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MAPPING OF EXPERIENCES ON SERVICES USERS' PARTICIPATION AT ESEIS

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Summary

This report presents the results of a survey conducted between January and April 2021 on how social service users participate in the training of social workers in ESEIS

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ESEIS: European School of Social Intervention

The school is managed by a non-profit association: Association for Training and Research in Social Intervention (AFRIS). It 's an independent organization, under the law of 1908

ESEIS trains professionals in social intervention and health. It was created on June 25, 2018 by the union of 2 schools : ESTES and IFCAAD.

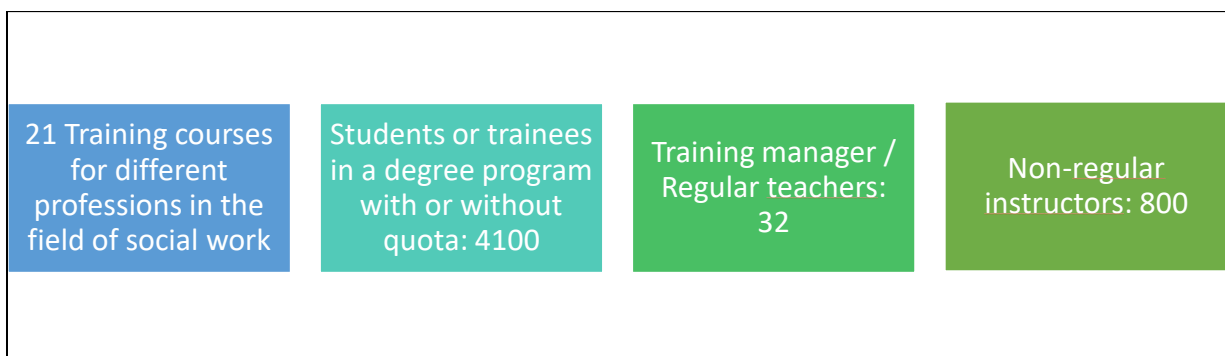
ESEIS prepares students for the social work professions, which include various fields of intervention:

- Management and expertise
- Support for professionalization
- Social action
- Social support and animation
- Assistance to individuals and families

A presence on three training sites in Alsace :

- Strasbourg
- Schiltigheim
- Illzach

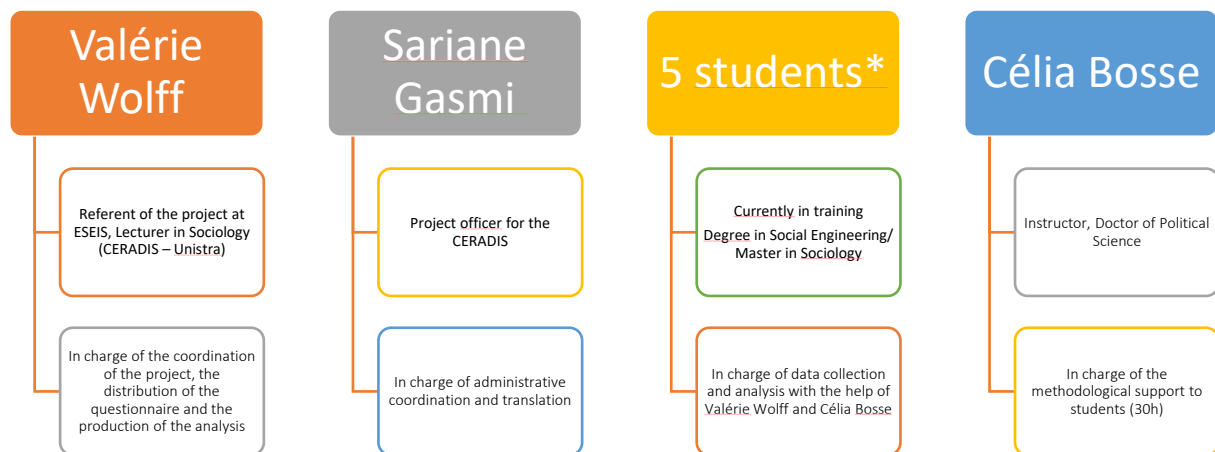
Fig 1: Key numbers of the activity



MÉTHODOLOGY

RESEARCH TEAM

The research team is composed of



**Arnaud Albinet, Céline Braun, William Franck, Laura Martena, Mathieu Recio*

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

3 COMPLEMENTARY METHODS

1. **Survey** sent to all ESEIS training manager and regular teachers (n=32)
2. **Focus groups** by videoconference with the ESEIS training manager and regular teachers (n=9)

