Social work education beyond transition in the Netherlands

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Dutch society anno 2017
Social policy in the Netherlands: the transition
New challenges for social professionals
Innovation program for social work education
The Netherlands anno 2017

- 17 Miljon people on 41.500 square km
- Urbanisation, 9 million people live in around cities
- Globalisation and diversity of population
- Social cultural dividing lines
- Ageing: 18 % > 65, 53%> 40 years of age
Vulnerable people in the Netherlands

More than 1 million people lives below the poverty line
90.000 Households are client of foodbank
30.000 People are homeless

220.000 Severe psychiatric disorder
65.000 Alcohol and drugs addiction
367.000 Children use youth aid
220.000 Elderly experience extreme loneliness

43 % Moderately to seriously overweight
18 % High to excessive use of alcohol
The economic crises triggered a debate about the welfare state, the role of the state, market and citizens.

Within the social domain critics on expertocracy, fragmentation and growing expenses

Promoting civil initiatives: ‘Big society’ (voluntary work, family support),
Withdrawing government,
Reduction of costs
New roles for social work

Employment Social work in the Netherlands (FcB, 2017)

- 70,843 social workers in 2016, 75% permanent employment contract, 10% flexible contract, 10% independent established.
- Employment opportunities are gradually increasing (specially in youth care)
- Social work after the transition: new roles and jobs
  - Social brokers in neighbourhoods strengthening the basic social infrastructure
  - Social work generalists in interdisciplinary district teams
  - Social work specialists in residential settings or in neighborhoods
New challenges in social work

- Collaborating with citizens, volunteers, family carers
- Interdisciplinary professional cooperation, cooperation with local government, dealing with differences of interest
- Profiling the profession, coping deprofessionalisation
- Working in a market driven context
New demands for social work education
Social work education in the Netherlands

18 Universities offer bachelor social work, 50,000 students
11 Universities offer master social work, 1000 students
91% graduates employed after 18 months, 2014

Since 2005 transformation of schools of higher vocational education to universities of applied sciences.

Bachelor courses:
• General social work (+MA)
• Social case work
• Community development (+Ma)
• Social educational care work
• Social pedagogy (+MA)
About future of Social work

- Improve the knowledge infrastructure
- Improve professional organisations, training and registration
- Set requirements for quality of social work

About the future of Social work education

- Improve the profile of social work education, new name: Social Studies
- Improve the knowledge base to educate reflective practitioners
- Develop recognizable specialization routes
- Embed social work education in regional context
All universities decided to develop a generic bachelor course in social work.

Three core qualifications / learning outcomes:

- Promoting social quality and social functioning of people and their social context (primary living situation, groups and networks, communities).
- Working in an organizational and policy context: strengthening the organizational conditions within which social work takes place.
- Promote one's own professionalism and the development of the profession.
Specialisations are derived from social policy context and decentralisation acts and also related to registration acquirements.

- Social work in communities (Social support act)
- Social work with youth
- Social work in Long time care (Service users with disabilities)
Body of knowledge: bridging sciences with social work practice
Structural elements BoK
7 building blocks

Theories of the societal and historical background

Theories of what social work is

Theories of the client world

Theories of how to do social work

Theories about social work research and innovation

Theories of social work agencies and social policy

Theories about learning and professionalisation
Innovations of methods in social work education

Learning
Deep learning concepts: self regulated learning, experiential learning, reflective learning

Educating
Blended learning: digital platform to connect learning contexts in school, in practice, at home
Learning communities: allignment of education, research and practice

Assessment: assessment of and for learning
Challenges for social work education

- Educate competent, reflective and innovative practitioners.
- Implementation of the body of knowledge of social work.
- Development of the triangle between education, research and practice.
- Contribution to the profiling of social work.
Thanks for your attention