

Policy practice engagement in Italian social work

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Policy practice engagement in Italian social workA sustainable development based on the enhancement of human rights and social justice is closely related to the social policies that are regulating these aspects in a country, but also to the way in which social workers can influence social policy formulation and its implementation in the community.This presentation, that address the key theme n.6 (social work and political action) will briefly define the concept of policy practice and will firstly analyze, with a historical perspective, the Italian situation in relation to the commitment of social workers in defending and enhancing the social work values.Secondly we will present the current situation where, despite these important transformations in social services and the role played by the National Register of Social Workers who made public statements against some laws considered in violation of social work principles, in the last decades social workers have failed to position themselves as a collective subject capable of formulating proposals at a political level or to react to the policies of the right-wing government that undermined the basis of social justice (see the law for immigrants). Some results deriving from national research carried out with funding from the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, through both phone interviews to 1000s of SW and 40 in-depth interviews to long standing managers of social services, in fact, show a low political sensitivity of social workers towards this topic.Finally we will present a research project that would like to deepen this analysis in two regions (Lombardia and Sicily) using the same questionnaire that has been used in the Israeli research (Gal, Weiss,2013).The presentation will conclude with some suggestions as how to strengthen policy practice competences in social work education and practice.Key workds: policy practice, research, social workers