Organised in 3 phases

- Identification/description of actions taken and their advantages/benefits
 - Identification/description of difficulties encountered and obstacles to the development of participation
 - Identification/description of ways to improve actions and develop participation within ESEIS
3. **Individual interviews** with identified resource persons

ESEIS Direction, regular or non-regular teachers, Training Managers, Union or federation professionals and representatives on the territory, instructors from other social work education institutions

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

- **The surveys**
 - Answers to the open questions were sorted and categorized afterwards
 - The data collected was flat sorted and cross sorted
- **Focus groups and interviews**
 - Were recorded and transcribed (note-taking)
 - Were subject to a content analysis
 - The data were sorted in relation to the objectives of the project
 - Identify existing experiences
 - Identify their advantages/disadvantages
 - Identify the obstacles and resources to the development of user participation

THE LIMITS

The context in which the survey was conducted was very difficult

- **La The Covid-19 pandemic** led to recommendations from the government to hold classes by videoconference
- Students and instructors have encountered many difficulties and dissatisfactions related to this context
- These problems were heightened in a context of **managerial crisis within ESEIS**
- As a result, **the first quarter of 2021 has been affected by strikes, demonstrations and claims** from both students and instructors
- In this context, the students were **not able to collect responses from all of the Teachers & Training Managers**, and the inventory of participation experiences **cannot claim to be exhaustive**.

However, the work accomplished has already allowed

- to reach **more than half of the permanent trainers (n=17/32)**
- to **identify many existing experience (n=19)**
- and **draw meaningful conclusions within ESEIS**

RESULTS

SOCIAL SERVICE USERS

For the majority of respondents (n=12), the term "social service users" refers to people who receive or have received support from social services.

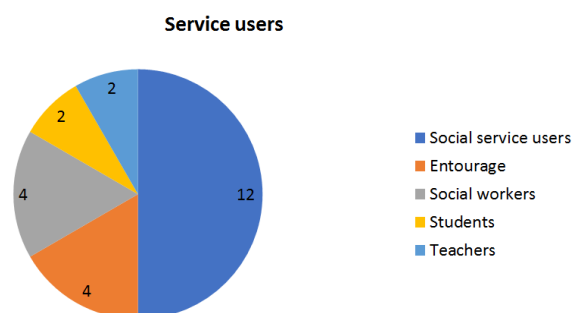
- Some respondents (n= 2) also mentioned "people concerned" with an area usually related to social work (e.g. disability). Concerned persons' do not necessarily receive help from a social service, but they have experience (e.g. as a person with a disability) that can help social workers

For other respondents (n=4) the term "service users" can also refer to the users' relatives: parents, siblings, legal representatives (legal guardians...). Two respondents pay particular attention to the topic of "peer support"

It is interesting to notice that some respondents (n=4) identify the term "service users" with social work professionals or volunteers: social workers, associations, administrations ...

Finally, for a minority of respondents, the term "service users" refers to students (n=2) and teachers at the school (n=2)

