

NEWSLETTER

EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORK

- Commonalities and Differences -

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THEMATIC NETWORK PROGRAM



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INTRODUCTION

International co-operation in social work and social work education has been always treated as an important activity in the European Union Community.

Its role has been changing over the last few years. It would be difficult to overestimate the contribution of international scientific collaboration to the quality of research and teaching in social work, during the times when our contacts with the international social work community were limited due to political and economical reasons. This last decade has brought major changes to the candidates for membership of the EU and as a result, many new areas of international relations have been opened with countries from Central and East-North European countries.

Today, many universities and other academic institutions in Europe, are deeply involved in fruitful co-operation with our long-term partners and friends, involved in social work research and training. In addition to this there are EASSW Seminars, which are held bi-annually in a different European countries.

International programs such as EUSW under the SOCRATES Program creates unique opportunities for exchange, not only for the members and staff, but especially for students.

On November 3rd, 2002 Parma University became the Coordinator of *the European Social Work – Commonalities and Differences* Thematic Network. This thematic network involves social work institutions from over forty European countries, for a three –year period. This period of time is expected to be especially interesting and challenging for the whole community of social work institutions. The year 2004 is an important year for us, projecting new possibilities for the exchange of information and better cooperation for research and training between EUSW members. One of the most important tasks is the organization of a summer school in 2005. This is really a challenge, but essential for further development of master degree programmes in social work, at all participating institutions.

Newsletter Group Leader

Ewa Kantowicz, PhD

University of Warmia and Mazoury in Poland

NEWS FROM WORKING GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

Working Group One (WG1) Organisation of meetings and conferences

*Planning the nearest annual EUSW NT Conference
on 6-8 May 2004 in Kecskemet*

Working Group 1 Meeting in Hungary took place on 30 January -1 February 2004 with participating members: Answin Weissenborn from Austria, Gudrun Ehlert from Germany, Zsofia Mucsi and Levante Fruttus from Hungary and Staffan Höjer from Sweden.

As a “pre-meeting” activity, Levante Fruttus, Zsofia Mucsi and Staffan Höjer had a meeting with our next keynote speaker Kinga Göncz in Budapest 30/1. Kinga was very interested to address the conference and she is going to speak on the subject: *Social Work a changing profession in Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe.*

Members of WG1 asked her to try to involve comments about: (1) the social policy situation and the most significant social problems that social work is meeting (2) the development and situation for social work (3) the development and situation for social work education and (4) the hopes and fears with the entrance in the EU from a social work perspective. Kinga Göncz is parliamentary secretary of state at the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs in Hungary. She has among other things been assistant professor at the Department of Social Policy at the Institute of Sociology at Eötvös Lorand University of Arts and Sciences. Her main activities included training in mediation, conflict management and negotiating skills.

They visited all the locations for the next conference including the two hotels the conference hall and group rooms. We found them all very suitable for the conference. We also met with the administrative staff at the college in charge for the conference. Most activities will take place in Kecskemet with the exception of a part of the social programme held in Nagykörös.

WG1 have also done agreements related to the final conference programme, which is supposed to be fill in between 6-9 May 2004.

After the conference in Dornbirn it was commented that there should be more time for the working groups. It saves money for the network if all working groups can do a lot of work while we are gathered. Therefore we have scheduled a pre-meeting for all working groups which means all network members need to arrive on Wednesday. Zsofia and Levante will arrange possibilities to be picked up with a bus at the airport in Budapest. Late arrivals will have to take the train from Budapest to Ketchkemet (1,5 hours).

At the registration everybody’s photo will be taken and the participants will be asked to fill in a “declaration of competence and skills” (This “declaration”, half serious half humorous, is a way to present everyone in a more personal way. It will hopefully increase the possibilities of cooperation between network members.). They will also be asked to fill in cards with “offers and demands” at the market place (more later).

The opening ceremony will be chaired by one of the students from the social work department in Nagykorös. The opening ceremony and the keynote address will be open for students and faculty staff from invited social work schools. Thereafter the programme is only open for the network members and associates.

This working group have been asked to help the summer school with marketing activities. They decided that Answin Weissenborn will be our contact person to the Summer School group.

They have also been asked to help with the administration of other working group meetings. Staffan contacts Annamaria Campanini and the other board members to clarify when this should be fulfilled and what tasks we are supposed to help with. In all they have had a very productive and inspiring meeting and we have received a very big hospitality form Zsofia and Levante and all the staff involved at the organizing committee. Thank you everybody.

