

Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice –
2020 – Volume 29, Issue 6, pp. 1–2
<http://doi.org/10.18352/jsi.666>

ISSN: 1876-8830

URL: <http://www.journalsi.org>

Publisher: Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences
Open Access Journals

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EDITORIAL

What do social workers stand for today? How do they support parents, clients, citizens with their social interventions? And what values are they driven by? This October issue of the *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice* contains four sparkling articles on this matter; two research papers, one practice and one policy article.

Independent researcher Alfons Fermin and professor Roland Friele from Tilburg University wrote an interesting policy article on the values that play a role in difficult choices social professionals are faced with. In 'Clashing values in kitchen table conversations' they describe how the dominant policy, under the 2015 Social Support Act, is focussed on promoting self-sufficiency at applicants for support. This policy provokes inconveniences amongst social professionals entering as municipal representatives in the so-called kitchen table discussions. They appear to base their decisions on other values than mere self-sufficiency, like the client's freedom of choice. The authors argue that acknowledging the (conflicting) range of values can help the social professionals to discuss and clarify their choices.

The second thought-provoking contribution addresses the meaning Dutch community workers give to the concept of advocacy in their day-to-day work. In 'Well behaved on the barricades, the conflict avoiding approach' researchers Michelle van der Tier and Chantal van Lieshout from Zuyd University of Applied Sciences present the results of a qualitative study amongst workers of

EDITORIAL

three community organizations. They explored by focus group interviews if and how these street-level workers use advocacy strategies to collectivize structural problems and contribute to (policy) change. Their findings show a humble approach where community workers position themselves mainly as translators and mediators between multiple perspectives and interests of government administrators and citizens, and between groups of citizens. The authors question if such an approach contributes to a public debate on structural issues in society.

Martine Noordegraaf, professor at the Christian University of Applied Sciences, wrote together with Schep, Andriessen, Bergenhenegouwen, Otten and Van Nijnatten an elaborate research paper on the cooperation of professional foster parents and birthparents. In 'A relational route to shared parenting' they present the results of a large-scale practice-oriented study into this relationship. Positive cooperation between the parents is not always obvious, but it enhances the wellbeing of the youngsters and can prevent early breakdowns. A literature review and a deepening case study at family-style group homes led to a model of shared parenting: the relational route. In the next phase the research will be continued to see if the implementation of the relational approach leads to better cooperation and more quality and stability of the placements.

The last article of this issue is an inspiring in-depth report of a long term social support intervention with a group of mothers. The author, Najima El Kasmi, staff member and social worker at Wiegwijs in Brussels, was the driving force and coach of the project 'Strong mothers, strong children'. The project brought together thirteen women with a vulnerable profile on a weekly basis during a three-year period. El Kasmi describes vividly how the approach of empowerment and resilience enhancement was carried out. She gives an analysis of how the theoretical concepts of capital of Bourdieu were translated by the women in practice in their personal lives and development. All participants experienced this process as a turning point, positive changes in the mothers, their children and their immediate environment are still visible one year later. El Kasmi argues that although the approach is intensive and costly, it is worthwhile. The approach is essential to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and to achieve social change and justice.

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