused on the development of recommendations for the preparedness policy of social welfare organizations, with particular emphasis on methods of protecting and strengthening social workers. The quantitative research conducted in Israel in 2023 focused on methods for protecting those experienced – evacuated due to Israel's war on Gaza. The results illustrate who reported to Israeli assistance centers, what assistance was provided to them and how it was assessed. The comparative analysis and discussion of the results of the Polish-Israeli research strengthen the thesis of the need for the immediate inclusion of specific therapeutic interventions involving social workers and the experienced, aimed at minimizing the consequences of exposure to potentially traumatizing humanitarian crises.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 05

Kindness in context of the social connectedness as possible topic of social work education - Case study from Czech Republic

PhD Karel Rezac

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Based on Alexander's theory of the civil sphere and Foucault's analytical perspective on power, we conceptualize kindness not merely as the transfer of goods (services, commodities, finances) between individuals, influenced by value orientation, but also as a power-laden concept. In its specific applications, kindness can both present an alternative to and reinforce the neoliberal tendencies evident in social work. This duality is already illustrated in the contested acceptance of the Good Samaritan parable as a foundational value for social work, the debate already rooted in M. Richmond's early reflection in *The Good Neighbor in the Modern City* (1908). Our presentation addresses two interrelated questions: What varied impacts can differing conceptions of kindness have on fostering social participation? And, accordingly, what implications might these hold for social work education?

The answer to the first question will be implemented in the form of a qualitative research based on the research design described by Jan-Claude Kaufmann in his form of operationalization directed towards fewer questions asked by multiple communication partners (from social work students, educators as well as social work practitioners). The analyses will take the form of thematic analysis by identifying keywords and the resulting codes and themes. As this is ongoing research and we do not have even preliminary analyses available, we cannot even suggest the form of the outputs at this time.

The answer to the second question will take the form of a theoretical reflection on the research findings.

Kindness; Attitudes; Participation; critical social work; Power

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 05

Constraints on Academic Freedom: Democratic Ideals, Reproductive Rights, and Care Work in the Academy

Dr. Karen VanDeusen
Dr. Dee Sherwood, Associate Professor
Ms. Amy Bocko

Western Michigan University,
US

Political, legislative and legal actions, high profile firings, online harassment, and censorship pose threats to academic freedom. We explore less visible, but arguably, no less pervasive, embodied, spatial, and temporal constraints on academic freedom along gendered and racialized lines. In the U.S. and around the world, capitalism, no longer simply exploits as primary mechanism of domination; it now renders increasing numbers of people disposable, e.g., immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and women. As Henry Giroux writes, disposability is the register of a new political mode of oppression. In the U.S., women's bodies have been rendered disposable, as vessels for reproduction, arguably, controlled by state actors. Supreme Court decisions have transmuted women's reproductive freedoms from issues about medical care and economic consideration to political and ideological issues. Using a Foucauldian lens, feminized bodies are a site for power relations. As social work faculty at a public university in the U.S., we connect struggles for women's freedoms at multiple system levels, and across societal, governmental, and academic spheres. We contend that neoliberal and nationalist, populist regimes diminish faculty autonomy and damage the culture and climate of universities, which are increasingly characterized by the politics of disposability, hyper-competition, financialization, marketization, and manufactured scarcity amidst prosperity. Using an autoethnographic approach, we critically reflect on the challenges of our current societal and working conditions, which undermine the well-being, voice, agency, and academic freedom of women and gender minorities, who disproportionately perform care work, i.e., academic mothering, both within and outside of the academy. We propose a framework for analyzing gendered constraints on academic freedom and possibilities for resistance.

academic freedom, care work, disposability, neoliberalism, women

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 05

Challenges and Student Support for Black Women in Brazilian Higher Education

Talita Prada

Co-Author(s): Maria Lúcia Teixeira Garcia, Fernanda Meneghini Machado e Maisa Miralva da Silva

Brasil

The article reflects on the experiences of Black women accessing higher education as the first members of their families to enter federal public educational institutions in Brazil. To this end, we will discuss student support policies and affirmative actions aimed at Black women students in Brazil. We will explore how the use and impact of student support services affect their trajectories in higher education and intersect with racism and the conditions of Black women in Brazilian society.

This study employs a case study methodology, incorporating documentary research and interviews through an online questionnaire sent to students participating in student support programs at federal public institutions in Brazil, using probabilistic sampling. The analysis techniques employed include statistical analysis and content analysis. We will based an intersectional to understand the complex interactions between race, gender, and social class.

As a result, the study has enabled us to identify the social and familial backgrounds of Black women students who are the first in their families to attend university, the rights accessed throughout their academic journey, the main challenges they face, and their expectations regarding obtaining a university degree, among other findings. This study articulated the participation of social workers involved in implementing student support policies and affirmative actions, Professor and students from the Social Work and Education. It contributes to strengthening inclusive policies by highlighting the difficulties and challenges faced by underrepresented groups and suggesting practices that enable academic success.

Affirmative actions. Black Women. Higher Education. Student Support Policies

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 06

Social workers - capabilities in policy practice

Professor Maria Irene Carvalho
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CAPP, ISCSP, Universidade de Lisboa,
Portugal

This communication aims to demonstrate the involvement of Portuguese social workers in policy practices. For this purpose, the „Questionnaires on Policy Practice“ by Weiss-Gall et. al. (2013) were used. The survey was applied to social workers members of the National Association, sent by email, and answered via an online Platform between January and May 2023 (n. 4079/100%). About 389 valid questionnaires were answered, equivalent to 9.5% of this universe.

The study shows that social workers have low levels of PPE, which is lower than other international and national studies. Despite this, these professionals self-perceive high levels of skills in political practice and consider the organisations where they work to have high levels of political concern.

The policy practice is associated with the development of micro activities with clients, colleagues, and the organisations where they work. The factors that explain this type of practice are above all the training received at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, political efficacy, related to their policies engagement daily, and the capabilities that social workers assume they have to change the organisations where they work, either alone or with colleagues.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 06

IIAS: Embracing tomorrow from present actions

David Prades

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IIAS || theca.studio,
Spain

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) presents profound challenges and opportunities for the social work field. As social connectedness is increasingly mediated through technological platforms, there is a pressing need to align AI integration with the core values of inclusivity, democracy, and social sustainability. The Institute Artificial Intelligence in Social Work (IIAS) is at the forefront of addressing these dynamics by fostering critical AI literacy among social professionals and advancing ethically grounded research and applications of AI in the social domain.

In this presentation, we will introduce IIAS as a hub for exploring how AI can amplify social connectedness without compromising human dignity or ethical standards. Our institute leverages interdisciplinary expertise to:

Conduct research on AI ethics tailored to social work contexts.

Develop actionable frameworks for integrating AI into social interventions.

Offer accessible courses designed to demystify AI for social professionals, empowering them to adopt these tools responsibly.

Through case studies and practical insights, we will demonstrate how IIAS projects enhance practitioners' ability to use AI-driven approaches to build more inclusive, supportive communities. We also address the crucial role of education in equipping future social workers to critically engage with technological advancements, ensuring AI serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion.

Join us to explore how IIAS is embracing tomorrow's potential by acting today-cultivating a future where AI complements the human-centric mission of social work.

AI Ethics, Social work education, Technology Integration, professional training, social connectedness.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 06

Social work education under the threat posed to democracy by judicial reforms: The 2023 Israeli case

Prof. Guy Shilo

Co-Author(s): Prof. Einat Peled

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Israel

Shortly after the Israeli government elected in November 2022, it proposed a judicial reform aimed at reducing the powers of the judiciary, including limiting the Supreme Court's authority to review legislative and executive actions. This reform is seen by many as an existential threat to Israeli democracy and the rights of minorities. In response, mass protests have taken place weekly for over 40 weeks. This intense political debate created deep divisions between supporters and opponents of the reform. At Tel Aviv University's School of Social Work, the values of social work that expects social workers to engage in political action to improve social conditions and combat discrimination and oppression (Bulia, 2010) are deeply embedded in the educational culture.

As the debate over the reform intensified, staff and students faced complex moral and educational questions, related to connectedness in politics and democracy. We will present the findings of this case-study analysis, that offers preliminary guidelines for addressing socio-political conflicts in social work education and examines the role of social work in times of democratic crisis. Key issues addressed include: (1) Can social work values be separated from political values, and should social work education remain apolitical? (2) What are the complexities of using social justice principles to justify political action, particularly within hierarchical academic structures? (3) How can social work educators balance political-professional commitments with fostering pluralism in students' opinions and actions? (4) What are the advantages and challenges of teaching critical social work theories through direct action?

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 08

„Social empowerment or social dependency“ Redefining the goals and tasks of social work and social education in an authoritarian power structure (Hungary)

Prof. Dr. Judit Csoba

University of Debrecen,
Hungary

The transformation of the welfare model and changes in the economic, social and political environment have inevitably led to changes in the position and role of social workers. What is the role of social work in a time of democratic crisis, where is the space for social empowerment, what is the future of social work as a profession in an authoritarian political system that has emerged in Hungary in the last decades?

This critical analysis, based on data from our empirical research with social workers (survey N=468), policy documents and publications, examines the transformation of the social work education system, the prestige and working conditions of social workers, and the relationship between social work as a profession and the state. Our research shows that the professional mandate of social workers, largely funded by the state, has shifted from welfare services and the provision of social rights to social control.

According to social workers, the social professions can effectively address social problems if they operate within the framework of a welfare state that guarantees citizens' basic social rights. The opposite situation inevitably leads to the deprofessionalisation of the social professions.

social work, social work education, professional identity, deprofessionalisation, empowerment

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 08

Kurdish Women's Movement: Source of Connection and Empowerment in the European Diaspora?

M.A. Duygu Korkmaz

FH Salzburg,
Austria

This study examines the impact of the Kurdish Women's Movement on Kurdish women in the diaspora. This topic underscores the significance of social connectedness at various levels, including the interconnectivity between women's movements across the globe and the linkages between communities that are connected through diaspora. The data was collected through interviews and subsequently analyzed using the method of content analysis, as described by Philipp Mayring. This study also examines the discourse surrounding the Kurdish Women's Movement in Europe, which has grown in prominence over time and has facilitated connections between feminist discussions on the topic of equality. The findings indicate that Kurdish women in the European diaspora are empowered by the Kurdish women's movement and the positive discourse surrounding it. They get politically subjectivized through the invocation of this discourse. This could serve as a valuable source in social work on a multitude of topics. Most importantly, it introduces a new perspective on a group that is vulnerable to multifaceted discrimination based on its sex and gender.

kurdish women's movement, diaspora, empowerment, social connectedness

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 08

Subversion of Neoliberal Austerity Agendas within the Academy: Implications for Social Work Education, Solidarity, and Democratic Ideals

Associate Professor Dee Sherwood

Co-Author(s): Linda Reeser, Ph.D., LMSW, Professor, and Marian Tripplett, LMSW, M.Ed., IHHW, Ph.D. candidate, Faculty Specialist II

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Consciousness raising is occurring within social work education. Market ethics and managerialism, which privilege speed and efficiency and technical-rational solutions are at odds with social work values and ethics. In the U.S. and around the world, capitalism, expressed through neoliberal austerity agendas no longer simply exploit as primary mechanism of domination; it now renders increasing numbers of people disposable, e.g., youth, migrants, workers. As Henry Giroux writes, disposability is the register of a new political mode of oppression. In the post-COVID era, neoliberal agendas within universities are accelerating, resulting in consolidation and centralization of administrative power and resources, narrowing of shared governance, neglect of responsibilities for meaningful consultation with faculty, and sweeping cuts that promote efficiency over effectiveness. Faculty have been rendered disposable under the toxic regime of neoliberalism in the academy. We present an autoethnographic case study analysis of social work faculty in the United States, using critical theory, and anti-racist, anti-oppressive, feminist frameworks. We critically reflect on our lived experiences, diminished time and space for sustained critical thought, and impacts on relationships with administration, colleagues, students, and community partners. We examine the dissonance between our professional values and ethics and our working conditions, which thwart connection, solidarity, and attainment of the department's mission. We reflect on strategies for collective resistance to neoliberal agendas through a lens of risk and responsibility, and the vital role of the university, as a cornerstone of democracy. Implications for social work education are discussed, along with recommendations to advance collective well-being and resistance.

critical theory, democracy, ethics, neoliberalism, resistance

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Politics 01

Managing Crisis: Perspectives of Social Workers on management role during violent political crisis

Sagit Lev

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Israel

Background and Purpose: The political violence of May 2021 in Israel intensified anxiety among Palestinian and Jewish citizens, particularly in mixed cities. This study explores the experiences of Palestinian and Jewish social workers in these cities, focusing on their perceptions of management's actions during this period.

Methods: In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 Palestinian and Jewish social workers from welfare departments in six mixed Israeli cities. Data were analyzed using inductive content analysis, with line-by-line and axial coding to identify themes. Inter-rater reliability was maintained through collaborative discussions.

Results: The findings revealed two themes: Management's engagement in the individual level, and management involvement at the group level. While acknowledging management's efforts, some respondents voiced critical viewpoints concerning their functioning during the crisis, which was sometimes perceived as inadequate and superficial. In addition, in certain cases, the managers' response was perceived as insensitive and even aggressive.

Conclusions and Implications: The study highlights management's crucial role in providing support during crises, offering both personal and professional assistance to social workers. However, insufficient responses were shaped by intergroup tensions and power imbalances between majority Jewish managers and minority Palestinian-Israeli social workers. The findings underscore the need for sensitive, inclusive management to support social workers from diverse national backgrounds, particularly in mixed cities.

Posters

POS-Digital-01

Gender Bias and Artificial Intelligence in University Social Work Education

Castillo Charfolet

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Spain

This poster explores the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in university-level Social Work education, emphasizing the need to educate AI systems on gender issues. In a context where technology is increasingly integrated into the training of future Social Work professionals, it is essential to examine how AI systems can both enhance learning and perpetuate gender biases if not implemented critically.

We have observed that when consulting AI systems on profession-related issues in Spanish, gender biases persist, associating certain professions, roles, or behaviors with specific genders. This reinforces stereotypes that contradict the principles of equity and inclusion upheld by Social Work. When AI reproduces these biases, it restricts the possibility of providing students with a truly egalitarian and pluralistic perspective.

In this poster, we present concrete examples of how these biases manifest in educational contexts and propose strategies to mitigate them, highlighting the urgent need to train AI algorithms from a gender-sensitive perspective. Addressing this issue is crucial not only to ensure that future social workers receive an inclusive and unbiased education but also to guarantee that AI becomes an effective and ethical tool in Social Work education.

This discussion is critical for advancing towards a more equitable education system in the 21st century.

Posters

POS-Digital-02

Exploring the use of AI in social work education

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In today's ever-changing society, it's important to focus on education and innovation. Innovations are not bypassing the field of social work either, in which artificial intelligence has found application related to current trends (Swan et al. 2024). The educational aspect of artificial intelligence helps solving everyday problems related to the performance of social work (Reamer, 2023). In addition to educational dimensions of AI, the paper also analyses the ways social work students perceive the use of artificial intelligence. The research on a sample of N= 100+ respondents focuses on examining the differences between individual demographic groups based on sex/gender, age and obtaining opinions on the use of artificial intelligence for the needs of social work in Slovakia. In addition to its benefits, artificial intelligence brings possible threats to the society and the field of social work, which need to be neutralized. In the research, we assume that social work students encounter disinformation and hybrid threats when using artificial intelligence. It is important to create means of protection against these negative impacts employing effective educational process that would help successfully use AI tools. The research is complemented by a case study that aims to encourage critical thinking and sorting of the information provided by AI, thus eliminating the damaging effects of the spread of disinformation. Artificial intelligence plays an important role in the educational process, but it is not able to solve the tasks of social work driven by empathy and assertiveness, which is the task of education in undergraduate study programs.

Key words: Artificial intelligence, social work, education, innovation, disinformation.

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Artificial intelligence, social work, education, innovation, disinformation.

Posters

POS-Digital-03

The use of the ASDetect mobile application as an innovation in the screening of clients with autism spectrum disorder

Mgr. PhD. Lívia Pastrnáková

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Autism is a neurobiologically conditioned developmental disorder that affects the entire personality and is reflected in thinking, feeling and behavior. Early diagnosis enables early intervention, which can positively affect the prognosis of an individual with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Therefore, early screening is crucial for a child with ASD. Screening is used to identify children at high risk of ASD in the population (Hnilicova & Ostatnikova, 2018). Screening can detect early signs of delayed or problematic development. The screening method should hence be fast, easily accessible, so that as many children as possible can undergo screening in the shortest possible time. The ASDetect mobile application developed at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, meets the above criteria and is an innovation in the process of identifying clients with ASD in Slovakia from 2022. Using the app, three age groups of children from 11 to 30 months are analyzed free of charge (Pastrn kov , 2022). As of now, no research has been carried out in Slovakia investigating the use of the ASDetect application in practice. The aim of the paper is to analyze the use of the ASDetect mobile application by Slovak parents of children with ASD through early intervention centers that are the institutional backbone for the implementation of the screening of this specific social work client group. The need for screening arises from the higher prevalence of ASD in children. Apart from the use of specialized screening and diagnostic methods M-CHAT R / F and ADOS - 2, another benefit is the use of new technologies in the fields of education, health care and social services as a requirement for assessment.

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Posters

POS-Digital-04

Social Work in a Globalised World

Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeffer
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Germany

With the project „Social Work in a Globalised World“, the Department of Social Work has developed new concepts for realising virtual teaching programmes in an international network. Since 2022, more than 200 students from five universities and four continents have benefited from the cooperative, virtually taught, international courses.

