

French literature review on service users' participation in social work education

Programme Erasmus+ "Strategic Partnership"
May 2021

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Articles and videos

Blanchard, C., Frutieux, S., & Poutrain-Mari, L. (2018). Redesign social workers' education including service users' participation. *La revue française de service social*, 2(269), 76-81.

Through their respective commitments, Laurence Poutrain-Mari, Sébastien Frutieux and Christophe Blanchard have made training and adding value to the skills of vulnerable people one of the focal points of their meeting. Through a joint interview, they each come back to the challenges of training social workers and, more generally, question the real consideration of the wishes of the service users.

Casagrande, A. (2019). Sharing our knowledge: Toward a democracy of experiences. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 61-70. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0061>

Several studies have shown the usefulness of involving supported persons, patients, and carers in the training of health and social care professionals. The “Sharing Our Knowledge” think tank, which includes user representatives, training and health care professionals, and health and social support institutions, co-authored the “Sharing Our Knowledge” advocacy campaign that promotes this idea. The process is presented here, from the initial establishment of the collective to the production of the consensus text.

Chardin, S. (2019). Among academic, professional and experiential knowledge. *VST - Vie sociale et traitements*, 2(2), 108-112. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vst.142.0108>

This study's main goal is to show that service users' contribution and participation in initial and further education are essential for social work students. This paper also highlights the fact that connections between scientific research, training and field experience are significant to professionalize social work.

Chartrin, T. & Dooley, J. (2019). Involving service users in the professional training of social workers? The question remains but has not yet been answered. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 179-191. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0179>

In this article, two views, French and American, on the position of the service user in the training of social work students are discussed. Both in France and the United States, the importance of the service user (or “client” in the United States) in the training of social workers is widely ignored, despite the fact that both French plans of action and American educational standards explicitly state that the service user or client is to have a primary role in the social work relationship. This article discusses both the French philosophical aspects of this issue and how the role of the client in the education of American social work students is experienced in practice. Despite cultural differences and orientations, it is concluded that the service user or client should be viewed as an equal expert in the social work relationship, serve as a guide for the helping process, and be an integral part in the education of social work students.

Cometti, E. (2020). Service users' participation to social workers education : from intentions to actions. *VST - Vie sociale et traitements, revue des CEMEA*, 146(2), 68-72. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vst.146.0068>

This study proposes a reflection on the participation of service users concerned in the plan and animation of educational contents in social work. It is based on several co-training experiences conducted between students, groups of concerned service users, social workers and pedagogical staff. It shows how these ways of providing education help to reshape our practices and clearly raises the question of the recognition of experiential knowledge, but also in the long run, the ambition to push forward professional practices in social work towards a greater consideration.



Crespo, G. (2019). Participation as a key to the reform of social work diplomas. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 43-60. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0043>

A new definition of social work was established in 2017, and a major reform of social work education has been implemented since September 2018. Many expectations accompanied this reform: recognition at bachelor's degree level, more readable course presentations, recognition of a common set of skills, consideration of the citizenship and capacities of service users, changes in teaching about social issues. The purpose of this article is to analyze how the issue of participation has really been taken into account. Other debates and issues, such as the core curriculum and professional identities, seem to have been prioritized. This reform therefore fell short, in the view of those who were hoping for better things following the General Estates for Social Work and the Higher Council of Social Work reports. However, training practices are evolving thanks to the commitment of some institutes, UNAFORIS, CNAM and FEHAP, in association with citizen movements representing service users.

Delhaye, P. & Galliot, D. (2019). Participation of supported persons in their social work training: The risk of meeting. *Le sociographe*, 68(4), 73-86.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/graph.068.0073>

The aim of this article is to go beyond the injunction of the supported people's participation in social work education by examining the meaning of it in the professional framework. Combining field experience and research results, the authors look at what conditions guarantee this kind of collaboration within social work educational institutions.

Derries, B., et Overney L. (2017). Knowledge from the bottom in the heart of social workers' education : shared expertise and interference in the workplace. Dans Y. Molina, et G. Monceau (dir.), *Les formations du secteur social aujourd'hui : Transformations et diversifications* (p. 87 95). Presses de l'EHESP.

For Donna Haraway, the situated knowledges are a scientific and political manifesto. (Haraway, 1988). It's time, she says, to think *with situated knowledges*, to reduce distances by *derecognition of concerns*. Shaking up knowledges' asymmetries and resisting such stigmatizations, is the political and epistemological posture the authors wanted to initiate within social workers' education. Their comments draw on 10 years' experience in pedagogy exploring shared expertise in collaboration with various movements working with service users. This section outlines several epistemological questions through the historical analysis of these movements and the blurring process proceeding from a new conception of shared expertise.

Gissinger-Bosse, C. (2019). Involvement in social work between ideal and reality: from initial education to applications in the professional field. *Le sociographe*, 68(4), 57-71.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/graph.068.0057>

Based on a questionnaire survey carried out in a centre for social work training, the article will focus on showing the gaps that may appear between the ideal of involvement, the form it takes within a legislative framework and its practical implementation. In the light of these three dimensions, participation will appear both as an old ideal and as innovative. We will then discuss the issues of participation in the social field, issues that begin with initial education.

