

**Developing internationalization in
Social work education:
the relevance of short programs**

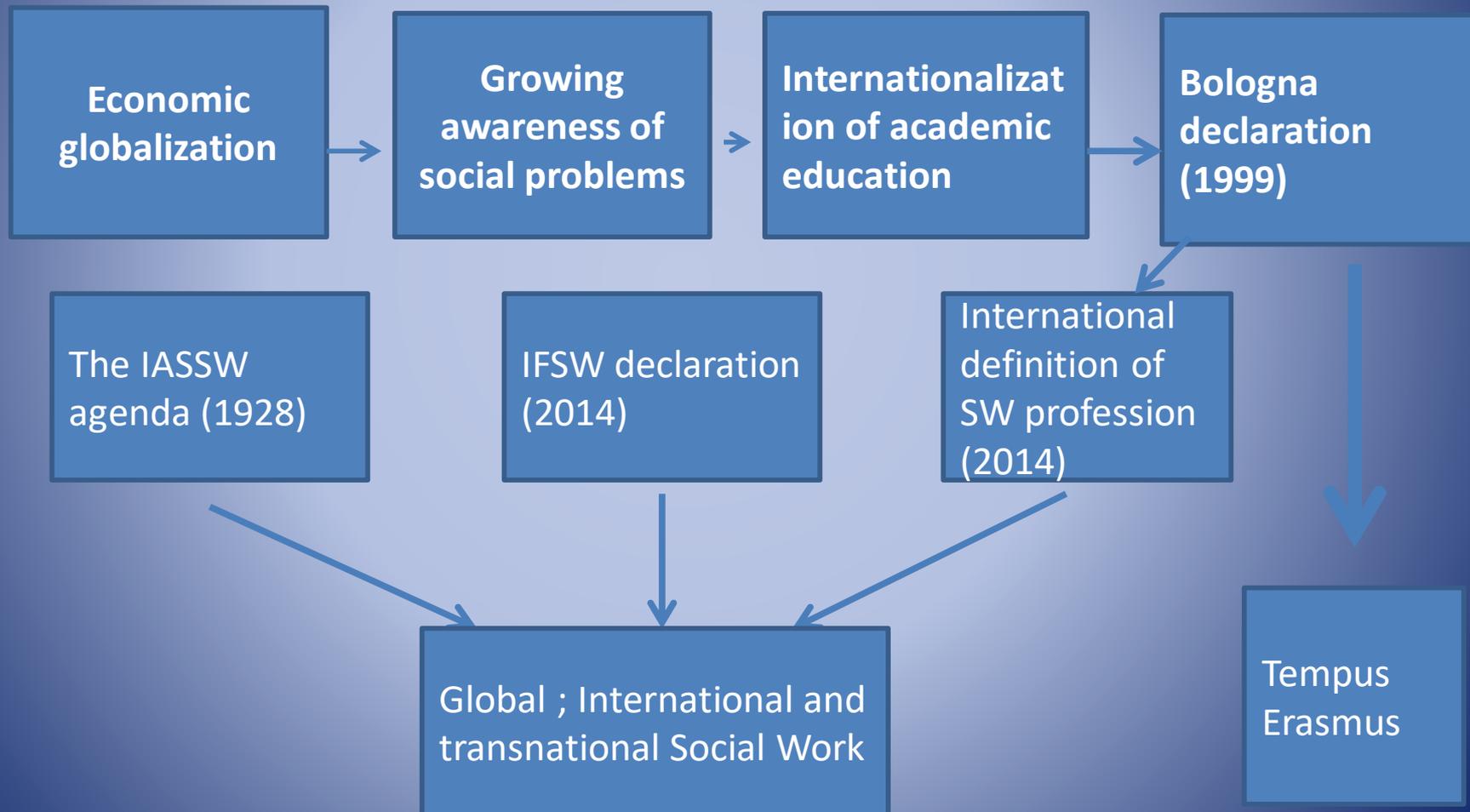
European Conference UNAFORIS-
EASSW - 2017

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Lecture outlines

- Introduction- Social Work - international training
- The student mobility model
- Project (or research)context
 - Tempus project
 - Methods - aim and research tool
- Results
- Recommendation future thought

The Basis of international training



International Social Work Education: The context

Growing recognition of the global nature of practice:

