

Transformed lives celebrated at launch of SPPA

An enthusiastic audience heard about the value of social pedagogy as an approach at the [Social Pedagogy Professional Association \(SPPA\) launch](#) on Tuesday 21st February 2017 at the British Academy in London. Lemn Sissay MBE, British Poet and Chancellor of Manchester University was interviewed by Prof Becky Francis, Director of UCL Institute of Education about social disadvantage and his experiences in care.

Social pedagogy is a relationship-based approach to caring for children and families and is sometimes referred to as 'education in the broadest sense'. It is based in an ethos that fosters equality and respect and values relationships, dialogue, joint activity and team work. The launch assessed the impact of social pedagogy in children's services to date and discussed its future.

During the launch, guest speakers from St Christopher's Fellowship, and the London Borough of Hackney's Virtual School for Looked-After Children shared their experiences of the positive impact of a social pedagogic approach to looked-after children, and their hopes for how social pedagogy will be adopted by more organisations in the future.

Established by the [Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy at UCL Institute of Education](#), [ThemPra](#) and [Jacaranda](#), SPPA is the professional home for social pedagogy in the UK. Since the 1990s, there has been interest in, research, delivery of training and development courses on social pedagogy in the UK. Now well over 2,000 people in the UK have had training in social pedagogy, in part through The Fostering Network's Head, Heart, Hands Programme. [Evaluations](#) show that a social pedagogic framework for practice can transform care for young people. The legacy of this programme and the need to scale up social pedagogy in the UK led to the establishment of SPPA.

SPPA's vision is to build a world in which social pedagogy contributes to each person realising their potential. Its aims include developing excellence in and raising the profile of social pedagogy in the UK, building an active professional community for social pedagogy, and supporting the development of qualifications in social pedagogy – the Crossfields Levels 3 and 5 (in England) diplomas in social pedagogy.

Founding membership will be launched in early 2017 and will be available for those who join by 31st December 2017. Speaking at the launch event, **Prof Claire Cameron, Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy at the UCL Institute of Education** said: "Today we are delighted to welcome Lemn Sissay and Becky Francis to join us in marking the start of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association. Having a professional association is new step in establishing this continental European approach to care and education built on humanitarian values of relationship and solidarity in the UK. We've heard such inspiring stories about the impact of social pedagogy on practice today. With SPPA up and running we can accelerate our learning and networking, that's why we're looking for anyone who shares our interest to join SPPA and make it a real professional home for social pedagogy in the UK."

Lemn Sissay MBE, British Poet and Chancellor of Manchester University said:

"We have to be the change that we want to see and SPPA offers the opportunity of that change that is closing the gap between child/user and the service provider. I feel lucky to be here. I feel like I am amongst like-minded people who will challenge the status quo as well as strengthen who it's there for – who are these systems built for? We need our workers, social workers, our educationalists. We need them to be valued so that they can give *true* value, and social pedagogy values those who provide care to those who need it."

Abby Ladbrooke, Director and Co-founder, Jacaranda said:

“Jacaranda is proud to be working with SPPA in developing qualifications in social pedagogy. The Crossfields Institute Level 3 Diploma in Social Pedagogy provides a chance for practitioners and carers to continue their professional development. This Ofqual registered qualification develops new knowledge, tools and ways of thinking and doing that build on and enhance good practice. The Diploma and the charter and standards held by the Social Pedagogy Professional Association, are all part of efforts to nurture a quality-assured coherence to relational work. This has the potential to transform our caring professions“

Gabriel Eichsteller, Director, ThemPra said:

“Social pedagogy emphasises that relationships are central to all care and education. We’re not just talking about relationships between the professional and the people they support, but also about wider relationships in society, how we can facilitate social inclusion. Building authentic relationships that lead to a person feeling supported, able to trust and recognising their unique potential isn’t simply a natural skill though. It’s a finely honed art that benefits from greater theoretical understanding, ethical and analytical insights. This is what a qualification in social pedagogy can provide.

Nicola Boyce, Social Pedagogue Trainer, St Christopher’s Fellowship said:

“Social pedagogy is fundamentally about recognising the creative potential in every individual and the transformative power of relationships for human growth. The impact has been felt by our young people, who tell us they feel we understand them better, listen to them and trust them more and have more ‘real’ relationships with them. Our staff have described how social pedagogy has improved relationships within teams and with other professionals, as well as with young people; they feel more confident, trusted and empowered to be truly creative and authentic in their practice. For the whole organisation social pedagogy has enabled huge cultural change, making our values central to all the work we do and placing a new emphasis on shared reflection, learning and dialogue. The launch of the SPPA is a hugely welcome step forward in developing social pedagogy more widely across the UK, so that even more people can benefit from the transformative potential of this approach to practice.”

Anyone interested to find out more about SPPA and SPPA membership should email sppa@ucl.ac.uk and [join the SPPA mailing list](#). One year founding membership costs £70, and concessions for full-time students and non-wage earners are available at £25. Group discounts available.

Anyone interested to find out more about the social pedagogy qualifications should email Gulsh Khatun at g.khatun@ucl.ac.uk.

Notes to editors

1. The Launch of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association took place at the British Academy on Tuesday 21 February 2017. More details: [Social Pedagogy Professional Association Launch](#)
2. Following research, activities and delivery of training on social pedagogy in the UK, there was a recognised need to scale up social pedagogy in the UK, which led to establishing SPPA. Find out more about the [Social Pedagogy Professional Association](#).
3. Further information about what social pedagogy is about: [Frequently asked questions about social pedagogy](#), [short video clips about social pedagogy](#), the [International Journal of Social](#)

[Pedagogy](#), and this article by Prof Claire Cameron, '[Social Pedagogy in the UK Today: Findings from evaluations of training and development initiatives](#)'

4. The [Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy \(CUSP\)](#) at the UCL Institute of Education, [ThemPra](#) and [Jacaranda](#) are the three partners involved in establishing SPPA. Established in the 1990s, CUSP conducts research and development activities and supervise doctoral students in relation to social pedagogy in the UK and in cross-national contexts. ThemPra is a social (pedagogical) enterprise supporting the sustainable development of social pedagogy through a range of short courses, organisational capacity building and whole-systems strategies. Jacaranda provides permanent recruitment services for social workers and social pedagogues, offers training and consultancy and contributes to the UK development of social pedagogy.
5. Founding membership will be available from early 2017. The membership offer includes continuous professional development and networking opportunities, being part of an active, supportive community and being involved in developing excellence in social pedagogy. Further details: [SPPA membership](#)
6. The recently concluded [Fostering Network's Head, Heart Hands Programme](#) delivered training on social pedagogy across the UK. SPPA is the legacy of this programme.
7. [Independent social pedagogy evaluations](#) builds on the growing evidence for social pedagogy.
8. The [Crossfields Institute Level 3 Diploma in Social Pedagogy](#) developed by Thempra, Jacaranda, and Crossfields Institute in partnership with SPPA is an excellent development opportunity for people working in care and education across the age range.
9. Anyone interested to receive regular updates about SPPA's developments can [join the SPPA mailing list](#).