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EDITORIAL

Human dignity, equity, social justice and equal participation; the underlying topics of this Journal of Social Intervention are not the least. It seems the authors have been looking for solid anchor points in turbulent times. These can provide guidance in the search for answers to questions like: “What is a good citizen?”, “How does a good social worker act and reflect?” and “What is the unique added value of social work?”

In this Autumn issue of JSI we present you two peer-reviewed articles, three book reviews, with its Editorial, and a contribution in the category Innovation in Practice and Education (IWO). In addition, you will find a call for state-of-the-art papers that connect to the Dutch Knowledge and Research Agenda for Social Work. Sufficient food for thought! We hope you enjoy it.

The first peer-reviewed article with the intriguing title *Mind the gap* addresses the matter of the potential of professional youth work for civic empowerment and engagement of youth at social risk. This interesting contribution is written by Ronald Crouzé, Tom Vanwing en Pieter Meurs, researchers and professors at the Vrije University of Brussels. The authors describe how, despite the efforts of youth workers and educators, there is still a serious civic empowerment gap: a problematic difference in the participation between disadvantaged groups and those from dominant and socio-economically advantaged backgrounds. In their study they state that often

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the non-participating youth is approached from a socialisation or disciplinarian discourse. They challenge such an approach and build on the concept of political subjectification to offer an alternative.

The second peer-reviewed article *Implementing the right to a decent living standard in Belgium*, is also of Flemish origin. The meticulously elaborated paper is written by Marieke Frederickx, Bérénice Storms and Ilse Cornelis, all working at the Centre for budget advice and research of the Thomas More University of Applied Sciences in Geel. The article details the case of the implementation of the REDI tool, a reference budget-based tool, tailor-made to each client situation. The tool is used to assess income adequacy in Belgian social assistance with the overall aim to enable people to lead a life in dignity. It also collects data that give insight into the characteristics of the group of aid seeking citizens and their budgetary barriers. In doing so, it seems a promising instrument to implement the right to a decent living standard in Belgium.

The three book reviews discuss recent publications targeting the heart of social work. Kristel Driessens, lecturer and researcher at the Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences in Antwerp gives them an outstanding introduction in the preceding Editorial. The first review discusses a collection of essays issued by the Dutch platform of social work lecturers. In *Sociaal werk doordacht* edited by Judith Metz, Marja Jager-Vreugdenhil, Jean Pierre Wilken and Toby Witte (2021), the authors strive to make a meaningful contribution to the explicitation of the common knowledge base of social work, as well as to its positioning and profiling.

The second publication, reviewed by Simone Boogaarts of the HAN University of Applied Sciences, has an almost similar title: *Denken over sociaal werk* (2021). This extensive work is the result of a Flemish-Dutch cooperation of lecturers of different Social Work Master's programmes, edited by Peter Raeymaeckers and Jeroen Gradener. Inspired by a wide range of – mainly Western orientated – philosophers, sociologists and other great thinkers, they debate key issues which set the context of social work.

The last review, written by Emilio José Gómez-Ciriano, associate professor Social Work at the University de Castilla-La Mancha, deals with the voice of service users. *Involving Service Users in Social Work Education, Research and Policy. A Comparative Analysis* (2022), edited by Kristel Driessens and Vicky Lyssens-Danneboom, is the result of an impressive and comprehensive multiannual research project in nine European countries. As much as 39 service users, lecturers and researchers from 22 (academic) institutions describe their respective experiences and models in

cooperating with service users (experts by experience, clients, patients) in social work. The study shows that social work education programmes are getting serious about user involvement, driven by its core values of social justice, equal participation and human dignity.

The three book reviews connect well with the call for a brand-new category of articles, that we present you in this JSI issue. In 2020 the Dutch platform of social work lecturers (Lectoren Platform Sociaal Werk) launched the Knowledge and Research Agenda for Social Work. The Agenda is built on four pillars: promoting social cohesion, promoting inclusion, strengthening everyday life and giving voice to citizens. In cooperation with this initiative, we invite you to submit state-of-the-art papers concerning one of these topics and thus contributing to enhance the further development of social work as a scientifically substantiated profession. A detailed description of the call can be found on page 62 of this issue and on our website.

Finally, we present you a contribution in the category Innovation in Practice and Education. Jeanet van de Korput, researcher and lecturer at the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in Almere, wrote an inspiring text on so-called first-generation students. These are the first in their family to follow an academic study. In *Eerstegeneratiestudenten: een groep apart?* she discusses the experiences and thoughts of these students on inclusion and participation. Based on small-scale research the author advocates that we should be careful in the use of this term, as it can lead to stigmatisation and exclusion from supportive programmes of a group of students with similar needs.

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