



Subject: Invitation for 10 persons from EASSW member schools to participate in a conference on 23rd and 24th of April, in the Hogeschool of Amsterdam . All expenses are covered by the project.

Please send us your participation including the working group you would like to participate in before the 5 February 2010

Dear EASSW member,

COPORE (COmpetences for POverty REduction) is a consortium of health, social and educational networks that presented to the European Commission successfully an ERASMUS Accompanying Measures Project within the framework of the European Year 2010, combating poverty and social exclusion. It will be managed by ENOTHE, the European Thematic Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education.

The COPORE project aims to define competences and recommendations for health, education and social work students and practitioners on how to contribute to poverty reduction strategies. The project aims to bring together all major actors in the field, identify good practices, and develop a common language on social determinants of health and indicators of poverty.

Although looking for ways to combat poverty is not innovative in itself, the introduction of an interdisciplinary approach to the education of health, educational and social work students, linking the education to research and to society in the specific field of health and social care and defining the competences in the field are new ideas.

The project aims to select existing good practices in the field of interdisciplinary community care, and invites students to develop interdisciplinary projects on poverty reduction in collaboration with disadvantaged groups from local communities. Working groups will prepare strategic papers on themes including community development and client participation, competences for monitoring social determinants of health, interdisciplinary approaches, preventive and outreaching approaches, and multidisciplinary education with regard to poverty reduction.

The various activities will culminate in an international conference to be held on **23 & 24 April 2010** in the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, where selected good practices will be presented, the best students project will be awarded and the strategic papers will be discussed. After the conference conclusions and recommendations will be disseminated to a wide audience in the health and social sectors.

The Conference will take place on 23rd and 24th of April, in the Hogeschool of Amsterdam.

The Conference will be organised around **five working groups**, which will each take up one important strand. Hereafter you find a brief description of the proposed working groups. The work of the groups will constitute the COPORE report.

"Competences For Poverty Reduction"

Five working groups:

1. Interdisciplinary approach in Social and Health care to prevent and/or combat poverty;
2. Community development and client participation approaches to addressing health inequalities;
3. Preventive and outreaching approaches;
4. Eradicating disadvantages in Education – (Poverty reduction)
5. Work and worklessness.

The overall objective is to furnish guidelines and reference points which are useful in developing competences for poverty reduction in European higher education.

The proposed work groups are organised around different aspects of the overall theme. Each work group is asked to discuss and report on their specific topic, and also to discuss and develop statements about the competences needed for poverty reduction, articulating these under three points: the necessary competences at entry in higher education; the necessary competences to be formed during higher education; approaches to teaching/learning and assessment that are useful for forming and assessing those competences, using the interdisciplinary expertise of the Networks.

Before the conference, the members of each group are asked to write a short statement (2 pages max.). Each one is asked to address the working group theme from the point of view of his/her Network as well as their personal view point.

In particular we note that the Networks are places where competences are developed and that in the COPORE consortium, the interdisciplinary aspects of dialogue about poverty reduction are further developed. The consortium COPORE can contribute to higher education in health, social and educational sciences by giving structure and publicity to its findings and understanding of good practice.

Here below is a brief explanation of what each work group theme may entail:

1. Interdisciplinary approach in Social and Health care to prevent and/or combat poverty;

This group will look at which interdisciplinary teams can break the circle of deprivation? How will their approach be? How will they tackle the social determinants of health? How do they bring this into practice without reducing efficacy. What is the added value of interdisciplinary work?

Tackling the wider determinants of health requires a joint approach to local social and economic realities - poverty, employment, housing, and other factors contributing to social exclusion - as well as to the wider context of individual health-related decision-making, such as food, access to recreation or transport etc..

What competences do our students need and what learning strategies can be used? And how do we implement this in our education?

2. Community development and client participation approaches to addressing health inequalities

This group will think of how to engage with communities and build partnerships. Community engagement, development and capacity-building strategies aim to address underlying causes of social exclusion and inequalities, and contribute to neighbourhood regeneration programmes.

What strategies (like community participation, empowerment) are the different disciplines using and how do they collaborate?

What competences are needed? What learning strategies are used?

3. Preventive and outreaching approaches; focus on health inequalities

WHO's *Health 21* strategy now sets a target of a 25 per cent decrease in the life expectancy gap between socioeconomic groups within European countries by 2020.

This emphasis on targeting is justified by the observation that interventions to improve health in the general population may have little effect on addressing inequalities; they may even exacerbate them if services are differentially accessed. For this reason, interventions need to be targeted and prioritised in order to evaluate progress in narrowing the health gap. The focus may be on deprived areas, neighbourhoods, pockets of deprivation within more affluent wards, on hard to reach groups, or on the provision and style of services where gaps have been identified between access to services and need for those services. Initiatives may address individual risk factors or focus on the context in which decisions are made.

Groups who are disadvantaged may be reached by promoting specific services in new ways.

4. Eradicating disadvantages in Education – (Poverty reduction).

Here we can think of the accessibility of primary, secondary and higher education for minority groups, or equal opportunities in education, as well as enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning

The health promoting schools framework is constituted by five components, namely promoting personal skills through life skills education; developing school policies which promote well-being, creating a safe and supportive teaching and learning environment; strengthening community integrative and health promoting approach (World Health Organisation, 2006).

5. Work and worklessness

Europeans believe that those most at risk of poverty are the unemployed, followed by the elderly and those with low levels of education or training. Statistics show that the unemployed are indeed a group particularly susceptible to poverty: 42% of people out of work have an income below the national poverty line.

And what about poverty among those in work?

Having a job does not always protect people from the risk of poverty. In 2006, 8% of EU-25 citizens in employment (aged 18 and over) lived under the poverty threshold, thereby facing difficulties in participating fully in society.

Access to quality employment is a sustainable way out of poverty and social exclusion. There is a need to design and implement integrated and comprehensive active inclusion strategies, and ensure social protection systems able to mobilise people capable of working, while providing resources that can make it possible to live in dignity, together with support for social participation, for those who cannot.

Although most Member States refer to "active inclusion" in their National Anti Poverty Plan, they tend to treat the issue mainly as a means to integrate people into the labour market. A few Member States construct "active inclusion" as a holistic strategy that combines adequate income support, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services.

We expect that each participant will describe for his or her theme :

- A statement of 10-15 lines
- Sharing best practices and limitations (preferable illustrated with a video or other visual material)
- Key aspects of the theme and reflections
- Competences needed (with performance indicators) and identifying the learning and assessment strategies.

At this time, we ask you to please contact your Network members and invite **ten** interested and committed members – including yourself -- to attend the Conference. Please tell us to which

working group each person will adhere: this will make it possible for the chairs or facilitators to be in contact with the people in their group in the preparatory stages of the Conference. The deadline to tell us the names of your members is **22nd of January,2010**.

As to logistics, we ask the participants to purchase their own tickets purchasing low cost or reasonably priced apex tickets (if needed the "Amsterdam team" can do this). Arrival is on 22nd of April, departure on 24th or 25th. We will make arrangements for accommodation and both meals on 22nd and 23rd and for lunch on 23rd and 24th of April.

We will send you further information about the programme as soon as we can.

We look forward to a great conference and to a further demonstration of the ability of our consortium to contribute to dealing with key European issues.

Best regards,
On behalf of the COPORE consortium,

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