Helfter, C. (2017, 10 juin). Learning from service users. *ASH actualités sociales hebdomadaires*, 3028, 30 33.

Leading future social workers to overcome their representations and prejudices in order to act better with the people they support. This is the objective for many educational institutions in France and abroad, which requires service users to participate in social workers' education. The article highlights that, although some initiatives are being carried out, currently quite



fragmented and not systematised, they tend to go in the same direction. In this way, the construction of cross-view modules, launched by the « collectif SOIF », provides food for thought.

IRTS Hauts de France Université Catholique de Lille. (2019, 13 juin). [Vidéo]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j007p87mCtk>

The IRTS from the « Haut de France » region has experienced service users' participation in social workers' education for many years. As from 2015, through the action-plan in favour of social development, participation has become compulsory and systematic. The IRTS has made the most of this context to engage in a process of reflection based on research, notably in collaboration with HADÉPAS. This video introduces the main outcomes of this research in progress.

Institut Social de Lille - Université Catholique de Lille. (2019, 26 juin). [Vidéo]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmgYoLwsqE>

Sylvie Desailly from the Institut Social de Lille, activists from the « Familles Ressources » association and social work students presented and recounted their 6-month experience of crossed perspectives between service users and social work students. “To meet beyond our differences, to better understand each other in order to improve professional practices, such is the ambition of our group from the start. If the idea is appealing, it is by living the experience that we “experience” its complexity... Despite everything, we set in motion together and meeting more person to person is rich in lessons for all. The students see a positive change in their representation of the helping relationship, their view of the people supported. Over the course of the meetings, they feel engaged in a process of emancipation which allows them to harmonize more in personal and professional spheres. ”

Jaeger, M. (2019). The emergence of a new profile of teacher for social workers: The service user. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 11-26. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0011>

The participation of service users in programs developed for their benefit is taking on a new form. Having already taken part in the life of the institutions and the development of projects that concern them, these people are increasingly involved in the training of social workers. Going beyond the expression of their suffering and beyond the testimonies or life stories that can enlighten professionals for their interventions, “service users” are now recognized for their skills, even their expertise. In successive stages, their involvement in training institutes and in social work research continues to grow.

Jouffray, C. (2009). Empowerment (DPA) and renewing social workers professional practices : perspective of a lecturer. *Passerelles*, Vol 1, no 1.

<https://pouvoiragir.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/jouffray-1-1-2009.pdf>

Social Workers often feel stumped when being confronted by the demanding needs of an ever-increasing clientele; more often than not, they see themselves having to give standardized answers which are not always suited to the particular needs of the client. Among the community, voices are rising to offer new solutions in order to rejuvenate the methods and practices of Social Workers. This is what the DPA is all about, it will allow us to redefine what the Helping Profession is and we will describe its traits. The implementation of this approach requires Social Workers to alter their mind-sets, thus a specialized training is necessary. At this point in time, the teachings of the DPA stipulate that if a professional wants to learn how to work under this approach he or she must first experience it for himself/herself. A first look at these teachings demonstrate that the DPA could bring about some suitable changes to the stance of Social Workers.



Lebailly, P. (2019). Issues, modalities, and conditions of participation in social work education: A report on practices in France and Europe. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 143-158.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0143>

This article presents the lessons learned from experiences in France and Europe, in particular within the framework of the PowerUs network and a European Interreg project carried out by four training institutes in the Pyrenean regions of Occitania and Catalonia. Two essential issues about participation are presented: the recognition of experiential knowledge as knowledge in its own right, and the reduction of the gaps between professionals and service users (referring to PowerUs's "Mend the Gap" concept). A typology of the different techniques identified in these participation practices will aim to show the diversity and richness of experiences they represent. The analysis of current practices makes it possible to identify certain conditions to encourage the participation of service users in social workers' education. The most important one is to build on a real partnership with service user groups.

Le Floch, C. (2019). From living in the street to participatory organisations, from peer-assistance to social workers' education. *Forum*, 3(3), 9-12.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/forum.158.0009>

The authors presents her personal journey from living in the street to an elected mandate for the HCTS and taking part in social workers' education. For her, the main interest in taking part to a governance body consists in raising the issue of participation. This experience has allowed her to be integrated into working groups and to build up confidence. She then took part in social workers' education and her conclusion is clear : students ignore largely vulnerable people's situation. As an occasional participant in their education, it was her ambition to guide and above all transfer knowledge, whether academic or experience-based, to students. This is why, according to her, the issue of peer-assistance and participation is essential, since it allows to relate experience to knowledge.

Mabilleau, F. (2019, avril). Service users, key partners for education. *TSA travail social actualités*, 101, 11 17. https://www.lemediasocial.fr/savoirs-issus-de-l-experience-quand-les-usagers-deviennent-formateurs_hsqtvw

In addition to academic and practical knowledge, experience-based knowledge, provided by service users, must enrich and be an integral part social workers' education. This work raises questions for teachers and professionals, particularly with regard to their positioning towards the people they support. M. Jaeger, member of the HCTS, explains that a profound change is needed. This is followed by a report on the approach of the collectif SOIF, which created and facilitated a "four voices" module on precarity.

