

Title: Are we on the right track with Five Core Competences as a sustainable model for the Bachelor of Social Work program?

Authors: Prof.dr Frans Spierings (Director of Research Programs), Anja Stofberg MA (Senior Adviser Internationalisation), Karin Blom (Senior Lecturer), Trijntje van Dijk (Senior Lecturer) at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Theme: Development of curriculum in social work

ABSTRACT

The Melbourne definition 2014, further elaborated on in Seoul 2016 Global Agenda for Social work and Social Development, identified important characteristics of modern Social work: empowerment, participation, working with communities, resilience, global citizenship, secularism, etc. Internationally, we have seen an important shift towards coproduction and participation at citizen level. But at the same time, the (urban) population of citizens is becoming increasingly diverse, stratified and individualized, with growing, shifting and contradicting expectations. Citizens are alert and critical towards services delivered. Furthermore, citizens become flexible and mobile, seek advice in peer groups and social networks instead of approaching authorities. This means that both social policy and social work organizations need to provide clearly visible and societally wanted, sustainable outcomes: they need to be able to adapt to the changing demands of their citizens. Social work courses try to follow these developments closely.

In this context, social work in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, is also changing. Especially in complex urban areas these changes are occurring increasingly rapidly over the past decade. Urban population are becoming increasingly diverse, super divers, in the sense of diversification within and between divers groups (Vertovec 2007), a related but much concept broader than migration issues sec. Social technology and the financial crisis and its related challenges have a major impact on social work professionals in our region. This means that the body of knowledge, skills and values of social work courses is also changing fast.

In our innovative session we would like to discuss the content and process of our comprehensive curriculum renewal at the School of Social Work at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. In short we have developed through intensive interaction with regional Social work organisations a broad T-shaped educational model. Characteristics are:

- *Two years basic education* around social issues and critical professional situations
- *Two year of graduation profiling*
- *Five end qualifications* and level differences through the four years of schooling for the social worker anno 2020.

World Café

The intent of the session is to exchange views, share and inspire the international participants around the benefits of this broad T-shaped educational model, but also pitfalls and possible alternatives from their practices. Further addressing our challenges and struggles. We will do this by hosting a dialogue on five tables, examining together the overarching question: Are we on the right track with five core competences and level differences each year of study? Every table discusses one competency in depth - namely to explore, to intervene, to collaborate, to undertake and to professionalize - exploring further level differences. At the beginning of next each round, the chair will summarize the findings until then, facilitating the joint effort of all the participants. At the end, we will harvest the findings and ask for additional comments, in order to answer the question 'to what extent do these five core competences cover a comprehensive and sustainable social work program and what improvements are feasible?'