The project was developed in collaboration with researchers from the partner universities and the project team from the Department of Social Work (Prof. Dr. Marei Pelzer, Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeffer, Prof. Dr. Martina Ritter and Prof. Dr. BettinaStoll). It was financially supported by the DAAD and BMBF-funded IVAC project (International Virtual Academic Collaboratio

Posters

POS-Digital-05

Digital interconnection of algorithmic tools in the lifestyle of social workers

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The aim of the study is to identify the benefits and risks associated with digital interconnection and subsequently formulate appropriate recommendations for the educational practice of undergraduate training of social workers. The research methodology is based on determining the level of use of algorithmic tools in the general population compared to social workers, with an emphasis on identifying the benefits and possible risks of social practice in social service facilities. By means of complex algorithms, smart technology users are categorized based on their level of activity and lifestyle. Data will be obtained through interaction analyses and monitoring of the health functions of the body in respondents, pertaining to the area of mental health. The strategy applied is quantitative. Statistical tools will be used to evaluate the data, ensuring the required variability and reliability of the results. In the operational context, the research relies on Bohr and Memarzadeh (2020) and primarily Stone (2023), which states that it is important to use and know AI tools that have the potential to improve the quality of education and practice itself as part of the preparation of social workers. At the same time, Lehtiniemi (2023) points to the valences of artificial intelligence, the range of expectations of AI's value and performance, contained in the practice of social work. The interconnection of linear concepts of information availability in practice foreshadows the use of algorithmic processes that can be used to formulate recommendations for lifestyle optimization (including risk assessment) already during the educational process.

Keywords: Social work. Mental health. Artificial intelligence. Algorithmic processes. Digital connectivity.

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Social work. Mental health. Artificial intelligence. Algorithmic processes. Digital connectivity.

Posters

POS-Divides 01

Maintaining Our Academic Community in Times of War

Prof. Tamar Darvish

Co-Author(s): Dalit Yassour-Borochowitz

The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College,
Israel

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an attack on Israel, murdering 1,400 Israeli civilians and security personnel, wounding 11,773, and kidnapping 251 individuals into Gaza. The subsequent „Iron Swords“ war dramatically impacted academic institutions, with nearly 30% of students called up for reserve duty, leading to the postponement of the academic year.

While academic institutions offered various adjustments to students serving in the military, and other traumatized students, the academic concessions such as attendance exemptions, assignment modifications, waiving of prerequisites, and credit point allocations instead of courses presented a significant dilemma for social work educators. This situation highlighted the complex tension between three fundamental professional obligations: The ethical duty to provide social justice and psychosocial support to students; The professional responsibility as gatekeepers to uphold academic and professional standards; The pressing need for new social workers due to the sharp increase in social needs exacerbated by the war.

Through case studies from the Academic College of Emek Yezreel's Social Work Department, this presentation examines the challenging decision-making process between sensitive inclusion and firm gatekeeping, as well as protecting the delicate fabric of the relations between Jewish and Arab students and faculty to protect our community in times of war. We will encourage reflection on the vital role of academic educators in protecting social work students and the profession. The discussion considers the dynamics of preserving professional standards during emergencies and traumatic situations while emphasizing the ongoing challenges social work institutions face in ensuring quality education for developing skilled future practitioners.

Posters

POS-Divides 02

Can social work programmes increase the social connectedness of young clients at the school-to-work-transition? A quantitative multilevel analysis

Prof. Dr. Benjamin Fuchs

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In modern welfare states, youth social work is one among various providers of assistance programmes for young people with difficulties at the transition from school to work. Often, these programmes entail a large share of multiply marginalised young people and try to prevent the divisive effects of unemployment experience at young age, the reduced employability and its related potential labour market exclusion. However, there is factually no quantitative evidence whether young clients benefit from social work programmes in this field besides purely economic outcomes such as the job transition rate. Moreover, despite the importance of these programmes for client's biographies, social work in this field is a poorly addressed topic in social work education and curricula. We present the YOU-BLN (Young in Berlin) study which collected quantitative multilevel data on clients (n=192) within 25 social work programmes in the German state of Berlin to bring light into this underresearched aspect of social work. This data allows to investigate whether these programmes are beneficial for the social connectedness of the young clients, as measured by a sociological indicator of social network quality. Using random intercept multilevel regression, our models indicate that client's social network quality does significantly improve over the duration of the programmes, indicating substantial positive side effects of these programmes which transcend economic aspects. We also investigate whether particularly marginalised groups benefit equally from these programmes. We conclude with recommendations for future social work research, education, and practice.

Posters

POS-Divides 03

Quartermaking: bridging separate worlds

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Today, society faces challenges of inequality and discrimination, where those who are „different“ are often seen as outsiders. Many communities struggle to embrace diversity because it can evoke discomfort. Social workers, however, play a critical role in combating these issues, acting as bridge-builders between individuals and communities to help make diversity feel less divisive.

The concept of Quartermaking (Kwartiermaken) focuses on welcoming those who may feel excluded from society. This social work method emphasizes moving beyond „difference-based“ thinking, removing barriers, being present, challenging stigmas, and fostering mutual hospitality and connection. Introduced in the Netherlands around 20 years ago, Quartermaking has recently gained renewed attention within social work and education.

In 2024, a previously established Kwartiermaken training course was revived and updated to address current social realities. This revamped training took place in late 2024 and early 2025, during which social workers were recruited and trained as quartermakers. The training has demonstrated significant relevance for integration into social work education.

This interactive poster presentation outlines the core principles and key concepts of Quartermaking, showcases the structure and content of the training, and includes an evaluation of its impact. We believe that Quartermaking and the insights from this training offer valuable applications for social work education across Europe.

Social work methods, quartermaking, social inclusion, bridging communities

Posters

POS-Divides 04

Strengthening connectedness among rural social workers

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Despite a widespread perception that social problems are concentrated in urban areas, rural communities in the U.S. experience rates of social, behavioral, and health problems equivalent to other locales (Walters, 2020). Rural communities also suffer from a scarcity of qualified service providers, especially licensed social workers. Those who serve rural areas face special challenges, such as geographical isolation and disconnectedness from professional support systems. Further, there are social and cultural divides between rural and urban communities that exacerbate social disconnectedness and hinder healthy societal development.

To prepare social work students for practice in rural communities, our school of social work developed several strategies to build social connections among faculty, students, field instructors, and communities. Key components include establishing a rural advisory committee to provide ongoing input into effective strategies for building connections in rural communities; hiring new faculty and identifying field supervisors to develop rural placements for students and serve a liaison to rural organizations; creating synchronous („live online“) courses to maintain social connectedness among rural students during their educational program; developing a specific course addressing cultural aspects of rural practice; offering a retention incentive program to provide financial and social support to students committed to rural practice; and providing ongoing continuing education to social workers to improve their professional skills and stay connected to our social work program.

This initiative demonstrates how social work educational programs can play a vital role in fostering social connectedness and strengthening social work practice in rural communities.

Posters

POS-Divides 05

Reflection on Teaching Social Work in Binational Classrooms in Wartime

Dr. Yael Lavy

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Israel

The events of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Israel have intensified the challenges of fostering an equitable and inclusive learning environment in binational (Arab and Jewish) social work classrooms. This reflection draws from teaching three social work courses in small classrooms of about 20 students each, raising a crucial question: how to address the war's impact within the classroom?

Two guiding principles shaped my approach. First, giving explicit acknowledgment of the increasingly polarized power dynamics between the Jewish majority and Arab minority during the war (Sonnenschein, 2019). Second, maintaining fidelity to the group contract (Corey & Corey, 2018): focusing on the course's academic goals rather than inter-group relations.

To navigate these tensions, I employed several strategies: engaging in individual discussions with each student, hosting group dialogues with Arab students, being the minority, and lighting a candle at the start of each session as a reminder of our shared humanity and suffering for both nations, at both sides of the conflict.

However, while personal conversations and unnational dialogs fostered belonging and a supportive atmosphere, the candle-lighting revealed a facilitator blind spot. Namely, Jewish students embraced the gesture, but some Arab students perceived it as honoring only Israeli military losses, which challenged their sense of inclusion.

This experience illustrates that teaching in binational classrooms during wartime, despite its challenges, presents opportunities for meaningful encounters between warring nations and fosters connections across social and cultural divides.

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Posters

POS-Divides 06

Rethinking Social Work for Indigenous Peoples in Japan: From the Perspective of Settler Colonial Studies

Osamu Miyazaki

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Japan

In recent years, some researchers in Japan have asserted the need for social work for indigenous people (Aynu). In this poster presentation, I will use the perspective of settler colonialism studies to examine these issues and present alternative ways of social work to protect indigenous peoples' rights in solidarity with them.

As the concept of diversity has become more widespread, the Aynu people have also come into focus, but their culture tends to be consumed superficially and they are otherized. Some researchers have focused on the reality of poverty and educational disparities in Aynu. But diversity tends to be understood as individual differences and the focus has been on protecting individual rights.

In Japanese social work education, there is a lack of learning about colonialism histories. The settler colonial studies perspective offers an understanding of how indigenous peoples have been oppressed as a group during the process of Japan's modernization. The fact that oppression is collective means that rights are also collective. It is necessary for social work students to develop an understanding of collective Indigenous rights in order to stand in solidarity with them. It is also important to recognize and participate in protecting the important role that ceremonies and monuments of the victims of settler colonialism in upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples living today.

Posters

POS-Divides 07

My DNA is on Fire: Exploring the Complex Intersections of Identity, Trauma, and Global Conflict in Social Work Education

Dr. Liat Shklarski

Co-Author(s): Liat Shklarski and Sonya Hinch

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USA

Background: The social work profession is deeply rooted in principles of social justice and dismantling inequalities. Social work pedagogy, in turn, has increasingly emphasized anti-racist frameworks to address historical injustices within the profession. However, global conflicts can cast long shadows, even reaching into the seemingly safe spaces of academia. The October 7 Hamas attack, resulting in the Israel-Hamas war, has sharply increased antisemitism worldwide, deeply affecting Jews in the diaspora, including social work educators in the United States. These educators now face the significant challenge of navigating politically charged conversations within the classroom while maintaining a humanistic approach to their teaching. This surge in antisemitism exposes a critical gap in current research related to the impact of a global conflict on Jewish social work instructors in the U.S. **Aims:** This study aims to explore the experiences of these educators, particularly focusing on the concept of secondary trauma, the personal toll of witnessing rising antisemitism and emphasizes how they navigate personal hardships in their workplaces and classrooms. By understanding how Jewish social work educators navigate these personal hardships within their workplaces and classrooms, this study can offer valuable insights to support this vital group of educators. **Method:** Employing qualitative methods, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with 23 social work instructors who identify as Jewish or are closely aligned with Jewish communities. The interviews, comprising 22 questions, covered aspects of teaching, professional life, and personal experiences post-October 7. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify core themes from the interview responses. **Findings:** The current study sheds light on how participants navigate social work education and their professional identity amid rising antisemitism. Key to managing these challenges are leadership support and strong collegial relationships, which help them discuss sensitive topics and reduce fear. Yet, personal struggles and insufficient institutional support often exacerbate their experiences of antisemitism. **Conclusions:** This study highlights the critical importance of understanding and addressing the intersections of personal identity, historical trauma, and global conflict within social work education. The experiences shared by Jewish educators and those with affinity to Israel post-October 7th reveal how personal and generational traumas deeply impact professional responsibilities and relationships. The study calls for a shift in focus from political discourse to personal struggles, emphasizing the need for social work curricula to embrace complex understandings of global issues beyond the traditional anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks. Institutions can better support educators and students by fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment while addressing antisemitism with the same rigor as other forms of discrimination.

Posters

POS-Divides 08

The experience of single mothers by choice in Israeli Jewish society

Prof. Head of the School of Social Work Ester Zychlinski
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Ariel University,
Israel

Background: Single motherhood by choice (SMC) is shaped by cultural values and societal perspectives. This study explored the experiences of Israeli Jewish single mothers, integrating post-modern Western values, traditional family structures, religious practices, and a patriotic view of motherhood.

Methodology: Using a qualitative method, thematic analysis was conducted on 11 semi-structured interviews with Israeli Jewish SMC.

Results: Six key themes emerged: „Before Birth“; „Motherhood Challenges“; „Sources of Support“; „Between Dyad and Family“; „Eyeing the Future“; and „Motherhood as a Dream Fulfilled“. Participants faced social marginality and exclusion but viewed SMC as a preferable „otherness“ due to the high value of motherhood and self-fulfillment it provided. This reflects Israeli Jewish society’s balance between individualization, women’s advancement, and traditional gender roles.

Importance: Participants’ experiences were complex, combining feminist ideals of autonomy with traditional family values. The acceptance of SMC is growing, balancing these values with the central importance of motherhood. Findings may also shed light on SMC experiences in other societies where modernity coexists with traditional family values. The primary recommendations for enhancing the integration of single mothers by choice and their children are:

- Recognize shared characteristics of SMC and provide specialized professional attention.
- Develop social interventions for SMC inclusion, especially in education.
- Introduce curricula showcasing varied family models.
- Provide specialized programs for SMC well-being.
- Establish SMC family centers and guidance for grandparents.
- Create support programs for male figures in SMC children’s lives.
- Implement policies to address financial difficulties, ensuring economic stability for SMC.

Gender roles, Motherhood, Single mother by choice, Well-being, Israeli society

Posters

POS-Divides 09

Equipping future social workers: diversity-sensitive education and navigating classroom challenges

Dr. Marjolijn Schouten

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Nederland

This poster presentation explores our research on promoting diversity-sensitive practices within social work education, addressing the need for future social workers to navigate intersecting social dimensions such as race, religion, background, sexuality, and gender identity. In diverse societies, social connectedness is often undermined by systemic inequalities and social divides, observed in phenomena like racism, sexism, and discrimination against queer individuals, which collectively contribute to the marginalization of certain groups. Our work examines how social work education can bridge these divides by fostering inclusion, equity, and the respectful exchange of diverse perspectives, especially through queer sensitivity in the classroom.

Our findings indicate that promoting connectedness across social and cultural divides in social work education requires a multi-level approach: inclusive teaching methods by educators, supportive institutional practices, and curricula that reflect diverse identities and experiences. Educators often face dilemmas, such as when students' personal values clash with professional ethical codes, including resistance to supporting queer individuals. This research offers guidance on navigating such dilemmas effectively, equipping educators with approaches to handle conflicting values while reinforcing social work's principles of equality and respect for diversity. Through co-creative research with students and graduates conducting thesis research, we explore practical strategies -such as dialogue, diverse teaching methods, and utilizing students' own experiences with exclusion - that equip educators to create safe, inclusive spaces.

This research provides essential tools and strategies for educators and institutions aiming to strengthen social connectedness and reinforce social work's commitment to diversity, equality, and justice.

Posters

POS-Health 01

Holistic connectedness of trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practice of social work and self-care in solving social isolation and loneliness of migrants with an emphasis on improving their health

Stela Richnavsk
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Institute of Educology and Social Work, Faculty of Arts, University of Presov,
Slovakia

Since 2015, we have witnessed a massive increase in the number of refugees and migrants, which has placed increased demands on the healthcare system in European Union countries (European Commission 2018). When addressing migration, the focus is on issues of sustainability, integration and healthcare. The vulnerability of the target group is related to the frequent occurrence of complex post-traumatic stress disorder due to discrimination, language barriers, war, etc. (Gasker 2023). Research shows a higher prevalence of loneliness and social isolation among migrants (Belau et al. 2021; Horn et al. 2023 and others). The need for social work interventions is linked to the prevention of the emergence of socially excluded migrant communities. In this study, we specifically focus self-care, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive social work practice, which can significantly impact the mental and physical health and promote the subjective psychosocial well-being of migrants. With the intention of making social workers preparation for practice more effective, we offer the results of quantitative research focusing on the opinions of social work students, including Ukrainian migrants at the University of Presov, on the area of social work interventions with a focus on eliminating the negative consequences of migration, supporting effective coping strategies for stress, and contributing to healthy social functioning of refugees and migrants. The theoretical-empirical analysis aims to contribute to the existing social work discourse on addressing social isolation and loneliness of migrants and to offer current recommendations for the promotion of migrant health and effective undergraduate training of social work students.

Keywords: Social isolation. Migration. Health. Self-care. Education in social work.

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Social isolation. Migration. Health. Self-care. Education in social work.

Posters

POS-Health 02

Participatory self-in-field study method: A supervision model for social work field instructors

Prof. Tamar Darvish

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Israel

Field instructors play a crucial role in the practical education of social work students and in shaping their professional identity. However, instructors face challenges from heavy workloads, conflicting professional demands, and a shortage of organizational support, putting them at risk of isolation and loneliness. These challenges potentially affect the quality of field experience, student achievement, and instructor retention. While ongoing supervision is key to supporting instructors' professional development, the lack of knowledge and programs highlights the need for specialized continuing education in social work field instruction.

This presentation demonstrates an innovative supervision model for field instructors based on a participatory self-in-field action research method, which views the social world as a complex network of „fields“ constructed through interactions. It illustrates how a group process guided by this model resolved common yet difficult dilemmas faced by field instructors.

The research employed a self-in-field action research approach with six social workers from diverse backgrounds (Arab and Jewish) who supervise undergraduate students, addressing issues arising from student supervision. The model promoted curiosity, raised awareness of supervision relationship fields and their interconnections, revealed new complexities, and enabled reframing of cases, leading to new action strategies and enhanced feelings of connectedness and wellbeing among field instructors.

This approach can be learned and applied in daily practice, potentially becoming an integral part of field instructors' and social workers' professional self-care strategies.

Posters

POS-Health 03

Crisis of Homelessness and Social Isolation. Experiences of Polish Homeless People

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Homelessness is an example of social exclusion and social isolation. The number of homeless people in Poland is increasing. This is due to various reasons, including low level of education, poverty, health and addictions and family conflicts. Research conducted in Poland and abroad shows that homelessness is usually caused by a series of interrelated events, often traumatic. We can ask the question: which events cause homelessness and which accompany it? However, it is certain that homelessness leads to the breaking/weakening of family and social connections.

