

The Third International Spring Institute of Fès



Social Work, Human Development and empowerment of Skills : A Cross-cultural approach

Kingdom of Morocco
Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Sais-Fès

International Institute of Sociology, Anthropology and Human
Development

In collaboration with
Institut Régional du Travail Social de Bretagne
(France)
Université de Moncton (Canada)
Et L'Université Nice Sophia-Antipolis (France)

are organizing
From May 16th to May 21th 2011

The Third International Spring Institute of Fès

After the success of the last two annual meetings of 2009 and 2010, the International Institute of Sociology, Anthropology and Human Development of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University (Morocco) and the Regional Institute of Social Work of Bretagne (France) co-organize the third edition of the International Spring Institute of Fès. This institute will bring together different participants (Researchers, students, practitioners and NGOs members) to discuss in large groups and thematic workshops the challenges of the link between theory / practice, on the theme of "Social work, human development and skills empowerment: a cross-cultural approach. Participants in this event will undergo a process of exchange based on their proper experiences in different academic areas: education, research, internships and fieldwork.

The aim of the third edition of the Spring Institute is twofold. On the one hand, it will allow sensing/appreciating intercultural variations in human development that various contributors in the field of social action would take into account in all strategies of empowerment of individual and collective skills. On the other hand, it will provide an opportunity for participants to share "tips and practical techniques" to identify the different modes of action on which social actors rely to handle empowerment skills among/regarding populations encountered in the field.

This event aims at an international level to address all that is proportionate to the thematic, bringing more focus on the field of training, of social work intervention or research which involves not only: researchers, students and social actors but also a large audience that will find in this opportunity means to discover and/or enhance aspects of city life and the practice of citizenship.





PRELIMINARY DEFINITION

There is a Chinese proverb that says “Give someone a fish; you have fed them for today. Teach someone to fish; and you have fed them for a lifetime”. This proverb illustrates clearly the meaning of the concept of empowerment that we will try to elucidate in the proceedings of the third Spring Institute. Specifically, among the roles assigned to social workers is to encourage those with whom they work to to develop and put into action their own techniques and strategies to address the problems they encounter. That is to say, the task is to enable them to utilise an interactive and constructive system of learning (Chi et al, 2001), based on autonomy and individual initiative, as a means to seek out resolutions to problem situations. Thus, capacity building/empowerment in this sense is to pursue the objective of a a dynamic and functional self in which the individual becomes a sort of technician who an manages his/her tools and techniques to best advantage when faced with challenges where there is a lack of support.



Moreover, if the true goal of empwornment is the image of the individual taking charge of his/her own life, and her/his own economic, professional, familial and social destiny, constituting not a burden to society, but rather a value to the community, so it is also important to consider the organisational forms and contexts for the achievement of such ends. Thus, for example, if the real purpose of empowerment in the non-profit sector is that instead of the NGOs depending on donations from benefactors, they should seek some measures to develop skills to become independent in their way of acquiring funds for their subsistence and their continuities, instead of relying passively on public funds. They could integrate, thus, within processes of social economy by becoming more mistress of their destiny, strengthening their social environment without being an unnecessary economic burden to the community. Equally, for other sectors, public and private, similar challenges may be represented in the difficulties they face in achieving a common basis and egalitarian framework for the development of individual strengths and capacities, which are not always in the organisational interest.



The realization of these objectives is not possible without promoting individuals as well as groups; this suggests a “Selbst arbeiten” system, according to the German concept, defined in the following quote :“Tell me and I will forget; show me and I will

remember; involve me and I will understand”(Thal, 2004: 30). Thus, among the components of this system are the following skills:



a. Self-regulation: that is to say, the target population comes autonomously to manage its various structures and its various components. it has the inherent capacity to adjust its internal dynamics taking into account external constraints?



b. Self monitoring: this is when the target population is aware of the different phases of its developments; it adapts itself, then, according to external influences and opportunities.



