

Local and European: the continuing importance of trans-national learning?

European nation states are increasingly focused upon their own 'local difficulties' notably the rise of nationalisms, particularly in the wake of the UK's likely triggering on Article 50*. The paper will explore whether or not there is still a relevant purpose to cross-national social work between European countries in general and the UK in particular.

We will outline the findings of a current small-scale research project into the continued importance and viability of cross-national learning, examining responses from German and English students.

The authors have in previous work put forward the case for continuing cross-national learning and these are being tested through the current research project:

1. Different perspectives on shared 'problems' – for example Exploring responses to growing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers as part of a European profession
2. Being confronted with 'the other' as part of routine learning
3. Questioning what is seen as routine or good practice by examining what happens elsewhere
4. Examining a range of different ways of delivering and funding services
5. Being in contact with potentially 'radical' alternatives throughout Europe.

Our current research aims to examine whether or not cross-national learning remains valued and viable and it involves groups of students who are studying modules with a strong element of cross-national research *and* those who are just beginning their social work studies, and have only limited exposure (or none) to social work in other European countries.

The research will provide directions for the future, as well as insights into how current social work students view this area. We remain optimistic that both groups will see validity in such an enterprise ... but these are challenging times!

*it is likely that this will have been triggered by the time of the conference