The presented poster raises the issue of the subjective experience of social isolation of homeless people. Qualitative research was conducted among 10 homeless people living in urban spaces or low-threshold facilities. The aim of the research was to answer questions about: 1) the essence/range of experiencing social isolation, 2) the consequences of experiencing social isolation, 3) the range and assessment of the forms of support they use, 4) individual ways of dealing with the feeling of isolation. The results can be an inspiration for practitioners (including social workers) on the functioning and needs of their clients.

Posters

POS-Health 04

Social barriers of Self-Care among Community Social Workers

Associate Professor Zuzana Poklembova
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Slovakia

Homelessness is an example of social exclusion and social isolation. The number of homeless people in Poland is increasing. This is due to various reasons, including low level of education, poverty, health and addictions and family conflicts. Research conducted in Poland and abroad shows that homelessness is usually caused by a series of interrelated events, often traumatic. We can ask the question: which events cause homelessness and which accompany it? However, it is certain that homelessness leads to the breaking/weakening of family and social connections.

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Posters

POS-Health 05

Connectedness among Older Adults: Mediating Roles of Optimism, Loneliness, and Psychological Distress between Sense of Community and Meaning in Life

Prof. Head of the School of Social Work Ester Zychlinski
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Israel

Background: A sense of community, rooted in emotional connectedness, is vital for older adults' well-being. Meaning in life, related to societal contribution, supports optimal aging. This study explored how optimism, loneliness, and psychological distress mediate the relationship between a sense of community and meaning in life. Methodology: Participants included 740 community dwelling Israeli older adults ($M = 71.96$; $SD = 5.81$), of which 59.3% were women and 40.7% men. Data analysis was based on a structural equations model (SEM) with AMOS 25.0. Results: A positive association was found between a sense of community with optimism, and a negative association with loneliness. Findings also show a negative association between optimism with psychological distress and a positive link between loneliness with psychological distress, while a higher level of psychological distress was associated with a lower level of meaning in life. Importance: The findings have important practical implications for the type of interventions recommended for older adults, both professionally and for government policy. Social workers interested in promoting meaning in life among the older adults should emphasize active community involvement with the aim to promote optimism and, at the same time, reduce loneliness and thus decrease psychological distress while heightening meaning in life. The findings can help policy makers initiate and budget activities that actively promote a sense of community among older adults, and thereby, increase their emotional connectedness. Community activities that enhance older adults as entrepreneurs and promoters of change in the community may ultimately strengthen their perceived meaning of life.

Posters

POS-Health 06

Creative Teaching on „clinical and trauma informed social work“: Using narratives on life experiences and a digital serious game for school social group work to enhance students' knowledge and competence in social connectedness and well being.

Professor Agapi Kandylaki

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The symposium focuses on the presentation of a research project whose aim is to introduce innovative ways of teaching on clinical and trauma informed undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses with 1) the use of „lived experiences“ of child abuse and various types of violence, 2) the „biographical narratives“ of parents of autistic children 3) the use of a Digital serious game for school social group work with children entitled an alternative journey to the bottom of the sea. The project is based on the narrative and strengths based theoretical approaches.

The purpose is to explain how using narratives of service users lived traumatized experiences may assist social work students develop critical reflection and enhance their knowledge and skills. The research project on creative teaching on „Clinical and trauma informed social work“ , using personal narratives, vignettes, aiming to enhance critical reflection on resilience and social connectedness, within a framework of strengths-based approach and narrative perspective, is introduced to assess the impact of the narratives and personal accounts on the students' knowledge and competence development. Narratives on lived experiences refer to child abuse, bullying, trafficking, domestic violence and the metaphors emerging from the biographical narratives of parents of autistic children. The research uses a mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative.) A questionnaire will be given to students before the introduction of the vignettes and another questionnaire aiming to assess the experience will be given at the end of the project lasting for five sessions in each group (undergraduate and postgraduate course). A focus group of students based on in depth questions assesses their experience and links it with the theoretical knowledge and skills development, by focusing on how it may help students develop empathy and compassion, as well as a vision of social work operating in complex human situations to promote social change, problem solving, human rights advocacy along with people's empowerment, enhancing well being and promoting social connectedness and social justice.

Moreover, an innovative Digital Serious game for School Social Group work, constructed by the presenters, is also used with the social work students for the research. It is an digital serious game based on group interaction, which draws from narrative and strengths based perspectives and aims to the improvement of social connectedness, the promotion of children's rights, the increase of empathy and development of critical reflection, as well as conflicts resolution, tackling stereotypes and bullying, in a group environment, to promote inclusion and coherence, respect and acceptance. Based on stories of the sea creatures children are encouraged to participate and communicate verbally and nonverbally while enhancing their creativity and their empathy, as well as their competence to deal with difficult situations. They are also familiarized with values, children's rights and they identify their own strengths and competences.

Posters

POS-Overall 01

„Future Skills“: qualifying social workers and teachers to empower the citizens of tomorrow

Professor Janne Fengler
Co-Author(s): Prof. Dr. Peter Schäfer

University of Luxembourg,
Luxembourg

Educational equity is a central concern worldwide, and two of the 17 SDGs (UN, 2015) relate to this. But the unequal access to resources still is very prevalent; e.g. the findings from the PISA studies conducted every three years by the OECD show that the socio-economic background of pupils continues to have a considerable influence on their development opportunities which cannot be compensated by the respective school systems (2024).

Furthermore, experts from science, education, business, the UNESCO (2015) and the OECD (2019), are calling for so-called „future skills“ in view of the massive multiple problems that we are facing. This additional challenge carries the risk of exacerbating the divide between the privileged and the marginalized.

Possible contributions of nonformal education must be closely linked to those of formal education. This in turn places demands on (prospective) social workers and teachers - and their corresponding university qualification (cf. Wissenschaftsrat, 2022).

The project analyses the extent to which future-oriented skills have already been incorporated into existing qualification concepts for social work and teaching through a literature review of exemplary European countries, and identifies approaches for further development.

The significance of this topic for social work lies in the fact that it addresses the need for multidisciplinary action, which initially starts at the level of training professionals in the formal and informal sector. By working together and teaching skills for the future, the socially disadvantaged can be empowered to participate in society and gain better access to resources and power, despite their different backgrounds.

Posters

POS-Overall 02

Promote sustainable relationships (with both human societies and the natural world) through an International Social Work Perspective

FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer

Co-Author(s): Enric Torras, Christina Fazekas, Adrian Frizberg, Michael Huber, Lisa Idinger, Jonas Jankovits, Viktoria Micheler, Balqis Mukari, Caroline Pfeiffer, Christian Puehringer, Clara Zoettl, Amir Zuberi

University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten,
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At the University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten social work students are working together in a research project to write their bachelor thesis. Throughout the work on the project students will have the chance to deal with the foundations of international social work, its current issues, approaches (indigenous knowledge, decolonialization, systemic theory) and challenges. The research will be done until 24th of April 2025 and shall be presented at the conference with three posters. The overall topic: „International social work is generally understood to encompass global social problems and policy issues, comparative social policy, international professional organizations, social work practice focused on development of human rights, or migration, especially that in international agencies.“ (Healy, 2009). This perspective opens an understanding of mutual respect and solidarity among diverse communities. The goal of SW to promote sustainable relationships with both human societies and the natural world can be achieved through this approach. It helps to question systematically social hierarchies and unequal access to resources and power. Students gain a critical view on power structures and can identify themselves as radical and emancipatory social workers.

Students contribute with their research in three main topics. Every topic will be a poster:

- 1) Migration
- 2) Reproductive & Women*'s Rights
- 3) Eco-social aspects

Ad 1) Poster one: Migration

Research on topics such as border control, cases of human rights' violation and policies on the EU borders are conducted. One of the goals is to find out how Forum Theatre methods can contribute to finding solutions to social issues that take place at EU borders. Further research focuses on the topic of access to information - or the right to information - for migrant and refugee employees in Austria and the EU.

The ambivalence of social connectedness between border security staff and migrants and the risk of reinforcing harmful systems while trying to improve them is being researched. Connectedness across social and cultural divides will be a theme, when researching the possibilities of ensuring human rights between border security staff and migrants through Forum Theatre methods.

The topic of ?Rights to information? is linked to social connectedness in that access to information enables migrant and refugee workers to understand and advocate for their rights, fostering mutual support and a sense of belonging.

Ad 2) Poster two: Reproductive & Women*'s Rights

The research highlighting different aspects. Reproductive autonomy and the role of Social Work in supporting/ensuring reproductive rights of women* is one focus. The aim is to conduct an assessment of the current situation in Austria regarding reproductive rights while also providing an international comparison. Another focus is on how to support social work in countries with repressive systems to protect women's rights.

The research results could be linked to either the theme of „Social Connectedness as a Social, Mental and Physical Health Issue“ or „Connectedness in Politics and Democracy“. The significance of Social Connectedness to women*s rights shall be elaborated and linked to politics and policies or in general to health issues.

Individual Oral Presentations

IOP-Overall 07

Searching for social work in queer activism and the tackle of social death: the case of Greece

Dr Panagiotis Pentaris

Goldsmiths University of London,
UK

This paper is part of a larger study examining the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Greece and the role of social work in advancing queer activism. Utilizing in-depth interviews with 73 LGBTQIA+ individuals and 34 social workers, the study explores the intersection between social work and queer activism in the fight for equality, equity, and liberation. The findings reveal that organizational policies within social work often act as barriers to engaging in social activism. Many social workers refrained from active participation in queer activism, citing a lack of personal connection to the cause. Notably, only social workers who identified as LGBTQIA+ themselves viewed the cause as worthy of active engagement. These results underscore the importance of social connectedness, particularly how a sense of belonging and identification with marginalized groups influences professional advocacy and activism. The findings suggest that if social work remains disconnected from queer activism, it risks reinforcing social death, a state where LGBTQIA+ individuals are symbolically or socially excluded. The study highlights the need for re-evaluating social work policies to foster greater inclusivity and activism, with potential implications for enhancing social workers' roles in promoting LGBTQIA+ rights and advancing social justice.

Posters

POS-Overall 02

Promote sustainable relationships (with both human societies and the natural world) through an International Social Work Perspective

FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer

Co-Author(s): Enric Torras, Christina Fazekas, Adrian Frizberg, Michael Huber, Lisa Idinger, Jonas Jankovits, Viktoria Micheler, Balqis Mukari, Caroline Pfeiffer, Christian Puehringer, Clara Zoettl, Amir Zuberi

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Ad 3) Poster Three: Eco-social aspects in social work

The connection between Human rights and Environmental rights is the issue of this research. It will discuss the impact on the individual due to the exploitation of all living beings and our environment. The well-being of an individual human being is deeply connected with its (social) environment and our livelihood. It took the global community a long time to bring in and strengthen Human-Rights. Now it is time to stand up for the rights of our natural environment and all living entities. Social Work as a Human-Rights-Profession needs a "more than human" social work, a critical ecological social work which overcomes the anthropocentric and speciesism perspective. In 2022 the ISWF published a report about the pandemic and how Social Work ethics can contribute to an Eco-Social World. The report links social justice with ecological justice and promotes holistic rights, which includes „ecosystem-rights and rights of nature“:

„Holistic Rights recognize individual human rights, (dignity and fundamental freedoms), social human rights, (civil, economic, and political), cultural rights, ecosystem rights, and the broader rights of nature.“ (The People's Summit @Co-Building a New Eco-Social World: Leaving No One Behind` 2022:5)

The research will investigate ecological justice, criticism on pure anthropocentric perspectives in Social Work and try to find new ideas on how Social Work can contribute to social and ecological justice world. It goes beyond social connectedness and refers to a connectedness to all living entities and to the natural world. The global human community is deeply dependent on a functional eco system.

This research fits in „Connectedness in Ecology and Sustainability“.

Across our various research topics, we share a common goal: to understand, strengthen and support the exercise of existing (Fundamental) Human Rights with a focus on marginalized social groups. We are addressing barriers that prevent social inclusion and connectedness and want to shed light on how these marginalized groups experience disconnection due to legal, social, and economic obstacles.

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Posters

POS-Overall 03

Integrating the Capability Approach in social work education: The case of refugee integration

Dr. Diana van Dijk

Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences,
Nederland

This poster presentation highlights the value of the Capability Approach in social work education as a justice-oriented framework that equips students to understand and address the complex, intersecting social and cultural divides refugees face. Rooted in principles of social connectedness and equality, the Capability Approach emphasizes that individuals require varying degrees of support to achieve well-being and lead lives they value, particularly when marginalized by social class, ethnicity, or migration status. This framework recognizes the two-way relationship between individual and social responsibility, supporting future social workers in fostering solidarity and empowerment across divides.

Using research on employment challenges faced by refugees in the Netherlands, this study illustrates how the Capability Approach can serve as a tool for addressing structural and individual barriers in social work education. Based on two sub-studies—one with long-term residents and another with recent refugee participants in a work-study program—the research identifies how discrimination, limited qualification recognition, and social and linguistic capital inequalities impact refugees' integration and access to meaningful work.

Findings suggest that by focusing on the expansion of real opportunities rather than fixed outcomes, the Capability Approach enables social work students to critically address social inequalities that limit connectedness across divides. This framework prepares them to support marginalized groups by fostering inclusive, capability-expanding environments, using tailored and flexible approaches to promote social justice and empowerment in their future practice.

Posters

POS-Politics 01

Preparing Civic-minded Professionals in Social Work ? The Role of Service-Learning in Social Work Education

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová
Co-Author(s): Zuzana Heinzov

Matej Bel University,
Slovakia

The paper delves into the transformative potential of integrating civic-minded principles and fostering connectedness in social work education. This approach is designed to shape compassionate and engaged practitioners. Drawing on the theory of post-conventional moral thinking and the movement towards engaged universities, the study examines the profound link between service learning and cultivating civic-mindedness in social work graduates. Findings underscore the transformative power of integrating service-learning experiences to nurture social responsibility and advocacy, which are key to the social work profession's dedication to community-based practices and social justice principles.

The research methodology used a modified civic-minded questionnaire (Steinberg et al., 2011; Slovak translation Brozmanov , Heinzov , 2018) to assess civic-mindedness comprehensively. The research group, consisting of 208 respondents, was composed of social work graduates from Slovak universities, providing a diverse and representative sample for the study.

The research results demonstrated statistically significant differences in the overall civic-minded graduate scale and several subscales between students who participated in service-learning during their studies and those who engaged in other practices. In all cases, graduates who participated in service-learning obtained higher scores. The study highlights the significant impact of service learning on cultivating civic-mindedness among social work graduates. Service-learning experiences positively influence various dimensions of civic-mindedness, such as advocacy, client empowerment, and commitment to social change and justice. These findings underscore the potential of service-learning to foster a deeper understanding of social issues and inequalities. The implications extend beyond academia, offering educators, policymakers, and practitioners insights into promoting democratic values and social responsibility.

Posters

POS-Politics 02

Repoliticizing Pedagogy: Resisting Post-Truth Drift in Canadian Social Work Education

Flavia Allajbeu

University of Toronto

This poster offers a critical examination of the postmodern depoliticization of Canadian social work education, wherein anti-oppression, reflexivity and intersectionality, once grounded in structural resistance, have been re-configured through postmodern pluralism and post-truth discourse into affective performances of self-disclosure. Originally intended to decenter dominant epistemologies, now functions to recenter whiteness as emotionally fragile and morally redemptive, thereby displacing structural accountability. This paper argues for reclaiming the radical potential of these frameworks as it requires repoliticizing pedagogy, rejecting “safe knowledge,” and returning to collective ethics and structural disruption as the foundation of social work education and the conditions for meaningful connectedness.

Symposiums

SYM-Digital 01

Blended Learning Formats in Social Work Education: the Role of Personal teaching Competence and the Teaching of Social Responsibility

Susanne Iris Bauer
Co-Author(s): Marlene Jänsch

University of Applied Sciences Fulda,
DE

Social Connectedness is crucial in teaching Social Work in Blended Learning formats, enhancing processes of reflection and discourse and transferring knowledge into practice. In addition to teaching theories, methods and legal principles, social work students need to be educated in a power-critical and -sensitive and (culturally) reflexive manner. This happens e.g., when teachers accompany authentic and committed learning processes and promote an attitude that enables active participation in the students' field of work. The research project „Hü-HyFlex, HighTech & HighTouch“ aims to find the most effective factors in this process. Analyzing the use of digital innovations as well as teaching/learning relations, the Personal Teaching Competence (PTC) stands out: built from teaching quality and perspectives and linked to the teachers personality. High PTC allows to take student diversity into account and includes the ability to enable students to work participatively and cooperatively and - where necessary - to criticise.

Introduction of „Hü-HyFlex, HighTech & HighTouch“ (10min)

Hü analyses impact factors of teaching Social Works, based on long years of experience with blended learning study programmes of the BASA-online and maps university networks with about 4,000 students across Germany. In five sub-projects, digital innovations were developed to accompany student life cycle as well as specific modules. The evaluation material consists of 35 teacher interviews, corresponding student evaluations and extensive module material.

The Personal Teaching Competence (PTC) in digital teaching/learning relationships (20min)

Initial results from the Hü effectiveness analysis are presented, which record factors for successful learning and teaching - including digital innovations. It shows that PTC is a particularly relevant factor for learning success, meeting the diversity of students in didactic concepts and use of methods. This can be recognised in

- design of teaching/learning relationships,
- authenticity in knowledge transfer
- examination formats.

The considerations include the reflected role of the teacher as ?performer, coach and learning counsellor? (Weil, 2020) in the didactic triangle as well as concepts from Hattie (2021) on teaching success and the ?Teaching Perspectives? of Pratt and Smulders (2016).