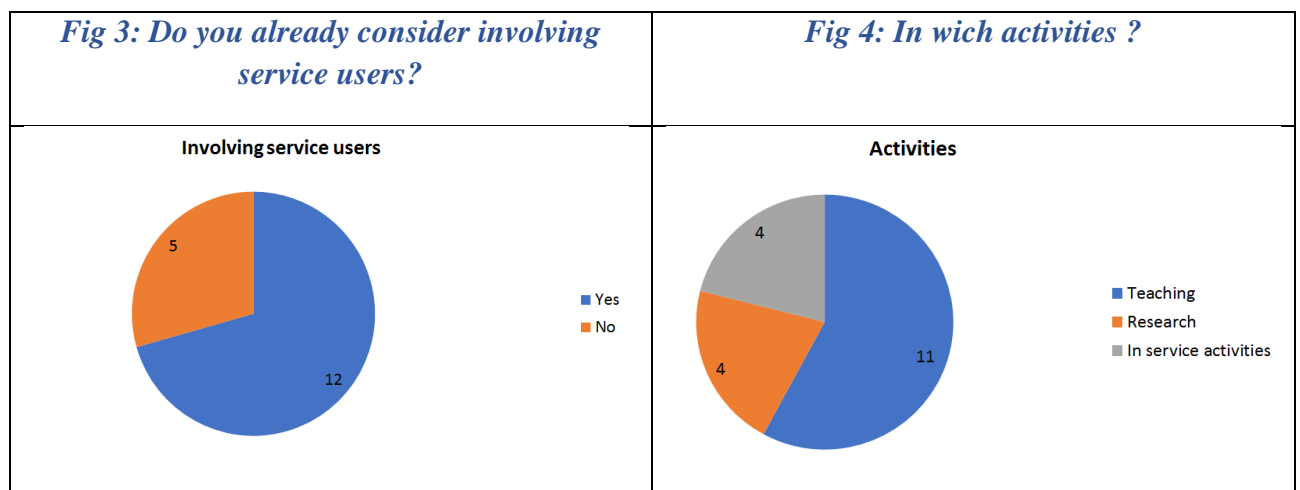
Fig 2: What audiences do you think constitute "service users"?



INVOLVING SERVICE USERS : IN WHICH ACTIVITIES ?

12 of the 17 respondents indicated that they offer to users to participate, a relatively high rate of 70%

- Education is the main field concerned (58 %)
- Users are also involved in the school activities (21%) and in research activities (21%)
 - This is one of the main objectives of CERADIS, which encourages the conduct of inclusive “action research”
 - Users are involved in all stages of the research process, helping to design the hypotheses, methodology and analyses
 - They also participate in the evaluation of the approach, its results and its distribution.

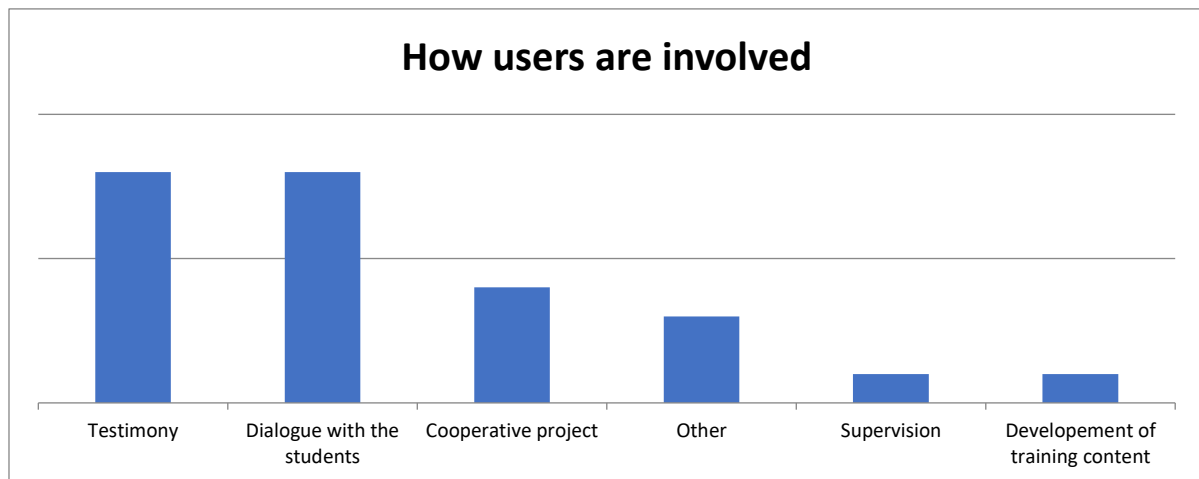


EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

The experiences noted are mostly programmed in the first year of the students' training (50%). In 90% of the cases, the experiments take place with small groups of students (about 15). The duration of the project is often very short: ½ day (25%) to one day (33%). More rarely, it lasts 2 to 3 days (17%) or more than 3 days (25%).

