



University of the Arctic:

Thematic Network of Social Work

Newsletter

March 2015

Editorial

Greetings from Canada! In July of 2014, I took over the role of coordinator or chair of the network. My wife, Joanne, and I attended the first meeting that led to the creation of the network in 2006 at the lovely Bodo, Norway and have been continuously involved. I must admit that it has been difficult at times and I don't have financial support from my university. I was not able to attend our last meeting in Umea, Sweden but did connect for a short time via skype. Here is my first attempt at our spring newsletter. It summarizes the discussion about the network and lays out a work plan. At the meeting, the group also discussed a profile of the network and this is a major step in clearly defining our goals and objectives. Finally, the group explored the possibilities of international field education placements. This final project makes a lot of sense for our Canadian students. Well, I hope you enjoy catching up on the network and I look forward to continuing our involvement. Best wishes as we wait for spring!

Douglas Durst, Ph.D.
Professor
University of Regina, SK
Canada



The University of Regina, Canada

*This is a newsletter for "Thematic network in Social Work" within University of the Arctic. It is published by coordinator Professor Doug Durst, University of Regina, Canada. **Email:** doug.durst@uregina.ca
Website: <http://www.uarctic.org/singleArticle.aspx?m=281&amid=1143>*



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Annual Meeting Thematic Network SocialWork (TNSWUA)

24-25 November 2014 - Umea, Sweden

Participants:

Online from Russia: Lidia Kriulya , Northern Arctic Federal University (24/11)

Online from USA: Debbie Gonzales, Humboldt State University (24/11)

Online from Canada: Doug Durst, University of Regina (24/11)

Finland: Tarja Orjasniemi, University of Lapland

Sweden: Lars Nordlander, University of Umeå

Greenland: Kåre Halvorsen, Perorsaanermik Ilinniartarfik , Illulissat

Norway: Asgeir Solstad, University of Nordland, Randi Marie Dahl Haugland, Arctic University of Tromsø, Ingunn T Ellingsen, Celine Nygård og Siv Oltedal, University of Stavanger

Denmark: Lars Uggerhøj, University of Aalborg

Member not present at the meeting:

Iceland: Jóna Ólafsdóttir, Háskoli Islands/University of Iceland (email: jona@hi.is)

Working plan for TNSWUA 2015

This thematic network runs a lot of activities. The most important can be summarized as follows:

- Four Virtual network meetings
- Four newsletters a year
- Course development
- Scientific journal: "Comparative social work"
- Research: "Social work with families"

This year our plan is to develop two new activities:

- Practice placement exchange program
- Master thesis forum

In addition we know that the research project – "Social work with families" will end in 2016.

To be able to run a continuous research activity in the network, it is important to start the development of a new project. This must be continued by f.ex. being the topic of one of our virtual network meetings.



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Thematic Network of Social Work, University of the Arctic: Profile document

[Apart of the international community of social workers.](#)

Being a part of the international community of social workers, implies that we support the international definition of social work as a common understanding of our field:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels”.

[A part of University of the Arctic](#)

Being a part of the University of the Arctic (UA) entails that our network is committed to the vision, mission and values of this cooperation. These concepts are described as follows on the UA website:

Our Vision

An Empowered North – With Shared Voices

Our Mission

Empower the people of the Circumpolar North by providing unique educational and research opportunities through collaboration within a powerful network of members.

Our Values

Circumpolar

UArctic promotes northern voices in the globalizing world, reflecting common values and interests across all eight Arctic states and among all northern peoples and cultures.

Inclusive

UArctic promotes cultural diversity, language plurality and gender equality while highlighting the partnership between the region’s indigenous peoples and other northerners.

Reciprocal

UArctic promotes respectful relationships in education, science, research and policy based on reciprocity, equality and trust between northerners and other partners. This approach values the

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inclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, together with multidisciplinary perspectives from the arts, social and natural sciences.

An Arctic perspective

The thematic network of social work (TNSWUA) contributes to the development of social work educations in universities and colleges the High North. The network does this by activities that put focus on topics with a specific relevance in our part of the world. These topics may vary over years and the development of knowledge. But the following topics are central to the network:

- The rights and the social conditions of the indigenous peoples in the High North.
- The relation between peoples in the High North, their living conditions and the utilization of the natural resources in this part of the world.
- The social changes in the High North, including changing family patterns, urbanization and poverty.

To develop knowledge in these fields, research of different kinds are useful. It can be comparative, by looking at conditions and situations in the Arctic and compare them to similar phenomenons in other parts of the world. Or the works may focus on developing knowledge by looking at them in the specific context of the Arctic.

The activities

The network will be involved in:

Research:

- Research by initiating and coordinating applications for research funding.
- Do research by cooperating across countries and universities.
- Arrange conferences and meetings – virtual and physical – where researchers can present their findings and ideas.
- Continue the cooperation on “Journal of Comparative Social Work” as a channel for publishing social work research in the High North.

Teaching:

- Have conferences discussing contents and curriculum in social work educations to inspire the schools to implement findings and knowledge of social work in our part of the world.
- Offer students placement possibilities in the Arctic.
- Offer working groups and other supportive measures to students who study these topics as part of writing different kinds of products for study purposes.

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- Run courses and conferences for students and teachers on the topics the network focus on.

Inspire and inform:

- Spread knowledge and other forms of information on the network and our topics by using newsletter, website and the channels of UA.
- Support memberships institutions and their contact persons in their efforts to put our concerns on their academic agenda.

Placements as networking activity

As suggested in our working plan for 2015 we should develop a framework for practice placement exchange program. It may be necessary to explain what this means – and it can also be a matter of discussion in our network meeting. But there are some matters that can be included into this:

- We should have a list of contact persons, including a person in every institution that can facilitate the placement for an incoming student.
- Every institution should describe what placements are possible for students that don't know the language of the country. In Norway we think that students that do not speak or understand Norwegian may have placements in refugee services and centres, or at the university, working with international students.
- The contact persons should also inspire students at their own university to go abroad for placements, and inform about possibilities like "North2north" and other programs – like "Erasmus" that students may apply money from to partly finance their studies.
- We must create a form that every institution fills in with this – and other information that you can think of. This information should be published on our website and other places where each institution finds it useful:

Name, address, website of institution

Name and contact info on a contact person

What periods placements are possible

Deadlines for application for placement

Fees and other costs

If possible/ interesting: Special placements that may be of specific interest

Housing possibilities

Supervision systems

Possibilities for adjustment of placement rules to fit with the rules where the student come from



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- We need to describe to work of the contact person in terms of information within their own institution and other possible tasks.