

Editorial

Editorial Board of the *Social Work Journal* (RTS)

RTS has always believed that the professional and academic realms can and should go hand in hand. This premise has been proven throughout the journal's history. Indeed, the current Editorial Board remains committed to continuing to work towards the goal of making RTS a meeting space for practising social workers and those engaged in university teaching.

If we deem social work to constitute a scientific discipline within the social sciences – and not merely from a professional practice perspective – we must consider research to be an inherent part of social intervention. This will help us to analyse the social reality in which we are involved, to assess and re-consider social action, to seek new perspectives and to adapt to the challenges that arise for social work. Even so, research needs the material that practical professional exercise can provide; it makes it necessary to address practical knowledge and the realities that social workers face daily in order to contribute to the growth of the profession. It therefore appears to be obvious that there is a need to build bridges between practical professional practice and academia. Professional practice needs theory and the history of our profession evidently reminds us of this.

Nonetheless, many theoretical developments require the material and knowledge that the practice of the profession offers. Analysing reality and the intervention context, reviewing intervention methods and delivering innovation all require contributions from professional practice. Consequently, we need both theoretical and practical knowledge, the combination of which will allow us to grow and progress, strengthening our position as a discipline to stand strong in the face of potential external threats. Such threats are highly present in a context where professional profiles having points of intersection with ours have proliferated, but at times they pose a risk to the identity of our profession.

This dichotomous relationship between theory and professional practice calls for meeting points and a break from the notion that academia – as a context for expressing theoretical knowledge – is often far removed from professional practice; and vice versa.

The foundation for this should be the interconnected milieu where the field of social work intervention is enriched by theoretical knowledge and academia is enhanced by professional practice. Indeed, academia is meaningless without practice and the reverse is also true. However, we can observe that in times of crisis, disagreements arise when it is crucial to cooperate more closely, not only to re-conceive strategies and actions, but also to foster the wellbeing of professionals, which is both necessary and beneficial.

Consequently, it is vital for the academic world, which must train future social workers, to organise gatherings to portray the profession's transformations and concerns, and to ensure that the scientific work carried out is more closely aligned to the reality of professional practice.

The professional world must also engage with academia and the opportunities it offers to review and refine practice. This practice, which has been engulfed by the social services system, may have lost some of its identifying features in favour of standardisation. Reconnecting with theoretical knowledge could provide an indispensable dialogue for progress. The synergy between academia and practice is crucial and indispensable to enable our profession to continue growing and establishing itself as a scientific discipline.

At RTS we therefore remain committed to fostering a forum for the interaction and integration of theoretical and practical knowledge. The Praxis and In-Depth sections serve as platforms for this interrelation, highlighting the synergy between practice and academia. We also aim for the journal to be a convergence point for all professionals, advancing the theoretical foundation of the profession and encouraging readers to identify existing common ground. We invite contributions that reflect on and review practical experiences with the necessary rigour to help strengthen social work as a scientific discipline and to boost the professional standing of social workers.