

Calling all Social Work Students from around the World!

Got any plans for the **15th of June 2021**? Staying in? Good!

You are invited to take part in a virtual European Association of Schools of Social Work (ECSWE 2021) pre-conference session aimed at all Social Work students across the globe. Challenge yourself and be a part of the debate on ‘Creative and Innovative Methods in Social Work’!

The future of Social Work is in our hands, and if these times have taught us anything, it is that innovation and resilience are the pair of shoes to take you forward. The pre-conference session is organised for students – although everyone is welcome – by students and is a great place to voice your ideas and exchange best practices (with a bunch of excellent contacts to boot)!

As a part of the pre-conference, we are planning four workshops:

- 1. Community-based Approaches and Social Work*
- 2. Creative ICT Solutions and Social Work*
- 3. Inertia of Movement in Active Social Work*
- 4. Benefits of Animals and Nature in Social Work*

How can you be a part of this building-the-future event?

If you have some great ideas or examples of good practices of creative and innovative methods for carrying out social work in your country that you would like to share with the rest of the world, get in touch with our team by the **30th of April**.

For more information on the event, contact katre.kalaus@tlu.ee.
Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Stay tuned!

Here is more about the proposed workshops.

Workshop 1: Community-based Approaches and Social Work

In addition to traditional social work models, considering the current situation in the world, there is a critical need for creative community-based approaches. Community empowerment is a process that highlights the resources and inner strengths of each individual while providing opportunities to support and help each other within the community.

In the community-based approach workshop, we will focus on the different opportunities and good practices in various countries that empower the community and its members. Different examples that promote mutual assistance will be introduced in the workshop, as there is a very clear need today for such methods in order to provide support and assistance to every member of the community.

Examples of Estonian community-based approaches:

- As part of the Jututaja project, young people are brought together with the elderly living at home and in care homes, with whom they spend time and talk face-to-face or through phone.

These young visitors to the elderly are specially trained, empathetic communicators with a sense of mission.

- Men's Garage promotes active and healthy aging throughout a person's life cycle. By involving both older and younger men, an opportunity is provided for exchanging mutual knowledge, which helps to prepare for a pleasant and active life as one gets older. The men not only work in the garage but also offer each other company in other activities to maintain their mental health.

More information and registration:

Would you like to bring to everybody's notice the good practices in social work from your country through a 10–15-minute presentation? If yes, please register through our page on Facebook or by sending an e-mail to katrekal@tlu.ee.

Workshop 2: Creative ICT Solution and Social Work

A robot walks into a bar, orders a drink, and places some cash on the countertop.

The bartender says, 'we don't serve robots.' The robot replies, 'Oh, but someday you will.'

Modern times require new skills and smart approaches. Already in 2020, industrial surveys indicated that 90% of all jobs require an elementary command of ICT. Estonia has set itself a target of 95% computer literacy by 2023, and large investments are being made into renewing the technologies available in schools, improving internet accessibility and providing digital books. At the same time, providing quality services and support to the public in a cost-effective manner remains the biggest challenge in the social sphere. Smart technologies and automated work processes can be used in a variety of settings from client security, wellbeing and entertainment to easing workloads and optimising efficiency. This would allow more time for the most important things – being human and being there for your clients!

To thrive in the global digitalisation race, Europe must quicken the pace at which new technologies are employed and widen the spectrum of activities in which they are applied. In this workshop, we will take a closer look at new technologies and their applications in the social sphere, with insights from specialists in the field and good practices from Estonia and around the world. The last section of the workshop will provide the participants the opportunity to debate the possibilities and limitations of ICT with our panel of specialists, practitioners and academia.

Join our workshop to find out which ICT solutions are already in the process of taking over both Estonia and the world. Be a part of the discussion about the future of ICT and social work. We are the future – the future is us!

More information and registration:

Would you like to present good practices in social work from your country in a 10–15- minute presentation? If yes, please register through our page on Facebook or by e-mail to katrekal@tlu.ee.

Workshop 3: Inertia of Movements in Active Social Work

In this world, we are surrounded by sounds of nature and voices of people. Similarly, we are surrounded by constant movement, our vital motion through the cycle of life. Most people have some awareness regarding its basic concepts, which are not completely understood, but we can learn their importance and practice them. We realise now that music, dance and movement are very important for maintaining our mental health. Thus, we are glad to introduce you to some interdisciplinary methods in social work. The project is aimed at all age groups at various points in the cycle of life. Our mission is to show how to use music therapy and movement and dance in social work practice. For that, we are preparing two thematic workshops involving students from various countries and specialists working in Estonia. Each workshop includes overviews of various methods, discussion on the topic and narration of experiences by Estonian experts in their respective fields. The methods we plan to use are empowerment, encouragement and therapeutic creativity. These are important for our project because creative methods are not generally considered to be science-based, even though they can be very effective. Some of the examples of Estonian music therapy and movement and dance approaches in social work are as follows: ●Estonian Music Therapy ● Tai ● Autism Movement Therapy ● Dance therapy.

Through the social work pre-conference workshops, we intend to bring into focus several theories and methods. Our effort is to create and convey a better understanding and development of interdisciplinary methods used in social work in general. Participants can explore our ways and work through problem-solving processes. To confirm the effectiveness of our methods, we seek help of international research and studies and other academic sources. We have structured these workshops in three stages – presentations by group members and, hopefully, by international students, along with specialist comments/discussion around spoken topics.

As you decide to participate in our conference, please think about your own experiences with sound, music and physical activity. If you know any good examples, we would be happy to hear about them and spread the word.

More information and registration:

Would you like to present good practices in social work from your country in a 10–15-minute presentations? If you wish to make such presentations, please register through our page on Facebook or via e-mail to katrekal@tlu.ee.

Workshop 4: The Benefits of Animals and Nature in Social Work

Social work is traditionally human-centred in practice, even though for many the bond between humans and animals and nature is the most fundamental of daily-lived experiences. This workshop intends to reflect on the predominant humanistic basis of social work and to consider the growing evidence for developing a wider perspective to incorporate the human–animal–nature connection into social work practice.

The workshop is divided into two main themes – animals in therapy and nature hikes (including virtual travelling). It is scientifically proven that animal therapy programs can improve motor skills and the movements of joints, increase verbal communication and self-esteem, lessen depression, decrease boredom and reduce anxiety. Another excellent way to reduce stress and anxiety is to take up hiking to let your mind ‘switch off’ and just listen to the sounds of nature and let yourself relax.

Our goal in this workshop is to give an introductory presentation on the above activities, analyse and give real-life examples from existing practices in Estonia. We are eager to explore new opportunities and look forward to hearing examples from various countries. We will end the workshop with a panel discussion that will focus on ‘Why Companion Animals are Beneficial during COVID-19?’ in which we will be joined by both students and working professionals.

Bearing this in mind, please provide answers from your country’s perspective on the following orientation questions:

1. How important are animals and nature considered for social work in your country?
2. How is animal-assisted therapy adapted in your country for dealing with the conditions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Is the use of dogs from animal shelters as companions for prisoners to increase their socialization also one of the methods used in your country?
4. Has virtual travelling gained popularity in your country during the COVID-19 pandemic?

More information and registration:

Would you like to present good practices in social work from your country in a 10–15-minute presentation? If yes, please register through our page on [FB](#) or by e-mail to katrekal@tlu.ee.