

Call for Papers

**13th annual TiSSA Plenum August 24 to 26, 2015 &
PreConference of the PhD-Network August 21 to 23, 2015
in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (www.tissa.net)**

Social Work in a Restructured Society

All over Europe countries are subjected to processes of radical restructuring with the objective of establishing a market-driven competitive society. This capitalist project operates by continuously creating economics constraints which leads to situations of intense competition. Individually people cannot respond either by calculating their chances or by influencing the process. The competitive society has a deep impact on all spheres of life, e.g., on education, work and welfare. The Welfare State and its corresponding social policy programmes have declined rapidly or were not even realized in the first place in countries which gained their independence since 1991. Instead of introducing structural measures to deal with social problems and fighting inadequate conditions, the leading ideology all over Europe prescribed self-responsibility on the part of suffering individuals with the slogans of 'self-actualization' and 'activation'. In addition, the true face of the competitive society can be seen in the dramatic social split between the rich and the poor. This causes an existential loss of perspective and real needs especially of that part of society which is totally dependent on the state as their only remaining source of support and solidarity. Social work has also been affected by these new political principles and has organized itself along a managerialist path with focus on indicators of efficiency and effectiveness, thereby increasingly ignoring societal causes. Indeed, social work, particularly in its practical case analyses, reduces itself to a "sanitary function" of maintaining an unequal society. In this it is backed by the overall imperative of more social control as expressed in more and more restrictive prescriptions how to act which shape the minds of the professionals themselves. In this way, a substantially limited identity of social work emerges with the task of political self-determination and the loss of the ability to reflect critically on its problems and its own actions. In short, social work deprives itself of all social impact. Again, it is precisely that part of society – which faces grave problems anyway and thus comes to demand social services – for which the non-existence of perspectives is always linked to the impossibility of developing new action spaces itself in its efforts to achieve a good life. In view of these facts, it is the task of critically professional social work to confront with determination its gradual self-dissolution and the implosion of its societal function. This could be the core of a modern social work that strives to emancipate itself together with its addressees and uses its political voice to fight for social justice and social equality.

TiSSA 2015 invites experts from social work research, professional fields and policy to discuss their experiences of the developments in a market-driven competitive society described above and to enter into a critical discourse about what ways there are to bring about change.

PhD PreConference

The PhD PreConference in conjunction with the TISSA conference from August 21 to 23 provides a unique opportunity for PhD students who conduct research in the overall field of social services and related social problems to present their results or 'work in progress'. A board of professors of international standing from a variety of countries will form a panel to comment on the presentations and will be available for any further guidance. The PhD PreConference offers therefore a very valuable occasion to engage in comprehensive networking with colleagues from other European countries, and to further one's own academic and professional development.

All colleagues and PhD-students are cordially invited to send an abstract (1-2 pages) to the TISSA coordinator: hansuwe.otto@uni-bielefeld.de. Submissions can either represent reflected practical experiences, empirical research, theoretical concerns and/or examples of resistance, conflict and alternates. A scientific committee will evaluate all incoming abstracts. Presentations will be limited to max. 20 minutes. Points for subsequent discussions are welcome. For all colleagues intending to give a paper either for the TISSA Plenum or for the PreConference of PhD-Network the deadline for the announcement of the abstract is **June 30th, 2015**.