Testimony and dialogue with students are the main experiences of user participation developed in the training of social workers.

Fig 3: How are users involved?



The objectives pursued are rarely identified in terms of skills to be acquired! (n=7/12)

- The main objectives identified by the respondents are: "providing testimony", "sharing experiences", "illustrating theoretical lessons" ...

Other initiatives (n=4/12) aim at the joint construction of actions with users

- "It is a question of implementing projects by groups of students in response to needs identified locally, for example in connection with the establishment project of the structures; (for example:) to carry out an animation with a public in difficulty "
- "Develop a handbook on access to rights and access to care for immigrants"
- " Co-writing the learner's booklet argument about inclusive policy "

Rarely, educational objectives are expressed (n=2/12)

- " Show the interest of the participation of the persons to improve the methods of accompaniment + Deconstruct the representations linked to the relation of domination between the professional and the user "
- " Enable students to understand the impact of disability on daily life, with a view to adapting their support as professionals by allowing the user to be at the center of concerns while being an actor of his life ".

GLOBAL EXPERIENCES: IDENTIFICATION OF SOME INITIATIVES

| Testimonies / dialogue with students | Cooperative project |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An educator with a hearing impairment who comes to express the realities and difficulties she encounters in daily life 2. A blind person who comes to express these realities and difficulties 3. A person with cerebral palsy who came to express these realities and difficulties 4. The mother of a young girl with a disability to talk about communication and her feelings about the way she is viewed with regard to disability 5. The peer-help on two sessions with the Educational Monitors in Training Area 1 (Testimony, making the link between theory and practice) 6. "Self-determination, being an adult with a disability": peer-help that gives a third party place in the training (AES) 7. Inclusive practice: The participation of the people supported, experiential knowledge and management: the example of the Day Care Service for the Disabled: participation of a college of residents for the recruitment of new employees 8. "The affective and sexual life of adolescents with disabilities: participation of transgender adolescents in one of the modules of the graduate training course 9. Social accompaniment in the Asylum Reception Center (testimonies; professional research, dialogues with students) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training days co-constructed within the framework of an option (in the bachelor's degree program), involving social work students, people attending a Mutual Aid Group (GEM), social workers from the GEM and a structure welcoming people with a psychological disability in Kehl (Germany).the training is organized in half-day at the GEM in France, half-day in Kehl. The GEM welcomed the students to present the structure and then the group of students + GEM (social workers and people concerned) went to Kehl to discover the practices on the other side of the Rhine. The persons accompanied had the same status as the students in these training days. 2. 4 projects to have the students assistants of specialized education intervene each year with the persons accompanied in institution for the co-construction of a project (10h). 3. Co-writing the argument of the learner's booklet concerning the inclusive policy and more precisely the inclusive mission addressed to all learners. 4. Collective elaboration of an action of animation in an establishment, common elaboration of a guide of access to the rights intended for the users...) 5. Literary "Coup de coeur" at the ESEIS resource center: selection and presentation of books by supported persons, professionals and students, then election of the best book 6. A social grocery store project set up with students and the people concerned at ESEIS in Schiltigheim. This project is renewed every year. Optional module on disability and theater - partnership with ADAPEI 7. Research-action Marge: involvement of the inhabitants with the aim of systematically developing exchanges between the actors of marginalized districts in France, Germany and Switzerland. 8. The support of senior immigrants: co-development of a guide to accessing the rights of elderly immigrants involving users, social service professionals and trainers 9. Write with users the argument of the student's booklet concerning the inclusive policy 10. ERASMUS + project on the participation of users in social training |

COMMENTS ON THE IDENTIFIED ACTIONS

LACK OF EXHAUSTIVENESS

The actions listed here are not exhaustive. They do not represent the totality of user participation actions carried out at ESEIS. Due to the limited timeframe and the difficult context (see methodology), not all instructors could be interviewed. However, the approach demonstrates the existence of a significant number of actions (n=21) identified in a short period of time

