

Community engagement and social justice in the context of pandemic

Main issues

The whole of humanity, both as individuals and groups, are facing same battle. Although made invisible in public discourse, social workers are in a frontline position in this context of pandemic: social problems they have to deal with do not disappear during a public health crisis. Economic disparities, social inequalities and discriminations can even be increased by the crisis.

Within the project “Community engagement and social justice in the context of pandemic”, we want to discuss the implications of this crisis for community social work and for social justice. How do social workers get involved in the community during the current crisis? What are the specific needs of the different vulnerable groups in such a context? How has the crisis been a mobilizing factor in the community? Further to these main issues, students may also discuss more specific subthemes according to their main interest such as: elderly or homeless people, asylum seekers, people with disabilities...

The project runs from 26 May 2020 to 7 July 2020.

Structure

The program is made of: two web-conferences, students meetings and subgroups work.

The *students meetings* will include all participants.

The *subgroups* are constituted of two to three students from different universities whose interests are the same. Each subgroup organize itself in order to collect information about what happens in each country, discuss around the collected information, and present their work at the end of the program.

The work of the subgroup is supported by a Swiss pedagogical assistant, who will create different channels on Microsoft Teams tool (one for each subgroup) and answer subgroup questions.

Schedule

26th May

1st recorded web-conference (on Microsoft Teams tool): Prof. Peter Stade, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, “Participative social work. The case of a vocational integration scheme for Roma populations in Kosovo”.

Summary: Not all young men and women manage easily the school-work transition. Especially persons from marginalized groups (like Roma) or youth in difficult economic or social situations, who are often not able to complete their school-work transition and participate in vocational education programs. Looking for employment, they do not only face difficulties due to their small educational background but also due to the lack of financial means or due to prejudices towards their background and community. The project aims to address these young men and women who have little or no access to vocational education and training and the labour market. Through a participative approach, the scheme implemented makes a contribution to fight the exclusion of vulnerable groups on the labour market in Kosovo.

2nd June (the day and the time will be determined with the participants through a Doodle sent by the Swiss pedagogical assistant)

1st *students meeting* (on Microsoft Team tool) supported by a Swiss pedagogical assistant:

- Oral presentation by the students from each university (8 minutes for each university followed by a short questions and answers time).

Type of required information: What is social work in your country? Which public? Which core functions? Which core tasks? Which career prospects? Which training?

- Creating subgroups according to individual interest. In each subgroup a leader is designed in order to coordinate the subgroup.

Until 16th June

Each students documents the reality of her or his country, in relation to the selected subthemes, by uploading on Microsoft Teams tool : government guidelines or recommendations, NGO's reports, newspaper articles (all in English)...

22nd – 26th June

Working in *subgroups*: each subgroup organises itself to exchange around the content of documents uploaded in Microsoft Teams.

23rd June

2nd recorded web-conference (on Microsoft Teams tool), Prof. Kiran Thampi, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Cochin, India.

16th June

Working in *subgroups*: each subgroup organises itself to discuss the differences between countries.

7th July (the day and the time will be determined with the participants through a Doodle sent by the Swiss pedagogical assistant)

Last *students meeting* (on Microsoft Teams tool) supported by a Swiss pedagogical assistant and in presence of professors from the participating universities.

- oral presentations of each subgroup (5 to 10 minutes for each subgroup followed by a short questions and answers time)

Type of required information: presentation of the situations on the different countries and of the issues discussed in the subgroups.

Students

4 Master's level Social Work students from University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland, attend the project « Community engagement in the context of pandemic ». Those are the students who were meant to take part in ISUSW 2020.

4 Master's level Social Work students from each member university may attend. Each student should write a short presentation of who she or he is (academic and professional experiences, interests in social work and social policies) in order to introduce herself or himself to the other attendees and send it to Sonia De Almeida (sonia.dealmeida@hes-so.ch) by **19 May 2020**.