- Working across national geographical borders: Provision of services in different parts of the world
- Domestic – local practice with foreign born population in immigrant communities



Need to adjust knowledge, values and skills to diverse cultures and client populations



Need to prepare students to practice in diverse cultural contexts

Components of Global-International Education

- Content (courses) about diverse cultures and their perspectives on human development, psycho-social issues and services.
- Field work with culturally diverse populations
- International field work placement versus student mobility

ISWE students Models exchanges

- The *independent/one-time model*
 - The *neighbor-country model*
 - The *onsite group model*
 - The *exchange/reciprocal model*
 - *Summer school*
 - Student mobility
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- Nuttman-Shwartz, O., & Berger, R. (2012). International social work: Where we are and where we should go. *International Journal of Social Work, 55*(2), 224-242.

TachyWe



Project: "Transnational Academic Careers in Child and Youth Welfare"

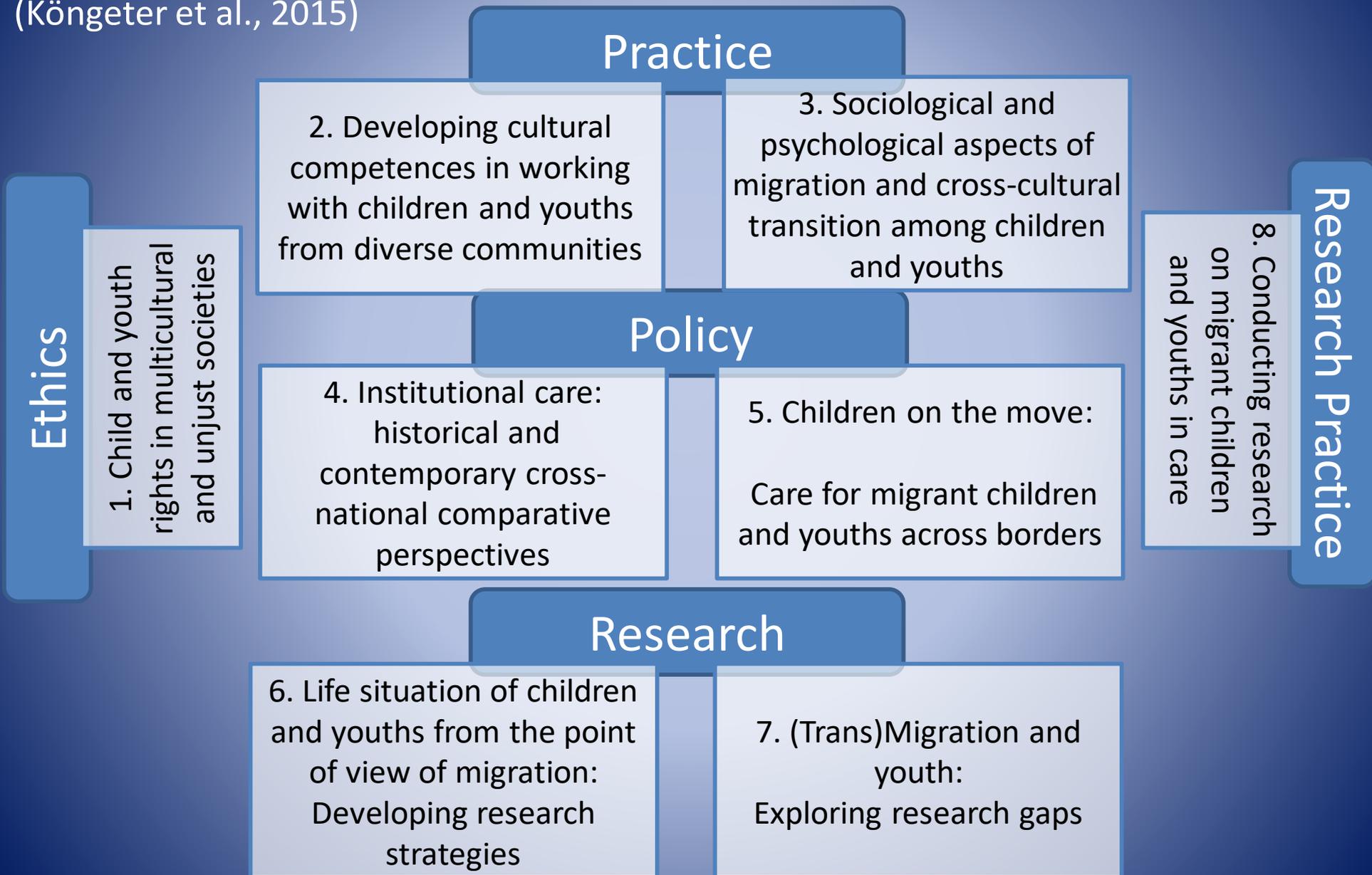


This project is funded by the European Commission

Child and Youth Welfare in Globalised Societies:

Migration in Child and Youth Care – a Transnational Curriculum for Social Work

(Königter et al., 2015)



Student mobility



Bozen Students visited Sapir

Student mobility



Sapir Students visited Bozen

The specificity of Tachy.we experience

- Mobility as part of a wider program on internationalization of child and youth welfare
- Experienced practitioners as well as students participating in the mobility program
- Short term mobility and the method of meeting/discussing with social services and practitioners
- In total students involved were 35, but few of them participated in more than one exchange

Method

- The feedback from students was gained through:
 1. A short written comment on their experience
 2. Three focus groups exploring students experiences, difficulties as well as gains and positive aspects
- The feedback from the staff was gathered through a written report

RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED



Students' mobility as tourism

- This risk was identified by both students and staff: In this case meeting and visits are just like a touristic tour where visiting students are shown/observe just the surface, the facade of social services and social interventions.
- They are shown the best interventions and not given the possibility to discuss common issues

Culture shock –Cultural Misunderstanding

The idea of promoting international exchanges in social work requires little more than an adventurous spirit, a willingness to endure discomforts, and a large dose of good intentions is widespread but naive and is likely to result in frequent cultural misunderstandings (Midgley, 1992:21)

Students and staff identify in short exchanges the risk of misunderstanding and shock as even higher, because there is limited time to 'digest' the new experiences,

