Report 2016

European Observatory of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social development

European Network for Social Action

PROMOTING THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF PEOPLE

Good Examples from European Social Work

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ENSACT foreword

Dear reader,

The report before you is the result of the joint efforts of the ENSACT partners, who worked together to collect the contributions from all over Europe. It is also the result of the thorough approach by Kerstin Svensson who did a great job in analysing and arranging the contributions. I would like to thank them all for their valuable help in producing this European observatory report.

We will share this European report with the members of the ENSACT partners and hope that it will contribute to a better understanding of the good practices that are taking place all over Europe to promote the dignity and worth of people. The digital version of this report includes links to all the materials received, so you can also learn more about individual good practices.

The report will also serve as the European input for the Global Agenda Observatory report that will be presented in Seoul, Korea, later this year. I hope you will enjoy reading it and that it will inspire you to contribute to future European observatory efforts.

Thea Meinema
President European Network for Social Action

ENSACT PARTNERS

The members of the European Network for Social Action (ENSACT) have worked together since 2007 to promote the human rights based approach of social work, social work education and social policies, in line with the objectives of the global social agenda but with a view to producing practical solutions at the local and regional level. The partners are:

- European Association of Schools of Social Work EASSW
- European association of training centres for socio-educational care work FESET
- International Federation of Educative Communities FICE Europe
- International Council on Social Welfare ICSW Europe
- International Federation of Social Workers IFSW Europe
- PowerUs, service users in social work learning partnership
- Social Work and Health Inequalities Network SWHIN

1. Introduction

> *The origins of social work can be regarded as a response to the emergence of 'the social question' in the context of the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. Through the fundamental changes in social relationships, caused by economic dislocation and revolutionary challenges to political power structures, ensuring the coherence of societies became a 'project' which had to be attended to, organised and shaped according to principles which came to be central reference points of modern social life such as liberty and equality (Lorenz 2016).*

The quote above contains the first sentences in an article by Walter Lorenz[1]. In the article, Lorenz points out the contemporary challenges for social work. I want to highlight some main issues for this report through the quote. Social work in Europe has been closely related to 'the social question', industrialism and social relationships in the specific forms of societies we have seen during the 20th century. One of the conclusions that are to be presented in this report is the importance of 'projects'. Lorenz points at social work as a project aiming towards the coherence of societies. In this report the focus is on how social work can promote the dignity and worth of people. Doing that is also a project, and as Lorenz says above, it has 'to be attended to, organised and shaped according to principles'.

This report is built on European examples of projects on how social work can promote the dignity and worth of people. The examples are given by voluntary contributors who recognised their practice as a good example worth sharing. "Good" is thereby defined by those who submitted the examples. This means that the collection is more spontaneous and less structured than it would have been if this was a research project. We cannot know why these contributions were sent in and others not, so that question has to be left aside. What we have is a collection of contributions of examples of practices those involved regard as good examples of promoting the dignity and worthy of people. That is all we know and all we need to know as long as we do not expect this report to tell a 'truth' or show the right thing to do. The aim of the report is to make the examples accessible and to start a reflecting discussion on the possibilities and difficulties in social work where it concerns promoting the dignity and worth of people.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank ENSACT for giving me this task and letting me work with this material. It has been very interesting to meet social work in different forms and contexts in this way. I would also like to thank Caroline Lundström, a social worker and master student in social work at Lund University, Sweden, who contacted me and offered to contribute to the work. It has been very valuable to share

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[1] Lorenz, Walter (2016) Rediscovering the social question. *European Journal of Social Work,* vol. 19, no 1, pp 4-17.

and discuss our impressions of the material. Last, but absolutely not least, my warm gratitude goes to CSA, *Centralförbundet Social Arbete* (in Swedish), with the English name 'National Association of Social Welfare'. The financial support given by this organisation has facilitated my work as it has enabled me to participate in meetings with ENSACT and in the IFSW European conference. I am sure the work has benefitted from this.

Social work in Europe

Social work is a varying practice. It is dependent on the context in which it is performed as well as on the people who perform it and the people who benefit from it. Nevertheless, there is something in common, something that makes it possible to talk about the concept social work in different contexts and for different kinds of actions. International organisations have formulated standards for social work practice and education as well as ethical principles.

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) recognised that the past and present political, economic, cultural and social orders, shaped in specific contexts, have unequal consequences for global, national and local communities and have negative impacts on people. Consequently, they felt compelled to advocate for a better world order which makes a reality of respect for human rights and dignity and a different structure of human relationships. ([The Global Agenda 2012](#))

The commitments are guided by and consistent with the organisations' core statements on the definition of social work and the ethical principles of social work. Here, it is stated that 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 diversity 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 ([IFSW 2014](#))

These definitions and statements are global and therefore also very general. When we understand them in a European context we also have to be aware of the contemporary situation in Europe. It is in this context that the practices presented are taking place. Today Europe is in a situation where solidarity is questioned and differentiated. We are facing situations where the boundaries between the deserving and non-deserving are in place, causing people to be excluded from resources. Parallel the offers of help focus more on individualised coaching than on social and human rights. There are many challenges in this for social work. Lorentz (2016) argues: "Modern societies require new forms of social contracts which social workers can pioneer in their daily encounters with

those individuals and groups most threatened with total bond disruption, abandonment and exclusion."

