

**Doru Buzducea, Valentina Rujoiu, Florin Lazăr, Anamaria Szabo & Theodora Ene (Eds.): *International social work: A supplement of Social Work Review* [Nemzetközi szociális munka: Melléklet a Social Work Review-hoz]**

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*International social work*, edited by Doru Buzducea, Valentina Rujoiu, Florin Lazăr, Anamaria Szabo, and Theodora Ene, appeared as a supplement to the *Social Work Review*, the academic social work journal under the umbrella of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the University of Bucharest. A carefully crafted collection of articles prepared by authors from around the world, the book attempts to highlight the increasingly global character of social work. It serves a double-folded purpose: (1) to highlight the diverse character of contemporary social work issues, and (2) to connect these issues into one dynamic, flexible profession, characterized by new features, challenges, and development perspectives.

The book came both as a confirmation of the growing international academic and professional interest in global social work issues and as a clear engagement of the Romanian social work academia in what has now become a global-scale movement for the integration and (re)positioning of social work expertise and knowledge within larger social development initiatives and strategies. A very brief overview of the international social work professional context in which this book has taken shape is necessary. In June 2010 a few thousand social work practitioners, educators and development workers met in Hong Kong and initiated a consultative process for the creation of a *Global Agenda* that would lay down a common framework for their joint-effort and engagement in addressing major contemporary social challenges (IASSW, ICSW & IFSW, n.d.). The outcome was the adoption in 2012 of the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development*, which marked the worldwide coalition between social work practitioners, educators and development professionals. It was between these two key-events, during global consultations, that *International social work* appeared, as an initiative of the Editors, all faculty

members in the Social Work Department of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest.

One of the most prominent strengths of this collection is, as the Editors themselves highlight in the *Introduction*, the fact that it brings together papers of researchers and scholars from around the world – Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia -, all addressing social issues of global scale. The collection is divided into two parts that complement each other: (1) social work: global challenges and practical insights, and (2) social problems, researches' outputs and interventions. Starting with a general note by highlighting new professional trajectories of social work at the turn of the Millennium, such as the privatization of social services (Doru Buzducea, Romania), *part one* builds around a *macro*-perspective on the social reality, in which social work issues take shape. Several *themes* arise from this part of the collection:

- *Critical social work viewpoints on ideological implications*: the negative consequences that the individualistic approach of The Third Way in the UK has on social services and social work values, the Big Society approach being presented as a plausible but still vague alternative (Bill Jordan, UK); the implications of the neoliberal ideology for social work ethics and practice, with a focus on the dismantling of the welfare state and the perpetuation of striking economic disparities (Christian Stark, Austria); a proposition for a return to the radical social work tradition of the '70s (Iain Ferguson, Scotland).
- *Social work from a systemic perspective*: from Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems (social work seen as part of a social control mechanism), towards Mario Bunge's system theory (proposes a more nuanced understanding of social problems) (Michael Klassen, Austria).
- *Evidence-based practice in social work*: the increasing need and obligation for scientifically supported measurements of outcomes in social work (Bruce Thyer, Florida); an example of an empirical direct evaluation model (Bradford Sheafor, Colorado); the emergence of evaluative research and of strategies for the use of evidence (Alison Petch, UK); an example of a continuing education program in evaluation techniques for social services providers (Annamaria Campanini, Italy); a call for self-evaluation of practice through reflection on own mistakes and experiences (Alessandro Sicora, Italy); a proposition for utilization-focused evaluation in social work (Michael Patton, Minnesota).