Assessing teaching success from a „social reformer“ perspective (25min)

Providing insight into results from teacher interviews and analyzing how teachers assess teaching success from the perspective of the „social reformer“ in Blended Learning of Social Works. This perspective emphasises social commitment and responsibility of teachers to enable students to actively participate in shaping their social environment. Conditions for the implementation of the perspective as well as the strategies used by teachers to authentically

integrate social responsibility and personal commitment into their teaching concepts can be shown.

Discussion (20min)

Symposiums

SYM-Digital 02

Action-oriented learning spaces on a hybrid campus to strengthen socio-emotional and collaborative learning processes in social and health sciences

Prof. Dr. Alexandra Engel

Co-Author(s): Prof. Stefan Wölwer, Kikko Neubert, MA, Jennifer Petry, Msc

HAWK Zukunftszentrum Holzminden-Höxter,
Germany

Students in social, health and therapeutic professions take responsibility for social cohesion and need to develop theoretical knowledge as well as specific action competences. The aim of the symposium is to discuss an innovative concept for a hybrid campus that enriches education in social, health and therapeutic professions by opening new learning and social spaces. The focus is on the integration of theoretical knowledge and professional attitudes with practical action competencies to prepare students for the demands of social cohesion and digital transformation.

Lecture 1: Prof. Stefan Wölwer/Kikko Neubert: A hybrid campus based on interaction design

The hybrid campus is presented as a web-based platform that combines physical and digital learning spaces to support the development of professional and socio-emotional competences. The aim is to provide participants with an overview of the infrastructural and didactic advantages of the platform for promoting collaborative processes.

The platform consists of a digital representation of the physical campus, a virtual desktop environment and a social medium to enhance professional and socio-emotional competencies. It implements theory-based and goal-oriented collaborative processes and serves as a social space that provides security, orientation and quality in processes and learning throughout the student life cycle.

A virtual taskbar gives users easy access to useful tools and services via application icons. Topics such as onboarding and academic work are supported by a curated media library that provides information security for first-year students. There are also workspaces for academic tasks and creating innovative career concepts, a strengths course for developing a professional identity and offerings to promote mental and physical health.

Lecture 2: Jennifer Petry, MSc: Theoretical foundations and evaluation of the hybrid campus

The hybrid campus focuses on the development of virtual teaching and learning scenarios based on the theoretical models of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci 2017) and socio-emotional learning (Zins & Elias 2007) with professional, disciplinary and value-based integration into the tasks of social, health and therapeutic professions.

The aims of the campus are to enhance autonomy, competence and social relatedness to promote intrinsic motivation and thereby support students in developing socio-emotional competencies. The current evaluation of the hybrid campus, based on a mixed methods design, is presented.

Lecture 3: Prof. Dr. Alexandra Engel: Innovative Vocational Concepts Collaborative Workspace as a tool for strengthening transformative competences

The scope for shaping and innovating professional work appears initially to be limited by social legislation. However, students in these professions should be encouraged at an early stage to develop visions and innovations that go beyond the status quo and to be able to implement them with an understanding of their implications and conditions. The Innovative Professional Concepts workspace guides you through the development process using creative methods.

1. Hybrid Campus 2. Social Connectedness 3. Collaborative Processes 4. Professional Innovation 5. Learning Processes

Symposiums

SYM-Digital 03

Service Design Thinking within IT based Service User Involvement Projects in Social Work ? New Ways to Create Connectedness?

Prof. (FH) Dr. Johanna M. Hefel

Co-Author(s): Prof. (FH) (em) Dr. Eva Fleischer; Dr. Bahtic-Kunratth Birgit; Lukas Arnold, MA

FHV University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg,
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The symposium builds on experiences from the project „Social route map“, an integrated and interdisciplinary project with potential users. The three-year project (2021 ? 2024) aimed to create a digital tool for people in need of support to access information about services and appropriate offers for their problems. A consortium of five scientific institutions, three IT companies, and fourteen social institutions from three Austrian federal provinces worked on the development and implementation using Service Design Thinking (SDT) and service user involvement approaches.

The result of the project is a web application that provides information about advice centers, helplines and services in the most flexible and accessible way. Accessibility, usability and anti-discrimination are central basic principles of the development work (Sloan, Joyner, Stakeman & Schmitz 2018, Selwyn 2016).

Methodology

In an integrated participatory process, combining a service design thinking and a service user involvement approach (McKercher 2020), a web application prototype was developed for a low-threshold, multilingual search for help and social support along several categories, covering the entire life span and all relevant fields of action of social work..

Qualitative research (focus groups, workshops, questionnaires, reflective teams, thinking aloud tests) was used throughout the project. A particular challenge was to reflect the complexity and interwoven nature of the social work fields of action and problem situations in the structure of IT requirements. The aim was to incorporate the perspectives of different users of the tool into a category system and to link connections and multiple affiliations with IT requirements. The prototype was continuously updated while tests with service user and social workers were still running.

Importance of the topic for social work education

In a digitalized world digital connectedness can be a promising tool for distributing and sharing information. Therefore, the participatory development of a web application is the first step towards participation and connectedness. The intersection of SDT and user orientation in social work provides a framework for developing more effective, responsive, and sustainable services that genuinely meet the needs of the service users, but also take into account the constraints of digital divide research.

In terms of sustaining social inclusion and connectedness through social work research, it is essential to think more broadly about digital tools in terms of accessibility and dimensions of diversity, but also about limitations of digitalization. Core principles are accessibility, usability and non-discrimination. There is great potential to implement digitalization projects as part of research projects in social work teaching. This first Austria-wide digital web application from three federal provinces has potential as a basis for further digitalization projects in the context of social work studies.

social work, digitalization, service design, connectedness, web application

Symposiums

SYM-Digital 04

The Dynamics Between Social and Digital Connectedness: Pathways in Social Work Education

Josephine Jahn

Co-Author(s): Stefanie Neumaier (Technische Hochschule Rosenheim, Germany), Joshua Weber (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Switzerland)

Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich,
Germany

This session explores how interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of digital tools reshape professional social work. From the potential of interdisciplinary learning to the critical use of digital systems and social media, the three contributions offer valuable insights into preparing future professionals for complex challenges in practice and advancing impactful educational frameworks.

To what extent does the interdisciplinary connectedness of students of social work and computer science during their studies determine socialpedagogical professionalization processes?

Stefanie Neumaier

Increasingly complex problems, such as the need for a socially acceptable digital transformation of society, go hand in hand with the need for interdisciplinary collaboration in everyday work. To date, there has been little systematic evidence of the extent to which interdisciplinary learning in Social Work Education, as a preparation for this everyday work, opens up potential for socialpedagogical professionalization. The same applies to the question of digital learning objects in Social Work Education (Kutscher 2024). This article aims to approach these questions based on an ongoing qualitative dissertation study.

Connectedness with digital technologies as a curricular challenge: Modes of integration between using tools and understanding the essence of technology

Joshua Weber

Digital tools such as commonly used Electronic Client Systems are increasingly being employed in social work. This entanglement of practitioners and digital artefacts, which are inherently social, creates a demand for professionals trained in the usage of these tools. The presentation argues that the training of such usage skills is not the responsibility of the universities. Instead, they are called upon to enable students to analyze and evaluate the knowledge contained in these systems (Weber/Rink 2024) and the problematizations that precede them (Rink/Weber/Seelmeyer 2024). At the intersection of academia and professional practice, it is additionally necessary to establish appropriate formats for the training of the usage competencies.

Social Media and Its Impact on media-mediated interaction in Social Work

Josephine Jahn

Given the complexity of Social Media and the critical lens required to examine its role in fostering social connectedness, it is essential for Social Work Education to prepare and support professionals for media-mediated interaction with clients on social platforms. Furthermore, it must provide frameworks and impulses for leveraging this unique mode of service delivery effectively. The presentation will examine empirical findings from a quantitative trend study involving social work professionals, focusing on media-mediated interaction. Based on the results, conclusions are drawn for the further development of Social Work Education, particularly with regard to the essential content and innovative formats required to achieve impactful outcomes.

Together, these pathways highlight dynamics between social and digital connectedness and the relevance for Social Work Education. Promoting a future-oriented Social Work Education will ensure that practitioners are equipped to meet the evolving challenges of society.

Digital transformation; Interdisciplinary learning; Digital tools; Electronic Client Systems; Social Media

Symposiums

SYM-Digital 05

Stress and Relief Factors from Digitalization in Social Work

Nadine van der Meule

Hochschule Landshut (DIWAG), Germany

The dissertation titled „Stress and Relief Factors from Digitalization in Social Work“ investigates the impact of digitalization on the field of social work, specifically focusing on the stressors and relief factors arising from the use of digital systems. Given the complexity of social issues, practitioners face the challenge of utilizing digital technologies as interfaces between various institutions and care systems. The central research question guiding this qualitative study is: What stress and relief factors are perceived by different stakeholders in social work, and what actionable recommendations can be derived from these perceptions? This qualitative, multi-perspective approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the stressors and potentials of digitalization in social work.

The dissertation also addresses the evolving needs for social services in light of digital transformation processes. The integration of digital technologies is transforming workflows, communication, and information flows, which introduces new demands for practitioners. Key aspects include the necessity for continuous professional development, the development of digital competencies, and concerns regarding data privacy and the reduction of face-to-face interactions. These factors can contribute to psychological strain, stress, and burnout, adversely affecting the quality of social work services and the well-being of both professionals and clients (Ver.di 2022).

Research literature indicates that digitalization has the potential to enhance the efficiency and quality of social services, yet it also imposes new demands on professionals, particularly regarding digital skills and data privacy. Studies by Kutscher et al. (2020), Klenk (2022), and Klinger et al. (2022) explore the challenges and opportunities that digital technologies present for social work and highlight the need for collaboration between policy, practice, and research. A nationwide study conducted by Fulda University and Ver.di (2022) reveals that social workers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced heightened levels of stress, reflecting increasing workloads and sickness rates in the field.

To capture the stress and relief factors associated with digitalization, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, incorporating group discussions, individual interviews, and an online survey. The study will involve various groups, including practitioners, policymakers, representatives from professional associations, and clients, to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalization. The interviews will be semi-structured, allowing for open discussions of participants' experiences and perceptions.

Preliminary findings from interviews have revealed key themes, including stress stemming from the need for continuous professional development and difficulties in adapting to new technologies. However, opportunities for relief have also been identified, particularly through the efficiency gains offered by digital systems, such as improved communication between authorities and social workers.

In summary, the dissertation aims to capture the perceptions and experiences of various stakeholders in social work concerning digitalization in order to develop practical recommendations for minimizing stress and maximizing relief. The insights gained are intended to promote social participation during digital transformation processes and enhance the quality of social services. Therefore, the dissertation aligns well with the DIWAG research group, as it addresses pertinent questions regarding digital transformation and its impact on social work.

Symposiums

SYM-Divides 01

Decolonising Social Work Field Education: Co-creating a Podcast for Global Transformation

Dr Henglien Lisa Chen

Co-Author(s): Michael Wallengren-Lynch, Libby Hammond, Einav Segev

University of Sussex,
United Kingdom

This symposium presents an innovative EASSW-funded project that utilises a participatory action approach to co-create a podcast series focused on decolonising social work field education. To challenge Eurocentric perspectives and power imbalances embedded within the field, this project brings together diverse voices from across the globe to foster dialogue and action towards transformative change.

The project builds upon an IASSW-funded scoping review on decolonising social work field education, which revealed three key findings: (1) the essential role of First Nations, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (FN & BAME) knowledge inclusion; (2) the need for reconstructing learning spaces and curricula; and (3) the importance of decolonisation as a process of unlearning and critical reflection. These findings served as the foundation for three co-creation workshops involving:

Research team members (including early career researchers and practitioners)

Participants at the SWSD 2024 World Joint Conference (academics, practitioners, Experts by Experience, service providers)

Social work students

Through these workshops, participants collaboratively generated podcast episode ideas, culminating in the co-production of nine episodes that delve into critical aspects of decolonising social work field education. Each episode specifically addresses challenges and opportunities within field education settings, exploring topics such as:

Challenging dominant narratives and power structures.

Integrating First Nations, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (FN & BAME) knowledge and practices into fieldwork experiences.

Creating culturally safe and inclusive learning environments for students from marginalised communities.

Promoting critical reflexivity and anti-oppressive practice in field education supervision.

Utilising podcasting as a tool for decolonising pedagogy and knowledge mobilisation.

This symposium will showcase the participatory methodology employed throughout the project, highlighting the unique contributions of each stakeholder group. Presenters will discuss:

The process of co-creating podcast episodes, including the challenges and benefits of collaborative knowledge production.

The impact of the podcast series on participants' understanding of decolonisation and its implications for field education.

The potential of podcasting as a pedagogical tool for fostering critical consciousness and social justice advocacy among students and practitioners.

The dissemination and global reach of the podcast, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on decolonising social work education worldwide.

This symposium offers a compelling example of how participatory action research and digital media can be leveraged to co-create decolonised teaching materials and foster connectedness across social and cultural divides within the social work profession. By centring the voices of those most impacted by colonial legacies, this project aims to contribute to a more just and equitable future for social work field education.

Co-Authors: Henglien Lisa Chen, Ann Anka, Catherine Ellis, Omar Mohamed, Nishi Mitra, Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail, Michelle Jones, Einav Segev, Libby Hammond, Maria Łuszczynska Samantha Laver, Mitali Kulkarni and Michael Wallengren Lynch

Contributing Authors: Sharlotte Tusasiirwe and Phyllis Ngai.

Symposiums

SYM-Divides 02

Integrating experiential knowledge in social work education: findings from a European project

Prof. dr. Kristel Driessens

Co-Author(s): Cecilia Heule, Camilla Landi, Sascha Van Gijzel

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Internationally, there is a growing interest in the subject of experiential knowledge in social work education. The value of lived experience as an equal and valid source of knowledge is essential.

This symposium will present experiences, knowledge, and findings from a 3-year European project (2021-2024) co-financed by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union. The project involved 12 Universities from 10 European countries (Belgium, England, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, and Spain) and aimed at developing experiential knowledge in social work education through an international perspective.

The focus of our work has a strong connection with the conference theme „Connectedness across social and cultural divides“ as we developed our methods and tools, in cooperation with experts by experience (EBEs) involved at the partner institutions. We worked together with EBEs in poverty, with a migration background or learning disabilities. Some partners participate in PowerUs, an international network of lecturers, researchers, students, and representatives from different service user led organisations.

This work builds on cutting edge research studies that demonstrate the impact of working with people with lived experience of services and support and promotes connectedness, inclusion and empowerment (Askheim et al. 2017, McLaughlin et al. 2021, Driessens & Danneboom-Lyssens, 2022, Wilken and Cabiati 2024). Our goal is to strengthen inclusive education and to develop the strengths of experiential knowledge in higher education, bringing into practice concepts of empowerment, participation and solidarity, bridging gaps in challenging power relations.

The project aims to make a significant contribution to education through establishing a range of principles and resources, from conceptual and theoretical knowledge to practical skills and didactic work formats useful to implement in programs and curricula.

In this symposium we will present a website on which we illuminate good practices in collaboration with experts by experience, peer support workers and students with lived experiences. A range of participatory based research activities were employed to investigate different themes and co-create knowledge, for example through facilitating focus groups, world caf,s and art-based techniques. During the project, transnational meetings and learning events have enabled a unique opportunity to explore experiential knowledge through a European lens: people from different backgrounds exchange knowledge with the aim to start or continue creating an impact in formal education processes in respective countries.

After a general overview of the project, partners from different countries involved will present the main outcomes and findings:

Key principles and values for integrating experiential knowledge in social work education programs (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore IT)

The website and Gap-Mending strategies and practices (Lund University SW & PowerUs)

Working with experiential knowledge in education: a didactical guide (University of Applied Sciences Utrecht NL)

Support kit for experts by experience (Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences Antwerp BE)

We welcome curiosity and dialogue throughout our presentations to exchange knowledge or explore other good practices in order to work together on more connectedness.

Symposiums

SYM-Divides 03

Enhancing Crisis Intervention Skills in European Social Work Education: Findings from the SISWEC Erasmus+ Project

Professor Christos Panagiotopoulos

Co-Author(s): Rasha Nagem, Urban Nothdurfter, Markus Pausch

University of Nicosia,
Cyprus

The proposed symposium is based on the ERASMUS+ project SISWEC aimed at strengthening the intervention skills of social workers in contexts of multiple social crises which particularly affect marginalised and vulnerable groups and increasingly challenge social work practice and education across Europe.

The symposium relates to the overall conference theme pointing out both the connectedness of different crises situations and the need to better connect social work education and practice in Europe in view of these challenges.

The symposium will present the overall project aims and findings and deepen emerging issues and main challenges of addressing crises related content and enhancing crisis intervention skills in SWE.

The ERASMUS+ SISWEC project: aims, activities and outputs (Rasha Nagem)

The first presentation presents the aims and activities of the SISWEC project, highlighting good practices and challenges of strengthening social workers' intervention skills in context of multiple crises.

Particular attention is given to core aspects that were addressed both in the train the trainer seminars and the development of an online course aimed at providing a useful resource for the training of social work professionals.

Crises related content in European Social Work Education: challenges and emerging issues (Urban Nothdurfter & Maria Chiara Pedroni)

The second presentation discusses the findings of the workpackages aimed at analysing how social work degree programmes across different European countries address crises related content and at identifying best practices of crises related education.

First, 50 curricula from various European countries were screened for relevant content. Subsequently, selected cases were examined more deeply through interviews with program directors, teaching staff, and students.

The findings suggest how collective crises can be addressed in SWE, the challenges for the development of knowledge and skills relevant to professional intervention in crises situations and, more generally, how practice related education must consider future scenarios challenging conventional modes of intervention.

