

# Social Work Education

Co-creating an innovative model for international context



Jorge M. L. Ferreira e Maria João B. Pena (Eds.)

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INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

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## Presentation

The book “Social Work Education: co-creating an innovative model for international context”, aims to reflect on the Social Work Education in an international context by deepening the ethical and epistemological dimensions as well as methods and skills in its operationalization.

The book was developed on the basis of a participatory methodology, through an transnational structured training module made by intensive seminars to enable students from the different partner countries to make a mobility experience, completing all the preparatory work they had done in their countries, with their teachers, but also with colleagues, especially international colleagues with whom they had worked via ICT. The project aim is to establish an international context of joint learning of cross border/international/global Social Work issues for the students and teachers.

The book intended to develop a critical reflection of the use of blended learning in international context discussing the ALLISW network as a collaborative network using ICT forms of learning.

Next, we make a synthesis of the key ideas of each chapter:

*Epistemology of social work education* by Jorge Ferreira and Maria João Pena. The chapter developed a structured analysis on the Epistemological dimension of Social Work Education based on its scientific foundations, within the framework of Social and Human Sciences and its Ethical foundations supported on human rights, human dignity, social justice and self-determination of the subject as person / citizen. The chapter developed an analysis and interpretation centered on the Social Work Method, the critical ability and the reflexive thinking which has impacts on the social responsibility of the organizations and in the competence and quality of the professional response to the challenges of contemporary society marked by social globalization.

*Transforming European Welfare States as a New Context of Social work Education* by Tuomo Kokkonen. The chapter reflect that the European models of social work

education are typically closely connected with national contexts of social work in each country. Social work has thus been attached to national space of social citizenship, solidarity, and equality.

This chapter studies how to renew social work education into a form where it better matches the requirements of current social and economic reality. It is argued that instead of attaching social work to nation states we need to increasingly build social work education on ideas of transnational social reality and universally humanistic values.

*Models and Practices to Support LEARNING Outcomes and Competences in Social Work Education* by Andrioni Felicia. To the author in a global level, Social Work education is conceived as a way of facilitating the understanding and knowledge of local, national or global phenomena, their connecting, establishing connections between the processes and situations of social reality. In a diverse, multicultural and interdependent world, Social Work education is the bridge between the poles of the triad: teaching – learning process – social work professional and client system (individual, group, family, community, society).

The chapter illustrates by models and practices in the field of social work, perspectives to new horizons in knowledge, opening new opportunities, ideas and ways of thinking.

*Social Work in international context: innovative blended learning collaborative approach* by Lea Šugman Bohinc. The chapter defines the joint module pedagogy approach within the conceptual field of “international Social Work”, “global social work”, “multicultural social work” education. Global standards for education and training of the Social Work profession are resumed with regard to the global, international context. A literature review of practical examples of teaching and learning social work in international context is given. A paradigmatic shift is suggested from the “what” are the SWIC competences expected to be adopted by Social Work students to the “how” can a learning context be co-created with a potential of stimulating constructive change in the students’ relationship and knowledge production patterns. Synergetics, a science of complex systems, is used as the referential framework along with concepts, such as “community of practice”, “learning community”, “lifelong learning”, “and thinking together”, “collaborative working relationship of co-creating”.

An innovative blended learning collaborative approach is suggested, based on both the concepts and practical examples from the literature as well as the inspiring story co-written by the social work teachers and students from Hradec Králové, Kokkola, Lisbon, Ljubljana and Petrosan.

*Ethical issues in social work education in international context* by Kati Turtiainen. The chapter presented ethical considerations of teaching Social Work in the international context. These moral and ethical standpoints give a possibility to evaluate our teaching in the international context, which may be a step out of our national “comfort zones”. Teaching social work in the international context will have a

number of demands in terms of ethical questions. Teachers as well as students come from the diverse societal and national contexts and they have different ethnic backgrounds.

In general, a comprehensive understanding of ethics in professional life is suggested (Banks). This includes also a demand for virtues of social workers and possibilities of being moral evaluators (Taylor, Laitinen).

We concluded that the internationalization of education in Social Work should respond to different student profiles, allowing different options for international mobility and learning. The students who do not have access to traditional forms of mobility, it becomes essential to establish an international context for lifelong learning.

The teachers should be made aware of the use of blended learning methods, i.e. supported by ICT in combination with interactive forms of face-to-face/digital teaching and learning.

The book represents the potential for a global model of Social Work Education, giving it an international nature and contributes to a deepening of Social Work literacy both in the field of learning (student) and in the field of Education (Teacher), strengthening a more theoretical, scientific and universal language in this area of knowledge.

*Maria João Pena  
Jorge Ferreira*