

2018 Social Work Summer School – Social work and cooperation: two of a kind? June 4th-8th Amsterdam Call for proposals and registration

Participation and Welfare State

It has become widely accepted that social work operates in a context of complex, interrelated social problems. Effective support for individual clients, families, groups, or communities often requires a comprehensive, multifaceted understanding of social problems and of leverage points for change. Moreover, social problems are situated in different domains like education, safety, or health. One meaning of the word “social” in social work is relational: social work is always an inter-human activity. This implies that several persons are involved and that social work practice is oriented toward individuals, groups, and communities. It requires combining the complementary expertise of various professions, and it may imply working across policy and administration boundaries. Finally, social workers need to work together with volunteers and the informal networks of clients to activate people, to help them cope with their problems, and to further their social inclusion. Consequently, social work must engage in cooperation. Thus, collaboration, alliances, partnerships, and many other forms of cooperation are key practices in social work.

However, these practices may involve complexity and ambiguity. A major issue facing social workers in cooperation is power. Stakeholders need to agree on the goals to be achieved, and on the methods for achieving them. They must deal with manifold issues, such as shared or divided reasonability, establishing a common language, or accommodating different organizational structures and cultures. Further issues include potential hidden agendas, mutual trust and understanding, and the time and workforce available. All these issues require social workers to possess specific skills.

Aim and key questions

The aim of the Summer School 2018 is to provide participants from various countries with a forum for developing a broad understanding of cooperation and various related issues. International participants will debate different forms of cooperation and different perspectives on successful cooperation in order to develop a broad perspective on this key issue. They will review extant views on “successful cooperation” and reflect on the barriers and facilitators of inter-professional, inter-agency, and cross-sectorial cooperation. Related concepts are constructive social work, alliance, social networks, cooperation in the 0, 1st, and 2nd line. From an international perspective, participants will explore modes of cooperation and their prerequisites against the background of specific social policy agendas and welfare regimes. The 2018 Summer School offers participants the opportunity to get acquainted with the skills needed to deal with the many challenges associated with cooperation. The key questions for the Summer School are:

1. What to do when either the professional or the client experience their relationship as suboptimal?
2. How might professionals organize multidisciplinary cooperation if their disciplinary expertise diverge extensively?
3. How can professionals connect with organizational prerequisites and policy making to enhance client well-being in particular or human rights in general?
4. How do professionals collaborate with volunteers and informal networks close to their clients?

Proposals and assignments

The general aim of the Summer School 2018 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 cooperation 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

Two kinds of proposals can be submitted: a plenary lecture with a discussion (1 ½ hour) or a workshop where 20 participants dive into a practical issue introduced by a social work practitioner or researcher (2 hours). The proposal should illustrate how it is related to (one of) the key questions of the Summer School. The proposal should also make clear whether it focuses on local, regional, national or international aspects of cooperation. Please attach a short biography of maximum 50 words about yourself (organisation, occupation/ study, interest, etc.). You can send the proposal of maximum 250 words, including a title, to Mike de Kreek (m.de.kreek@hva.nl).

If you have ideas about a proposal, but you would like to discuss them, please contact the organizer nearest to you: Selma.vanderHaar@han.nl, +31 (0)6 58822522, andreas.schauder@fhnw.ch/ +41 613372759 or m.de.kreek@hva.nl/ +31 (0)621156077. Other participating universities (Helsinki Metropolia, Saxion and others) will have their own contact person for informal questions. This organizing committee will also review the proposals and communicate about the possible day and time-slots.

- Deadline February 15 submit to m.de.kreek@hva.nl
- Comments March 15 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. The Dutch students will have to register online, so we can make a list of participants (the website will be active from January onwards).

- Registration February 1st – April 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 2018).

Please send any ideas or questions to Mike de Kreek: m.de.kreek@hva.nl or +31621156077. Do not hesitate!