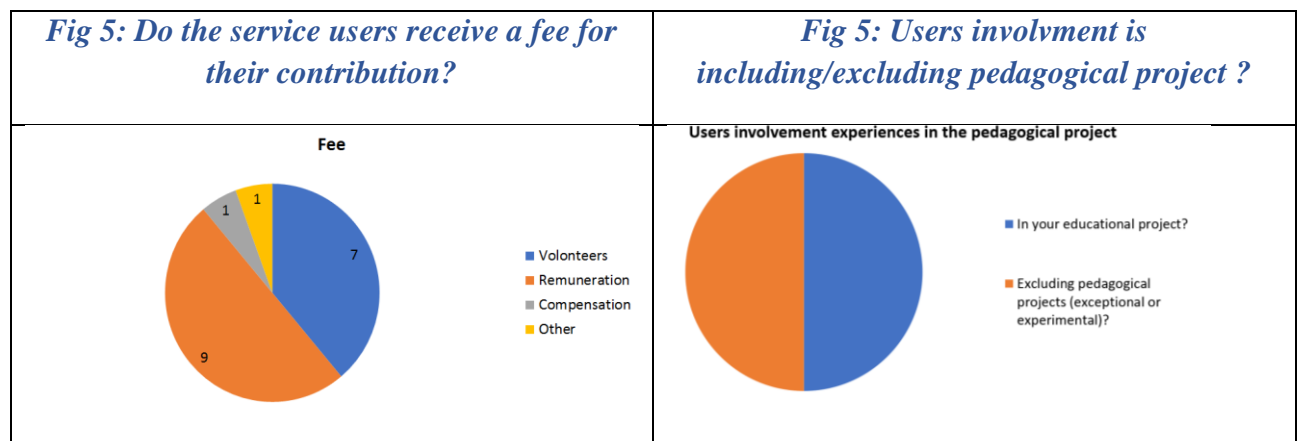
TPOLOGY

The typology used makes a distinction between actions that are based on testimonies/dialogue with students, and those that are co-constructed between users, students, instructors and professionals. The degree of involvement of users is more important in this second type of action. However, this type of action is in the minority in the context of training. the involvement of users is thus more frequent in the context of research.

DISABILITY

The actions identified often concern people with disabilities Several hypotheses can explain this: the "snowball effect" in the contact with users on the same territory, the progress of the disability sector (compared to other sectors) on the issue of user participation, the possibility of access to the public through specific accommodation/schooling/work establishments...

STATUS OF USERS AND ACTION



BARRIERS

| Reason for non-implementation | Obstacles |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No time • Not included in the training model • Newly arrived instructor • Didn't think of it • Difficult to set up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Time • Users' compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of users and their remuneration • Logistical dimensions (transport, travel) • Impossible remuneration for some of the disabled people (risk of loss of benefit / administrative problems) • Multiplication of contributors to be remunerated (several users sometimes parfois, sometimes accompanied by social workers) • Recognition of experiential knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The conviction that the persons concerned have an experiential knowledge to transmit to future professionals or to professionals, beyond the contribution of a single testimony, is not yet widely shared among training managers and professionals ". • Knowing people who are able to express themselves in front of groups • Difficulty to go beyond the simple individual example and to have a constructed pedagogical approach to this subject |

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

- **A relative consensus on the definition of users**
 - These are people who receive or have received help from social services (and more broadly their relatives)
- **The actions of participation of the users concern essentially teaching activities**
 - This is the main activity of the School (research being secondary)
 - The actions of participation in the activity of the school are more rare

- **These actions are often short** (1/2 day or 1 day) and concern mainly **small groups of students** (in order to encourage discussions) in first year
- **The objectives are rarely identified in terms of skills to be developed**
 - The main objectives identified by the respondents are: contribution of testimonies, dialogue with the students, illustration of theoretical teachings...
- Most of the initiatives are currently based on service **users' testimonies**, which remains quite a **narrow approach to participation**
 - More seldom, some actions are the result of a real cooperative project involving users, students, professionals and instructors. This is particularly the case for actions "outside the walls" / outside the school (collective development of an activity in an establishment, joint development of a guide to accessing rights for users, etc.). This is also the case for research activities.
- **The three major barriers to participation are:**
 - Lack of time
 - Difficulties in compensating users (administrative and financial problems: see slide " challenges")
 - Lack of framework (not foreseen in the training model, no instructions given to the instructors, no help for the implementation.)

