

Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice –
2013 – Volume 22, Issue 4, pp. 1–4
URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-114620

ISSN: 1876-8830
URL: <http://www.journalsi.org>
Publisher: Igitur publishing,
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EDITORIAL

Because the end of 2013 is approaching, it is time for the *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice* to take stock, and we can proudly conclude that it has been a successful year. We have published 18 academic articles, nine book reviews and four articles in the News from Higher Social Education section. Professionals and academics from the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and the United Kingdom have all contributed to our journal. The subjects of their contributions reflect an interesting variety of topics, such as Family Group Conferences, the well-being of social climbers, neighbourhood deprivation monitoring in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, research on local memory websites, the Best Practice Unit, critical dialogue as a research and intervention method, the self-employed healthcare professional, and success factors among Turkish-Dutch innovative entrepreneurs. In addition, we published two articles in the “Students’ Work” section – one of which can be found in this issue.

Our first contribution is by Anja Machielse, Associate Professor at the University of Humanistic Studies and senior researcher at LESI (National Expertise Centre for Social Intervention) and her colleague Karin Runia, researcher and advisor at LESI, the Netherlands. In their article they discuss the practice of using volunteers to work with isolated people affected by multiple problems. Social isolation and loneliness are familiar subjects to the readers of our Journal (see 4/2005; 3/2011; 4/2011), but Machielse and Runia approach the subject from a new angle. The Social Support

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Act (Wmo) means that social professionals are expected to mobilize informal support and create the conditions for the use of volunteers, including for those who are socially isolated people and are affected by multiple problems. But is it possible to use volunteers for this target group? What obstacles do professionals come up against? And under which conditions do professionals want to use volunteers with this group? Based on a survey conducted among professionals from 16 organizations for welfare and social services, the authors seek answers to these and other questions.

Next in this issue, we have an article co-authored by Pamela Besselink, who is a social worker and researcher of a practice-based research programme at NIM Maatschappelijk Werk, and Margriet Braun and Ellen Oosterkamp-Szwajcer, who are both researchers at Community Care & Youth, Saxion University of Applied Sciences and teachers in the Master's programme in Health Care & Social Work at Saxion, the Netherlands. The authors discuss a topic that is the subject of vigorous debate these days: poverty in Dutch families. As a result of the economic crisis, more and more individuals and even whole families including children are having to contend with poverty. Based on 15 semi-structured interviews with parents the authors seek to give more insight into how parents in poverty view their circumstances. The results show that there are three types of parents in poverty: resilient parents, parents with fighting spirit and depressed parents. This typology may contribute to the development of interventions for parents in poverty, because it gives us an insight into the living conditions of such parents, how they experience their situation and the strategies they use to cope.

Erik Jansen is Associate Professor at Kenniscentrum HAN SOCIAAL and the Wmo-werkplaats (Social Support Act laboratory) in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He states that a transformation is needed in the social sector in the Netherlands because of recent developments in housing, wellbeing and care. He discusses the use of the *transcending narrative* as a potentially powerful tool with which to effect this transformation. Jansen depicts this transformation metaphorically as learning how to play a new game. He gives the outlines of an action framework for social innovation based on narrative and collective meaning in which, he states, it is important that all parties learn to act a dialogue and a narrative.

Collin Den Braber is lecturer in social work and international relations officer at the School of Social Studies, Avans University of Applied Sciences in Breda, the Netherlands. His article focuses on the *capability approach* of Amartya Sen. The capability approach is an alternative to the prevailing models of economic growth and it places human well-being at the centre of thinking about human

development. Den Braber wants to introduce the capability approach, and to explore its relevance for social work in a European context that now seems dominated by neoliberal policies. He starts his article with a reflection on current developments in Europe to demonstrate the need for a people-centred approach to human development; then he describes the capability approach as a people-centred human development theory and explores the relevance of the theory for the field of social work and continues with the consequences of neoliberal policies in Europe for the social work profession, as discussed from the perspective of the capability approach. The article ends with a conclusion and some remarks.

The fifth and final article is by Hilde Vlaeminck, a social worker, supervisor, teacher of methodology and ethics at the Arteveldehogeschool in Gent and part-time lecturer for the Master's programme in Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Leuven, Belgium. She focuses on the development of methods in social work by practice teachers, especially the opportunities, and she evokes the mixed roles of these teachers. Vlaeminck explores all the roles of a practice teacher – namely those of teacher, researcher and method developer. On the basis of a project involving primary care in Flanders, she describes the methodological choices that a practice teacher has to make in every phase. She states that as well as the dual roles of researcher and lecturer, a number of stakeholders are also concerned with method development: the method-practitioners; the method-users (clients); the method-supporting management; the method-policy; and the method-referrals.

As stated earlier in this editorial, the second of this year's contributions to the Students' Work section appears in this issue. Articles in this category follow a different review procedure to the others: the work of these students is not peer reviewed. In consultation with the editor-in-chief and the managing editor, students have the opportunity to make some amendments before finalizing their article for publication. Following Moniek Van der Krogt (4/2011), Maaike Kluft (1/2012) and Ingrid Nordt (4/2012), Myrna Derksen, a former student in Social Work at HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, was given the chance to publish her article in the Students' Work section. Derksen wrote one of the articles that won the 2013 HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht best article award. Derksen writes about the role that communities can play in preventing children from dropping out of school. This article is the result of her research on children that drop out of primary education at Vaal Oranje Primêr in the town of Douglas, one of the largest primary schools in the Northern Cape, South Africa.

Finally, this issue concludes with our regular book review and News from Higher Social Education sections.

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Three books are discussed in the book review section. Ben W.M. Boog discusses *Onderwijs en onderzoek van eigen makelij. Onderzoek met en door leraren* [Education and research of our own making. Research with and by teachers], written by Petra Ponte. Ton Notten discusses *De dorpenmonitor. Ontwikkelingen in de leefsituatie van dorpsbewoners* [The village monitor. Changes in living conditions of villagers], written by Anja Steenbekkers and Lotte Vermeij (Eds.). Finally, Meindert Slagter discusses *Meesterschap in het sociaal werk. Over kennisontwikkeling* [Mastership in social work. About knowledge], written by Mariël van Pelt, Marc Hoijtink, Hans Oostrik and Marc Räkens (Eds.).

In the News from Higher Social Education section, Theo Roes discusses the meaning of Wmo-werkplaats (Social Support Act laboratory) for practice and education.

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