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The Project



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The WIT project aims to expand and strengthen skills and knowledge of social care professionals, through an open and dynamic way to share experiences and exchange information and views on a national and international level.



ALICE SALOMON HOCHSCHULE BERLIN University of Applied Sciences

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Project overview

WIT - White Task Force on the development of skills of the social welfare professionals intends to improve the quality of the services provided to citizens through the creation of a European network for social innovation.



Its overall objective is to analyze the evolution of the system of social and health services in Europe, to provide new and effective guidelines to support innovation in the organizational models and the definition of vocational training courses for operators in the sector.

Specifically, the project goals are:



- coordinate the analysis and scenario building on emerging trends in order to facilitate the matching between demand and supply of new skills in the social work;
- analyze the impact of social innovation on the skills and competencies of social workers, creating a European Atlas of innovation in social care professions;
- capitalize and disseminate best practices on developing new skills and competencies for the White Jobs.



WIT project involves public and development bodies next to research, university and training prominent institutions on the topic of social innovation, from 4 Member Countries (Italy, Bulgaria, Germany and Lithuania). The Province of Milan, leads the partnership composed of the National Development Agency (Bulgaria), Alice Salomon - University of Applied Sciences in Berlin (Germany) and Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy (Lithuania).

WIT Partners



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Province of Milan, "Training for welfare and third sector professions" Area is committed to promoting the continuous training of workers in the social welfare and health services, by networking experiences and models of innovative interventions in this context.



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National Development Agency (NDA - Bulgaria), actively contributes to the progress of the Bulgarian society and to the development of a knowledge-based society, by supporting the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of education and training, the development of a balanced governance in the public sector.



Alice Salomon University (ASH - Germany), by deeply focusing on teaching theory, practice and research, the University aims to high-level education and training as a key factor for its students success, according to an interdisciplinary, international based approach.



Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy (VU - Lithuania), dynamic participant in international scientific and academic activities, the Faculty of Philosophy is a wide-spectrum humanistic and social education and science institution.



WIT FIRST International Conference: an opportunity to arise debate on the quality of social work, educational needs and ongoing changes

The First International Conference has been held on 15th of May. It has been attended by about 40 participants among students, social workers, professors, representatives from the partner countries and others who take an interest in the topic of the Berlin events: "***Social work quality, educational needs, and changes in the organisation of production and in the social work employment structure***".



After a short welcoming speech by vice director Prof. Dr. Bettina Völter (ASH, Professor for Theory and Methods of Social Work), Prof. Dr. Michael Brodowski (ASH, Professor for Early Childhood Education) gave an overview about Alice Salomon University. It is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the field of social work in Europe and with about 3.300 students, among the largest. It was also shown that ASH as a research intensive, practice-orientated educational institution reacts on emerging needs in the field of social work.



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Prof. Dr. Heinz Stapf-Finé (ASH, Professor for social politics) spoke about social changes as general conditions for social work. Socio-political changes in the past led to new target groups for the social work profession and to a reorganization of social services based on principles of business administration. Efficiency became a new guiding principle and competitive and cost pressure brought problems for both social workers and their clients. While clients often do not get the appropriate help and support, the working and employment conditions for social workers deteriorate. Part-time jobs, underpayment, fixed-term contracts become more and more

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normal. Admittedly, the job market situation for social workers is very good and will remain so. There is a need for more involvement in professional associations and unions for social workers - for their own but also their clients sake.

Representatives of the Vilnius University, Prof. Dr. Laimute Zalimiene (Professor at Social Work Department) and Ieva Adomaityte (Researcher at Vilnius University) gave an overview about the academic education of social workers in Lithuania and about the social changes as general conditions for social work in Lithuania.

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Even if there are many differences between the situation in Lithuania and that in Germany (i.e. parents leaving the country for work), it was interesting to realize there are also things in common like ageing society or changing gender roles. In addition, the salary of social workers is below of other sectors and the image of social work profession is marginalized.

Lyubomir Grancharov, CEO of the National Development Agency (NDA, Bulgaria) gave a presentation about "How social changes affect the social work in Bulgaria". The NDA is a NGO who actively contributes to a sustainable socio-economic growth of Bulgaria. They work for the development of a knowledge-based society, by supporting the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of education and training and the development of a balanced governance in the public sector.



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Political changes in the beginning of the 1990s caused large changes and reforms in the field of social services. Mr. Grancharov talked about the development of a new national system of social services and about challenges, the country is facing, like creating conditions for increasing employment, reducing poverty and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.



Germana Di Falco (Expert in public policies and EU planning, Province of Milan) presented the WIT-project and considerations on the first collected data. She talked about what is meant by the term "social innovation" and the projects outcomes like collecting best practices, snapshots and foresights, exchanging and gaining knowledge.

