Reinventing the body of knowledge for social work education in the Netherlands

ESWRA 6th Conference for Social Work Research
Lisbon March 2016

Dr. Raymond Kloppenburg
Raymond.Kloppenburg@hu.nl

Dr. Ed de Jonge
Ed.deJonge@hu.nl
Overview

- Social policy in the Netherlands
- New challenges for social professionals
- National innovation program for social work education
- Generic body of knowledge
Social Work and Social Policy

Criticism social domain
- Expertocracy
- Fragmented expertise
- Hospitalization
- Rising costs

Social Policy: from welfare state to participation society
- Promoting civil initiatives: ‘Big society’ (voluntary work, family support)
- Withdrawing government
- Decentralization: transfer of finances, tasks and responsibilities to municipalities and citizens (right to challenge)
- Legislation: 3 D’s (Social support act, Long-term Care, Youth, labor participation)
New demands for social work education

Starting social professionals
- New tasks and challenges: facilitating of and cooperating with citizens

Dealing with the tension between
- De-professionalization: citizens take over tasks of social professionals, especially in local communities
- Stronger demands on professionals in complex social situations

Role change:
- arranging care instead of providing care
- increasing statutory registration requirements

Alignment social work education: not only reactive but also critical and proactive
18 Universities (UAS) offer bachelor social work, 50,000 students
11 Universities (UAS) offer master social work, 1000 students
(91% graduates employed after 18 months, 2014)

Bachelor courses:
- General social work (+ MA)
- Social case work
- Community development
- Social educational care work
- Social pedagogy (+ MA)

National association for social work education
Innovation of Social work education

Aim: strengthening the identity and profile of social work and social work education in the Netherlands

- Reflective practitioners: prepare students for complex social work
- T-shaped social professionals: generalist and specialist
- Specialisms: Youth, Long-term care, local social work
- Generic: competencies and body of knowledge
Challenges

- Improve scientific knowledge base of the curriculum
- Invest in academic knowledge development of students
- Invest in evidence based social work
Knowledge in social work education

Aim: (re)define a generic body of knowledge for social work that is mandatory for at least 50% of the content of all bachelor courses

Delphi method
40 practice experts (UAS) and 8 academic professors interviewed in 3 rounds about:
- Definition
- Demarcation
- Design
- Content
of the body of knowledge
Definition & criteria

Definition: The whole of conceptual and fundamental knowledge of social work that should be mastered by all graduates of the bachelor courses for social work.

Criteria
- Practice based
- Science based
- Education based
- Sustainable

Types of knowledge
- Generic Theories, Practice models and Perspectives
Structural elements: 7 building blocks

- Theories of the client world
- Theories of the societal and historical background
- Theories of what social work is
- Theories of how to do social work
- Theories of social work agencies and social policy
- Theories about social work research and innovation
- Theories about learning and professionalisation
Filling in the contents

**Scientists**
- Sociology & Cultural Anthropology
- Philosophy & Ethics
- Psychology & Pedagogy
- Communication
- Governance
- Politics
- Law
- Health

---

**Practice experts**
Thank you for your attention