

ASA Project 1503: “Analyzing curricula and learning materials for Social Work studies from a postcolonial perspective”

Context:

Within the framework of Asa Engagement Global, I was involved in a diverse German-Ghanaian research team. The aim of the commissioned research is to analyze both curricula of the Bachelor's program "Social Work" at KNUST and the Master's program "International Social Work with Refugees and Migrants" (MRM) at FHWS from a postcolonial perspective in order to promote a more reflective and power-sensitive focus in the academic training of future social workers by suggesting improvements.



Picture 1: Intersectionality.



Picture 2: Pluriverse.

Research question for the entire team:

How do alumni of the selected study programs experience the addressing of decolonization of social work in their curricular and if so, how does this come in play/affect their current life?

My specific foci:

What is the alumni's personal understanding of postcolonial perspectives and decolonization of the social work curriculum and what calls arise in this regard to make their universities postcolonial?

Applied methods:

Participatory Observation
Semi-Structured Interviews
Online-Survey

The whole process was explicitly orientated on 'Constructing Grounded Theory' by Charmaz (2014).

A few findings:

- Understanding of postcolonial perspective: (in-)direct connection to colonialism and today's structures, gender/intersectionality/anti-discrimination, (critical) self-positioning especially in the so-called Global North, including perspectives from the so-called Global South.
- Understanding of decolonization and its approaches: localization/contextualization, intersectionality/diversity, revitalization, critical approaches.
- Recommendations: mutual learning instead of students in the so-called Global South learning the classics from the so-called Global North, include diverse voices in curricular, rethink concepts of professionalism, academic work and science, decenter the 'West' in order to break universalism.

A collaboration between the University of Applied Sciences (FHWS) in Würzburg-Schweinfurt (Germany) with the Kwame Nkrumah University (KNUST) in Kumasi and the Department of Social Welfare (Ghana).



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References:

- Picture 1_Intersectionality: The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia, 2006–2021. Accessible at: <https://geo.coop/story/future-pluriverse> (11.10.2021).
Picture 2_Pluriverse: Grassroots Economic Organizing, 2017. Accessible at: <https://apps.chamberphl.com/event/5817/intersectionality-in-business> (11.10.2021).