Democratic crisis (Markus Pausch)

The third contribution is dedicated to the question of how democracy and its crises affect the field of social work. Research shows that more and more young people are skeptical about representative democracy and its institutions, and thus more receptive to conspiracy theories, authoritarian populists or extremism. Increasing social inequality also leads to a decline in the sense of democratic self-efficacy in other population groups.

All of this poses a challenge for social work, and the question arises as to how these topics and necessary skills or competences can best be taught in SWE. Possible answers are discussed in this presentation.

Migrations and Reactions? (Christos Panagiotopoulos and Maria Nicolaidou)

The final contribution in this symposium presents the situation around forced migration in Europe and to what extent social workers are prepared to work with this group of people but also how they can act as mediators between the society and the community. In particular findings from this project elaborate on specific needs and knowledge necessary to educate and train social workers to mediate as professionals.

Symposiums

SYM-Divides 04

Dear Daughter: Exploring the experiences of Black British mother

Dr. Erika Laredo

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United Kingdom

'Dear Daughter' is a qualitative research project giving voice to narratives of Black motherhood. It brought together 12 Black British women of African and Caribbean heritage, with the aim of creating an artefact. The research consisted of a day in a workshop setting, with a professional facilitator. The facilitator created a safe space enabling the participants to reflect on their experiences of being Black mothers, with the end goal of writing of a letter or a poem to their daughters. The project used a creative methodological approach, underpinned by Critical Race Theory. Our objective in undertaking this research was to illuminate and amplify diverse experiences of Black Motherhood, whilst developing important counter stories to challenge and resist more prevalent racist narratives. The symposium will present the methodology and its application, and discuss the findings from the project in three distinct, but connected presentations.

Motherhood is subject to a critical gaze that is classed, gendered and racialised. Whiteness is associated with being a good mother, whereas Black mothers have traditionally been othered (Bernard and Gupta, 2008; hooks, 2014). It is only recently that research about maternal health has identified some of the barriers and obstacles that Black women experience as they enter motherhood (Ahmed et al., 2022). Traditional social work approaches risk reinforcing the pathologisation of Black mothers, presenting them as deficient and in need of corrective intervention prohibiting a connectedness of Black mothers within social work. This symposium will offer an important counter to these ideas.

Existing literature is often US based, although emerging literature in the UK (Bernard and Harris, 2019 and Nayak 2020), is beginning to address some of these deficiencies. Social work research, however, remains obstinately colour-blind and does not overtly explore the racial identities of mothers.

Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a methodological approach has allowed researchers to embrace the narratives and counterstories of people of colour (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Although CRT seeks to centre race, it recognises its intersection with other categories of difference, enabling an analysis of Black mothers' experiences in navigating both gender and race, as well as other forms of their identity.

This methodology is inherently aligned with social work values as it is concerned with facilitating dignity by naming and challenging racism, whilst simultaneously encouraging an awareness of the structural roots of individual problems. A CRT lens challenges our every day, taken for granted assumptions about established narratives concerning race and provides a relevant framework to examine the production of racialised knowledge about Black women within social work research and education.

A thematic analysis of our data highlighted commonalities, vulnerabilities and an overwhelming positive experience of motherhood alongside the implicit challenges encountered by Black women.

The salience of several themes will be presented in the symposium:

- The first presentation will provide an overview of the project and explore the use of creative methodologies as an approach to promoting social connectedness for Black women.
- The second presentation will examine the utility of Critical Race Theory within social work education and practice to understand the influence of racism on social connectedness.
- The third presentation will focus on the importance of love and hope as a compelling counter story, which presents a challenge to stereotypical narratives within society, and empowers a more radical approach within social work education and practice.

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Symposiums

SYM-Health 01

Psychosocial support after an earthquake and personal experiences in difficult life conditions

Professor Gordana Berc

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Previous research describes psychosocial support as a process that seeks to establish community resilience within an area affected by a natural disaster (such as an earthquake) by enabling them to develop resilience from the impact of large-scale crisis events and helping them to cope with such events in the future.

The aim of this paper was to gain insight into the experiences of residents who survived an earthquake and lost their home or apartment and how they perceived the psychosocial support they received. The paper used a qualitative research approach, and the qualitative content analysis procedure was applied to data analysis. The research used a semi-structured interview on a sample of ten residents of container settlements in the city of Sisak. The research results show that the research participants - older people - indicate circumstances that contribute to the continuous need for psychosocial support due to emotional overwhelm, mental difficulties caused by stress from the earthquake and its consequences, and due to daily coping with inadequate living conditions. The results show that there is a need for organized social gatherings and general togetherness within the container settlement, with some residents expressing satisfaction with interpersonal relationships, while others report impaired interpersonal relationships within the container settlement. The paper recognizes the lack of support provided by some residents of container settlements, while some research participants report support provided by family, friends, experts and volunteers from various organisations. Finally, the paper concludes that participants report feeling frustrated and forgotten by society due to the lack of information from city authorities, due to unreconstructed homes, and express uncertainty about their own future.

Symposiums

SYM-Health 02

How Housing First works in Salzburg - Impact analysis of Housing First in Salzburg based on three impact dimensions

Samuel Kok, BA MA

Co-Author(s): Dr. Wolfgang Amann; Mag. Peter Linhuber BA, MA; Nathalie Greisberger, BA

IIBW - Institut for Real Estate, Construction and Housing & VinziDach- Housing First Salzburg, Austria

INITIAL SITUATION

Austria has joined the European goal of ending homelessness by 2030 and has a competent partner to pursue this goal in the form of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe (BAWO). Housing First is internationally recognised as an effective method of sustainably combating homelessness and enabling those affected to be included in society. The first Housing First services in Austria were opened in 2012 in Vienna: Neunerhaus and Salzburg: VinziDach- Housing First Salzburg. In 2021, the Ministry of Social Affairs launched the nationwide Housing First initiative *zu Hause ankommen*, which was extended by Housing First Austria in 2023. The nationwide campaigns of the Ministry of Social Affairs provided many resources to establish Housing First structures in other parts of Austria and to provide homeless people with affordable housing. An effectiveness analysis has not yet been carried out and is difficult to perform due to the many partner organisations involved and the comparatively short project period.

STUDY CONTENT

VinziDach- Housing First Salzburg has more than twelve years of experience in Housing First and has now provided housing for over 130 clients, with a success rate of 92%. The aim of the study is to document the impact of Housing First on homeless people with mental illness and addiction using the following three impact dimensions: Empowerment of people in care (micro level), regional services for homeless people in Salzburg (meso level), clinical care of the target group in Salzburg (macro level).

METHOD / APPROACH

The study is based on different methods. At the centre is the quantitative evaluation of data sets since 2016, which have been collected quarterly and contain eight outcome-related indicators. The indicators are: 1. physical health; 2. mental health; 3. risk behaviour; 4. everyday life skills; 5. housing; 6. legal problems; 7. work and income; 8. resocialisation.

The evaluation reveals the extent of stabilisation and the progression over the four-year care period.

As a further quantitative method, a data comparison is carried out in cooperation with the Christian Doppler Klinik, which is the psychiatric hospital in Salzburg, of the federal state of Salzburg with regard to hospital contacts and their quality (outpatient and inpatient) and duration. By analysing the periods before, during and after VinziDach care, the impact and sustainability of the programme can be verified. Qualitative expert interviews are conducted with (former) care recipients and professionals. Other literature based and important sources of knowledge will also be used.

The results will be discussed with Housing First organisations from other federal states in an expert workshop. The aim is to discuss the study results in the context of the specific target group of VinziDach (long-term homelessness, mental illness and addiction) nationwide and on the basis of broader Housing First target groups. The focus here is on the generalisability of the results.

STUDY - PERIOD

The study will be carried out in the period 01.10.2024 - 30.06.2025. The study is being financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the City and the federal state of Salzburg. As the study will not have been fully completed and published by the time of the European Conference of Social Work Education, the first results can be presented exclusively to an international expert audience.

Symposiums

SYM-Health 03

Enhancing social connectedness in diagnosis in social work - empirical results and considerations about quality in social diagnosis from the trinational research group „QuaSoDia“

Prof. Dr. Anna Lena Rademaker

Co-Author(s): Dr. Ines Arendt, Kerstin Krottendorfer, Prof. Dr. Joseph Richter-Mackenstein

Hochschule Bielefeld (HSBI), University of Applied Sciences and Arts,
Germany

Diagnosis in social work develops its effect through and in connection with clients. As social work focuses on the „person-in-environment“, social connectedness and networks become a dimension of diagnosis compared to other disciplines. Promoting a high-quality process is a key criterion, particularly with „hard to reach“ clients. However, the quality of the process is shaped by the relationship, professional skills, concepts and methods used, institutional framework and case complexity. Social connectedness becomes a social, mental and physical health issue. The use of tools can only contribute to a limited extent to the quality, the professional relationship shapes the diagnostic process. It's a central professional issue in practice and education.

In the symposium the trinational research group „QuaSoDia“ (Quality Criteria in Social Diagnosis) aims to discuss empirical results and considerations about quality in social diagnosis. The researchers from Germany, Swiss and Austria present how connectedness throw-out diagnosis in social work can be enhanced referring to their ongoing analysis and work.

In the first presentation about „Quality Criteria in Social Diagnosis“ results from a multidimensional evidence-based scoping review, Ines Arendt and Anna Lena Rademaker present outcomes from a scoping review, to describe what empirically defines quality in the process of diagnosis in social work and how these processes must be designed that social workers and clients experience them as helpful. The review is inspired by the multidimensional evidence-based-practice (MEBP) model (Petr & Walter, 2009), which incorporates scientific knowledge as well as practical and service user perspectives.

Secondly Joseph Richter-Mackenstein focusses on „Connectiveness and Diagnostical Tools“ digital tools and new approaches for social work?. Diagnosis seems a complex process, within high expectations for the correct representation of objects. Therefore, we should use tools, for example questionnaires or tests, with high quality (reliability, validity). But in social work the object becomes a „person-in-environment“, itself a complex phenomenon. Is it possible to use the same quality criteria that apply to classical psychological tests? Should we create new quality criteria? These questions will be discussed referring to the virtual network tool easyNWK and its further development in the TransSoDia-project.

Kerstin Krottendorfer refers to „Social Diagnostics in Pediatric Oncology - A practical example of implementation and research focused on social networks and social support“. The implementation and application of diagnostic tools in social work is a challenge and requires consideration of how this can be improved. A special social diagnostic tool for pediatric oncology has been successfully implemented at the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent (Medical University Vienna). A part of the diagnostic tool collects the social networks and relationships in and during the treatment of the child, which can be illustrated based on initial research.

In the end we'll sum up to what extend investigating quality criteria enhance students' and professionals' skills in social diagnosis - basically forming a connected process with clients in multi complex social and health related issues.

Symposiums

SYM-Overall 02

Connecting Social Work Education through Transnational Learning Concepts

Prof. Dr. Johannes Kloha

Co-Author(s): Mariusz Granosik, Anna Jarkiewicz, Sarah Collins

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Germany

The symposium proposal is based on our long-lasting experiences of teaching and research cooperation. The common goal of our past activities has been to enhance knowledge and develop education for social work with a particular focus on its international context.

The following proposal is about one of the many activities we undertake in this regard, which relates to our experience of developing and running a transnational social work education course.

The aim of our symposium is to share reflections from the teaching of social work students through the organisation of a transnational learning course.

Social Work is a profession with a high regard on connecting people and on strengthening networks. While this is true - both in theory and practice - for the perspective of local communities and - while still growing - of virtual networks, the understanding as a transnational profession is still underdeveloped. Based on important approaches, first of all the 'Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development' (IFSW 2020) there is an emerging need to systematically implement this global perspectives in Social Work teaching (Healy/Wairire 2014).

While it is already an important step to include theoretical perspectives into teaching that overcome isolated national approaches and challenge social work theory of the Global North as the dominant viewpoint (Moosa-Mitha 2014), sustainable learning processes demand for the experience of direct exchange and encounter between students and scholars of different national backgrounds. And this raises questions of the mode of delivery of these forms of transnational teaching (Wallenberg-Lerner; In: Francois/Awoseh/Griswold 2016):

- Who listens and who talks? Who decides upon the content in a transnational learning environment?
- How can the reinforcement of cultural stereotypization be prevented?
- How can online and face-to-face modes of teaching be combined?
- How can students be empowered to participate in transnational learning environments?

These questions and other will be addressed in this symposium. Following the notion of teaching as a co-production of teachers and students, the voice of the latter will be an integral part of the symposium.

Contributions to the symposium:

1. Bi-national student research projects as a way to connect students and perspectives (Anna Jarkiewicz, University of Lodz, Department of Educational Studies)

During this part, we will address the current discussion and challenges in educating students about social work through the organization of transnational courses (Bartley and Beddoe, 2018, Zhao, 2023; Das and Anand, 2014). In this section, in addition to addressing the theoretical perspective, we will present the concept of the course we run and our reflections.

We specifically targeted students from Germany and Poland with a course entitled Social Problems and Social Work in Germany and Poland. The course was primarily conducted in English, with elements of work in the native language.

Our course consisted of three main parts:

1. The theoretical part was led by the teachers, whose task was to theoretically introduce to the participants the context of social work in both countries. In addition, during this part, students were guided through the basics of conducting a small research project (online part)

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2. The research part consists of student work in transnational groups, during which students conduct joint research in a selected social welfare institution in both countries. The requirement was to undertake the research in an institution dealing with a social problem chosen by the students - one transnational group needs to select the same social problem and find an institution in their own country that addressed work to this specific field of social work - e.g., working with young people at risk of social exclusion, working with people with addictions, etc. („blended part“, online and in real life) - each group had two supervisors (teachers performed this function) from each country.

3. presentation of the group work results, involving a 5-day stationary meeting in one of the Universities. During this part, students presented the results of their research projects conducted at the selected institutions (the real-life part)

Considering the nature of the project, the facilitators were particularly sensitive to the student's perspectives, especially their comfort level, the quality of communication in the teams, challenges, difficulties, etc. Consequently, discussions were held with students on an as-needed and problem-solving basis.

Additionally, to better understand the participants' points of view and consequently improve one's learning skills for social work in a transnational context, individual student reflections were collected in the form of written notes at the beginning and the end of the course. Students were asked at the very beginning to describe their expectations from the course, concerns, motivations, etc. The final written note, on the other hand, contained a student evaluation of the course, which included an assessment of well-being during group work, communication in the group, division of labor, conduct of the course by the lecturers, confrontation of perceptions with the reality of the course, as well as comments and recommendations on how the course could be improved in the opinion of the students.

2. Binational Social Work Education as Transformative Learning (Mariusz Granosik, University of Lodz, Department of Social Pedagogy)

An important goal of social work/social pedagogy education is identity work. The importance of acquiring knowledge in the educational process is decreasing in the contemporary world of knowledge saturation. However, the importance of critical analysis and selection and biographical involvement in social work is growing. The greatest challenge of education seems to be the transformation of students' identity and their perspectives on the world and various social problems that may arise in the situation of meeting others and oneself.

For these reasons, an important goal of binational education was identity work. The challenges posed to students during the course can be presented using Mezirow's categories as: disorienting dilemma, self-examination, critical assessment, recognition, exploration, planning a course of action, acquisition of knowledge, provisional trying of roles, building of confidence, reintegration (Jones, 2020). These 10 stages close the cycle of transformative learning, i.e. education, which creates conditions for identity work, and in some cases even opens a biographical transformation (Schütze, 2001) or a turning point (Reimer, 2014).

3. Chances and limitations of a global online workshop series on social work theory and practice (Sarah Collins, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee / Johannes Kloha, Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm)

Globally, social work programs have a common mandate to focus on issues of poverty, inequality and social injustice (Caragate & Sanchez, 2002). In response to this mandate, social work educators are charged with exploring issues of diversity and difference, but often many struggle to offer options for students to experience people and populations with different lived experiences, cultures, and values in courses. Social Work educators are also expected to teach concepts of globalization and global relationships that perpetuate oppression (CSWE, 2022; Moosa-Mitha, 2014). Additionally, when students are leaving social work programs it is expected that they value

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diversity, are able to manage biases, have acquired the skills to engage with diverse clients, understand concepts related to social work, and understand the roles of other professionals in interprofessional relationships (CSWE, 2022). These are difficult tasks to accomplish within the constraints of a classroom that can be limited by location and population. Many social work students do not have the resources to travel. However, social work students, along with students in many related disciplines, have become adept at navigating online education platforms, which can be harnessed to provide some experiences with students in other countries. Our project was created to bridge the gap that exists among curriculum expectations, instructor experience, and individual student resources available to engage in international study.

The core element of the project is a series of 90 minutes online workshops on a specific umbrella topic for every academic year. Every workshop session is hosted by an expert from a field of practice and research and consists of theoretical inputs on the one hand and time for direct transnational student interaction on the other hand. The access to the sessions is open to anyone and the program flyer with the online access possibilities is distributed regularly through international mailing lists and networks.

We will reflect on our experiences with this format to highlight core challenges in transnational online teaching settings and address the following core questions:

- How can sustainable discourse be facilitated when the commitment and the participation in the workshops is very temporary?
- How can meaningful encounters become possible when there is no experience of embodied knowledge? (Snyder & Gonzalez 2021, p. 5) of the participants?
- How can a common ground of understanding be established regarding the limited time and limited options of preparation work?

4. Reconstructing the student experience (Students from University of Łódź: Anna Derendarz, Malwina Golik, Julia Dębicka, Marta Szymczak; Student from the Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm: Vanessa Girgner)

This section will explore students' perspectives on participating in the transnational learning program. The reconstruction will be based on students' written reflections. For the presentation of this part, we would also like to invite student representatives like former course participants.

This attempt, whose form is yet to be developed in the interaction with the students, draws on two perspectives: First, it opens up possibilities for the students to systematically engage

in reflective learning processes (Ryan & Ryan 2013). This seems of utmost importance given the complexity of the learning settings caused by transnational diversity and hybrid class settings. Second, taking this idea further into the field of professional competency, there are options for learning processes that allow for a critical reflection of one's own practice (Riemann 2006), which is a core element of the development of a professionally competent social work practice.

