



From Global to Local

International Conversations
on Social Work and Social Justice

Spring Semester 2025

Children's Rights & Child Welfare

Online via Zoom!

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General Idea

In this online series we would like to bring together Social Work classes from different countries around the world and encourage them as scholars and students to engage in an online discussion about current topics of global interest framed within the main theme, "From global to local – international conversations on social work."

The goal is to create an ongoing platform for international exchange and to reflect on issues which are relevant to social work practitioners and scholars in different geographical contexts and sociopolitical backgrounds. In doing so, we hope to gain knowledge about social work from a global perspective and to create a dynamic and stimulating international network as well as a collaborative platform for further projects.

Children's Rights & Child Welfare



This year we will focus our attention on the **issue of children's rights and child welfare**. As we learn more about these issues from experts around the world, we will examine how **children's rights and welfare issues are intimately connected to issues of social justice**. We will also examine how children's rights and welfare issues impact local and global communities. Lastly, we will also explore why, as social workers, it is absolutely **critical that we participate** in these conversations and efforts.

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April 7

How to Have Difficult Conversations in Child Welfare:

A Rights Focused Perspective



Donald Forrester

- Professor of Child and Family Social Work
Cardiff University, UK
- Director of Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre
(CASCADE)
- Research Director
Best Childhoods Centre
- Deputy Director
SCALE Centre for Social Care and AI Learning

May 5

How to Develop a Positive Identity Among Youth? Practical Implementation



Emilia Żyłkiewicz-Płońska, PhD

- Faculty of Education
University of Bialystok, Poland
- Editor and Executive Secretary
"Culture and Education"

May 19

Privatization in Child Protection



Ulrika Järkestig Berggren

- Associate Professor in Social Work
Linnaeus University, Sweden

June 16

10,000 Voices: What Matters to Children in Care and Care-Leavers' Well-Being



Julie Selwyn

- Professor of Education and Adoption
Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK

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Contributors:

Donald Forrester

Donald Forrester is Professor of Child and Family Social Work at the University of Cardiff, where he is Director of the CASCADE Centre for Children's Social Care. He also helped set-up the Tilda Goldberg Centre, the Frontline programme, the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (now Foundations) and is currently Research Director for a major new Centre in Denmark called the Best Childhoods Centre and Deputy Director of the SCALE Centre for Social Care and AI Learning.

Donald was a child and family social worker in London, and his research interests still relate strongly to his experiences as a practitioner. Donald has researched extensively on the links between practice skills, outcomes for children and families and the organizational factors that influence practice quality. He is a leading researcher on social work communication skills, Motivational Interviewing in child and family work and what works in child welfare. His latest book *The Enlightened Social Worker: An Introduction to Rights Focused Practice* tries to understand why social work is so often full of tension and conflict and how we can best work with these challenges. It argues that practice informed by respect, love and wisdom is essential not only for those we work with but in creating a humane and civilized society, and in his latest book he tries to describe what such practice involves.

Emilia Żyłkiewicz-Płońska, PhD

Dr. Emilia Żyłkiewicz-Płońska has a PhD in social science and works at the Department of Intercultural Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Białystok, Poland. Fields of research include youth identity, positive prevention, youth empowerment, and higher education. She has participated in several international research and educational projects in the field of empowering youth and educating professionals, such as "A Better Tomorrow", LLP-Erasmus Programme (IP), No. 2008-LT-0216, (2008-2009), "Special Programme International Capacity Building Youth Work", LLP-Erasmus Intensive Programme (IP), No: ERA/IP/11/39, (2011-2014), "Social Professions for Supporting Youth in a European Solidarity Context", EU Erasmus + Strategic Partnership for Higher Education Programme, No. 2019-1-PL01-KA203-065091, (2019-2022). In 2018 she did a postdoctoral internship in the field of socio-cultural context of youth resilience at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal.

Dr. Żyłkiewicz-Płońska cooperates with psychotherapy centers, NGOs, as a social and psychological skills trainer where she mainly works with children, youth, parents, teachers, and educators. She was responsible for training educators in the project funded by the City Council in Białystok, "Development of positive prevention in secondary schools in Białystok" (2017). She is a member of scientific organizations at the Polish Academy of Science (Youth Studies Unit and Pedagogy of Culture and Intercultural Education Unit) and a member of Editorial Board at two scientific journals: „Kultura i Edukacja” [Culture and Education] (ERIH Plus, BazHum, ICI Journals Master List / ICI World of Journals) and "Tiltai" (EBSCO, Ulrich Periodical Directory, Index Copernicus).

Ulrika Järkestig Berggren

Ulrika Järkestig Berggren is associate professor in the Faculty of Health, Social Work and Behavioural Sciences, School of Social Work at Linnaeus University, Sweden, with research experience in child protection and disability studies. She has published articles for journals including European Journal of Social Work, British Journal of Social Work, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Child & Family Social Work, Nordic Social Work Research, International Journal of Social Welfare, and Child Care in Practice.

Julie Selwyn

Julie Selwyn is a Professor of Education and Adoption at the Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford. She is a qualified social worker who worked in residential, child protection, fostering and adoption teams before becoming an academic. She has led many studies on adoption and kinship care as well as the Bright Spots research on the wellbeing of children in care and care leavers. Julie has worked as a special advisor to the House of Lords, given expert advice in the courts in the UK and Australia, and has contributed to the Family Justice Board modernising adoption report. She was awarded a CBE for services to adopted children and children in care in 2015. Julie has led the work on measuring children in care's wellbeing since 2013.

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All workshops start at 10am CST / 5pm CET (German time)
Make sure to check your local time!

All workshops are delivered via Zoom:

<https://cuwaa.zoom.us/j/2622432191>

Meeting ID: 262 243 2191

Participation is free and open to anybody! Feel free to share this program!

For further information please contact one of the organizers listed below:

Prof. Dr. Sarah Collins, Concordia University Wisconsin, USA, sarah.collins@cuw.edu

Prof. Dr. Johannes Kloha, TH Nürnberg, Germany, johannes.kloha@th-nuernberg.de

Prof. Dr. Cosimo Mangione, TH Nürnberg, Germany, cosimo.mangione@th-nuernberg.de



Important:

We plan to use the International Conversation Series sessions to produce a set of learning packages, including instructional videos. **Therefore, we are recording the sessions.** However, we will only use the parts where the contributor is visible. No data from participants will be used. We will announce the recording prior to every session. By participating in the session you are expressing your agreement with this.