Göteborg, Feb. 2004
WG1 Leader - Staffan Höjer

Working Group Two (WG2)
Production of the book about social work in Europe

Book Production Group Meeting WG2 in Madrid on 6-8 November 2003 was participated by: Maria Michailidis, Gunter Friesenhan, Tomasa Banez, Gerard Moussou, Maria Jose Freitas, Ewa Kantowicz and Liz Frost.

Additionally the meeting included guest members who came to discuss their possible contribution to the development of the second EUSW book. These were Augustin Monivas, Manuel Serrano, Wilfred Diekman, Elena Roldan, Maria Asuncion Martinez, Fernando De Lucas.

Annamaria Campanini resigned from chairing the book as her commitments in relation to the network are too time – consuming, and Liz Frost has taken over as a chair.

The task of the book group were primarily to look at all the contributions of proposals received so far, and to create an inclusive book structure, which engaged people's interests and reflected the aims of the EUSW but which also had structural coherence and a potentially academic standard. A Further task was to appoint a group of editors and a draft further instructions for writers.

Having spent some time on Friday looking out different ways of structuring the book, on Saturday morning Liz Frost introduced a proposal for the following structure: the book would be titled something like “*Children Young People and Families in Europe: Examining Social Work Practice*”, and it should comprise three sections, the most substantial and central one of which would be called “*European Social Work: Examining Practice*”.

The introductory section would be “*European Social work, Understanding the Context*”, and the concluding section: “*European Social Work: (In)Forming the Profession*”. The offered a space for nearly all the chapters without necessitating massive changes in their proposed themes, although the option to alter the chapter was there if people wished to.

The group worked very hard on drawing up a realistic time-scale for book production which has since been sent to all authors. A publisher’s proposal has been requested from each author by January 2004 and a full first draft before the conference in May. The final product must be ready this summer, 2004.

A new editorial group was needed for this book, as without Annamaria that only left Liz in this role. Gunther Freisenhan, Maria Michelaidis and Maria Jose Freitas offered to act as further editors for this project. Overall then the group worked hard and efficiently and achieved its aims. The core group present, of approximately six, seemed a good optimum number for advancing such work and everyone’s contributions were extremely valuable.

The next meeting of the group will be in Hungary on 5th May, immediately prior to the annual meeting.

Bristol, January 2004
WG2 Leader - Liz Frost

Working Group Five (WG5)

Student related activities and the International Summer School in Social Work

Present at this meeting in Madrid were Annamaria Campanini from Italy, Vincenzo Fortunato from Italy, Andres Arias Astray from Spain, Carsten Otte from Germany, Eduardo Marques from Portugal, Michel Veevaete from Belgium, Anne Karin Larsen and some new members in the group: Jaana Viemero from Finland, Robert Sanders from Wales, Kerstin Gynnerstedt from Sweden, Masun Martinez Roman from Spain.

The group started the first session of this meeting with the presentation of the work on creating the curriculum for Summer School and e-Learning part. According to the agreement in the Dornbirn meeting, several members of this group had made proposals for the curriculum plan for the different themes of the curriculum and the summer school. We started by reading and commenting the curriculum template which the group agreed to be useful.

Anne Karin informed the group that two applications have been made about getting money for the development of the e-Learning part of the Curriculum, called the VIRCLASS project – The Virtual Classroom of Social Work in Europe. One to SOFF a state organisation for e-learning projects in Norway, and one pre-proposal to MINERVA, Sokrates, involving 7 partner countries and 9 institutions. The response will be in January and if success with the pre-proposal a full application has to be written before the 1st March 2004.

(By the time this report is made available in the Newsletter 1/2004, we know the results of these applications. The SOFF application was successful and the MINERVA application was not approved).

Thoughts and ideas about the summer school was an important subject in this meeting, and the discussions went about: where will it be situated, how long duration, at what time of the summer period, the number of students and teachers, the pedagogical ideas, cultural activities and so on.

Some inquiries have been done in Madrid about the possibilities to arrange the summer school here instead of in Parma.

(By the time this Newsletter is printed, we know that the summer school will be situated in Parma).

The time will be 16 – 31. July and the thematic program will give the students a lot of different options. The number of students approximately from 90 – 135. The duration will be two weeks.