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SYM-Overall 02

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Symposiums

SYM-Politics-01

The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action: Beyond Anti-Black Racism Training to Transformational Action

Professor Uzo Anucha

Co-Author(s): Sinthu Srikanthan, Carol Wade, Adanna Anucha

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Canada

This interactive symposium presents the Kit for Centering Black Youth Wellbeing, an online hub that takes a multi-faceted approach in addressing anti-Black racism and centering the wellbeing of Black youth. The Kit focuses on three areas: education (a bi-lingual comprehensive online anti-Black racism certificate), action (an interactive Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action) and community engagement (a Community of Practice on the Virtual Caf, by YouthREX).

The Kit was developed by the Youth Research and Evaluation and eXchange (YouthREX) based at the School of Social Work at York University, Canada. The Kit provides youth workers with the knowledge and tools to understand the historical roots and context of present-day manifestations of anti-Black racism; engage with research on the impact of anti-Black racism on Black youth and their families; learn critical practices for centering the wellbeing of Black youth and communities; and commit to ongoing personal, professional, and organizational accountability. The Kit is grounded on five understandings of anti-Black racism including that the experiences of Black youth are multi-layered and class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and other social identities are intersectional and therefore cannot be separated from one another.

The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action, the action component of the Kit, draws from Critical Pedagogy to centre critical self-reflexivity as the source and impetus to connect understandings of anti-Black racism to anti-Black racism action - at the individual, program, and community levels. The Call-In-Cards foster dialogue by encouraging the identification of deep-seated assumptions without being called out, and the development of actions for centering Black youth wellbeing. Each card in the deck of 16 Call-In-Cards features a scenario on one side and four reflection and prompts on the other. The scenarios detail Black youth experiences of anti-Black racism by Black youth in different areas of their life, including school, work, and play.

When we „call-in“, we invite ourselves, colleagues, and peers into a conversation that draws attention to bias, prejudice, micro-aggressions, and other forms of discrimination to facilitate learning, growth, and change. These conversations require gracious spaces that are supportive and nonjudgmental. More importantly, critical self-reflexivity is always an action-focused project, never still and only useful when followed by thoughtful, transformative action.

Without critical self-reflection and action, there is a risk that education, itself, becomes the end to commitment against anti-Black racism. In taking up anti-Black racism, this symposium addresses social justice, a core value for the profession of social work and its pedagogy. Anti-Black racism training is especially important for the youth-serving and education sectors. The Kit represents one of the few examples of anti-Black racism education in the field social work. The symposium will review strategies to develop and support participants to influence and transform their organizations to center Black youth wellbeing. This symposium directly takes up the conference's subtheme of connectedness in politics and democracy. Specifically, by emphasizing critical self-reflection and action, it takes up anti-Black racism as a challenge for radical and emancipatory social work issue in ways that disrupt power imbalances and are transformative.

Authors:

Dr. Uzo Anucha, Professor; Sinthu Srikanthan, Research Associate; Dr. Carol Wade, Assistant Professor; Adanna Anucha, Assistant Dean, Community and Wellness

Symposiums

SYM-Politics-02

Threat to democracy ? contributions of social work towards greater social cohesion

Prof. Dr. Heinz Stapf-Fin,
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Alice Salomon-Hochschule Berlin,
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The trend towards individualization in our societies is continuing, the binding effects of traditional large organizations such as churches, parties and trade unions are diminishing, while at the same time right-wing extremism is gaining strength in many European countries.

The proposed panel will discuss innovative examples from the theory and practice of social work in a triad of theory, practical research and transfer to higher education.

The first question to be addressed is what contribution social analysis can make to the practice of developing social work methods. Therefore, Janette Otterstein will give an insight in the main structural roots of individualization and where obstacles and potential ways out of the antagonism of individualism and collectivism in transformative practices lay. She is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Sociology at the Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and her dissertation deals with social theories and strategies of common emancipatory struggles in the field of tension between capitalism, racism and sexism.

Heinz Stapf-Fin., Professor of Social Policy at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin and Director of the European Institute for Social and Health Research, accompanied a project for outreach political adult education by the Berlin State Center for Political Education over a period of four years. The basic idea here was that many people in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods and life situations are no longer accessible to the offers, and an outreach approach is necessary. For this reason, cooperation was established with social work providers in the neighborhoods in order to reach more people for political adult education projects through existing relationships. The contribution to the panel shows how the formative evaluation research carried out has contributed to the ongoing improvement of socio-spatial project work.

Daniela Molzbichler, Head of the Department of Applied Social Sciences at FH Salzburg, explores the vital connection between socio-ecological transformation, democracy, and the principle of „Leave no one behind.“ Drawing on her work with the UniNETZ network (Universities and Sustainable Development Goals), she emphasizes the critical role of democratic participation in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Her contribution reflects on the tensions of our time? progressive transformation versus retrotopia?and their profound implications for social cohesion.

Symposiums

SYM-Politics-03

Democratising social services: lessons for education and training from research across Europe

Dr Michael Rasell

Co-Author(s): Mette Romer, Agnieszka Naumiuk, Anna Rurka

University of Innsbruck,
Austria

This symposium will share new research about increasing democracy and social connectedness inside social work practice and social services. It discusses how social work education can better prepare practitioners to support the voice, action and decision-making of people who use social services.

Considering democratic principles within social work is an important ethical and practice imperative in light of the structural marginalisation and limited political voice of many people who use social services. Social work itself needs to address questions of trust, disenchantment and low connectedness with citizens. Various countries struggle with the fact that people do not receive significant opportunities to influence the social service interventions shaping their lives, especially in the context of welfare cuts, economic precarity and top-down decision-making. This was shown particularly clearly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The symposium draws on findings from a major EU-funded research and practice project conducted in collaboration with IFSW Europe from 2023-26. The Horizon Europe RESPONSIVE project has collected user, activist and practitioner perspectives about the role of citizen voice in shaping social services in Austria, Denmark, France, Poland, Portugal and Romania. The research looks at four types of social service: disability inclusion, mental health, child protection and youth at risk.

The symposium begins with a conceptual discussion, proposing that the idea of „responsiveness“ to the lives and perspectives of people using social services offers a clearer vision of democracy in social work than „participation“ and „co-production“. The concept of responsiveness explicitly focuses on changes within social services prompted by learning from citizen perspectives and voices.

The second and third papers present key results from primary research with 420 users and 180 activists across Europe about seeking to achieve change and responses in social services. These findings have important implications for social work teaching and training by widening the knowledge base about democratic experience in social services.

The final paper explores how citizen involvement in the delivery of social work training can be intensified, drawing on experience of creating new structures and processes in educational institutions in France.

Together the papers will shed insight on the conditions needed to put the perspectives of people who use social services at the heart of social work education and practice. Each speaker will consider the changes needed in teaching/training in vocational and academic settings. Overall the symposium will emphasise that social work must interrogate its own democratic deficits and potentials if it is to genuinely promote empowerment, inclusion and socio-political participation.

Colleagues from four EU countries will give presentations, ensuring international diversity.

Presentations

Democracy in social services: towards a concept of ?responsiveness?, Michael Rasell, University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Citizen experiences of voice and influence in social services in six EU countries: implications for education and training, Mette Romer, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Incorporating activist and artistic knowledge into social work training, Agnieszka Naumiuk, University of Warsaw, Poland.

Creating structures for citizen involvement in social work education in France, Anna Rurka, Paris Nanterre University, France.

Symposiums

SYM-Politics-04

Policy practice and social work education. Findings from an Italian national research.

Giovanni Cellini

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University of Turin,
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Social workers are potential key actors contributing to social policymaking at different levels and their work is highly structured and influenced by socio-political conditions. Growing attention to the social policy-social work nexus and more detailed analyses and conceptualisations of why and how social workers engage in different ways to influence policy have contributed to greater awareness of these issues in different national contexts. The involvement of social workers in policy practice is a crucial aspect of realising the mission of social work. In Italy, there has been a historical period in which this involvement has been very successful. The current situation has recently been analysed through a national research initiative carried out by the National Foundation for Social Workers (FNAS) and the University of Pisa.

Despite a broad consensus and growing debate about the role of policy practice in social work, the question of what knowledge and skills social workers need to engage effectively in policy practice is often not very explicit and still limited in debates about social work education. In order to engage effectively in policy practice, social workers need a set of skills and training that enable them to analyse existing policies and actively participate in their improvement in the different arenas and stages of policy making. The oral presentations in this symposium allow for a more nuanced analysis of the different policy practice activities in which social workers are involved and a deeper insight into the issues of training and perceived skills.

The research, carried out between autumn 2022 and spring 2023, used a mixed-methods approach, combining an exploratory study based on 30 qualitative interviews with social workers in different professional roles with a national survey of the entire population of social workers (approximately 46,000 individuals). The interviews focused, among other things, on the following topics: social workers' interpretation of the political role of the profession, the skills perceived as necessary to improve social connectedness between different stakeholders, the ability to represent the community needs, and efforts to promote solidarity. A total of 6,856 completed responses were received, providing valuable insights into the engagement of social workers in policy practice among Italian professionals.

These issues are crucial for social work education. More specifically, understanding whether social workers feel adequately trained for policy practice and improving social work curricula where they are not effective are key steps to increasing levels of engagement in policy practice. Universities play a key role in policy training and are therefore called upon to investigate the training needs of social workers. At the same time, social workers' professional organisations have a key role to play in contributing to policy engagement training.

The symposium will address the conference sub-theme of „Connectedness in Politics and Democracy“, highlighting the central role of social workers in forging connections between citizens (especially those at risk of social exclusion due to various forms of vulnerability) and with the institutions of a state, thus enabling participation, inclusion, dialogue and empowerment.

knowledge, training, skills, professional engagement, Italy

Symposiums

SYM-Politics-05

Connectedness in politics and democracy - how young people are involved and future social workers are trained through cooperation between university, municipal administration and youth work

Prof. Dr. Janine Lináer

Co-Author(s): Prof.in Dr.in Barbara Rink (THA), Dennis Galanti (City of Augsburg)

Technische Hochschule Augsburg,
Germany

Current youth studies in Germany show (e.g. Shell, 2024) that young people are strongly interested in politics and that political interest has increased significantly in recent years. Young people find it increasingly important to engage actively. More than 30% are currently active. Spontaneous, topic-related individual actions are typical, but self-organised and project groups are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, there is a lack of connectedness to decision-makers: young people do not feel listened to by politicians, with only 8% agreeing that politicians care about what young people think (Brandt et al., 2024, p. 10). It is therefore not surprising that only 5% of all German municipalities have a representative body for youth (Roth & Stange, 2020) and thus consistently involve them in decisions that affect them. However, to create connectedness, this is all the more important!

The city of Augsburg has been taking an innovative approach to youth participation. The framework concept was adopted by the city council in February 2022, and the first Augsburg Youth Forum „Make something happen!“ took place in December. The participation process is currently in its third round. Results include the current renovation of a youth playground, a youth initiative which promotes peer-to-peer democracy education, and a higher number of young people getting involved in the urban discourse. The example shows how municipal youth participation can be successfully promoted through structural and institutional anchoring. The overall process of youth participation workshops and youth forum is driven by close cooperation between administration, practice and the university and is supported by a city-wide committee of independent organisations and school representatives.

The Technical University of Augsburg (THA) has been significantly involved in the pedagogical, didactic and methodological development and conception of the entire youth participation process from the very beginning. Social work students are also involved in the implementation of this youth participation format via a teaching-practice project and support social work specialists in its implementation. In cooperation with the City of Augsburg and the Stadtjugendring Augsburg, prospective social work professionals are trained in the fields of political youth education and youth work at the interface of theory and practice during their studies. They deal with the political function of social work, learn about new democratic structures of an urban society and experience how they can promote participation, contribute to the empowerment of young people and to more social solidarity and connectedness.

Lecture I: Youth between engagement and ignorance - How we can strengthen connectedness in and for democracy, Prof.in Dr.in Janine Lináer (Department of Social Work, THA)

Lecture II: The implementation of youth participation in the Augsburg Youth Forum, Dennis Galanti (Head of Department for Youth, City of Augsburg)

Lecture III: How the close cooperation between administration, practice and university can contribute to more connectedness in politics and democracy, Prof.in Dr.in Barbara Rink (Department of Social Work, THA)

Workshops

WOR-Digital-01

Co-Designing for Connectedness: Exploring the Role of Warm Experts in Technology Adoption for Older Adults

Prof. Dr. Andrés Arias Astray
Co-Author(s): David Alonso Gonzalez

Complutense University of Madrid,
Spain

This workshop explores the crucial role of "warm experts"—trusted individuals such as family members, peers, or community figures—in supporting technology adoption among older adults. Drawing on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework, it explores practical strategies for co-designing initiatives that empower warm experts to promote digital inclusion and strengthen social connectedness.

The session begins with an introduction to the research project, providing context for the UTAUT framework and the concept of warm experts, emphasizing their importance in bridging technology adoption gaps. Participants will then engage in an interactive design activity, working in small groups to co-create collaborative spaces like Labs65+. These spaces are envisioned as sustainable hubs for ongoing technology support, shaped through participatory action research (PAR) and co-design principles.

The ideas generated during the interactive design activity will be presented and critically analyzed in a facilitated discussion. This segment will evaluate the feasibility, strengths, and potential challenges of the proposed designs, to assess their impact and effectiveness.

By the end of the workshop, participants will gain a solid understanding of the warm expert concept and its application, practical skills in co-designing collaborative spaces, and the ability to critically evaluate initiatives that foster technology adoption and social connectedness within community settings.

Workshops

WOR-Digital-02

Social work education and podcasts: live recording of the EASSW podcast from the conference

Michael Wallengren-Lynch
Co-Author(s): Richard Ingram

Malmö University,
Sweden

In this workshop, we will record a live episode of the EASSW podcast, featuring a panel of guests, most likely the keynote speakers, who will reflect on the last six episodes and explore key topics relevant to social work educators. Audience participation will play a central role, fostering active engagement and input throughout the recording. Podcasts are increasingly playing a pivotal role in facilitating the connectedness of ideas and networks globally within the social work education community. By integrating creative and inclusive methods into both the discussion and the dissemination of knowledge, this workshop offers an innovative approach to enhancing social work education, specifically within an academic conference setting.

Workshops

WOR-Divides-01

Interprofessional collaboration within the socio-educational domain

M.A. PhD student Jolanda Berends

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HU - Utrecht University of Applied Sciences,
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Democratic citizens are encouraged to participate in civic life, but since democracy doesn't come naturally, developing and strengthening citizenship skills is essential to foster this participation. In many countries, schools are tasked with supporting this development. Beyond formal education, children acquire these skills across various contexts, such as family, peer groups, neighborhoods, and social media. These social contexts also involve the work of social workers, who actively promote citizens' growth and connections across social and cultural divides.

In scientific literature, there is no consensus definition of citizenship. Following educational and welfare professionals in the Netherlands the qualitative findings revealed three main categories within citizenship: identity development, social cohesion and having knowledge and skills to participate in society. Both education and social professionals share the responsibility of working on social cohesion.

In this workshop, we mention feasible interventions based on participative action research to improve inter-professional collaboration between social workers and teachers at schools, jointly contributing to children's social cohesion. We first present (the initial results of) a good practice from Italy and the Netherlands on inter-professional collaboration within the socio-educational domain. We apply the boundary crossing learning theory (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016) and conclude which boundaries professionals should cross. Together with the participants, we want to discuss the potential learning mechanisms in interprofessional collaboration on local experiences of social cohesion.

Interprofessional collaboration, social connectedness, social cohesion, citizenship development

Workshops

WOR-Divides-02

International Social Work education: Connectedness beyond national borders

Assoc Prof Dr Jonas Christensen

Co-Author(s): Abigail M. Joseph-Magwood, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, Germany and Stefanie Kurt, HES-SO Valais-Wallis, Switzerland

Malmö University,
Sweden

International programmes in Social Work, play as this workshop argues a vital role in advancing education and professional skills in social work as they foster collaboration across borders supporting sustainable learning processes. Such programmes respond to the growing demand for trans-cultural skills and the ability to apply theories in diverse contexts, essential in today's globalised world. Central to this „trans-cultural“ exchange of experiences and professionalism is the concept of connectedness, which emphasizes the interdependence of global communities and the need for lasting, collaborative solutions to tackle complex social challenges.

This workshop discusses the need for more international exchange within social work education and contributes with an example of a current initiative, the International Social Work (ISW) programme, jointly created by the HES-SO Valais-Wallis (Switzerland), the University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrück (Germany), and Malmö University (Sweden). It offers Bachelor students an opportunity to develop their professional skills supported by reflective knowledge, comparative capacities using social work theories and practices through three two-week modules on children's rights, diversity and inclusion, and social policies in Europe. Based on this example, we'll explore the importance of sustainable collaboration beyond national boundaries, fostering connectedness among participants by e.g. encouraging self-reflexivity on topics like privilege, discrimination, and access for marginalized groups to society, challenging social work as a profession. Within the workshop, the participants will discuss current and future networks, pitfalls and advantages, while engaging in prior work and knowledge on the conference theme of connectedness across social and „cultural“ divides.

Social Work, education, international social work, connectedness, transcultural

Workshops

WOR-Divides-03

Groupwork in Social Work Education Today: Working Together to Promote Social Connectedness

Dr. Carol S. Cohen

Co-Author(s): Assist. Provost Cudore L. Snell, Assist. Prof. Jorūnė Vyšniauskytė-Rimkienė

Adelphi University School of Social Work,
United States

Meaningful groupwork epitomizes social connectedness through bonds among members, attention to central human relationships, human rights and social justice. This workshop provides a rare opportunity to discuss challenges and approaches to mobilize mutual aid, promote goal achievement and strengthen community consciousness. Our purpose is to foster shared engagement to co-create strategies to strengthen groupwork throughout social work education, leading to expanded practice and research.

