

Introduction to
the Launching of the Network
“Supervision in the Bachelor and Master
of Social Work in Europe”

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Comparative European Social Research and Theory



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Comparative European Social Research and Theory (CESRT) is a Hogeschool Zuyd research centre embedded in the Faculty of Social Studies. CESRT is designed to deepen current social work education programmes, to professionalise teachers and to enhance social professional practice. The applied social research conducted by CESRT centers upon the processes of social exclusion and inclusion.

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Introduction

On May 16th 2007 CESRT, Hogeschool Zuyd, took the initiative to organise an expert meeting on the subject of “Supervision in de Bachelor and the Master Social Work in Europe”. A group of supervision experts spent a whole day brainstorming and discussing supervision as a teaching method for practical training and professional development, “the state of the art” in Europe, and recent developments in the field. The expert meeting lead to the launching of a network for supervisors involved in Bachelor and Master (BaMa) Social Work programmes in Europe. The prime objective of the network is to exchange experiences and knowledge and furthermore to contribute to the development of supervision theory and practice in the BaMa Social Work.

The following report examines the reasoning and motivation on the subject. It provides a summary of the main themes, perspectives and a list of participants (including some of their publications).

Motivation

- Starting point: The changing society: Europe, globalisation, technological developments, intercultural movements, the welfare state, the free market economy and civil society;
- The “new” social worker: a flexible, reflective, scientific, output-oriented, client-oriented professional in psycho-social, social-emotional, socio-pedagogical areas;
- Social work education: Bologna and Copenhagen agreements, BaMa-structure, lifelong learning, the reflective and scientific practitioner, and competence-based learning;
- Bachelor Social Work: theoretical and practical learning;
- Supervision on practical learning in the BSW: terms, concept, methods and content
- A comparative study on: exchange of expertise, exchange of knowledge, current trends.

Summary report

The expert meeting called “**Supervision in the education of social work students in Europe**” was held on 16 May 2007 at Hogeschool Zuyd in Maastricht, The Netherlands. The meeting gathered nine experts in supervision from different European countries. It was a first step in the comparative research on supervision in social work education, launched by Godelieve van Hees, CESRT member, who also organized and mediated the meeting.

Participating countries:

Belgium
Croatia
Slovenia
Germany
Spain
Sweden
The Netherlands

Supervision experiences:

- All participants involved with supervision in the education of social workers: recently according the Bologna system BaMa;
- Bachelor and Masters level: supervision as a learning method to become a professional in social work;
- Some participants are involved in a "Master in supervision";
- Background: sociologist, psychologist, pedagogue, social worker;
- Position: professor, senior lecturer, manager in faculty/ school for Social Work, supervisor;
- Most participants are educated and licensed supervisors;
- In the "new" European countries (like Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) supervision introduced after the war and strongly developed since the late nineties.

Practical learning:

- Important to integrate theory and practice;
- The concept of "research-mindedness": practical experiences and theory integrating and bringing on a meta-level. Supervision is a perfect method to realise this;
- All schools for Social Work offer practical training (placement, projects);
- Problematic to find qualified field placements and qualified field workers to supervise (coach) students.

Organisation of supervision:

- Supervisors come from within the school (e.g., Faculty Social Work University Barcelona);
- Supervisors come from outside the school (e.g., Alice Salomon Hochschule fur Sociale Arbeit, Berlin);
- Students are supposed to find their supervisor by themselves;
- Important to distinguish field teachers from supervisors;
- Supervisors from the field are trained and licensed as supervisors;
- Supervision takes place individually, in groups of 3, 4, 6, 8 and 15 students and 1 supervisor. Group supervision is preferred;
- Once a week, once in two weeks;
- Students are supposed to write a report, a reflection, an evaluation report to demonstrate their ability to connect theory and practice. In the Alice Salomon Hochschule students do not write a report or a diary for reasons of confidentiality;
- For supervision the student has to be progressed in the education, in the first years they are not mature enough to reflect upon their problems and share them with others;
- In the first year of the education a student will have training in reflection and self-reflection, as preparation for subsequent supervision.

