

AWAKENING, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

20 years of degree programme in Social Work

November 21st and 22nd, 2019

The twentieth anniversary of the degree programme in Social Work at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano is an occasion for a reflexive assessment of the status quo, to discuss recent research findings, to develop new perspectives for social work as profession and academic discipline, and to celebrate together. We invite you to participate with a conference contribution.

An essential characteristic and central challenge of social work is its specific embeddedness in and necessary involvement with social contexts and social questions as well as their interpretation and handling in socio-spatial and life-world contexts. Social work has a socially important function of mediation, which is challenged again and again both on the action-oriented level of professional practice as well as on the level of the discipline. Through this, social work looks back on a long history of important upheavals and changes. This understanding of social work emphasises its dynamic development and the change to which social work is ideally not only subject, but which it also helps to shape. In this sense, social work is not limited to the reactive handling of social problems. Based on scientifically founded reflexive professionalism and normative positioning (e.g. its human rights orientation), it understands itself as a proactive actor in shaping "the social".

This basic understanding also characterises the degree programme in Social Work that has been offered at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano for twenty years now. The programme is based on the international definition of social work as a profession and discipline, complies with international and national educational standards, and takes into account the peculiarities of the local context and traditions in local welfare provision. South Tyrol is a largely autonomous administration unit with primary legislative competence in the field of welfare policy, but above all a borderland and bridge between German and Italian linguistic and cultural areas. It constitutes a privileged place for the multilingual and integrated examination of different traditions and cultures. Accordingly, the Social Work programme in Brixen-Bressanone is characterised by its focus on comparative and transcultural perspectives and the combination and integration of different theoretical traditions and specialist languages. At the same time, the consistently multilingual education represents a unique feature of the programme. In this sense, the Social Work programme at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano can be seen as a reference model for a European social work education.

In recent decades, social work in Europe has developed into an academic discipline in the European spirit, also thanks to the commitment of scholars at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. The study of different traditions and disciplinary positions of social work in the European welfare states, the publication of relevant European journals, and the founding of European associations have allowed social work to grow together and contributed to its strengthening as an academic discipline in many European countries.

At the same time, social work in Europe is faced with new challenges, including, among others, large parts of the middle class facing social risks, the late effects of the financial and economic crisis, growing social and spatial inequalities, demographic and technological developments, the handling of migration and refugee movements, questions of sustainable development, the organisation of social solidarity at the European level, the questioning of the European unification process, and not least the relapse into new nationalisms and right-wing populism. All these developments lead to new social questions and the search for adequate answers, to disruptions and continuities that do not stop at social work. In addition, there are new mediation and negotiation tasks against the background of social pluralisation and diversity as well as in the context of promoting participation and democratisation. Social work can only meet all these challenges through a historically and socio-politically conscious self-assurance and a critically reflexive examination of current and future issues.

The twentieth anniversary of the Social Work programme at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano will be an occasion to discuss current social issues and new strategies for action through conceptual and research-based contributions. We look forward to receiving your abstract of about 500 words in German, Italian, or English on the following topic areas (please indicate at least one):

1. Child and family social work
2. Elderly people, care work, social and health integration
3. Minimum income, social inclusion and participation
4. Migration, mobility, transnational approaches
5. Social service organisation(s), social policy
6. Community, space, eco-social development
7. Diversity, culture, education
8. Research, social work education, professionalisation
9. Other fields of social work practice

The final conference panels will be defined after the review and selection of submitted abstracts.

The abstract submission deadline is **July 15th 2019**. Please submit your abstract via e-mail to the following address: 20yearssocialwork@unibz.it

Authors will be notified of acceptance of abstracts by **July 31st 2019**.

For general information, please visit the homepage of the conference: <https://20jahresozialearbeit.events.unibz.it/>

A selection of the conference papers will be published as an edited volume with bu,press.

We look forward to welcoming you to the conference!