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**SOCIAL WORK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (SWIC) 2018  
“THE CHALLENGES OF GLOCAL SOCIAL WORK  
EDUCATION, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH”, THIRD EDITION,  
BUCHAREST, NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup>, 2018**

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## **Social Work International Conference (SWIC) 2018 “The Challenges of Glocal Social Work Education, Practice and Research”, third edition, Bucharest, November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

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The Social Work International Conference (SWIC) is an annual scientific event of the University of Bucharest, organized by the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Department of Social Work in partnership with The Association of Schools of Social Work in Romania. The format of the conference includes keynote addresses, parallel workshops, parallel sessions with oral presentations, poster presentations, and exhibitions. The programme is distributed throughout two days and allows participants to informally interact.

The third edition of SWIC took place on November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 under the overarching theme *The Challenges of Glocal Social Work Education, Practice and Research*. Positioning the concept of glocalization at the heart of this edition of SWIC, the conference organizers invited participants to reflect at the external and internal pressures present in social work today at both the international and local levels, reverberating throughout social work education, in practice and research. During the three years of existence SWIC has gathered an international and culturally diverse audience. The 2018 event gathered over 60 participants from USA, Canada, South Africa, the Philippines, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Belgium, Poland, Turkey, Italy, and Romania.

The first day of the conference started with four parallel workshops, which created spaces for social work academics, practitioners, and students to become familiarized and/or deepen their knowledge and skills related to specific social work topics. All the conference workshops have received prior accreditation from the National College of Social Workers in Romania. Jill Bunce (Derby University, UK) presented the social model of Dance Movement Psychotherapy, which enables interventions within a community context and activates changes in social and behavioural patterns, through the workshop *Dance Movement Psychotherapy in working with various populations*. This interesting topic was continued by Flavia

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Dorelia Cardaş (University of Bucharest, Romania) with a workshop on *Dance (therapy) to connect – the art of communication through movement*, offering participants the opportunity of discovering new ways of communication through dance and movement.

Elizabeth Lightfoot (University of Minnesota, USA) introduced participants to Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) as an increasingly recognized approach to social work research, which involves long-term engagement and power-sharing with community members and organizations, through the workshop *CBPR: A Research Approach Useful for Understanding the Global Challenges of Social Work*. Karen Clark Hoey (Springfield College, Massachusetts, USA) and Cristina Baciú (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) shared their insights about best practices related to inter-institutional collaborations in social work education through the workshop *International Student Exchange as a Valuable Approach for Social Work Education, Practice and Research: A Model of Collaboration between Babes Bolyai University and Springfield College*.

The opening session of SWIC 2018 included welcome speeches from Professor Marian Preda, the President of the Senate, University of Bucharest, Assoc. Professor Darie Cristea, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Ms. Roxana Andreea Marin, Head of Social Inquiry Department, General Directorate of Social Work Bucharest, Assoc. Professor Adrian Dan, Head of Social Work Department, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, President of the Organizing Committee of the SWIC 2018. During the two days of activities, the conference featured keynote presentations from Emeritus Professor Karen Lyons (London Metropolitan University, UK), Professor Nino Žganec (University of Zagreb, Croatia; European Association of Schools of Social Work), and Professor Lars Uggerhøj (Aalborg University; University of Lincoln, UK).

Professor Karen Lyons's engaging keynote address focused on the international dimension of social work as an increasingly important field that can enhance our understanding of the interconnection between global and local social issues, as well as of the challenges faced by practitioners and researchers engaged in either comparative (cross-national research), international (education) or transnational (practice and labour mobility) social work. Drawing on examples of cases and research studies on the topic, Professor Lyons highlighted the international conventions and professional ethics which can guide social workers' actions and made valuable suggestions for developments in education and research in support of transnational social work practice.

Professor Nino Žganec gave a compelling keynote presentation on the "traps" that neoliberalism poses on social work practice and education and discussed some possible professional responses to this situation. Professor Žganec talked about the dominance of economic logic in governing all aspects of society and the limitations that this imposes on social equality, social justice and human right. Professor

Žganec argued for the need for social workers to oppose the idea of neoliberalism and constantly challenge the dominant paradigm of social development by building its own development, relying on clear social work ethical principles and lessons learned from social work history.

Professor Lars Uggerhøj's thought-provoking keynote presentation focused on Practice Research as a possible "missing meeting point" of practice and research, highlighting the benefits that social work can gain from actively engaging practitioners and service users in the research process, while, at the same time, making researchers more active in practice learning processes. Professor Uggerhøj talked about the growing need for social work organisations to transition from knowledge build on personal norms and professional experience to knowledge based on research, produced through bottom-up processes. He argued that the strenght of the Participatory Practice Research approach lies in its positioning in between practice research on social work (research that focuses on research on social work) and practitioner research (research that focuses on processes controlled and accomplished by practitioners), as well as in its distinctive characteristic of engaging "practice-minded researchers" and "research-minded practitioners" in a co-creative knowledge production process.

The presentations in the parallel sessions tackled the glocalizing dimension of social work in connection to various social work major topics and areas: community development, active aging, restorative justice, social work professionalisation, social work education, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, youth work, migrants and asylum seekers, substance abuse, domestic violence, foster care, rural social work, etc. Within time slots of usually 15 minutes per presentation, followed by approximately 5 minutes of questions and answers sessions, participants had the chance to convey their research findings and to receive meaningful feedback from the audience.

Each year, SWIC features selected social work-related exhibitions that participants can enjoy during conference breaks. In the 2018 edition, SWIC hosted the photo exhibition *A Century of Social Work in Romania and Bucharest*, prepared by the General Directorate for Social Work of the Bucharest Municipality. The year 2018 marked the centenary of the unification of the historical regions Transilvania, Basarabia, Bucovina, Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș with the Romanian Kingdom. The photo exhibition was an occasion to commemorate the beginnings of social work in Romania, and also to take stock of the achievements within these years and reflect upon the development of social services and social protection measures addressed to individuals and families. SWIC 2018 participants could also admire the painting exhibition *About Angels. About Love, Beauty, Kindness* by Simona Budică, a social work graduate of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest. The Decorative Candles exhibition of the "Ateliere Protejate" Association, featuring products made by service users themselves, was an opportunity for participants to witness first-hand the results of occupational therapy for people with disabilities and to interact with the service

users of the association. In the first day of the conference, following the opening session, “Parada” Foundation entertained participants with an artistic programme based on spectacular circus acrobatics performed by the service users themselves, children and adolescents from socially disadvantaged environments.

The conference dinner, lunch and coffee breaks were organized in an informal manner, enabling participants, keynote speakers and organizers to interact directly, exchange ideas and further give/receive feedback. Each year, the SWIC Organizing Committee strives to create an accessible social work hub, an inclusive space for knowledge sharing on latest trends in social work research, education and practice, at an affordable participation fee. The venue of the conference, a new building of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the University of Bucharest, contributes to creating the friendly and hospitable environment that the organizers aim at. At the same time, the relatively small size of the conference allows participants to interact directly in both formal and informal arrangements, and to freely engage in discussions on their preferred social work-related topics.

The fourth edition of SWIC 2019 will be held in Bucharest on November 7th-8th, 2019. Scholars, researchers, practitioners, students and service users are invited to submit their contributions on the theme *The Place and Role of Social Work in the 2020s and Beyond*. The Call for Abstracts, together with more information about the next edition are available on the conference website: [www.swicub.com](http://www.swicub.com).