What is supervision?

- A place for free speech, for openness, for feedback;
- A place for reflection and self reflection;
- "Supervision is hard to define. One recognises, for example, differences between the Anglo-Saxon countries (UK and Ireland) and the continental countries. During professional training and field placement, students get individual supervision,

- which compared to continental definitions and modes of supervision, is more likely to be called an individual consultation process, based on the practice teacher's direct observation of the student's piece of practice. (See: Ford, K. and Jones, A. (1987)."Student supervision". London: BASW. p. 7.);
- Supervision is a learning method to learn the profession;
- Learn to learn: developing a reflective attitude;
- Directed towards personal and professional growth;
- Focus on personal characteristics of the student and their self reflection, helping them to integrate practical work into their personal distinctiveness.

Content of supervision:

- A "challenging question" related to the concrete situation they are confronted with;
- Field experiences, problems in the field;
- Personal experiences and reflections;
- Theory, methods and field experiences;
- Research mindedness: connecting theory and practical experiences on a Meta level.

Challenges:

- Role conflicts: supervisor, trainer, professor;
- Ethical dilemma's in judgement;
- Lack of empirical data on what supervision does;
- Lack of supervision theory;
- Unclear relation between supervision in education and in profession.

Supervision and coaching:

- New development;
- Different roles and responsibilities. The context is referred;
- Supervision originates and is an integral part of social work, coaching is more output-oriented and a management tool;
- Coaching is booming and perhaps overwhelming supervision in future;
- Big overlap between the two;
- Current ANSE (European Association for Supervision) discussion on coaching and supervision for identifying similarities and potential collaborations.

Cultural aspects of supervision:

- Because of internationalisation/globalisation and immigration, supervisors notice that students from abroad and going abroad are not well enough prepared to deal with their new experiences;
- When students return from abroad it is useful to offer them supervision to reflect on all those intercultural experiences.
- Aspects of culture play a role in reflection, in learning;
- In Barcelona students are well prepared by having supervision before and after the period abroad in Latin American Countries;
- Supervision is very culturally and historically embedded.

Supervision, counselling and therapy:

- In the "new" European countries (like Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) the last war had a big influence in the education of social work students, e.g., the experience their own trauma, problems. Supervision and therapy are closely linked;

- Social work professional field attracts people with psychological problems (?);
- Supervision is not therapy; there is an overlap that has to be divided.

Research in supervision:

There is a need for research: insight in the comparative practice in supervision.

- Lack of information about what supervisors do in practice;
- Lack of information on what supervision does, e.g., supervision outcomes;
- There is a need for supervision theory.

Competence-based education and supervision:

The Lisbon Strategy emphasises the development of competencies in the European higher education system. What does this mean for social work education supervision in social work?

- Competence: knowledge, skills and attitude;
- Competence-based curriculum is a challenge to design: high level of abstraction: how to formulate them that students and workers can identify with them?
- Competencies refer to skills but what about reflection, values?
- What are the competencies for supervision? (The Dutch definition says nothing about competencies or values);
- EASSW document on global standards for social work can act as a useful starting point for discussing competencies;
- Jan Agten proposed 9 competences formulated by his school and asked meeting members to read and provide an opinion on these (See appendix 3).

What to do with this knowledge and exchange of experiences?

- Set up a network of supervisors involved with the education and training of social workers;
- Develop research into the practice of supervision in the Bachelor Social Work in European Schools for Social Work;
- It is important to remain realistic;
- Interesting to do case studies of particular schools and their practice in supervision. Context of particular countries should be put only in the introduction. Case studies could produce interesting highlights extracted from the input of experts. Some of these could be focussed upon and discussed from the perspective of trends.
- Research could be done by the team of national experts, via a case study in their respective countries and according to a joint methodology. This could reduce the risk of error and ensure consistency in the different countries. It would also increase the research's intercultural dimension, creating an opportunity for intercultural learning.

