

Empowering care leavers in Europe
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The perspective of the European Association Schools
of Social Work (EASSW)

Teresa Bertotti

(President of the Executive Board of EASSW)

University of Trento – Italy



The relevance of this theme for social work: the involvement of those who 'use' services

- A theme historically present in social work but with a renewed attention in the last decade (*). Within different socio-political frames
 - As '**evaluator** of the quality of services, in a consumer approach
 - In **providing** services and support (expert for experience – mutual aid)
 - In devising **outlining planning** and implementing social services
- **Involved in education**, again at different levels
 - As *witnesses*, bringing experience
 - As *contributors* in the planning of educational programs, and as lectures
 - As *evaluators* of students' competences

(*) Ramon et al, (2018) Social work education, Innovations in Service users' engagement in social work education training and research)

- In **professionals long-life learning**

- An Italian example: the collaboration between the national board of Social Workers and Agevolando
- An European example: the association Power which has a long collaboration with EASSW (partner in conferences) <https://powerus.eu/>

- SUI was traditionally spread more in mental health and adult disability field. in **the child protection field** is more recent and it is a crucial factor for

- *Innovating services and updating to emergent needs*
- *Upholding the discourse on children rights*
- Help in *overcoming the false contrast* between help to children and help to families
- *Bridging the gap* between services and citizens
- Help in prevent and recognize institutional abuses (i.e Il Forteto in Italy, or the Laundrette in Irland – Sasca project)



European Association of Schools of Social Work

www.eassw.org

EASSW brings together over 200 different schools, universities and tertiary education institute.

- promotes the **development of social work education** throughout Europe
- develops **standards to enhance quality** of social work education
- encourages **international exchange**
- provides **forums for sharing social work research and scholarship.**

In all aspects of its work, **EASSW adheres to the *United Nations' Declarations and Conventions on Human Rights***, recognizing that **respect for the inalienable rights of the individual is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.**

EASSW represents social work education at the European level at the European Commission, the Council of Europe and with other international organizations

EASSW carries out its purposes through:

- ✓ A **biennial conference** on social work education
- ✓ Representation at the European Union and Council of Europe
- ✓ Links with the European Journal of Social Work
- ✓ Funding of **small cross-national projects** in social work education
- ✓ Publication **of a newsletter**
- ✓ A **website with** a digital community for members
- ✓ support for regional events

In the near future:

- ❖ Special interest group
- ❖ A social work education award
- ❖ The advisory council



European Association of Schools of Social Work

Membership of EASSW is open to those engaged in social work education in member countries of the Council of Europe.

Membership is open to:

- Individual Schools of Social Work
- Individuals engaged in Social Work Education

For each member school up to 50 persons can have access to reserved areas

Member's benefits include:

- School home page
- Reduced registration fees at the biennial European conference
- EASSW-newsletter
- Funding for innovative projects
- Grants for service users to attend the bi-annual conference

Ad – vocacy

- In their curricula, SW are asked to put in place their competence and develop Advocacy.
- In social work, advocacy has a double meaning
 - As “Ad voce” - speaking for ...
 - As 'giving voice' – provide support and competences for taking the floor and speak up directly

Regarding your 10 recommendations

They are all very relevant and it is difficult to 'select the most important. In my position, I engage in supporting especially the following:

- **Rec n.1** - implies the responsibility of social workers in enacting and implementing rights, which is one of the most relevant issues for our welfare systems and social policies.
- **rec. n. 4.** for SW it implies awareness and sensitivity in supporting children. When you say that the care system should “encourage... but never force relationships with birth families...” you adopt a fantastic way to describe the complex balance between helping parents and helping children.
- **n. 7 and 8** – refers to the need to taking into consideration the transitions to adulthood and the responsibilities that practitioners and institutions must have, overlooking the strict division of functions
- **n. 9** is explicitly dedicated to education and training. I can only agree and try to think which is the specificities of this preparation for social workers and at which level

On the practical level .. what can EASSW do?

- Sponsoring and publishing your events (as now)
- Favouring your connection with the universities in your countries: in EASSW there are these member schools → [list of member schools](#)
- Small project funding
- Supporting Regional events
- Next SIG opening dedicated to service users involvement
- Fostering erasmus exchange for teachers and student mobility

Thank you for your work and attention!

**With my warmest wishes for your dreams and lives ...
and hope we will work together in the future!**



E A S S W

The logo consists of the letters 'E A S S W' in a red, serif font. Below the letters are two red, curved lines that resemble brackets or a stylized 'W' shape, with the first line under 'E A' and the second line under 'S S W'.

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