

2016 Social Work Summer School – Participation and Welfare State

June 6th-10th Amsterdam

Call for proposals and registration

Participation and Welfare State

In many European welfare states, participation is an important issue in contemporary social policy. Participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in society. Participation is a broad concept and the ways in which involvement takes shape can differ between political participation, such as voting during elections and membership in political parties, and participation in decision making; civic participation such as volunteering, participation in one's local community or neighbourhood or informal care; economic participation such as active involvement in the labour market; and finally social participation in terms of being part of society by meeting people and taking part in social life.

Although participation as a means of enhancing the well-being and social functioning of citizens is far from new for social work and social workers, the demand for the participation of citizens in society in European welfare states is nevertheless increasing and often seems to have a more political and economic nature. This tendency is partly driven by fears that the informal networks surrounding people in vulnerable situations are dissipating, due to the advance of individualization, professionalization, and similar processes. Another reason behind the increasing appeal for participation has to do with the ambitions of national and local governments to make citizens less dependent on public services.

As a consequence, citizens, social work participants, volunteers, social work professionals, and local governments are confronted with the notion that citizens should or must be responsible for their own well-being. Professional support should only be complementary to one's own efforts. This means that citizens are expected to care for themselves, their families, and their immediate environment. They are also required to secure their income (through gainful employment). In addition, they should be dedicated to and involved in their community as well as political debates and decision-making. In times of growing numbers of refugees, these high expectations become an even larger challenge for all actors involved.

Contemporary social policy leads to far-reaching changes in the relations between citizens and government, between citizens and welfare professionals, and between these professionals and government. These changes are implemented without knowing how exactly they affect the quality and effectiveness of social services, the well-being of citizens in general and social work participants in particular, and social cohesion. Social workers are challenged to respond to these multiple changes and this new social policy. But how might or should they respond? And what are the consequences for social work practice and for the social work profession(s)?

Key questions

During the Summer School 2016 we will explore the consequences of the widespread changes in social policy and their demand for citizen participation, including social work clients. We will try to get a grip on the opportunities, obligations, and negative effects for citizens and social work clients. And we will explore how social workers can and should act and react in the face of these challenges, and shape their daily social work practice when participation is such an important social policy goal. The international mission of social work will serve as a starting point for in-depth discussion.

The key questions of this Summer School are:

1. How to understand the phenomenon of participation? This question is approached by studying different concepts of participation. Which similarities and differences exist with other concepts such as social inclusion, integration, and citizenship?
2. How do contemporary national social policies affect participation in general? And what does this mean for social work participants? Are there differences between different countries?

3. How can social professionals stimulate, support, and protect participation? Which aims, interventions, results and instruments exist? Also: which dilemmas should social work practice deal with, which actions should social workers take (and which not), and when, also in respect of which action citizens can take themselves?
4. What are the consequences of these developments for the social work profession, its legitimation, and its relationship with citizens (both social work participants and non-participants), other professions, and government(s)?

Proposals and assignments

The general aim of the Summer School 2016 is to start a collaborative and joint process of exchange and discussion on international level between speakers and participants. Studying professionals (Ba-Ma-PhD), lecturers, researchers and experienced professionals are invited to submit a proposal related to the key questions. Besides your contribution, you can, of course, participate during the whole week of the Summer School. You can also participate in the Summer School without a proposal and collaborate on the assignment formulated by your university during the week. Together we hope to form a learning community for a week, making participation not only what we talk about, but also what we practice. Please note that the total number of participants – including speakers – is limited to 80.

How to submit a proposal

Please send your proposal of maximum 300 words, including a title, to Mike de Kreek (m.de.kreek@hva.nl). Beside presentations, posters and workshops we also invite you to work on innovative and creative contributions which focus on the key questions, including film, art, literature, music, etc. The proposal should illustrate how it is related to the key questions of the Summer School for presentation and discussion. The proposal should also make clear whether it focuses on local, regional, national or international aspects of participation. Please attach a short biography of maximum 60 words about yourself (organisation, occupation/ study, interest, etc.). Please also qualify your proposal according to the following categories: workshop proposal, paper presentation, poster presentation or other. If you have ideas about a proposal, but you would like to discuss them, please contact the organizer nearest to you: Mariel.vanPelt@han.nl/ +31 614545670, andreas.schauder@fhnw.ch/ +41 613372759 or m.de.kreek@hva.nl/ +31 621156077. This organizing committee will also review the proposals and communicate about the possible time-slots for each type of contribution.

- Deadline March 1st submit to m.de.kreek@hva.nl
- Comments March 25th expect from m.de.kreek@hva.nl

How to register for participation

Participation in the Summer School is free and includes a social program, but you will need to arrange getting in Amsterdam, a place to stay and meals. And you will have to register online, so we can make a list of participants (the website will be active from January onwards).

- Registration March 1st – May 1st <http://www.amsterdamuas.com/summerschoolmsw>

Distribution of this Call

Please support us in distributing this ‘Call for proposals and participation’ to colleagues and students.

More information

Additional details about the program, the registration process, the venue, places to stay and places to visit etc. will be provided through <http://www.amsterdamuas.com/summerschoolmsw> (starting in January 2016) and <http://www.fhnw.ch/sozialarbeit/bachelor-und-master/summerschool/> (also about the previous editions).

Please send any ideas or questions to Mike de Kreek: m.de.kreek@hva.nl or +31621156077!