During this first day of the meeting the group members went to a computer lab and got more information about the use of the e-learning platform “It’s learning”. The members of WG5 will try to use this platform in their communication and to share notes and papers on the themes. The platform is available for all members of EUSW-TN to use for information, and username and password can be available by e-mailing Anne Karin Larsen.

The system text of the platform is translated to different languages. There is an agreement with the company that it also can be translated to Spanish. Our group member from Madrid will try to do this.

Planning for the future Annamaria and Alessandro presented a plan for a one year fulltime study on International Social Work over the theme The European Family. They also suggested that the summer school could be an introduction to this new study.

The group members considered the presentation as a good idea for a future application for Socrates and a prolonging of this thematic network co operation.

The next day of this group meeting was concerning pedagogical ideas about the e-learning part and the summer school arrangement.

Summery of the appointments made by the group:

- Next group meeting will be in Parma, Italy the 6 – 8 of February 2004.
- All members enter the platform once a week and use the platform for communication and discussions.
- The subjects/themes not worked on will be presented as soon as possible and before the middle of December on the platform
- Every members are expected to participate active and to bring in ideas about every theme (not only the one they are directly responsible for)
- Anne Karin will try to figure out how much time that will be needed for the participants connected to the e-learning and Summer School part.
- Alessandro will provide the group with ideas about the financial costs of the summer school
- The ideas about one year full time post graduate study will be considered later
- Every participant in WG5 will till the next meeting in Parma clear out their own and the institutions possibility to be responsible and participant in the different parts of the “school-program”.

The next meeting have to plan more in detail the aspects of the summer school and also to go into the pedagogical presentation and organisation of the themes in the e-learning part. The program of the Curriculum must be ready for presentation to the next annual meeting in Hungary the 5-8 of May.

Bergen, 21st November 2003
WG5 Leader - Anne Karin Larsen

NEWS FROM PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

News from Dr. Robert Sanders - a lecturer at the University of Wales Swansea

Research Plan – Sibling Research

This research project will look at how relationships between brothers and sisters are affected by stresses within families, and undertake this in a cross-cultural context. The first stage will use an internationally recognised scale ('The Sibling Inventory') to interview 30 children between the ages of 6 and 12 in primary schools in Parma, Italy. The inventory classifies sibling relationships along three dimensions, rivalry, hostility and warmth. The study will also use two scales (the Parenting Daily Hassles scale and the Holmes-Rahe scale) to look at the level of stress that parents experience both in the longer term (over the past two years) and in the short term. The central hypothesis is that sibling relationships that are high in rivalry and hostility, and low in warmth will be more common in families that have experienced higher levels of stress. It is also to be hoped that the study may provide more information about which particular stresses are more strongly associated with the quality of sibling relationships. This stage of the research will be undertaken April – June 2004.

The second stage of the research will use the same methodology in respect of 30 children in Wales. The hypothesis concerning the relationships between parental stress and sibling relationships will be the same as for the Italian stage of the study. However, the second study opens the opportunities to consider how sibling relationships may vary between two European countries, how the types of stresses experienced by parents may be similar or different, and finally, what types of similarities and differences there may be in relation to the central hypothesis, that parental stresses influences the quality of sibling relationships. The research in Wales will be undertaken in Autumn 2004, and the results of the research for both stages should be available in late Winter, early Spring 2005.

Dr. Sanders is the author of *Sibling Relationships: Theory and Issues for Practice* (London: Palgrave, 2004). An important contention he makes is that we now have a very good understanding of sibling relationships in ordinary families, but we have not yet begun to develop a significant understanding of how sibling relationships are affected in the types of families that either seek professional help for a range of problems or are subject to professional scrutiny because of welfare concerns. This is an area where more research is needed.

February 2004

TIMETABLE OF EUSW EVENTS In academic year 2003/2004

Meeting in Madrid, 7-8 November 2003

- 1. Meeting of Book Production Group WG 2**
- 2. Meeting of Summer School Group WG 5**

Meeting in Hungary 30 January- 1 February 2004

- 1. Meeting of Organizational Committee Group WG 1**

Meeting in Parma 6-7 February 2004

- 1. Meeting of Summer School Group WG 5**
- 2. Meeting of Website Group WG 4**
- 3. Meeting of Newsletter Group WG 3**

EUSW BOARD NEWS

EUSW Board invites all Leaders of our NT for the nearest Annual Meeting in Hungary. Most activities will take place in Kecskemét with the exception of a part of the social programme held in Nagykörös on 6-9 May 2004.