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**Challenges and Opportunities for
Social Work Students' Placement in
Cyprus**

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Outline

- **Social work education & training**
- **Cypriot welfare system**
- **The development of social work**
- **Supervision in fieldwork placements**



Social Work Education & Training

- **Education was provided till 2001 solely from SW Departments abroad mainly in Greece, UK & USA (Panayiotopoulos & Spaneas, 2011)**
- **Curricula and teaching modeled that of western culture as those of the USA and the UK**
- **As a result Cypriot social workers were trained in different environments where academic stimulus and programmes have most of the times no reference to the local context**



Social Work Education & Training

- **Since 2001 till 2007 there were developed 3 SW programmes**
- **All SW programmes have been influenced by the educational curriculum offered in Greece**
- **Social Work Education in Cyprus is offered only by private Universities**



Cypriot Welfare System

- **Political situations played a significant role into the development of social work profession**
- **In 1952 the first public Social Welfare Department (SWD) was established**
- **Social work was later influenced and structured accordingly to facilitate the humanitarian needs of refugees & victims of the Turkish invasion in 1974**
- **Social work is still today closely associated with SWD as the main provider of social services**



Cypriot Welfare System

- The model used in Cyprus is a combination of the Anglo-Saxon and central European models
- It includes:
 - a general comprehensive scheme of guaranteed minimum income
 - categorical sub-programs for specific vulnerable groups, like the disabled, the elderly, the Greek Cypriot refugees etc.



The development of social work professional practice in Cyprus

- Influence by the psychodynamic theories of 1950's in social work.
- Social welfare and social work were transferred and implemented almost without any indigenization.
- Social workers still fight to strengthen their position in the welfare arena.



Challenges for practice learning...

- **Performance of practice teachers varies**
- **Usually are too busy to perform their role & complete all the tasks required**
- **Lack of an established supervision system for professionals**
- **Lack of training on supervision**
- **There is not an official body that monitors and sets criteria for student's fieldwork placement**
- **Lack of fieldwork placement criteria by agencies**



Opportunities for practice Learning

- **Social work practitioners from different backgrounds & cultures**
- **Social services make an effort to change**
- **Social work programmes have a medium level of influence**
- **There are significant grounds for research opportunities**



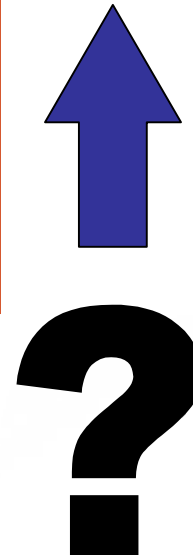
So where are we now and what is our vision about where we would like to be concerning practice learning in social work education????



Social Work Programmes (SWPs)

- different curricula with different requirements
- policy on practice learning
- faculty staff recruitment & retention

limited power
over the SWPs
& SCOs



Social Work Regulation Body

Social care organisations
(public & NGOs)=SCOs

- lack of legal acts
- differentiation of services provision
- no specific policy on fieldwork



A first step...

- **University of Nicosia/Social Work Programme-Certificate for Practicum Supervisors & MSc in Social Interventions**
- **The only post qualifying courses in social work in Greece & Cyprus.**
- **Both are designed to equip social work practitioners with skills for practice teaching**



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Thank you!!!

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