



Uniwersytet  
ŁÓDZKI



ERIS  
EUROPEAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
FOR SOCIAL WORK

## Call for Papers

The Department of Social Pedagogy of the University of Łódź (Poland) and the European Research Institute for Social Work (ERIS) (<http://eris.osu.eu/>) are organizing a conference 29-30 September 2016 devoted the following topic:

### **Participatory Social Work: Approaches, Barriers, Critique**

Contemporary social work is challenged on the one hand with increasing and multidimensional social diversity and, on the other hand, an increasing emphasis on building a civil society based on activity, equality and participation. The result of these phenomena is the growing expectation of democratization of the social services system expressed in appreciating the importance of the activity of service users, both in academic discourse and in daily practice.

Adopting the assumption that service users know best the reality in which they live has undermined the dyadic frames of social work demonstrated in the divisions: theory - practice, researcher/those researched, professionals who 'know better'/recipient of social welfare, etc. and has given rise to participatory social work. Its rapid development is manifested not only by a theoretical shift or introduction of new research techniques and methods, but most of all by empowerment of the service users. Eventually, they have given the impetus to the emergence of participatory research teams or, later on, participatory advisory bodies, whose expertise and commitment are reflected today in the socio-political decisions found in many countries.

Participatory social work raises anew the issues of credibility of knowledge, processes of its creation and use, the purpose of social work, its relationship to politics, and - above all - the role and competences of a social worker (co-)constructing social change in partnership "with" and not just "for" the service users. In terms of research, in the more radical viewpoints, it can be associated with the gradual de-academization of both the empirical and theoretical aspects of social work.

The Department of Social Pedagogy of the University of Łódź invites you to the debate these and other issues key to participatory social work. Our Department is an academic centre that has been training students to act in the field of social/societal work since 1945 and its creator was Helena Radlińska – the precursor of Polish social pedagogy and education to social work in Poland.

In Łódź – a city with multicultural history – we plan to debate around the following issues:

- Theoretical approaches to participatory social work
- Participatory research strategies
- Participatory social work as a praxis/in practice
- Barriers to implementation of participatory social work
- Critical perspective on participatory social work

You are most welcome to participate in this debate in the ways listed in our registration form. If you plan to give a presentation, it should take no more than 20 minutes. We intend to publish them in a follow-up volume. The abstracts of presentations (2,000 characters maximum) should be submitted by 30 April 2016 to [eris.lodz@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:eris.lodz@uni.lodz.pl).

Conference language: English (we offer two key speeches simultaneous interpretation from French to English, optionally we offer one conference workshop whispered interpretation (from English to French))

Conference Venue: University of Łódź, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Social Pedagogy, Pomorska 46/48 Street, Łódź, Poland.

We would also like to encourage you to participate in the events accompanying the debate:

- **28 September 2016**- a symposium: *Participatory Approaches in Social Work Research – discussion of controversies identified during ERCRSW seminars* devoted to sum up the annual research seminars of the Centre Européen de Ressources pour la Recherche en Travail Social/European Resource Centre for Research in Social Work, dealing since 2008 with the issues of approaches to participatory research in social work

Symposium language: French (with whispered translation to English)

- **28 September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016** - study visits to selected social work projects and institutions in Łódź

Please tick the selected forms of participation in the registration form and return it to us by 30 April 2016 at the email address provided above ([eris.lodz@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:eris.lodz@uni.lodz.pl)).

You are most welcome in Łódź!

**Conference Organizing Committee:**

Anita Gulczyńska

Mariusz Granosik

Małgorzata Kostrzyńska