c. Self-representation: the target population is aware of its features, differences and all that distinguishes it from the others, its history, individual identity, desires, tendencies and expectations.

d. Self modification: the target population comes to anticipate the kind of the problem to be faced in the near future and prepares appropriate strategies and solutions to resolve it (Khabbache, 2004).

e. Self description: the target population is capable of diagnosing the causes and consequences of its failures and successes (Sigler, 2002).



f. Self concept: the target population comes to create techniques and both original and innovative techniques relative to the problems faced, and which are not identical copies of another working system ... that is to say knowing the level of creativity and craft of individuals and populations facing unusual problem situations (Demtriou and Kazi, 2001).

Of course, the techniques and approaches to self-realisation will differ according to the context and social setting, and we must acknowledge and reflect upon the implications of such variation, in culture, development, economic system or legal and policy frameworks. The aims, purposes and methods of social work must also be adapted to these differing expectations and challenges, whilst also acknowledging shared common features and principles. We aim to explore these areas of common ground and diversity more thoroughly through the work of the third Spring Institute.





PROBLEMATIC

'Empowerment' is a prominent word in the world of social work. It has become significant because it seems to provide a focus for the critical objective of engaging with and enabling people in difficult situations to become agents of change in their own right. It seems to capture essential principles to do with promoting social justice with and for people experiencing disadvantage and oppression. However, it is a word which also creates significant challenges for us, both conceptually and practically. It is difficult, for example, to be clear about how we negotiate unequal power relations and what exactly our role as professionals might be in changing these, especially when we stand in a position of having 'power over' people with whom we practice. It is also problematic when we move on to consider just what an empowering change might look like. How can we judge if and when people have gained power, or become better able to influence key aspects of their own lives? What, too, is or should be the relationship between empowering individuals, and empowering communities? Greater freedom to choose for some may mean less choice for others, for example. Is it necessary, then, to think in terms of empowerment as a 'zero-sum' game, where for every 'winner' there are also losers? Or, is it better to think in terms of mutually empowering social relations which enhance our collective capacity to influence and change the material and social world around us.

These are major questions for those engaged in the social work task, but they are further complicated by the divergent understandings and practices brought to bear on the subject in different communities and cultures. What are the contexts and practices of 'empowerment' in social settings characterised by differences in experience, resources, beliefs or structures. How do social workers go about the task of promoting change on behalf of service users in diverse settings where different rules apply ?

In setting out the basis for our third Spring Institute, the aim here is to suggest some of the ideas and key questions which participants might usefully bring to bear; it will be important, too, to here about how power relations are differentially constructed in a range of social contexts, and how these establish the framework for social work practice, setting the terms for what is conceivable and thereby, what is possible. The ways in which conventional values and practices are embedded in social structures need to be evaluated, because it is only in

light of this understanding that we can identify the most appropriate and effective modes of operation for social workers and others whose focal point of concern is promoting social justice for disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Working to achieve change is always constrained and contextualised by the specific patterns of belief and forms of social organisation which apply. Social work as an applied activity can benefit hugely from a close understanding of specific examples of such dynamics, and how they are negotiated and changed in particular societies. It is also likely to benefit and be enriched by the forms of dialogue which are established in the process of exchanging knowledge, ideas and evidence from experience. This is the basis for the Spring Institute itself, and it is to be hoped that participants will join with the aim of sharing and building on this exercise of mutual sharing, challenge and problem-solving. New ideas and ways of working will emerge from the experience of listening to each other, questioning and building on what we already know about 'best practice'. Out of this will emerge a more fully engaged, inclusive and empowering social work which is culturally aware and effective across social divisions and geographical distance

The development of pragmatic approaches of public policies (Payet, Giuliani & Laforgue, 2008 ; Cantelli, Roca I Escoda, Pataroni & Stavo Debaugue, 2009 ; Tardif & Felix, 2010) offers a reading of social work which analyzes the moral aspects of qualification processes and addresses therefore directly the questions of vulnerability and social and psychic sufferance of the people. (Renault, 2008, Cultiaux & Perilous, 2009, on the humanitarian issue from a more Foucauldian perspective see Fassin, 2010). These analytical perspectives have not only redefined the contemporary social and health issue in the 2000s, but have questioned also anew the "ordinary knowledge" of practitioners and the public, beneficiaries of educational activities and care (Ferrand, 2008).

