

International Policy Practice Meeting 14 October 2021, 18:00 CET (Zoom)

The expert committee “Politics of Social Work” of the German Association of Social Work (DGSA) in collaboration with the Institute of Social Work and Social Spaces (IFSAR) at the Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences invites all interested students, scholars and social workers to participate in the second international policy practice meeting. This workshop will be a good opportunity to get in touch with politically interested and engaged social workers from different countries, discuss various professional options to bring about change in social policy, and to learn from outstanding researchers in the field of political social work. The meeting will last about three hours and consists of the following program:

Dr. Rick Hoefler (he/him), University of Texas, Arlington

Amplifying the Voice of Social Work in Policy:
SPEAK and the Civic Voluntarism Model

SPEAK (Social Policy Education, Advocacy, and Knowledge) is a new initiative to amplify the voice of social work in social policymaking. The program is designed in line with the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) to increase students’ resources, engagement, and access to networks. This presentation discusses SPEAK, its theoretical foundations, and activities and outcomes thus far. We believe the educational initiative can be applied elsewhere, just as the CVM has been shown to apply in many countries around the world. We welcome a discussion of facilitators and barriers to successful implementation in any higher education setting.

Dr. Talia Meital Schwartz-Tayri (she/her), Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Findings of a quantitative research project on policy advocacy

In her presentation, Dr. Schwartz-Tayri will present and discuss her most recent work examining policy advocacy explanatory models tested among front-line social workers and managers in welfare services. The first two research models used traditional Civic Voluntarism Model predictors, and the third model tested used an ecological integrative theoretical approach to predict social workers' policy advocacy engagement. The studies used advanced quantitative procedures to reveal the mechanism that may explain policy advocacy engagement. Taken together, policy advocacy studies show that using a research model comprised of a multi-leveled and integrative theoretical approach leads to a better understanding of the engagement of social workers in policy advocacy. Directions for future research are also discussed.

Kathrin Amann (she/her), Department of Health Canton of St.Gallen
Social Workers in Politics – factors influencing social
workers' decision to run for political office

This presentation is about a qualitative study which explores the motivations that led social workers in the German-speaking part of Switzerland to run for political office, identifies factors that influence their decision to participate in politics, as well as important policymaking skills and competencies among social workers holding elected office. The results of the study emphasize that to further promote political engagement, political action should be more strongly integrated into social work education and encouraged by professional associations.

**Matthias Kachel (he/him), BayWISS Promotionskolleg Sozialer Wandel
(KSH München, Uni Bamberg)**

"It takes a decent dose of courage" – Political elements in Social Work education in Germany

For my doctoral thesis, I am currently comparing ten different Social Work curricula at as many Schools of Social Work in Germany. My goal is to find out if and how future social workers are receiving – or are at least able to receive – training for political situations and political work and if the skills taught are the ones that are needed in practice. As work on my thesis progresses, I let students of social work and social workers discuss my findings about "their" study programme in focus groups while also asking if the skills taught on paper are also the ones that are taught in reality – and if they are the ones that are needed in practice.

Laura Schultz (she/her), University of Duisburg-Essen
Methods of political influence of weak interests using the example of the reform
process of the Bundesteilhabegesetz (Federal Participation Act)

The presentation presents first results of the dissertation project (working title): 'How can people with disabilities assert their interests? Process tracing of the Bundesteilhabegesetz'. The aim of the dissertation is to use the example of the Bundesteilhabegesetz (Federal Participation Act) reform and the method of process tracing to reconstruct to what extent and how people with disabilities were able to assert their interests. Within the reform process of the Federal Participation Act, interest groups of people with disabilities (also called 'weak interests' following association research) have been intensively involved in different stages of the process. The presentation will take a closer look at their political influence. The power resource approach adapted to 'weak interests' forms a basis as well as various lobbying activities to show different methods used by 'weak interests' to influence the reform process (for example: by using special alliances and consultations as well as 'classics' of lobbying like protests and direct lobbying).

Registration and contact

There is no registration fee. The meeting will be held online only. Please send an e-mail to tobias.kindler@ost.ch in order to get your Zoom access code. We are looking forward to your participation.

Tobias Kindler & Jens Wurtzbacher,
Chairs of the expert committee "Politics of Social Work" (DGSA)