



International Association for Social Work with Groups

SPARC Program

June 2016 IASWG SPARC Report, Recommendations and IASWG Board Actions
SPARC Committee: *Carol S. Cohen, Barbara Muskat, Marcia B. Cohen and Zaneta Smith*
2016 Spring SPARC Review Committee: *Carol S. Cohen, Barbara Muskat and Zaneta Smith*

Overview:

The purpose of the IASWG SPARC Program is to "spark" IASWG members' innovative group work practice, education, training and research projects through endorsement and/or small grants to advance the IASWG [mission](#). The program was developed by the IASWG Board and Commission from 2011-2012, and inaugurated in 2013. Only IASWG members can apply for SPARC endorsement and funding – funds are used to support projects, often in partnership with other organizations. According to its framing protocol, the SPARC Committee members were appointed by IASWG President and were charged with reviewing SPARC protocols and launching the Project. The IASWG Board reviews and votes on the Committee's recommendations, within 30-60 days of the closing date for applications in each cycle. There are two review cycles each year, corresponding with bi-annual Board Meetings in June and November. The SPARC Committee has continued to update, expand and circulate Project documents through multiple strategies and venues. SPARC documents, Project reports, and outreach materials are available at <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc>

This June, SPARC enters its 4th year. In three years, including 6 funding cycles, we have endorsed 24 projects, 14 of them with funding totaling \$9,870. We will be bringing a number of endorsement and funding recommendations to the June Board Meeting. We continue to distribute info on SPARC widely, including through conferences, EBlasts and IASWG Group News. Our annual SPARC Workshop, to share info on applying and hearing about awarded projects, will be on Thursday, June 16 at 3:45.

IASWG SPARC Project Awardees have either completed their final report, or have submitted an interim report as required. Updates and final reports will continue to be posted at: <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc>

Working in collaboration with the IASWG Marketing Committee, SPARC Project has had a presence at the US CSWE Conference and many other venues. Emily Wilk has been essential to all these activities. IASWG SPARC is promoted as a Member Benefit, and an opportunity to advance the IASWG mission and innovations in group work practice, training, research and education.

History of Endorsement and Funding

2013

June 2013/Cycle One: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 with Funding (\$2500.00 expended).

November 2013/Cycle Two: 5 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$700 expended - *One declined due to insufficient funds – not included in total funds expended).

Total 2013: \$3250.00 (9 Endorsed, 5 with Funding)

2014

June 2014/Cycle Three: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$695.00 expended).

November 2014/Cycle Four: 3 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$2160.00 expended – **\$1160.00 not proceeding, funds returned – not included in total funds expended).

Total 2014: \$1695 (5 Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

2015

June 2015/Cycle Five: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$1250.00 expended).

November 2015/Cycle Six: 8 Projects Endorsed, 5 with Funding \$3675.00 expended)

Total 2015: \$4925.00 (10 Projects Endorsed, 6 with Funding).

The IASWG SPARC Review Committee brought the following for IASWG Board Review and Vote. They were approved at the Board Meeting, June 2016.

For Endorsement:

- 1. Working with groups in addiction treatment and / or prevention between passion and frustration: A postgraduate professional education program targeted to professionals in addiction treatment and / or prevention in the province Westfalen – Lippe, Germany, Tanja Schmitz-Remberg**

Professionals, who serve in the addiction treatment and/ or prevention work usually are well educated in single-treatment approaches, in social work and in case management. LWL Coordination Centre for addiction, Germany, decided to provide a Groupwork postgraduate further education for those professionals. The need is well evaluated and first experiences are collected by short-term GW classes of three days. The target group needs and wants a deeper and long-term education. Developed by a team with a high multiperspective expertise on groupwork the program contains selected significant modules especially tailored for this target group, e.g. running groups in enforcement contexts, the challenge to deal with content-based intervention group programs according to the knowledge about groups' development, fostering mutual aid as a forgotten approach in the professionalized addiction treatment and / or prevention. The class takes 200 hours and combines an inspiring link between theory and practical/ experimental learning. Self-reflecting supervision in group is mandatory, also self-studies and homework. The endorsement by IASWG related this program to the international groupwork community and shows that the training leans on the IASWG standards.

- 2. Florida Institute for Group Facilitation: Certified Group Facilitation Specialist Program, Mark Smith, Florida**

The Florida Institute for Group Facilitation (FIGF) is a joint program of The Florida Chapter of the International Association of Social Work with Groups (IASWG) and Sunshine Social Services, Inc., (SunServe). The mission of the Institute is to certify the acquisition of knowledge about core basic competencies in group leadership for all candidates who complete the certification program. The program content is guided by IASWG's core competencies identified as "Standards for Social Work Practice for Groups." This articulates role expectations for facilitators for groups convened for multiple purposes including areas of direct concern for FIGF, namely group leadership in the context of behavioral health care. The program consists of 18 hours of classroom contact and a full year of supervision in once monthly supervision groups.

Commentary from the Review Committee:

We are enthusiastically recommending IASWG SPARC Endorsement to the Initiation and Implementation stages of these two project, with the understanding that SPARC is by its nature a start-up designation, for a year, and if requested, additional time for a SPARC Project to get off the ground. Institutionalization time and continuing designation is not part of our mission. In the past, all training, research and practice innovation endorsements are time limited. Since we think these have great promise, and set the stage for other similar group training and certification initiatives, we want to include a provision that both programs (possibly with other IASWG leaders) will discuss how a consortium of IASWG endorsed, ongoing training projects could be designed. We would ask any Chapter-led, existing training and continuing education programs identify a representative to participate in this discussion. We ask that this ad hoc group explore how the IASWG could establish a process for ongoing endorsement (beyond SPARC's initial phase or outside of the SPARC Program such as in the case of Chapter-organized efforts), as well as possible financial considerations (such as a royalty paid to IASWG?) to accompany the IASWG endorsement.

For Endorsement and Funding:

- 1. Pop-Up Front Porches and Housing First Residents as Community Activists, Jennie Ann Cole, University of South Carolina / Civic by Design (\$500.00 Grant Recommended)**

The purpose of this project is to engage residents to share their stories with people who have not experienced homelessness at an event using Pop-Up Porches. *Pop-Up Porches* is the intentional act of placing portable front porches where they will be able to support existing social activity and serve as a catalyst for community gathering. This project will discuss the engagement process working with a multitude of community partners from the perspective of Housing First (HF) residents. This project will

also present the stories collected through a storytelling project and the implications for understanding the recovery process as clients transition into HF. Housing First (HF) is a philosophy that helps adults who are chronically homeless identify and secure long-term, affordable housing. There is no time limitation and individuals participating in HF generally have access to ongoing case management services that are designed to preserve housing and address their current needs.

2. Best Practices for the Evaluation of Peer Support Groups for People who are Recent Immigrants and Refugees, Azadeh M. Block, California University of Pennsylvania. (\$1000.00 Grant Recommended)

The requested funds would provide for a day long training on best practices in program evaluation processes for the peer leaders and interpreters who are involved with the collection of data on the pre/post surveys of the peer groups. This project aims to reduce bias in the collection of data about the effectiveness of the peer support model. Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS) has been providing peer support groups to the refugee community in Allegheny County (Greater Pittsburgh, PA) since 2013. In August, 2015 Dr. Azadeh Masalehdan Block began working with the JF&CS to improve the implementation and evaluation of their peer support group model. In addition to seeking publication in the IASWG –related peer reviewed journal, we would be very pleased to share this video and any training materials created with IASWG as well as to share our group training strategies developed as a result, as well as to focus on our training documents as part of an abstract for the IASWG 2017 conference.