"The capability approach" came particularly from "moral economy" of Amartya Sen who has inserted in social sciences new research programs to implement dynamic components of vulnerability and human capacity. The activation of "real human rights" has energized the democratization of our societies by means of individual and collective/community empowerment (De Munck, Zimmerman, 2008). Papers to be produced will be listed in four areas of research :





Area 1: Modes of governance in social work and empowerment process enhancement.

Area 2: Social Interventions from users as spaces for power appropriation to autonomous acting.

Area 3: Influence of sociocultural context on patterns of implementing empowerment actions.

Axis 4: Empowerment Skills in the following areas:

- Psychology.
- Psychotherapy.
- Network.
- Intercultural approach.



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SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Pr. Brahim Akdim, (Dean of Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Saïs Fès, Professor of higher Education), President of the scientific committee.

Pr. Roger Smith (Professor of Social Work: England)

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Mme Najah Mahmi (Anthropology of Religions; English Department)

M. Julien Tardif (Sociology of Social Work ; France)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Two types of papers can be presented to the Scientific Committee:

- *Conference sessions are for scientific papers lasting 30 minutes, a standard-size paper, Times New Roman font, size 14, Editorial Style APA (American Psychological Association: www.apastyle.org) with summary in English and another in French each should be between 150 and 200 words. The maximum number of characters for the entire text should not exceed 10,000 characters (References and footnotes pages are included).*

- *The posters are of a shorter format and more open to developing scientific contributions (research topic, preliminary results, arguments, etc..) Case studies, presentations of experiences, personal reflections or positions, institutional presentations. Posters are therefore open to a wider audience: PhD students, Master or Bachelor students, practitioners, activists, etc.. and must be presented in a format not exceeding 100 cm by 200 cm.*

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Participants wishing to present a paper must first provide a summary of their paper of two pages containing the problematic, keywords, methodology or approach, the main results and a bibliography.

Participants wishing to present a poster (research topic, preliminary results, starting arguments, case studies, presentations of experiences, personal reflections, institutional presentations) must provide a one-page summary

These abstracts that will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee members should be sent to the following address :



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Deadline for abstracts submission: March 03, 2011
Notice of decision of the scientific assessment will be given maximum two weeks after receiving of the manuscript

Selected papers will be published in the acts of Spring Institute, in the form of a digital CD and in the form of a hand book as a collective work, the publisher of which is the International Institute of Sociology, Anthropology and Human Development.



EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

- *The proposal should contribute to broadening knowledge on one of the themes of the Spring Institute 2011 in connection with notions of social work, human development and empowerment skills.*
- *The proposal should tackle a subject that will interest a large number of participants*
- *The research question or problem should be clearly identified and supported by an updated knowledge in the field*
- *The method should be rigorous and appropriate to the research. The various elements that compose it (sample, instruments of data collection, analysis, etc...)*
- *The results should be presented and related to one of the Spring Institute's themes.*



- *The discussion should be sufficiently extensive and consistent with the logic of the problematic; it should be then based on solid arguments.*
- *The proposal should present clear positive outcomes relevant at least for one of the skills of empowerment and human development.*
- *The proposal should be supported by recent and relevant references.*



LOGISTICS

Registration Fees

250 Euros for your stay from May 16th, to May 21st.

Including accommodation, meals, the Gala and the tourist tour

Reduced rate for students: 150 Euros



Make the money order or check

Payment must be sending at:

Charles Gaucher

Professeur adjoint

École de travail social

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(Before 1 March, 2011)

