

Call for Papers

8th annual TiSSA Plenum August 25 to 27, 2010 &

PreConference of the PhD-Network August 22 to 24, 2010 in Tallinn, Estonia

Social Work in Times of Crisis

What can Social Work deliver - And who benefits?

In the face of the dramatic global financial-economic decline the disrupting existential consequences at least for dependent workers and unemployed people become apparent. Social Work as part of the social policy mechanism is also becoming increasingly crisis-driven. Existing forms of help and support both for enjoying an individual life in a manner one has reason to value and for material safeguards are becoming weaker while the extent of poverty is growing dramatically with long-term effects on life chances particularly of young people. This situation affects Social Work in its very foundations.

- Can Social Work continue to act as responsible and adequate social service in line with the needs and obligations of people?
- Under which conditions has Social Work to fulfil its role?
- Which are the options for Social Work in order to deliver the professional and effective support?

Yet in order to do so Social Work has to position itself between the conflicting demands of political incorporation and social solidarity. Social Work has also to find a pathway between the regulations of welfare employers, community demands and the interests of other stakeholders in order to serve its users in a socially just and professionally adequate way.

- What chances and risks arise from an indicator-based management of social services?
- What are the relevant questions concerning the professional standard to develop the necessary expertise of Social Work?

What Social Work can deliver always depends on its organisational context. Most obviously it depends on whether Social Work is institutionalised as a public agency or whether it acts as a voluntary association. In terms of Social Work's organisation two developments turn out to be significant. On the hand side there is a quest to implement an indicator-based management of social services which implies a range of chances and risks that have to be critically reflected against of Social Works ethical tasks and professional self understanding. While this is a managerial development from 'above' there is on the other hand a broad development 'from below': in many European countries self-help movements are emerging which sometimes complement or support Social Work. Yet there is also a tendency to substitute Social Work by a growing strategy to make people themselves responsible for social and economic needs. This kind of politics is sometimes combined with the ideology of civil society. Both developments are signatures of future Social Work as they reshape what Social Work may deliver as well as the critical question about who benefits from Social Work. In Tallinn the TiSSA meeting aims the necessary clarifying of the social and political scopes and prospects of Social Work in societies at the crossroads of enhancing civility, human development, and social security or overburden the vulnerable who face new dimensions of psychological, ecological, and economic distress. TiSSA therefore invites scholars and practitioners from all over the world to bring together helpful insights, challenging experiences, and promising approaches of participants from field work, administration and research.

All colleagues are cordially invited to send an abstract (1-2 pages) to the TiSSA co-ordinator: hansuwe.otto@uni-bielefeld.de. Submissions can either represent reflected practical experiences, empirical research or theoretical concerns. The international scientific committee will validate all incoming abstracts. Presentations will be limited to max. 20 minutes. Points for subsequent discussions are welcome. For all colleagues intending to give a paper either for the TiSSA Plenum or for the PreConference of PhD-Network the deadline for the announcement of the abstract is **June, 15th, 2010**.