

Abstract for the EASSW Conference in Paris 2017

Theme 2. Development of curriculum and course contents in social work

Workshop: Learning sustainability! Social Work course contents promoting environmental, economic and social sustainability

Length of a workshop: 90 min

Logistical support: Audiovisual facilities to demonstrate film clips, for each participant A4 -sized moderation cards or papers, a couple of marker pen, a wall or table where to fix these cards, tape of nails to fix

Language: English

Presenters:

Aila-Leena Matthies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, Aila-Leena.Matthies@chydenius.fi

Komalsingh Rambaree, University of Gävle, Sweden, kolsie@hig.se

Helena Rocha , ISCTE – IUL, University Institute of Lisbon, helenar2@hotmail.com

Vesna Leskosek, University of Ljubljana, Vesna.Leskosek@fsd.uni-lj.si

[ABSTRACT TEXT \(600 words\)](#)

The third Global Agenda item for Social Work and Social Development is “Promoting Sustainable Communities and Environmentally Sensitive Development”. The question of sustainability needs our urgent attention also in social work education due to the alarming environmental problems of the planet, the untenable direction of the global, national and local economy, as well as the persistence of social inequality and human suffering. The relevance of social work for the transdisciplinary issues of sustainability is evident and visible also in the Global Sustainability Goals of the UN (2015.)

This workshop is based on an international network for ecosocial transition research and teaching in social work. The aim of the workshop is to invite participants to share their experiences and ideas how to integrate the challenges of sustainability in the contents and values of social work education. As impulse for the joint discussion, we will present in short four models of our respective teaching.

The workshop will have following structure:

1. Start: While entering in the room, participants write own experiences and ideas of learning sustainability on cards which will be collected to a table to be discussed in workshop
2. Impulses: Four 10 minutes’ presentations of different pieces of learning sustainability in social work education, including 2 – 3 min for questions and comments.
3. Interactive Discussion (30 min) of the participants’ collected experiences and ideas of learning sustainability, which are visualized by the cards. The participants are invited to tell shortly about their experiences and ideas.

4. Conclusion (10 min). The achieved results of the workshop as an overview of experiences and ideas how to learn and teach sustainability will be summarized and evaluated by visualization and joint discussion.

Komalsingh Rambaree will focus on some examples on how the social work unit at his university is contributing towards sustainable development through its education, research, and community engagement. The presentation demonstrates that social workers, because of their strong skill set in promoting equality, solidarity, human rights and the dignity and worth of all human beings, need to play more influential roles in promoting sustainability. Within this context, teaching, practice and research of social work, must be geared towards and grounded on sustainable development.

Vesna Leskosek: will discuss the role of social movements in reducing hunger and present cases of practical placements for students and ideas of how to include urban gardening practices into the social work education. The research on urban gardening practices in Slovenia showed that they differ substantially in how they are organized, what are the relations between gardeners and how they create sustainable communities. It is important for social work to recognize potentials and constraints of such practices that might act as an alternative to food banks which are one of the fast growing industry in reducing hunger.

Helena Rocha and Jorge Ferreira will present their experiences in the three levels of social work education at their university. At the Bachelor level it is built in community context, at the Master level in family context and in the doctoral studies of social work in interdisciplinary research context. Theoretical education and practical skills in the training and qualification of social workers are focusing on sustainability, ecology, environment and ecosystemic theory, including the conceptualization of personal welfare and human rights.

Aila-Leena Matthies will discuss how different sustainability themes and ecosocial approach have got attention in the MA theses of the students during the last years. This includes literature reviews and conceptual analyses regarding the environmental paradigm in social work, social care workers' experiences and reflection in nature-assisted social care services, and how people living in precarious life circumstances create sustainable lifestyles.