



International Association for Social Work with Groups

SPARC Program

June 2017 IASWG SPARC Report and Recommendations and IASWG Board Actions
SPARC Committee: *Carol S. Cohen, Barbara Muskat and Zaneta Smith*
2017 Spring SPARC Review Committee: *Carol S. Cohen and Barbara Muskat*

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 IASWG Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education 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. IASWG SPARC Project Awardees have completed their final report or have submitted an interim report, or are in the process of doing so as required. Updates and final reports will continue to be posted at: <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc>

2017 is SPARC's 5th year of operation. In the first four years we have had 8 funding cycles and we endorsed 28 projects, 16 of them with funding totaling \$11,370.00. We will be bringing one endorsement and funding recommendations to the June 2017 Board Meeting (\$1000.00). We continue to distribute info on SPARC widely, including through conferences, EBlasts and IASWG Group News. We will be holding the Fourth Annual SPARC Workshop at the annual International Symposium this week, and we intend to continue this practice to share info on applying and hearing about awarded projects.

Working in collaboration with the IASWG Marketing Committee and other IASWG members, SPARC Project has had a presence at the US CSWE Conference, international conferences, 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. With our rich history of SPARC Projects we are considering further dissemination, publication and utilization of material generated by SPARC Endorsed projects.

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).

2016

June 2016/Cycle Seven: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$1500.00 expended).

November 2016/Cycle Eight: 1 Project was Endorsement and Funding (\$1500.00 expended).

Total 2016: \$2500.00 (5 Projects Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

In November, 2017, the IASWG SPARC Review Committee brought the following for IASWG Board Review and Vote. This proposal was approved for Endorsement and Funding of \$1,000.00:

Great Conversations in Social Work: Using Groupwork to Promote Inclusive Dialogue and Collective Action Around Social Justice

Project Coordinator: Stacy Gherardi; (Co-Coordinator: Maria Gurrola)
New Mexico State University

Project Description:

Great Conversations in Social Work is a proposal for a one-year project aimed at providing opportunities for inclusive dialogue, mutual aid, and collective action around social work and social justice at New Mexico State University. If funded, this project will facilitate four group sessions for students, faculty and community social workers in which they will explore the concept of social justice. Each session will use a model centered on dialogue and collective action to probe central themes including social justice and democracy, social justice and immigration, economic justice, and social justice in health, housing, and education. Participants will increase their self-awareness and understanding of the ethical principal of social justice as it relates to social work. More importantly, they will gain experience with a model of group work which utilizes deep dialogue to allow participants to deeply understand and learn from one another while building the foundation for collective action. 6. Relation to IASWG Mission IASWG calls upon members to “find ways to become inclusive, to celebrate our differences and to generate a powerful sense of togetherness” noting that “There has never been a more urgent time to bring communities together towards a mutual understanding and a respect, not just for humanity, but for the planet as a whole.” (IASWG, n.d.). This proposal responds to this call in an effort to build student mutual understanding and collective action around a central tenet of social work ethics: social justice.

This is a critical time for group work on college campuses. Social work programs face a challenging call to fulfil their commitments to protect the vulnerable while working to heal the deep divides the most recent political cycle has wrought. Beyond this, campuses everywhere are working to find meaningful solutions to issues which seek to pit “free speech” against advocates for safe or harassment free campuses. This project proposes that groupwork can be a critical tool in resolving these issues. In supporting this project, IASWG will have the opportunity to highlight one novel way that schools of Social Work and others can respond to the current environment. This project represents a manifestation of group work in order to expand student notions of what social work with groups is or can be. Students will be encouraged to explore membership with IASWG or resources provided through the organization.



The International Association for
Social Work with Groups

SPARC Program

Two Review Cycles Each Year: Oct/Nov and May/June

The IASWG launched the SPARC Program to "spark" our members' innovative projects through IASWG Endorsement and small grants.

IASWG members are welcome to submit proposals to the SPARC Program, requesting endorsement with financial or non-financial support for special projects (e.g., training, research, and practice) consistent with the mission of IASWG.

SPARC Projects include:

- Initiative to expand support group work services and training with media capabilities.
- Dissertation study of factors in the commitment to group work practice.
- Project to compile case studies for group work teaching and training.
- Research to study authors' trajectories following their group work related dissertations.
- Training to expand staff expertise in providing diverse group work programs.
- Innovation to expand knowledge and competency to more effectively serve an underserved population.
- Dissertation study of school social workers' perceptions of grief counseling groups for adolescents.
- Large scale research study to examine and work more effectively with diversity in group work throughout stages of development.
- Development of group work programs to better serve youth and young men of color.
- Large scale research study to examine and work more effectively with diversity in group work throughout stages of development.
- Implementation of an innovative book discussion group with members with multiple sclerosis.
- Evaluation of small group activities within online learning environments.
- Research and training in group work supervision.
- Advocacy for the use of group methods in social work and allied fields.
- Examination of the linkage of summer camp programs and the development of social group work.
- Establishment of a think tank & action network to challenge and eradicate the oppressive social structures threatening young Black males.
- Implementation of a stigma focused group program, collaboratively developed for and with parents living with HIV.

Please visit the IASWG SPARC webpage: <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc> for more information, to read about our SPARC Projects and their progress, and for instructions about submitting a proposal.