Summary of the core ideas/ suggestions:

- Basic principle: The Bachelor-Master structure of the Bologna Declaration 1999 is a starting point to frame the supervision research;
- There are different opinions about doing and organising supervision in the participating schools for Social Work. It would be interesting to describe and distinguish the experiences.
- The importance of exposing and developing knowledge on supervision leads to support for the proposal to start up research on supervision in the Social Work Bachelor programmes in Europe;
- Case-studies are an appropriate research method;

- A publication: "Supervision in de Bachelor programme Social Work in Europe" would be the research outcome;
- It is important to contact supervisors of Schools for Social Work in the UK and Ireland in order to get a better geographic spread of European countries and views on supervision;
- Need for research on supervision;
- Need for a new, further developed supervision theory;
- New aspects of learning can help develop supervision theory;
- New insights in learning processes by the neuropsychological research;
- The competencies discussion has to start.

Perspectives:

- Developing the network;
- Preparing a research plan and developing research on "Supervision in the Bachelor and Master Social Work in Europe";
- Preparing a publication.

Participants:

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Publications (of network members) on supervision:

- Marina Ajdukovic, Lilja Cajvert: *Development of social work supervision in countries in transition- Reflections from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina*.
Published in: Social Work in Europe, 10(2) 11-22.
(in English).
- Marina Ajducovic: *Introduction supervision in the social welfare system in Croatia*,
Published in: U:Hessle, S.I.Zavirsek,D (eds) (2005)Sustainable developments in social work-The case of a regional Network in the Balkans, Stockholm: Stockholm University, Department of Social Work. International Projects, 113-141

- Lilja Calvert: *Education of supervisors in Sweden-Bosnia and Herzegovina- Croatia*, intern publication, conference report Opatija, 2004.
(in English).
- Lilja Cajvert: project-Leader, *Master Postgraduate studies Supervision in social work (M-SSW)*, 2006, Project of the departments of social work of the universities of Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Gothenburg
(in Englis
- Josefina Fernadez i Barrera: *La importancia de la supervisión en la formación de los trabajadores sociales: los principales actores implicados*.
In: Servicios sociales y política social, Aprendizaje y Formación 68, 2004
(in Spanish)
- Josefina Fernadez i Barrera: *La supervisión en el trabajo social*, Barcelona, Paidós Iberica S.A., 1997
- Josefina Fernadez i Barrera : *Supervision in social work studies in Spanish' universities*, Abstract from:: *La supervisión en el trabajo social*, Barcelona, Paidós Iberica S.A., 1997 and "La supervisión en los estudios de trabajo social de las diversas universidades del estado español". Fifth Congress of Schools of Social Work, Huelva (Spain) April 2004.
(summary in English)
- Brigitte Geißler-Piltz / Susanne Gerull: *Social work in the health sector. Subjective appraisals and framework conditions of professional conduct*
published as: *Soziale Arbeit im Gesundheitswesen. Subjektive Einschätzungen und Rahmenbedingungen professionellen Handelns*. In: *Klinische Sozialarbeit. Zeitschrift für psychosoziale Praxis und Forschung*, 3/07
- Godelieve van Hees: *De praktijk in ogenschouw, Supervisie nota, ("Review the practice", module supervision) Bachelor Social Work*, 2007, Intern publication Social Studies, Hogeschool Zuyd
(in Dutch).
- Alice Salmon Fachhochschule Berlin: *Modulhandbuch des Bachelor-Studienganges Soziale Arbeit*, 2007, Intern publication, ASFH-Berlin
(in German)
- Alice Salmon Fachhochschule Berlin: *Regulations for training Supervision in the "social work" bachelor's programme at the Alice Salomon Fachhochschule Berlin*, intern Publication ASFH-Berlin (In English).

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