

Abstracts – International Lecture Series “Social Work in Practice”

The International Lecture Series “*Social Work in Practice*” at DHSN Breitenbrunn brings together international scholars and practitioners to discuss current developments, research perspectives, and innovative approaches in social work. The series fosters international dialogue, strengthens academic cooperation, and connects theory with professional practice.

 **More information on the programme, speakers and schedule:**

<https://www.dhsn.de/aktuelles/news/news-details/internationale-vortragsreihe-soziale-arbeit-in-der-praxis>

 **Meeting link for all lectures:**

<https://ba-sachsen.webex.com/ba-sachsen/j.php?MTID=me25d7ab20682a88c52faf369386c62fe>

Lecture 1

5. März | 09:00–10:30

Prof. Dr. Simon Wilhelm Kolbe (SRH University of Applied Sciences Fürth)

TOPIC: *Human Trafficking and Social Work in Germany: Early Detection and Awareness in Refugee Shelters.*

Human trafficking remains one of the most severe human rights violations worldwide and poses significant challenges for professionals working in refugee accommodation. Individuals affected by trafficking often remain unnoticed, as indicators are frequently subtle and embedded within complex vulnerability contexts such as displacement, dependency, language barriers, and legal insecurity.

This lecture emphasises the critical role of interprofessional competence in recognising potential victims and ensuring appropriate support. Effective identification cannot be understood as the responsibility of a single profession; rather, it requires coordinated awareness and action among social workers, security personnel, administrative staff, healthcare providers, and counselling services.

Drawing on practical insights from the German pilot project *Lichtblicke*, the presentation highlights typical situations in which trafficking may become visible, outlines key indicators professionals should be attentive to, and discusses common uncertainties that can hinder timely intervention. Particular attention is given to strengthening professional confidence, promoting trauma-sensitive communication, and clarifying pathways for action.

The lecture argues that sustainable protection structures emerge where organisations foster shared responsibility, clear procedures, and a culture of attentiveness. Developing interprofessional competence is therefore not merely an additional qualification but a central prerequisite for safeguarding vulnerable individuals and responding effectively to exploitation within refugee accommodation settings.



Lecture 2

12. März | 09:00–10:30

Dr. Karl Mason (Associate Professor of Social Work, Royal Holloway, University of London)

TOPIC: *Social Work and Homelessness: Care and Carelessness in a London hostel*

This presentation will share findings from a study on how ‘need’ is interpreted differently by those living in a complex needs hostel in England and the professionals who supported them. Drawing on case study research comprising semi-structured interviews with hostel residents (n=28) and staff (n=25) as well as observational and documentary analysis data, the presentation focuses on how the theme of care arose when discussing professional support. The study’s conceptual framework combined Fricker’s ‘Epistemic Injustice’ and Honneth’s ‘Misrecognition’ theory to consider how residents were prevented from articulating their true experiences of care or where their need for care was unappreciated. Key patterns in the data include (i) the value of basic caring responses, (ii) surprising features of caring responses, (iii) inconsistencies and absences of care, (iv) the contrast in hostel resident perspectives on care and that of professionals. The presentation will conclude that care was a contested concept, perceived differently by different stakeholders and a site of epistemic justice and misrecognition.



Lecture 3

16. März | 09:00–10:30

Dr. Esther Kronsbein (Acting Professor, RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, Wiesbaden, Germany)

TOPIC: *Women and Girls as agents of social development in East Africa – Experience from social work in Rwanda and Uganda*

Social Work in the Global South is often equated with social development, as the addressees are struggling with essential challenges like absolute poverty, hunger, limited access to clean water, basic health care and education. In addition, there are psychosocial problems and family conflicts. The rights of women, (female) children and minorities are often not adequately enforced. There are therefore many tasks at which “traditional development aid” has failed over decades. This has structural reasons, both on a global political scale and within the structure of development aid itself. International social work offers an alternative perspective. And yet, in practice, the two are difficult to separate in the Global South.

In this session, we will examine this area of tension and look at practical examples from East Africa. As we will see, women and girls play a significant role as agents of social development in the region. Hence, Social Work with this target group, their resources and potentials, will be given special attention. In addition, we will discuss Social Work’s special capabilities as a profession that is close to the addressee’s life worlds. This characteristic holds the potential for Social Work in the Global South to leave its colonial roots behind and truly meet the needs of its addressees.

Contact & Moderator

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