

**NOL REVERDA,
SABRINA KEINEMANS** **EDITORIAL**

The first issue of 2011 begins with a series of articles on supervision, all of which are rooted in research and practice. The articles are the result of a European comparative study on supervision in social work practice and education which will be presented at the forthcoming ENSACT conference in Brussels on 10–13 April 2011. ENSACT is an umbrella network of six European associations that brings together policy makers, researchers, practitioners and teachers in the social domain. The focus of the conference is sustainable social development in times of economic crisis and topics include how budget cutbacks, neo-liberal principles and “managerialist” objectives impact on the day-to-day activities of social practitioners. In other words, how do social practitioners address these challenges? In this context, reflection on professional performance becomes extremely important and supervision becomes an essential building block for creating reflective practitioners that can cope with the challenging demands of our time. Members of the Supervision in Europe Network will be holding a symposium during the ENSACT conference in which they will discuss these and other issues that have stemmed from their comparative research.

Geißler-Piltz reveals new insights into how social workers in the health care system experience supervision. She starts with a brief sketch of the use of the concept of supervision in Germany and the types of supervision in use in the health care system. The results of both a quantitative and a qualitative study are presented, showing that social workers take a highly ambivalent view of supervision. On the one hand, they hold supervision in high regard and believe that it has positive effects, yet at the same time they do not notice any sustained impact on their own everyday

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work. On the other hand, supervision in a multi-professional team is frequently experienced as a continuation of the hierarchically ordered healthcare system: the interviews reflect situations in which the respondents were inactive or experienced an inability to address conflicts in the presence of other professional groups, or to offer a social-work-specific perspective on a particular case. The second article, by Van Hees, reports on the findings of a comparative cross-national study on the use of supervision in the training of social workers during Bachelor's degree programmes at seven European universities and universities of applied sciences, entitled "Supervision meets education". The study looks at the role of supervision in the curricula of Bachelor's degree programmes in Social Work in Europe, and analyses why this is so. Supervision is seen as an educational method and to indicate this specific form of supervision, the term "student supervision" has been used. Seven countries participated in the research project, using a case study method which enabled comparison of the use of supervision in Bachelor's degree programmes in these countries. The results show that most social work education programmes in Europe offer student supervision. There is general agreement on the need for supervision and its usefulness in learning in practice. However, student supervision is subject to different interpretations. The differences relate mainly to how it is designed, organized and integrated into the curriculum and the article provides a detailed description of these differences.

The final article on supervision is practice-based as the author, Lilja Cajvert, presents a model for dealing with parallel processes in supervision which she bases on her own experiences as a supervisor. She starts her article with a clear introduction to the concept of parallel processes as "the problems, impasses, feelings and difficulties that occur in two simultaneous relations; supervisee-client and supervisor-supervisee". Cajvert also explains how her experiences as a supervisor encouraged her to develop a model for dealing with these parallel processes. She noticed that during supervision processes, some participants responded negatively when confronted with parallel processes. A model was needed which would enable the participants to identify parallel processes. Cajvert describes how she developed such a model and presents the result, a model consisting of six phases, illustrated by an interesting example in a separate appendix.

We continue the issue with an article on the Dutch project "Healthy to Work (HtW)" ("Gezond aan de Slag"), which developed and evaluated an intervention combining an exercise programme with cognitive training. HtW aims to improve participants' functioning: the assumption is that chronic physical complaints and accompanying behavioural health problems such as depression can negatively reinforce each other. HtW assumes that the intervention is necessary for correcting inadequate coping behaviour, so that the client will subsequently be able to successfully complete

a follow-up trajectory aimed at finding a regular job. Although HtW had been selected as an example of good practice, a randomized clinical trial did not show beneficial effects. An in-depth qualitative study was therefore conducted to examine reasons for failure. The article by Bramsen, Tomesen, Voorham and Miedema reports on this qualitative study, which focused on the question of “what went wrong in the HtW project, particularly during the cognitive training?” A purposive sample of six trainers were interviewed. The results describe several problems that trainers encountered and the authors therefore question the assumption that coping style and cognitions of welfare recipients with health problems are the main obstacles to finding work, and they question the policy of ignoring the physical limitations of participants. They suggest that in this complex area of practice, improvement can be achieved by allowing trainers to adapt and learn during the process, while also reflecting on normative aspects, and by taking into account the perspectives of the welfare recipients themselves.

Marja Jager-Vreugdenhil discusses the use of the word “participation” in policy. Jager-Vreugdenhil argues that although participation is a very common word in Dutch policy (as shown in the Social Support Act and Participation Act), there is no agreement on the nature of participation. As a result, confusion between the terminology used in different policy sectors and actors is a real risk, as participation has different meanings, dependent on the context and the actors involved in the participation. Jager-Vreugdenhil describes some of the meanings and usages of the concept of participation and draws a distinction between economic, political, educational, societal and social participation. She goes on to discuss some participation ladders, which often have a normative character. The article concludes with four recommendations aimed at policy makers and scientists, to avoid confusion between tongues.

Friction in the cooperation and communication between managers and social work professionals is the central theme in the final article of this issue. For her Master’s thesis, Labrie studied the cooperation between managers and professionals since she – a social worker herself – had identified a significant tension between the managerial perspective and logic, the professional perspective and logic and the client perspective and logic. In the article, this tension is described and explained and the findings of a small-sample, qualitative study into the cooperation between managers and professionals are presented. Labrie also presents the conceptual framework which she used to analyze her data, which draws heavily on Donker’s model of the theory of changing (2006, 2008). The results show that professionals as well as managers tend to focus on their own logic and feel powerless in their mutual communication. Mutual trust, taking responsibility and allowing others to take responsibility, and reciprocal communication are all key factors for successful cooperation.

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In the book review section, Nicolien Wassenaar discusses *Broken Citizenship. Formerly abducted children and their social reintegration in northern Uganda*, and Willem Blok discusses *Social Work in Europe*.

The interaction between welfare organizations and universities is seen as added value for clients, organizations, universities, lecturers and students at the University College Arteveldehogeschool. In the "News from Higher Education" column, Philippe Blocklandt discusses five challenges of the implementation of chat help in welfare organizations in Flanders for the University College Arteveldehogeschool. These are:

- collaborative research and method developments useful for the field;
- the implementation of chat help in the Bachelor's degree in social work;
- training for social workers;
- process management to implement chat help;
- and further research.

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