Ngnafeu, M., Puddu, V., Diffort, A., Gaudet, L., Burgy, C. & Mazaëff, C. (2017). When the legislative theater gives political meaning to social work : an unprecedented meeting between service users, trainers, artists and professionals in social work. *Forum*, 150(1), 44-55.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/forum.150.0044>

The evolution of the context in which social action takes place, of the publics and their problems, leads us today to reinvent social work, to consider new alternatives and responses to the difficulties they meet. Account of the experience carried out around a legislative theater festival, a catalyst tool for political social work, which was able to gather together around the same goal, professionals and students in social work, artists and service users to co- build a space for debate and reinvent the Athens agora in the city.



Noviello, L., et Loriente, C. (2018, mai). Education – Students and service users : a new encounter. *Lien Social*, 1228, 24-31.

One of the main stakes of the action-plan for social development, adopted in October 2015, is the participation of supported persons in initial education. The article insists on the steps taken by several educational institutions that have embedded participation modules involving service users into their programmes. A particular focus is given on the experimentation lead by the collectif SOIF.

Piou Iliassi, E. (2019). When social work students and people experiencing poverty share their knowledge. *Vie sociale*, 1(1-2), 255-270. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0255>

The Institut régional en travail social at Perpignan, in partnership with NGOs and local authorities, has been experimenting since 2015 with involving people experiencing poverty in the training of social work students. Time for cross-fertilization of knowledge and practices with people experiencing poverty is organized between students, professionals and people experiencing poverty. The article presents the context of this approach and its functioning over two years of initial training. Based on an evaluation of the approach, we then analyze its effects on people experiencing poverty, on the one hand, and on students and professionals, on the other. The author discusses methodological and sociological questions and changes in practices. It appears that the approach also has an impact on the other training modules. Thus, not only people experiencing poverty, but also students and professionals develop their capacity to act against poverty through these co-training processes.

Ravon, B. (2017). Autonomy, standardisation or shared knowledge ? Problems, issues and new configurations. Dans Y. Molina, et G. Monceau (dir.), *Les formations du secteur social aujourd'hui : Transformations et diversifications* (p. 87-95). Presses de l'EHESP.

In this chapter, the author analyses the changes in social work education by pointing out some transformations in contents of transferred knowledge. He puts forward three epistemic logics that are articulated over time. A critical one, which corresponds to the foundation of a national collective of social workers' educators in the mid-1960s, when autonomy is based on a "theorisation of practices". The second logic is based on conformation, reinforced in the 1980s as a result of national and European directives. The last one reflects openness towards service users, reclassified as being able to co-produce knowledge. Taking care of the experience of service users is an approach that could allow social work educators to theorise social intervention practices, provided that they are able to requalify their autonomy and their critical skills.

Rosenberg, S. (2019). What does experiential knowledge bring to the training of professionals? A perspective on co-training through the "cross-fertilization of knowledge and practices®". *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 113-129. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0113>

Co-training through the cross-fertilization of knowledge, carried out by ATD Fourth World, is a training method for social work professionals that brings together on an equal footing practitioners and people experiencing social exclusion. The latter call upon their experiential knowledge, built up previously, to change the practices of social workers. After examining how to refer to users of social services, the article explores the issue of experiential knowledge, describes the principles of co-training, and outlines its effects on social work practices.



UNAFORIS (2018, septembre). Service users' participation to social workers' education. https://www.unaforis.eu/sites/default/files/public/fichiers/telechargements/2018_09_unaforis_guide_participation_version_papier_vdef.pdf

The UNAFORIS has put a focus on service users' participation to social workers' education. In 2017, supported by the DGCS and monitored by the UNAFORIS, various actors involved in participatory actions were brought together into a "community of practice". A major result of this collaborative work was the creation and publication in 2018 of an operational guide on participation in social work education.

Follow this link for an english synthesis of this guidebook :

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M1OFVA3d2gyPbYWGYL3cz-d2vy1c7E_5/view

Vallet, P. (2019). Prerequisites for any form of user participation in social work training. *Vie sociale*, no 25-26(1), 243-254. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.191.0243>

The experience described here is based on ministerial encouragement to question the concept of participation in order to examine the place that service users and students occupy in a program of social work training. This experience, currently in progress, has allowed us to consider what takes place when different actors meet each other (professionals at a residential structure for social reinsertion and service users, students, teachers at the Regional Institute). The article presents the questions, issues, and methodological choices that gave an orientation to this initiative. It then describes the first stages from September 2017 to May 2018 and draws some provisional conclusions.

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https://www.cnle.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Rapport_edite_version_numerique.pdf

Conseil supérieur du travail social. (2015). *Rapport : Refonder le rapport aux personnes « Merci de ne plus nous appeler usagers »*. Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CAB_COM_RAPPORT_COMPLET_Merci_non_usagers-2.pdf

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The advocacy of « La déclaration de Paris » (2018) is available in english on the following link : https://associons-nos-savoirs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Declaration-associons_nos_savoirs-lang_en.pdf

Key words : social work, participation, service users

Completion date : may 2021