- *The establishment of modern social work*: the role of supervision in the shaping of the social work profession in former communist countries (Rebecca Davis, New Jersey); the development of professional standards for social services – the Hungarian experience (Judith Kozma); the management of risk in social work practice, with a focus on security and resilience (Malcolm Payne, Poland); the role of professional associations in ethical accountability (Kathryn Wehrmann, Illinois).
- *Social work in development initiatives*: the implementation of ‘active inclusion’ policies at the local level through public social services (Matthias Schulze-Boing, Germany); an example of an urban housing development program (Ramona Stone, Robin Vanderpool, Anita Barbee and Dana Patrick, USA); an example of a project for the capacity building of faith-based and community organizations in local development (Marciana Popescu, Carmen Sugawara, Edwin Hernandez and Smita Dewan, USA).

*Part two* turns to a *micro*-perspective on social work pressing issues. Although locally-based social interventions and researches are being presented, their underlying social problems mirror the growing interconnectedness of worldwide social realities, supporting the view of an ongoing internationalization process of social work. The *themes* that can be identified in this part are:

- *Aging*: the social protection of the elderly in Slovakia (Martiana Hrozenska); the role of genetics in shaping the functioning of families and the well-being of individuals that have had one or more relatives suffering from Alzheimer’s disease (Stephen Cutler and Lynne Hodgson, USA).
- *Violence and abuse*: a comparative analysis of marital rape legislation in numerous countries (e.g. Chile, France, Germany, Canada, India, Russia, etc.) (Valentina Rujoiu, Romania); developing child protection skills and best practices for children raised in families affected by domestic violence, substance abuse or mental illness (Betty Blythe, Kristin Heffernan and Barbara Walters, USA); the prevalence of sexual assault and its implications for social work education and practice (Noel Busch-Armendariz, Holly Bell, Diana DiNitto, Shetal Vohra-Gupta and Diane McDaniel Rhodes, Texas); the criminal exploitation of children in Nigeria (Olakunle Michael Folami).
- *At-risk social groups*: achieving universal access to treatment for people living with HIV in Romania through community sector involvement and advocacy (Florin Lazăr); the evolution of social protection services for children and the youth in South Africa (Rika Swansen); findings from focus groups on smoking

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prevention and treatment among Romanian teenagers (Theodora Ene); mentoring as an alternative to therapy for immigrant and refugees (Andrea Colin and Betty Blythe, USA).

- *Local insights on social work education*: difficulties encountered by social work education in South Asia (Bala Raju Nikku, Nepal); an evaluation of a field placement program for social work students in Barbados (Letnie Rock and Karen Ring), the pros and cons of online education (Keith Haley, Ohio).
- *Social work in criminal justice*: health promotion for the incarcerated youth in Romania (Anamaria Szabo); judicial rehabilitation and practices of redemption in France (Martine Herzog-Evans); an analysis of current transformations of the field of criminal justice social work (Fergus McNeill, Denis Bracken and Alan Clarke, UK); promoting protection and positive behavior as an alternative to the risk factor perspective in criminology (Stephen Case and Kevin Haines, UK); an analysis of the break between social work and probation studies in England and its implications for practice (Lol Burke, UK); latest developments in criminal justice social work in Scotland (Trish McCulloch and Fergus McNeill, Scotland), social work and criminal justice in the context of the Scandinavian welfare state (Kerstin Svensson, Sweden); theoretical and practical insights on probation and social work in the Slovakia (Martin Lulei).

*International social work* is a unique piece in the Romanian social work literature, where very few initiatives to bring in focus the global character of social work exist at this time. Its audience, however, spreads well beyond Romania's borders, as the book succeeds in its attempt to capture the dynamism of contemporary social work and the diverse perspectives of social work researchers from around the world in regards to current pressing issues on the global agenda. The collection's eclectic character works in its favor, imprinting it with an "ice-breaker" effect for deeper involvement in and wider recognition of international social work issues. Social science scholars, researchers, practitioners, policy makers and anyone else interested in international social work will find this book to be an excellent starter into to field.

### References

IASSW, ICSW & IFSW (n.d.). *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. Toward an Engagement Agenda. Mobilisation of Social*

*Workers, Social Work Educators & Policy Practitioners and Developers for Global Social Change.* Last visited on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2014:  
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