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The WIT-project means research with the aim to enhance the practice. International conferences, meetings and round tables are part of it as well as the development of a geo-referenced WITGIS Atlas where visitors of the website can find innovative projects.

Sebastian Kiedaisch is a social worker in the field of family support and representative of the "Junger DBSH" (Young DBSH). The DBSH is a professional association for social workers as well as a labour union. Mr. Kiedaisch reported on the changes for the working and employment conditions using the example of ambulatory support for families.

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Due to changes in funding, social workers have to take care of more cases and have less time for each child or family. Precarious employment conditions are almost normal in this field of social work. Kiedaisch also talked about the work of the DBSH and the Young DBSH.

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Bartosch (Professor for Pedagogy at Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt) spoke about "Consequences for social workers training, further training and further education". He remembered the audience that in the Bologna Declaration (1999) - the main guiding document of the Bologna process - there is written about a "Europe of knowledge" as a condition for social and human growth and about shared values not only employability.

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Within the Bologna process (the reform of higher education in the European Union) economic issues became more and more important and the role of the universities in many contexts has been reduced to qualify students for the labour market.

Prof. Johannes Kniffki (ASH, Professor for International Social Work) contributed to the successful ending of the event with a presentation based on an essay he wrote together with other colleagues from ASH.

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He presented four controversial statements: 1. Social work is not an academic discipline but an interdisciplinary field of research. 2. Social work must take into consideration the social framework (social



inequality, racism, sexism, etc.). 3. Profession: social work commissions itself due to its involvement into society to reduce social injustice. 4. Due to the complexity of society, social work must be a researching profession to be able to understand the social context of its work and to work for social change. Participants to the conference took the opportunity to discuss these statements.





WIT Second Round-Table feeds debate on Social work quality, educational needs and ongoing changes.

The second project round-table on May 16th was the occasion to discuss innovative projects and initiatives in Germany under the title “**Social work quality, educational needs, changes in the organization of production and in the social work employment structure**”.



It has been underlined as social changes discussed during the international conference led to new target groups of social services or to the application of old methods to new groups of clients. Additionally consequences of the changes as far as the organization and the quality of production have to be taken into consideration.



One of the major changes on the structure and quality of the services comes from the fact that a number of projects **work with volunteers**. Prof. Dr. Stephan Wagner, director of the Paritätische Akademie, the educational institution of one of the major welfare organizations in Germany is an expert on the subject of social work with volunteers. Alice Salomon University and Paritätische Bundesakademie work closely together in offering the social management advanced master program. This master is now offered since 13 years to people working in social services that want to be ready for a management position.



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Prof. Dr. Wagner stated that the thesis that volunteers ultimately are increasingly used in the social services sector due to the lack of sufficient resources following his observation, is not true. He argued that the social budget in Germany has been increasing. But at the same time he said that many innovations (new clients, new services) have been introduced. Thus an increasing budget with increasing services offered leads on an individual project basis, to the observation that there is a lack of resources. Prof. Dr. Wagner made also clear that most of the management work must be done by the professionals to prepare and accompany the work of the volunteers. This is for example one of the subjects of the social management master program.



Target groups for the "Zahnmobil" (mobile dentist service) are illegal, homeless and/or unemployed persons. Officially, there are about 2.000 persons in the region of Hannover, as reported by Dr. Werner Mannherz, but he estimates that the real number is of about 10.000 people. Dr. Mannherz together with his wife had the idea of this project that has existed since two years plus two more years for its preparation.

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The Zahnmobil is the only example of a mobile service for this specific target group in Germany; in other cities, services like this are intramural. In total 27 volunteers are working in the project, 5 of them already retired. Until now, 845 persons have been treated. A number of problems and resistances had to be overcome concerning the project financing and the authorization of the mobile service. [More information: http://www.zahnmobil-hannover.de/](http://www.zahnmobil-hannover.de/).



FrauenNachtCafé (*Night café for women*) addresses women who suffered violence or had deep ruptures in their biography. Gertraud Deinhart explained the concept. The institution opens three evenings (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) from 20 until 2 o'clock and offers services like individual counseling and group offers, free of charge and anonymous.

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The service follows the self-help concept and aims at the empowerment of the target group. The project is controlled by staff affected in the past and that thus is able to contribute with its own experience. In the political field, FrauenNachtCafé together with its supporting institution Wildwasser is fighting to avoid iniquity. [For more information: http://www.wildwasser-berlin.de/frauennachtcafe.htm](http://www.wildwasser-berlin.de/frauennachtcafe.htm).



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Queer Leben (Queer Living) is a project offered by Schwulenberatung Berlin which is a counselling service for gay and bisexual men and for everyone who has questions about his/her sexual identity and people living with HIV/Aids. The project, presented by Katja Vollmer, aims at young people, families and adult people that describe themselves as queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. The project has been existing since 4 years and offers counselling to the target group or to their partners and families. For young people housing (also with therapeutical assistance) is offered. The demand for those shared flats is high since youngsters from all over Germany seek for assistance.

