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Special issue: Social Pedagogy in Times of Crisis in Greece

Editorial

Social Pedagogy in Times of Crisis in Greece

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Social Pedagogy in Times of Crisis in Greece

Gabriel Eichsteller & Pat Petrie, editors

Dear Reader,

How we treat others when crisis threatens reveals the sincerity of our deepest inner values and beliefs: acting selflessly and in solidarity with each other may, in such moments, can be challenging. This can hold true at individual and at societal levels – as different national responses to the recent financial and refugee crises demonstrate. Greece has been affected disproportionately by both, with widespread hardship and inequalities arising from the austerity measures afflicting the Greek population and from the huge influx of refugees risking their lives to reach EU territory via Greek shores. Both have made global headlines, with dimensions such as political polarisation, voter disillusion with traditional austerity politics, outbursts of violence at public demonstrations, all receiving much media attention: much less has been reported on pro-social responses, such as how organisations in the field of social pedagogy have responded to counter or cushion the negative effects of the crises on individuals, groups and communities.

This special issue of the *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* sets out to provide evidence to help redress this imbalance. Guest edited by Professor Iro Mylonakou-Keke, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, it offers profound insights into the impact of the crises on the lives of children, families and vulnerable groups and explores some of the social pedagogic implications for schools and the wider society. Comprising 18 papers with diverse theory, practice and research perspectives, this is a monumental attempt at chronicling social pedagogic responses to immediate social issues. Although the scale and force of these issues may appear more grave in Greece than in other EU countries, they are by no means limited to Greece. For this reason we believe that the papers also offer an opportunity to reflect on any parallels with our own contexts and on how we can seek inspiration from practitioners and academics in Greece. Their passion, resolve and inventiveness offer the possibility of hope, the sense of a better future, even in a seemingly desperate situation. But it is not only practitioners and academics who take responsibility in addressing the crisis – the surge in volunteering highlighted by several authors shows that what matters most at such times is the hope and support we, as human beings, can give each other by virtue of ‘being there’, countering austerity and hardship with kindness, selflessness and a spirit of solidarity.

We’re very grateful to Professor Mylonakou-Keke and all contributors for their immense efforts in sharing these highly topical social pedagogical perspectives and hope that you will enjoy reading them,

Merry Christmas and our very best wishes for 2016,

Gabriel & Pat

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