We welcome participants across geographic boundaries, interest areas, and approaches to explore wide-ranging strategies for advancing groupwork in social work education. We will „spotlight“ contemporary issues in groupwork education, including doctoral education to support expertise and interest in groupwork, innovation in teaching groupwork online, and anti-oppressive strategies for building learning communities of students and faculty with diverse cultures, identities, experiences and nationalities.

The presenters will use groupwork principles in engaging participants through the session, guided by the following outline:

1. Welcome and Introductions (Including participants? groupwork highlights)
2. Group Discussion of Emerging Groupwork Opportunities and Challenges
3. Sharing ?Spotlight? Examples of Contemporary Groupwork Education
4. Building and Sustaining our Connections (Networking, resource sharing, engaging research partners, planning future activities, and methods to sustain connections)
5. Closing and Next Steps (Evaluation of session and summary of next steps).
6. We will follow up with attendees wishing to participate in further communication,

This workshop?s process of engaging participants with distinctive, yet unifying interests in groupwork in social work education is expected to enhance future work, influence curriculum and policies, and foster partnerships to improve local and international conditions.

Presenters:

Carol S. Cohen, Professor, School of Social Work Adelphi University, New York, US

Cudore L. Snell, Assistant Provost for International Programs and Professor, School of Social Work, Howard University, Washington, DC, US

Jorūnė Vyšniauskytė-Rimkienė, Assistant Professor, Social Work, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Groupwork, Collectivity, Mutual Aid, Justice

Workshops

WOR-Divides-04

Training multi-perspective thinking through photography: an educational tool for social work

Lecturer Veerle De Schrijver

Artevelde University College,
Belgium

In an increasingly diverse and complex world, opening up to other perspectives poses a significant challenge for social workers. How can we allow ourselves to be „taught by others“ to broaden our view?

Through an action research project, I developed an educational tool that uses photography to train multi-perspective thinking. Photography has a unique power: it freezes time, captures moments, and tells stories without words. However, looking goes deeper than merely seeing. It requires an open heart and a curious mind.

Looking is an active process, a way of connecting with the world around us. It involves observing, discovering, and understanding. In this interactive workshop, participants will experience firsthand how this tool works and learn the basic principles for effective training.

This approach offers social work students and professionals the opportunity to enhance their ability to view situations from multiple perspectives? a skill that is essential for effective and inclusive social work in a diverse society.

Workshops

WOR-Divides-05

Support Circles as a modern form of voluntary, person-centered collaboration in a „citizen-professional mix“

Prof. Dr. Sandra Fietkau

Protestant University of Ludwigsburg,
Germany

Historically, social work emerged from the guidance and coordination of volunteers (Kuhlmann 2021). Gradually, it has developed into a profession that uses its knowledge and skills to accompany people who are unable to cope with life's challenges on their own (ibid.); self-help and self-determination are promoted. The relevance of context is also becoming increasingly clear (Groá 2017): in which contexts do people live? What is their environment like (Thiersch 2009)? What social contacts do they have?

All of this is central to working with and in self-help groups. Together with a person, it is considered how social contacts can be activated and networks built up in order to plan and become active within the framework of a „citizen-centered“ network (Hinz & Kruschel 2013) by means of „conductive relationship design“ (Falkenst"rfer 2024).

Such support circles exist in various areas of social work, for example in work with refugees, in the form of family conferences in youth welfare, or for people with experience of disability (Fietkau 2017). They are characterized by the fact that they activate people, enable cooperation, and strengthen or build social connections.

How exactly these can be better integrated into social work - and teaching - and what ideas there are for further development are the topics of the workshop.

Workshops

WOR-Divides-06

Storytelling as a Tool for Building Connectedness in Social Work Education

Lucia Galkov

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Slovakia

Storytelling has long been recognised as a powerful tool for fostering connection and understanding across diverse populations. In social work education, storytelling can be particularly impactful, as it allows students to engage with complex social issues on a more personal and affective level. The effectiveness of storytelling in the classroom has been well-documented. Storytelling can serve as a means of passing down traditions, heritage, and history while also allowing for the exploration of contemporary social challenges. Significantly, storytelling can also help to address the historical shortcomings of social work education, which have tended to focus on „cognitive content rather than on intervention strategies or skills“ and „group powerlessness and oppression rather than in terms of coping strengths and vitality“ (Carter-Black, 2007). By centring the stories and lived experiences of marginalised communities, social work education can work to cultivate a greater sense of cultural competence and empathy among students. By learning to recognise the stereotypes, principles, and emotions within a given community, one can better prepare for its shaping. Andreotti (2015) argues that education should prepare us to expand our thinking and coexist with others in society. In a society that supports diverse, interdependent, and unequal communities, we must understand and learn from repeated historical mistakes, recognise shared responsibility for emerging problems, and expand our knowledge. In the workshop, we demonstrate good practice in promoting humanity and sensitising students through work with stories and offer examples of how storytelling can be embedded in social work education.

Workshops

WOR-Divides-07

Empowerment by co-creation: improving efficacy of participation processes with LEGO © Serious Play©

Dr. Agnes Kriszan

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Germany

LEGO© Serious Play© is a co-creative tool to develop joint ideas, visions, and scenarios and to reflect on them. It can be perceived as a method for change management using LEGO© bricks as a medium or common language and play as an enabler?. In debates on its applicability in practice and research (ibid.). The specific potential of LEGO© Serious Play© to unveil ideas, experiences and views in a way that cannot be caught by verbal and conventional participation methods is subject to several debates on its applicability in practice and research (Kriszan/Nienaber 2024: 2).

By building three-dimensional models with LEGO© bricks and a subsequent storytelling, participants are driven to transform abstract or intangible concepts which they have in their minds into concrete and generally comprehensible ideas and artifacts.

The results created in LEGO© Serious Play© processes have strong transformative power as they build upon individual knowledge on the one side, and on group consent on the other. Individual LEGO© Serious Play© experiences enhance self-efficacy and empower especially vulnerable people who suffer from being overlooked, ignored, or marginalized. This makes it especially valuable for community work in different spatial and also cultural contexts.

The interactive workshop will practically introduce into this method by offering the opportunity to test it related to a conference-related topic, namely social cohesion.

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Workshops

WOR-Divides-08

International Social Work Acting in Crises: Alleviating symptoms or structural transformation?

Prof. Dr. Hannah Reich

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Germany

In today's era of global crises, Social Work needs to expand its methodological repertoire and accordingly expand and adapt its work and teaching practices. In doing so, it is important to learn from the experiences of social workers in the South who have had to develop skills to respond appropriately to exceptional situations since the beginning of their practice. Considering the focus of social work on the excluded and marginalized, the difficult situation of many people on this planet is strongly reflected in the field of International Social Work. Social Work professionals face significant challenges in dealing with conflicting imperatives and uncertain contexts shaped by increasing economic disparities, environmental, economic, and health crises, as well as various forms of group-focused enmity and violent extremism. Even if International Social Work has to act in locally well anchored, it also acts in its professionalism in the light of universally valid maxims of action (Cox/Pawar 2013). This entails ethical dilemmas and challenges (Healy 2008: 239 ff). Also it is important to be aware of global interconnectedness and interdependencies, including unequal power relations and unequal access to resources, in their concrete, local practice. Hereby it is important to integrate the knowledge from Social Workers from the so called „South“, e.g. post-war Lebanon, to integrate their long-term experience with crisis situation & post-war peace building. Further, it is not enough to learn theoretically the competence to deal with different systems of interpretation, but it must also be experienced practically (Tesoriero 2006). Within the project ThRivE we aim, together with the Modern University of Business and Science (MUBS) in Beirut, at developing future needed competencies based on a growth mindset for Social Workers on the one hand and on the other to transform International Social Work teaching practice by strengthening experience-based, participatory learning formats & international group learning processes. These are approaches which are coined „elicitive“ (Lederach 1995) within the systemic conflict transformation & peace building scene or „emergent“ within the Mindfulness Teaching practices (Santorelli 2019).

In the presentation, I would like to contribute meaningfully to the section No.4 of „Connectedness across social and cultural divides“, as this is our main focus with the project. Depending on the whole set-up, I would be be honoured to 1) present some questions and dilemma, working in an intercultural, participatory empowering manner within the structural context of Higher Education. Or 2) facilitate an interactive session, using embodiment methods from interactive theater to present & discuss these „relationship-building“ methods. Or 3) guide an interactive session building on embodiment & mindfulness, connecting to our inner selves, as we are capable to connect with others as more as we are connected within.

And I would be very curious to discuss: Does the integration of such experience-based, participatory & embodied teaching practices transform Higher Education towards more global interconnectedness, or does it simply alleviate certain symptoms as the structures in essence remain the same?

Workshops

WOR-Divides-09

Research and Practice United: Political and Transformative Social Work within the Uni4Equity Framework

MA Marlies Wallner

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Fachhochschule Burgenland,
Österreich

The research project „Uni4Equity“ funded by the European Union, aims to enhance the capacity of universities to recognize, document, and respond to sexual harassment. The University of Applied Sciences Burgenland is actively involved in this research, collaborating with seven European project partners.

Gender-based inequalities persist at universities, creating conditions that may facilitate sexual harassment. These inequalities are often linked to an uneven distribution of power in academic relationships, reinforcing hierarchies based on factors such as gender, age, or social class (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022). For instance, a representative survey conducted by the Austrian National Union of Students (TMH, 2022) revealed that nearly 12% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment at their institution within the past 12 months.

Social work researchers and educators addressing sexual harassment take on a role similar to that of social workers in practice, mediating between individual experiences, institutional structures and political challenges. Increased awareness regarding this issue, transparent processes and a special focus on minority social groups is needed. In contrast, hierarchical systems may avoid emerging of complaint culture in order to preserve itself.

In this interactive workshop, focus will be on the preventive awareness-raising workshops conducted as part of the project, aiming to balance the interests of the target groups and institutional expectations and therefore to overcome divides. Using the example of the project, integration of scientific knowledge, professional ethics, and human rights and dignity will be explored, guided by the triple mandate of social work (Staub-Bernasconi, 2007).

sexual harassment, gender-based inequalities, awareness-raising workshops, prevention, higher education context

Workshops

WOR-Divides-10

Connecting through Learning and Learning Through Connection: Engaged Pedagogy in Global Social Work Education

Dr. Christine Tronnier

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bell hooks' concept of Engaged Pedagogy, rooted in the principles of critical education and democratic participation, recognizes the importance of students as active participants in their learning. This approach decenters the instructor as the expert and invites students and instructors to co-create a dynamic learning environment. Dialogue, reflection, recognition of intersectionality, and collaborative generation of knowledge are techniques used to foster critical engagement with myriad social problems. Social work educators who adopt this approach empower students to recognize their own positionalities and to challenge the systemic factors that contribute to social injustice. Engaged Pedagogy promotes authentic connection across cultural and social divides and provides a pathway for dismantling historically dominant systems and practices in education, thereby creating opportunities for students to generate new knowledge and solutions to the social problems that the social work profession endeavors to address globally.

The presenters will briefly define Engaged Pedagogy, discuss its importance to social work education, and share about their experiences using this approach as a case study. The presenters will then demonstrate key principles of Engaged Pedagogy in the implementation of the workshop by inviting participants into an interactive, experiential, co-created learning experience. Participants will be invited to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with using these principles in an increasingly divided social landscape and will be encouraged to consider how to position themselves in relationship to their students. Participants will leave with strategies to apply in their own educational settings.

Engaged pedagogy, intersectionality, social work praxis, case study, critical consciousness

Workshops

WOR-Divides-11

Fostering diversity-sensitive practices in social work education: a co-creative approach to bridging social divides

Dr. Diana van Dijk

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Nederland

This interactive workshop presents key findings from our critical participatory action research on embedding diversity-sensitive practices within social work education to enhance social connectedness across diverse social and cultural contexts. Awarded through a national educational innovation grant, this project is a collaboration between students, educators, and practitioners at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. Together, we explore the definition of diversity-sensitive practice and identify methods for cultivating these essential skills among future social workers.

Our findings show that effective diversity-sensitive practice requires educators to model inclusive behaviors, creating a learning environment where diverse perspectives are respected and social justice is central. However, this is not without challenges: educators often face dilemmas between training social workers to treat all individuals equally and navigating students' personal values, which sometimes conflict with these principles and are voiced openly in class. Establishing „safe and brave spaces“ for open dialogue allows students and faculty to engage with topics on social inequities, power dynamics, and privilege, fostering transformative understanding and resilience.

After sharing our findings and experiences, we will invite participants to experience the dialogue approach firsthand. This interactive segment provides concrete tools and strategies for facilitating diversity-sensitive discussions, enabling attendees to apply these techniques with students and colleagues in their own institutions.

Workshops

WOR-Ecology-01

Eco-social work and climate justice

Ben Eggink

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As in many other countries, The Netherlands needs to put more efforts in realizing equality within the sustainable transition. Otherwise, the rich will benefit most and the poor become more marginalized. Social workers have a crucial role to play as „eco-social workers“ in ensuring sustainability benefits all groups by engaging in agenda setting and policy implementation. Central are the needs of marginalized people, as they often face an accumulation of problems, such as poor social housing conditions, a lack of green and a healthy living environment, limited access to subsidies to make living conditions sustainable, resulting in growing distrust towards government authorities. In fostering climate justice, eco-social workers need to focus on: 1) the redistribution of resources, 2) recognizing and amplifying the voices who are not heard, and 3) improving their representation. Current education in social work however does not prepare students for these tasks.

This leads to the key question: how can the current social work curriculum be adjusted to foster eco-social work?

The method used was the initiation of a community of practice at the school of social work in Amsterdam to explore ideas how to adjust the curriculum.

One of the activities was training colleges how to put „eco-social work“ in practice within the classroom as we realized that in order to reach out to students, teachers first needed to be educated and sensitized. With our workshop we aim to discuss further ideas on how to put an eco-social approach more central within the curriculum.

Workshops

WOR-Ecology-02

Deep adaptation workshop

Virag Havasi

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Hungary

Jem Bendell coined the expression 'deep adaptation' (DA) which is a concept, an agenda and a social movement. DA combines mitigation and adaptation goals as a response to the existential risks that humanity faces. Bendell offered a framework for community dialogue asking four questions (The 4Rs) regarding the challenge. Resilience asks us: what do we most value that we want to keep and how we want to do this? Relinquishment asks us: what do we need to let go of so as not to make matters worse? Restoration asks us: what could we bring back to help us with the coming difficulties? Reconciliation asks: with what and whom shall we make peace as we face our shared mortality? I designed a series of workshops for the sensitisation of social work students based on the BA agenda. In the conference I would like to discuss with the participants three questions (their opinion on the state of our world and from the 4Rs: resilience and relinquishment) and I will also share my experience with our students. We will use OH cards, pen and paper as tools in our thinking.

Workshops

WOR-Ecology-03

Eco-social work as promotor of justice

Josien Hofs

IFSW,
Nederland

Recent research into the awareness of climate injustice and coherent action, that has been done among social workers and among social work students in three different countries, shows that personal concern about climate change does not necessarily leads to professional consequences. Knowing this, how can we promote the connection between the profession of social work and climate change, or even climate crisis?

In this workshop we will focus on answers to this question by emphasizing the relationship between different dimensions of justice and by finding new connections with other professions.

We see forms as: epistemic, economic, political, cultural and ecological (in)justice. Themes like these connect to the global definition of social work and its principles of social justice, respect for diversity and indigenous knowledge, and emancipation. It makes clear that there are different ways in which social work can relate to climate change and climate justice. One could think of empowering disadvantaged people to make their voices heard, educational programs to promote ecological awareness, developing political strategies to influence policies.

The aim is to discuss our views, exchange good examples, to explore possibilities and to inspire each other. The results will be shared with the attendees.

The workshop will, after a short introduction, be a fully interactive session.

Josien Hofs

Lead of the Eco-social project of IFSW Europe

From 2019-2024 member of the Executive Committee IFSW Europe

Former social work teacher and social worker.

Workshops

WOR-Ecology-04

RECONNECT: Holistic Facilitation Methods towards Earth Democracy, Empowerment and Resilience for Groups and Participatory Settings in Ecosocial Work Fields

Mag. Christina Pürgy

FH Salzburg,
Österreich

Goodwin (2007) and Rosa (2019) are not at all the first scientists diving deep into questions of living systems thinking in the Anthropocene. And as Richard de Brabander (2024) reviews in his article, there is a striking number of theory and practice on ecosocial perspectives that call out loud for a holistic system change in the field of Social Work.

Macy & Brown (1998) and Pourian (2022) are pioneering authors and practitioners for resilience & empowerment towards a culture of Earth-Democracy based on Ecocentrism, More-Than-Human-Rights and Circularity. Their field manuals *The Work That Reconnects* and *Returning to Perception* contribute to develop sentient and collaborative methods of grassroot-based group work within a 4-step-spiral process to foster and nurture the goals of a good life for present and future generations.

This Interactive Workshop will introduce participants to holistic concepts of systemic process facilitation addressing Ecosocial Change Agency & Deep Culture Work for public and interest groups and professionals.

