

strong
social
work



Formal meets informal social work: what can we learn?

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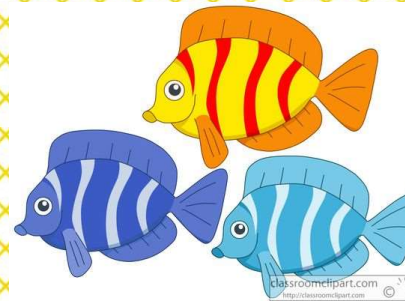
Odisee University of Applied Science – HvA University of Applied Science of Amsterdam



Program of this session:

1. Introduction of the concept “social shadowwork”
(Van Dam and Welschen): 10 min
2. Questions and reactions: 5 min
2. Video: 3 min
3. 4 examples: pitches by guest speakers (3 min each)
4. Debate on 4 themes, 10 min per theme

The fish bowl method: rules of the game



What is informal social work?



Informal social protection (Boccagni, 2017)

Voluntary social work (La Cour & Højlund, 2008)

Social shadow work (Schrooten et al., 2019)

Hidden voluntary social work (Borell & Gerdner, 2011)



Less visible

'hard to reach' target groups

Practice <> profession (Roose, Spierts, & Hoijtink, 2020)



In the bigger picture:

Rentrenching welfare state

Super diversity



Super diversity

'Old' and 'new' migrants with different ethnic-cultural backgrounds

Diversity within diversity

Gap between 'hard to reach' migrant communities <-> formal care/welfare

Informal social work = essential



Dilemmas:

Social shadowwork searches for recognition
but without giving up autonomy

Obstacles in the cooperation between
formal and informal social work

Potential risks of social shadow work



Foto Rufus de Vries,
<http://www.buurtbanden.nl/amsterdam-noord-fotoserie/>

**Migrant self-organisations face suspicion:
“closed communities” that “hinder integration” (Ponzoni & Pels, 2016)**

But instead, they bridge the gap (migrant communities – formal care):

- low threshold, familiar and safe place
- where residents can express their problems and support questions
- starting point, a ‘foyer’ (Schrooten et al., 2019) to formal welfare/care:
 - offering support to residents
 - referring residents to formal care/ welfare
 - advising formal welfare organisations (Bellaart et al., 2019)

“If we would be like them (formal care), people would stay at home. The point is that they feel at home. We don’t have any expectations. Our door is open to everyone.” (member Turkish organisation)

***“I think that if people feel more firmly [connected to] their base, then it will be easier to take the step to the other world.”
(volunteer, Turkish organisation)***

To kick off: two examples

[Oekraïense pastoor stelt kerk in Brussel open voor Oekraïense vluchtelingen | BRUZZ](#)

[Shortdoc ECHO Stichting Studiezalen \(youtube.com\)](#)

Voices from the field: our guest speakers today:

Peggy Anijs & Soemitro Poerbodipoero, Kraktie Foundation Amsterdam

Ann Lamon, involved in citizen's initiatives in transitcamps in Pas de Calais

Gottlieb Blokland, pastor protestant-evangelical church and Open Deur in Schaarbeek

Lotte Stoops, GREEN MP Brussels

Theme for debate no. 1

→ The risks of leaving the support for vulnerable groups in the hands of religious organizations are too high, authorities must have sufficient control over their activities.

Theme for debate no. 2

→ **Social shadow work must steer clear of government interference or subsidies in order to maintain its autonomy and independence.**

Theme for debate no. 3

→ Ethical considerations matter less
when dealing with groups like undocumented migrants
because they have barely any rights to support elsewhere.

Theme for debate no. 4

→ **Informal social work is a mirror for formal social work;
it shows where formal social work falls short.**

Thank you for participating!

Further questions?

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