Social Work and Social Work Education in Sweden

Anna Nelson

Department of Social Work
University of Gothenburg
FACTS ABOUT SWEDEN

• Area: 450,000 km², the third largest country in Western Europe
• Longest north-south distance: 1,574 km
• Longest east-west distance: 499 km
• Capital: Stockholm (second largest Gothenburg)
• Population: 9.4 millions, 0.1% of the world's population (22/km²)
• Languages: Swedish; recognized minority languages: Sami (Lapp), Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish), Yiddish, Romani Chib
MORE FACTS

• Form of government: Constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy

• Parliament: 349 members in one chamber

• Religion: 80 percent Evangelical Lutheran. Islam second biggest, many other religious beliefs

• Life expectancy: Men 79 years, women 83 years

• Forests: 53 percent - Mountains: 11 percent - Lakes and rivers: 9 percent
SOCIAL WORK IN SWEDEN

• 30,000 practitioners, 95 percent within municipalities, less than 1.5 percent in full time private practice

• Heterogenic activities: Child welfare, Social Care, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Social Assistance, and much more – often individual or family oriented

• Most social workers are affiliated with a social work union. Through the union there are ethical guidelines

• There is an authorization system (however only 13 percent have gone through this)
SOCIAL WORK IN SWEDEN

• BSW education at 12 universities

• MSW since 1980s, however not so many practitioners have MSW (7 percents)

• Social work is a university subject, several theory attempts

• Integration with Social Care
SOCIAL WORK IN SWEDEN

• One of the first in Europe with research education in Social work

• 1980–2009: 252 Doctoral dissertations in Social work, also growth in senior research

• Four scientific journals in social work

• Pluralism when it comes to research areas, theories and research methods
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN SWEDEN – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

• First social work education 1921 (1944 in Gothenburg)

• 1977 – integration with the university system

• Social work – academic profession and discipline

• From 7 to 17 national social work programmes in 8 years

• BSW provides the students with a general competence in Social Work

• BSW in Social Work is a very popular programme
SOCIAL WORKERS IN SWEDEN
AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

• In Sweden there are about 30 000 social workers
  (Swedish professional title is *Socionom*)

• Sweden: 1 SW in 300 inhabitants
• United Kingdom: 1 SW in 600 inhabitants
• Italy: 1 SW 1600 inhabitants
• Uganda: 1 SW in 6500 inhabitants
UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

• Gothenburg University College 1891 (private)
• 1907 independent university college (national status)
• Formally founded in 1954,
• Reform 1977- incorporation of colleges
• 8 faculties, 40 0000 students
• 5 700 staff
• Urban university in the city
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN GOTHENBURG

• 120 staff members 1400 students
• Social work programme 3, 5 years (BSW)
• Master programme, 2 years (MSW)
• International Master Programme, 2 years
• Erasmus Mundus M-family together with universities in Portugal, Norway and Uganda
• Doctoral programme 4 years
• Psychotherapy programme 3 years/part-time
• Supervision course (3 semesters)
• Single subject courses/Contract teaching
• Several undergraduate courses at the faculty level that are of interest for social work students
RESEARCH AT THE SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

• Approx. 25 PhD students
• From evaluations to global comparisons
• 3 profiles - 3 chairs/professors:
  – Children, youth and family research
  – Social exclusion (poverty, abuse, homelessness)
  – Social care with specialization in ageing and disability
• Other research areas:
  – Professionalization and organisation
  – Gender and sexuality
CURRENT THEMES IN SWEDISH SOCIAL WORKER DEBATE AND RESEARCH

• Work-family/care balance
• Gender equality
• Immigration
• Child poverty – growing differences
• Education
• Children; positions, rights and participation
• Segregation and exclusion
THANK YOU!
Anna.Nelson@socwork.gu.se

For more information regarding international matters at the Department of Social Work contact:
Ronny Heikki Tikkanen,
International Coordinator
ronny.tikkanen@socwork.gu.se