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Workshops

WOR-Health-01

MIRROR CARE: Professional Selfcare in Social Work. A contribution to the Organizational Culture of CAFAP

Dr. Rita Vercas

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Mental health is increasingly taking on a vital role in professional life, responsible for taking away well-being, based on performance and productivity, which consumes and drains. We are left with the torment of those who can no longer work, who no longer are, and who don't know if they ever will be well again. In Social Work, this is not yet a concern that mobilizes the profession, but the mental health of social workers is increasingly a current concern, the discussion of which must be significant and impactful. There is a clear direct relationship between mental health and working conditions, which may be responsible for people leaving the profession and losing the meaning and purpose of social intervention. Portugal is the second country in the European Union with the highest levels of stress after COVID. (STADA Health Report 2022) In the same year, around 30% of the Portuguese population reported anxiety in relation to work (INE, health statistics report, 2022). At the same time, burnout was considered a work-related illness by the World Health Organization in 2022. On the other hand, in terms of prevention, 81.8% of Portuguese say that their company does not have an action plan to prevent work-related stress (EU-OSHA-ESENER 2019 Survey). This research aims to focus on prevention in the field of Social Work, which is one of the most affected professions, and asks: What if prevention involves all of us taking care of each other in the workplace, where professionals thrive and don't just function and survive? Self-care stands out as an important prevention factor, recommended by the World Health Organization, and particularly relevant in care professions, such as social work and, in particular, in the area of the protection of children and young people in danger, in the CAFAP response. However, it doesn't feature in the agenda and planning of the organizations, nor in the intervention of social workers, who recognize its importance, but assume they can't make time for self-care. There is evidence that institutionalizing the practice of self-care can make it more effective, focusing it on the professional dimension and also returning to Social Work, as an institutionally framed practice, a broad and collective vision that must care for its

professionals. It is therefore proposed to understand how professional self-care, based on the theoretical constructs of Bloomquist (2015) & Miller (2013), can be integrated into organizations that have CAFAP responses, in order to mitigate professional risks and promote the well-being of social workers. Professional self-care is believed to be an important promoter of healthy work environments. In this sense, the aim of this study will be to identify and reflect on these practices and integrate them into the planning of social interventions in CAFAP, as well as into their legal framework. It is proposed to carry out qualitative research, with two studies each, with two different groups of social workers and technical directors of CAFAP, that make up a Lisbon region of Organizations with CAFAP. Preference will be given to participatory and collaborative methodologies, based on semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The first study will be exploratory in nature, with the aim of understanding the perception and practices of professional self-care among Social Workers and Technical Directors, identifying challenges and opportunities for its implementation. The second study, of an action nature, will have the objective of outlining practical guiding principles that contribute to the institutionalization of professional self-care in CAFAP. The research aims to contribute to the importance of implementing professional self-care practices in CAFAP Organizations. It could have implications for the organizational culture of well-being in this particular context.

social work, professional self-care, organization culture, well-being

Workshops

WOR-Health-02

Connecting Bodies, Connecting Minds: Community and Self-Care Through the Flow Arts

Dr. Lori Sirs

Co-Author(s): Julie M. Meek, LCSW

Centralia College,
United States

Theme: Social Issue - Mental Health

For social workers, self-care is critical to implement. We are engaged in a profession that puts us at risk for compassion fatigue and turnover is commonplace. Given this, it is even more imperative that we are intentional about our self-care practice. While we understand the benefits of self-care, it can be challenging to implement and sustain, despite adding this charge to our Code of Ethics.

Theoretical Background:

An embodiment orientation includes awareness of our emotional and internal states. Embodied practices provide a pathway for healing hierarchical, neoliberal thinking that relegates care and function of our body to a lesser importance than that of our thinking processes. Embodiment theory offers a framework for including somatic approaches in self-care.

Methodology:

The authors will engage participants in an embodied form of self-care, poi spinning. Benefits include use of rhythm, bilateral stimulation, mindful movement, playfulness, and creative expression. Poi spinning specifically is low cost, low barrier, and requires little training to implement and enjoy. It involves spinning a pair of weighted socks or similar items around one's body in rhythmic patterns.

Sub-theme - connectedness:

We need to be intentional in centering self-care in our environments at home and work and prioritize the well-being of each other. Poi spinning inherently supports social connectedness and community-care. Embodied forms of self-care centers and regulates our physical well-being, bring us home to our bodies, and fosters a pathway to our shared humanity by safely and playfully connecting our bodies to one another.

Embodiment, Community-Care, Self-Care, Flow Arts, Poi Spinning

Workshops

WOR-Health-03

„All of my professors felt more like humans:“ Trauma-informed educational practices to promote social connectedness

Dr. Kris Atkinson

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This interactive workshop will provide participants the opportunity to apply trauma-informed educational practices within the social work classroom. College students are at risk of experiencing a myriad of traumatic events, the consequences of which include increased risks of anxiety and depression, substance abuse, difficulty adjusting to college, low grade point average and dropout (Carello & Thompson, 2021, p.3). Trauma-informed and anti-oppressive principles have the potential to hold students and foster more positive student outcomes. This workshop - grounded in these complementary theories - will center curriculum design and class facilitation approaches that promote transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, voice and choice, and attention to cultural dynamics.

The pedagogical practices highlighted within this workshop have emerged from a participatory, phenomenological study of social work students' educational experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key themes from this study - such as instructor authenticity and opportunities for connection - will inform our collective work to rethink course materials, assignments and learning activities. As the facilitator, I will share strategies I've used to promote trauma-informed and anti-oppressive education, provide examples of re-envisioned teaching materials, and discuss my authentic use of self as an educator. Participants will be invited to explore and exchange concrete ideas to transform their own classrooms into spaces of healing and connection. Given the prevalence and significant impact of trauma in the lives of today's students, this workshop offers us an essential moment to create and innovate within social work education.

Workshops

WOR-Health-04

The Sound of Silence Speaks Loud. Bridging the gap between trauma and social disconnection through a trauma-informed care programme for social workers in Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Dr. Marinei Herselman

University of Fort Hare,
South Africa

The Eastern Cape, South Africa, faces a crisis, with over 2,328 lives lost to violent crimes in the fourth quarter of 2023/24, leaving communities devastated (Crime Stats, 2023). Social workers in Buffalo City Metropolitan (BCM) in the Eastern Cape are frequently exposed to secondary trauma while engaging and supporting survivors of violence, kidnapping, and human trafficking, leading to emotional distress and social isolation. Many lack specialized trauma intervention training, challenging their ability to manage these difficulties in the communities. This study seeks to develop, implement, and evaluate a Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) programme for social workers using a mix method intervention research design. Social Work professionals The TIC programme fosters connectedness, compassion, and resilience-building to enhance social workers' capacity to support themselves and their clients. By addressing a critical gap in social work education, this programme aims to equip social workers with essential skills, promoting their well-being and effectiveness in high-trauma environments.

Workshops

WOR-Overall-01

Decoloniality as Radical Social Work Education and Practice

Dr Linda Harms Smith

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South Africa

While it is true to claim that geopolitical colonisation has ended, the impact of colonisation and the power of ongoing coloniality extends far beyond the borders of past colonial contexts. And social work finds itself situated within these embedded structures and power matrices of racist dehumanisation, inferiorisation and alienation; hegemonic Western Eurocentrism; and aggressive capitalist exploitation (de Souza Santos 2014; Fanon 1967; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018; Lugones, 2020). The multiple and entangled crises that emerge within this context of ongoing coloniality and that call forth a social work response include extreme inequality and poverty; the climate and ecological crisis; relentless war and genocides; and the forced displacement of peoples. This paper will argue that a critical and radical social work is required to resist and disrupt the embedded structures of coloniality that shape these crises of our age (Quijano 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2017). This workshop will engage on questions around the meaning and impact of ongoing coloniality, interrogating social work's ideological positioning from a critical and radical perspective. Resisting hegemonic white Western knowledges (Almeida and Khumalo, 2018), it will propose a pluriversal position (Miettinen et al. 2023; Mbembe 2016) which encourages transformative, traditional knowledges and practices, and offer examples of how these may be utilised. Despite social work's claim that it is a social justice profession, it seems that it is only such dissenting social work knowledge and practice that offers hope for contributing to a better world beyond coloniality, characterised by solidarity, equality, and interconnectedness.

Workshops

WOR-Overall-02

Experiential and adventure therapy methods in social work education

Julia Kosztka

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Hungary

Social work is a profession that constantly reacts to social changes and trends, and needs proactive and innovative professionals. This requires a diverse and constantly renewing social work education, expanding methodological knowledge and continuous professional dialogue. Rooted in this line of thinking is the interactive workshop I propose, which will focus on experiential methods, adventure therapy and the potential of using natural spaces in university education.

I have been teaching adventure therapy courses to undergraduate and masters students in social work for five years. The aim of the courses is twofold: to demonstrate the applicability of adventure therapy methods and natural spaces in social work and to support the development of professional self-awareness.

The proposed workshop will give participants the opportunity to experience first-hand the practices used in adventure therapy courses and to discuss their potential for application in university education and social work training.

The workshop will therefore start with first-hand experiences, followed by individual and group reflection, interactive professional discussion and a short presentation on theoretical background and my own research on the topic.

Optimally, I would like to hold the workshop outdoors in a nearby green area, but it can also work effectively indoors.

adventure therapy, social work methods, university education, experiential learning, natural spaces in social work

Workshops

WOR-Overall-03

Connecting practitioners, students and educators through Enhancing Crisis Intervention Skills in European Social Work Education (SISWEC): Presenting an online training tools

Professor Christos Panagiotopoulos

Co-Author(s): Rasha Nagem, Urban Nothdurfter, Markus Paush, et al

University of Nicosia,
Cyprus

The proposed workshop is based on the ERAMUS+ project SISWEC aimed at strengthening the intervention skills of social workers in contexts of multiple social crises which particularly affect marginalised and vulnerable groups and increasingly challenge social work practice and education across Europe.

The workshop relates to the overall conference theme pointing out as it builds on findings elaborated from all work packages of this particular Erasmus project.

In particular this interactive workshop will present an online manual that was developed by all partners (France, Portugal, Austria, Cyprus, Italy and Poland) as the final product of this project. The aim of this online manual will be to educate and train future professionals and current practitioners in social, education and health care services in topics such as social and mental health, democracy, precarity, forced migration, radicalisation and extremism. The type of the manual will allow the continuation of the project's results and the implementation of findings in SWE curriculums. Overall we aim to educate as many participants as we can in this topic, which is not a new one but very important for social workers who work with groups under the threat of exclusion.

The workshop will be interactive and through interaction with the audience the project consortium will try to improve and finalise its content.

Authors: Rasha Nagem, Urban Nothdurfter, Markus Paush, Maria Chiara Pedroni, Camille Maffre, Maria Nicolaidou, Ana Margarida Nascimento, Filip Pazderski, Doris Rosenlechner-Urbaneck

Workshops

WOR-Overall-04

Skills development in social work and teacher training: where are we and where are we going?

Prof. Dr. Peter Schaefer
Co-Author(s): Prof. Dr. Janne Fengler

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Germany

The discourse on the competencies required for professional action is a constant topic, both in the profession and in the academic discipline of social work, including in relation to the emancipatory approach of the sociologist and adult educator Oskar Negt (2016) with the principle of exemplary learning and to the learning objectives of Bloom's taxonomy (cf. Tremp & Eugster, 2020).

In the workshop, exemplary comparisons between Germany and other countries are presented. The occupation-specific competences for social work are discussed using the example of the German Qualification Framework for Social Work (QR SozArb, 2016) and the newer approach of so-called future skills (cf. Stifterverband, 2024). For teachers, the Qualification Framework for German Higher Education Degrees for the European Higher Education Area and other relevant regulations are applied. The workshop focuses on a combination of different methods and creativity techniques (Open Space, Fishbowl, Summary Matrix) to discuss the existing frameworks and develop new perspectives (Open Space, Fishbowl, Summary Matrix).

The importance of the topic lies in the further development of the discourse on competence development between professional qualifications frameworks and the future skills approach for graduates of social work and teacher training. Workshop participants will be able to discuss concepts from different countries and compare the formal/non-formal skills considered necessary, exchange ideas and, ideally, specify them. A practice-oriented synthesis of the different approaches will be discussed. From this, ways in which social work education, as an pillar for a multidisciplinary and socially sustainable society, can promote social connectedness can be concluded.

Workshops

WOR-Politics-01

Teaching EMPOWERMENT to Social Work Students

FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer

University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten,
Austria

By its origine „empowerment“ is an American concept that has been pursued by „empowerment practitioners of social work“ (Simon 1994: 1) since the 1890s. The starting point is to recognise and acknowledge the many competencies and possibilities of individuals, families, groups and communities with the aim of taking them seriously in their expertise of their respective lifeworlds and citizenship, the goal is to support them in using their self-confidence, health, community, security and personal and social resources in a (self-)powerful way (Simon 1994). It contributes therefor to achieve connectedness. In German-speaking countries, the concept first found its way into the scientific discourse of social work at the end of the 1990s (Herriger, Theunissen, Keupp, Knuf, Miller & Pankhofer, Sambale). Empowerment can now be found in almost every concept. A critical observation shows that hierarchical structures are often institutionalised instead of being dissolved.

The question arises how „empowerment“ can be taught so that it can then also be practiced in social institutions?

This workshop shall train participants to develop teaching methods to teach empowerment in a sustainable way and support students' professional development to become „empowerment practitioners of social work“. After a short introduction the participants understanding of the concept will be collected and structured by an interactive method called „the silent dialogue“ to enter the topic. By using further methods and an experience-based approach to learning and teaching participants are guided to develop first ideas of standards and good practice example for social work education and professional development.

After all the outcomes of the workshop will be collected and provided.

I situate the workshop as a contribution to the overall topic: to foster social connectedness as social work profession. The reflection on teaching the concept of empowerment in an innovative way that it meets students understanding and the commitment of applying the concept in practice also fits under the headline „Connectedness in Politics and Democracy“ as well as „Connectedness across Social and Cultural Divides“.

The workshop will be facilitated by Andrea Pilgerstorfer (social work professor), a peer specialist (which name will be announced as soon as possible) and an expert in higher education from UAS LEARN (which name will also be announced as soon as possible / <https://www.fhstp.ac.at/de/uber-uns/fh-services/service-und-kompetenzzentrum-fuer-lehr-lernentwicklung-und-bildungsangebote-learn>)

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Workshops

WOR-Politics-01

Teaching EMPOWERMENT to Social Work Students

FH-Prof. Mag. FH DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer

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Herriger, Norbert (2014): Empowerment in der Sozialen Arbeit. Eine Einführung. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 5. erw. u. akt. Auflage

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Theunissen, Georg (2013): Empowerment und Inklusion behinderter Menschen. Eine Einführung in Heilp,,dagogik und Soziale Arbeit. Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus, 3. akt. Auflage

Abstract By FH-Prof. Mag. (FH) DSA Andrea Pilgerstorfer, University of Applied Sciences St. P"lten,

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Workshops

WOR-Politics-02

Teaching EMPOWERMENT to Social Work The legacy of the Holocaust in social work education: threats and challenges related to „moral revisionism“ after 7.10.2023

Professor Katarzyna Ornacka

Co-Author(s): Hubert Kaszyński (Jagiellonian University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Ron Shor (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

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Polska

This workshop hosted by the Special Interest Group of EASSW called "Holocaust heritage for contemporary clinical social work" is intended as a collaborative learning and discussion forum. Welcome is anyone interested in exploring and reflecting on this overlooked yet very actual topic, for which the theoretical framework is the study of collective memory and trauma-informed approach in social work. As this international SIG aims in their research, the focus is on education, particularly axiological, and building a value-based practice. Challenging times when fundamental human rights were brutally violated – every state carries some historical trauma and reminders of painful history. In this hands-on and highly interactive workshop, participants will discuss topics such as "Where do we stand in this context as social workers facing current crises and their consequences first-hand?", "What can we learn from our difficult national legacies?", "How can we implement this knowledge into education?" At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to comprehend why difficult legacies and historical trauma should never be neglected topics of our professional identity, education, and practice and leave with some practical takeaways.

Workshops

WOR-Politics-03

Applications of a human rights action framework in social work (education)

Professor Katarzyna Ornacka

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Democracy is built upon the foundation of human rights. Given the essential role of human rights, social work is sometimes described as a „human rights profession“. Social work education and training has a crucial task in educating future social workers so they can become human rights professionals.

In this workshop, we will build on an innovative approach on social work education in relation to human rights. An approach that we define as human rights „from below“. Social work’s bottom-up approach to human rights is a distinctly contextual view of the realization of human rights. Social workers, as everyday life experts, face daily human rights violations impacting the dignity and social justice of vulnerable citizens. Based on our perspective of human rights „from below“, in this workshop we will expand on an action-framework for human rights in social work. This action framework consists of five central building blocks: 1) systemworld-oriented action, 2) lifeworld-oriented action, 3) participatory action, 4) politicizing action and 5) joined-up action. This action framework is deeply intertwined with the issue of connectedness in politics and democracy.

Using interactive methods, international experiences are shared about working with these building blocks. The goal of this workshop is twofold: (1) to further explore the application of the proposed action framework in social work and social work educational contexts across Europe, and (2) to support participants in their mission to educate future social workers on human rights from a ?bottum-up perspective.

Workshops

WOR-Politics-04

Challenging Classism in Social Work Education: Towards Inclusive Pedagogy

Prof. Dr. Francis Seeck

TH Nürnberg,
Germany

Classism remains an underexplored issue in social work education, despite the growing recognition of intersectionality. This workshop focuses on the ways in which classism impacts both students and educators within academic settings, and how it perpetuates inequality. Classism – the discrimination based on class background and class position – often shapes access to resources, academic success, and the professional expectations placed upon students from working-class and poverty class backgrounds.

The workshop aims to critically reflect on how classism manifests in the curriculum and classroom dynamics. Participants will engage in discussions about the hidden curriculum, classist stereotypes, and class barriers faced by students. Through participatory methods and interactive exercises, we will explore strategies for integrating anti-classist approaches into teaching practices.

The workshop will provide a space for participants to reflect on their own positionality and develop concrete actions to promote a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. This session is particularly relevant for educators, students, and social work practitioners committed to fostering social justice in education.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and understand how classism operates in social work education.
- Explore and share strategies for integrating anti-classist pedagogy.
- Develop actionable steps to create more accessible and equitable academic environments.