ANALYSIS

Reminder:

- In France, the participation of users in social training
 - Is not a legal obligation.
 - Does not have a dedicated budget
 - Is not mentioned in all the educational standards for the different social professions
 - Is left to the initiative of the training center/school
- At ESEIS
 - Numerous experiments have been carried out
 - They are based on the free initiative of trainers
 - There is no institutional framework that favors this implementation

The SWOT allows for the analysis of user involvement experiences at ESEIS by highlighting their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

STRENGTHS

There is a real desire to develop user participation within ESEIS. The survey conducted confirmed this desire among the trainers interviewed, as well as the desire of the management.

Many experiences already exist. However, they are not systematic or harmonised and do not appear in all training reference systems. Most of the time, these experiences are the result of the individual initiative of trainers.

There are a few specific projects that include dedicated funding for user involvement. This is notably the case of the inclusive action research carried out at ESEIS.

WEAKNESSES

There is a severe lack of resources. Several actions (e.g. a working group) to develop user involvement in social worker training have already failed due to lack of resources (staff, time, etc.).

Another weakness is that the topic is not considered a priority. At the time of the survey period (2021) ESEIS was in a double crisis context: the Covid-19 health crisis had many impacts on teaching, and ESEIS was in an institutional crisis situation, which resulted in a complete reorganisation of the institution.

In this particular context, special attention was paid to the participation of students in their training. However, the development of actions to develop user participation has been significantly delayed.

A major problem is the lack of coordination and sharing of good practice. The implementation of user participation actions is left to the initiative of trainers. In this context, many teachers feel unprepared, not knowing how to approach/prepare for user involvement, how to organise the conduct of such an activity and its evaluation. There is a lack of a framework to help implement the actions (e.g. procedure, sharing of contacts, toolbox, feedback, etc.)

Another difficulty identified is the lack of evaluation in relation to the objectives. The actions implemented are not evaluated. More specifically, user participation is often a testimony and its objectives do not always seem to be clearly defined beforehand.

A final difficulty is that of user remuneration. Although all trainers are convinced of its value, two problems exist:

- users sometimes intervene in groups or accompanied by a social worker. In this context, it is a question of paying several speakers for a course, which can be incompatible with the training budget.

- in addition, users may receive benefits that are incompatible with receiving a salary

OPPORTUNITIES

At the national level, there is a will of the politicians and social work actors to develop the involvement of users in the training of social workers.

Thus, in 2015, the report of the "Etats Généraux du Travail Social" states that "recognising the expertise of users, the principle of the participation of supported persons, as occasional trainers, in training sessions will be systematised. Its obligation will be included in the specifications of social work schools and institutes, which will be defined by decree" (EGTS, 2015 : 13).

In addition, methodological resources exist. The Union Nationale des Acteurs de la Formation et de la Recherche en Intervention Sociale (UNAFORIS) has published a methodological guide on the participation of users in the training of social workers. The guide proposes a framework for action, principles for implementation and feedback. It can be a fundamental resource to help develop participative actions.

Finally, Unaforis will soon offer a training course for trainers wishing to develop user participation in social education.

THREATS

To date, there is no real national obligation to develop *effective* user participation in social work schools. Although this was recommended by the EGTS in 2015 (see previous paragraph), the 2017 decree relating to the accreditation of establishments only mentions, for each school, the need to produce "a note on the *envisaged methods* of involving supported persons in the training of students". State control is based solely on the presence of this note.

Another major threat is that there is no national budget for the development of user involvement in social work schools. The budget allocated and the way in which possible actions are implemented are left to the initiative of each school.

Finally, user participation is not present in all national social work training frameworks



Fig 6: SWOT analysis of user involvement at ESEIS

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although many experiences of user involvement exist at ESEIS, they deserve to be further developed. In this perspective, it will be necessary to build on the existing strengths and opportunities, but also to overcome the weaknesses and threats identified.