More information: <http://www.schwulenberatungberlin.de/english/>



MUT (Mobile Unterstützende Traumhilfe für Jungen) is a project presented by Yvonne Halejcio-Lindner and Marek Spitzcok von Brisinski. Its target group are boys that lived sexual violence, normally not perceived as a target in the public discussion. Specialists for trauma counselling work with the target group, according to an accepting concept approach and trying to strengthen individual resources.

See for more information: <http://www.hilfuerjungs.de/?cat=52>

Dr. Thomas Bryant (who is also a visiting lecturer at ASH) presented the project POLIS. POLIS is a project of the mobile advisory team Ostkreuz (east cross) that works for the development of democracy, human rights and integration, financed by the SPI foundation (a foundation of the Arbeiterwohlfahrt, the social democratic welfare organization).



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POLIS works in close consultation and cooperation with the district office of Marzahn-Hellersdorf (where ASH is located) - in particular with the district mayor and the integration officer. The goal is to promote a democratic culture against right-wing extremism, democracy hazardous tendencies and all manifestations of group-focused enmity (http://www.stiftung-spi.de/sozraum/sr_polis.html).

Moreover POLIS is closely collaborating with the coordination bureau of the Local Action Plan Hellersdorf-Nord and Hellersdorf-Ost. Those action plans are part of the federal program "Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken" financed by the Federal Ministry of Family to promote democracy and tolerance and to fight right wing extremism. Mrs. Liza Kis presented the local action plan which on the



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district level supports initiatives of local civil society actors that develop strategies for action against right-wing, xenophobic and anti-Semitic tendencies - tailored to the situation of the area. [More information: http://www.aktionsplan-hellersdorf.de/75_LAP_Hellersdorf.htm](http://www.aktionsplan-hellersdorf.de/75_LAP_Hellersdorf.htm).





Next Events in Vilnius

Next Events in Vilnius inspires discussion and more awareness on enhancing “THE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS” of social professionals



Provincia di Milano

During the last week of June 2014, it will be the moment for the Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Social Work to host other very stimulating project events.

The events will start with a preliminary meeting with some of the partners about expectations for the Vilnius events and an overview of the state of art on June 25th. The second day will be the occasion to get into the **2nd seminar analysing the role of organisation in enhancing the Development of the 21st century skills of social professionals**. The very rich agenda foresees a number of international experts and professionals on the field who will be called to deepen the proposed issues. Some of them will be Mrs Germana Di Falco, EU policies Expert, Province of Milan, Italy who will talk about “Emerging skills within social professionals and social services management sector in Italy”, Prof. L. Žalimienė, (Vilnius University), who will analyse the theme of “Organizational support in social services’ organizations - implications for the need of new skills” and Prof. B. Gruzevskis (Vilnius University) who will go into depth as far as labour market trends and the need for the labour power in Lithuania.



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The afternoon will be dedicated to **the 2nd Workshop on “Definition of a new set of specific social service management oriented courses and updated training courses for transversal social professionals”**. Among the experts called to intervene, Lyubomir Grancharov, (CEO of NDA, Bulgaria) will give an overview on emerging skills within social professionals and social services management sector in Bulgaria, Assoc. Prof. Birutė Švedaitė (Vilnius University) will talk about working conditions of social workers:



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the changing organizational culture. Andrea Metzner, Network Management and Education for sustainable develop Expert, (ASH, Germany) will get into depth as far as occupational fields for social workers and studying social work in Germany in the 21st century'. The workshop will be further fed by an open discussion on proposals for specific updated social service management-oriented training courses for transversal social professionals.

The intense working day will moreover end with the Partners' 3rd Coordination Meeting.



On Friday 27 of June **the 3rd Round-Table will take place, being dedicated to an open discussion analyzing the “21st Century Skills” of Social Services Providers**. A focus will be dedicated to the theme of “Supporting life quality: tasks for developing social services Valakupiai rehabilitation centre”. In the afternoon there will be the opportunity for a meeting with the Department of Social Work of the Vilnius University and social partners (foreseen in the afternoon).

How to access to the WIT Thematic Workshops



*Are you interested to share your expertise and join a thematic workshop? **WIT thematic workshops** are open focus groups of experts, practitioners or simply very interested in the field people (researchers, advisors, people from the worlds of NGOs, public and private social sectors, to mention some) focusing on a specific subject, while sharing knowledge and experience. Each thematic workshop tries to feed practical innovative solutions to problems or opportunities in the field drawing on experience derived from tailored useful projects, initiatives and practices.*



You can easily join the on line thematic workshop and download all useful background information, videos and materials via this [link](#).



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