New understandings - Critical reflection new perspectives creative ideas

- **The experience opens up to an understanding of a different reality**
- **There are exchanges and discussions**
- **There is the feeling of mutual learning (Nuttman-Shwartz, O. & Berger, R., 2012).**

The traits of positive exchange as they emerged from students and staff

- The possibility of constant reflecting and discussing what students have seen
- The opportunity of the incoming students to present and discuss how services were organised in their home countries and to present and discuss with local student and practitioners examples of practice

There are exchanges and discussions

- It was the first experience in my life to participate in a programme like this. I could speak with professionals of social welfare about children, about parents, about family. I could share with them my own experience and I could see experiences of people from different countries. And I think that it's very useful for our work, and for to helping people...(Student)

Mutual learning

(Israeli student): It's important for the [people we] visit to hear about our work in Israel.

Facilitator: There is a reciprocity?

Student: It was good to exchange knowledge and exchange experience.

Facilitator: To talk, not only listen.

Student: To share, exactly. (Focus Group 1)

Nuttman-Shwartz, O., & Ranz, R. (2014). A Reciprocal Working Model for Fieldwork with International Social Work Students. *British Journal of Social Work, 44*(8), 2411-2425.

The experience opens up to an understanding of a different reality and to critical reflection

- True, I am proud of our country, offering various services to people with special needs and to their families. Before I went to Bolzano, I always felt we have too few services and that they are not good enough! Now I realise that we have more services than other countries and we are doing a lot in order to help children with special needs and their families. Nevertheless, I wish we'd learn from Italy. I wish we'd have a stronger inclusion ideology and an inclusion policy embedded in legislation. (student)

The perspective of the staff: Key factors

- **Focused organization - preparation**
- **Room for critical reflection during the visit (Ranz et al. 2015)**
- **More room for listening to incoming students and to take advantage of their knowledge and experiences**

Concluding remarks

Acknowledging that there risks ingrained in international short exchange programs, nonetheless our experience shows that advantages and opportunities far exceed the limits:

- They include students with working and family commitments
- They do not disrupt programs and curricula
- They allow to tackle the language issues
- If carefully planned they provide an important opportunity to develop critical thinking as well as to promote innovation.

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Thank you for your attention!

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