The global agenda and the observatory

When the international organisations for social work (IFSW, IASSW and ICSW) started to advocate for a new world order in reaction to the contemporary situation, they set out the Global Agenda. They committed themselves to "supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of oppression and inequality." (The Global Agenda 2012) Their efforts were aimed at the following areas:

- ➢ Promoting social and economic equalities
- ➢ Promoting the dignity and worth of peoples
- ➢ Working toward environmental sustainability
- ➢ Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships

One of the steps in the Global Agenda process is to gather information on good practices and share those between social workers all over the world. The purpose is to gather evidence about the activities of social workers, educators and social development practitioners, in order to give visibility and credibility to their contributions and to promote further action. This is what "the Global Agenda Observatory" is about.

During 2010-12 the first area was in focus. The observatory report on promoting social and economic equalities was presented as a supplement to the *International Social Work journal* . The European contributions showed that social workers had been able to develop and improve services even in times of austerity. Examples of innovative methods in practical social work as well as of ways to influence policy making and decision-makers were given and an image of the creativity within social work was presented.

The present report is the European contribution to the second phase of the Global Agenda Observatory. This report will be published as a stand-alone version, and will also be the European contribution to the Global Agenda Observatory. In other regions of the world, observatories are also actively collecting and analysing good practices, but each region in the world has chosen its own way to gather examples. In 2016 the Global Agenda Observatory will present a final report of global examples on good practices on promoting the dignity and worth of peoples. It will also be presented at the international conference on social work and social development in Seoul, Korea, in June 2016.

Methods and materials

This report is based on contributions given by social work organisations in a wide sense. Contributions represent a wide variety of organisations, as well as a wide variety of materials. It is a collection of examples given by people and organisations that were informed about the observatory and that would and could present these. We cannot know why some social workers sent their contributions, and other did not. What we have is glimpses of the wide variety of how social work is organised and executed in Europe. Nevertheless, the examples given vary to an extent that gives valuable insights in different practices of social work. The examples can inspire and challenge other practices in their development. Therefore it is relevant to structure this report as a catalogue of examples.

The submitted contributions

The examples have been gathered mainly through a website that was open for submissions from May to September 2015. Information about the observatory and the website were spread through the ENSACT organisations in various ways. The submissions should be in English and specific questions were to be answered (see appendix 1).

Throughout the collection of examples we had an open attitude, so that every submission was accepted. Some came a bit late, some came as emails instead of through the website and some contributions were sent in several times, as several attachments were submitted and the questions were answered several times. This open attitude has made it more difficult to describe the material. To this we can add the fact that some organisations sent in more than one example and that some of the submissions concerned several organisations, or several countries. To make it easy we can say that we had a little over 30 examples submitted from 16 countries, while more organisations and countries were involved in the activities presented.

The submissions were to be defined as representing Practice, Education or Policy. It was possible to choose more than one perspective, and most contributions actually indicated that they concerned more than one of the perspectives.

The map below shows the countries that were represented in the submissions.
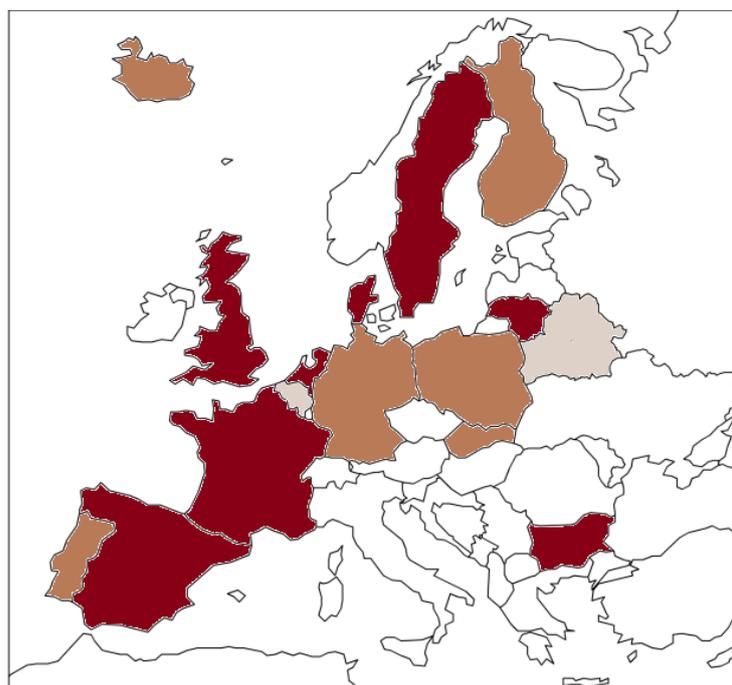
The darker countries: Sweden, UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Lithuania, France, Spain and Bulgaria had more than one submission. The lighter countries: Iceland, Finland, Portugal, Germany, Poland and Slovakia had one submission each. Belarus and Belgium were represented through contributions sent in from other countries. In addition two submissions were more general for all, or most, European countries.

The submissions contained different forms of descriptions: 16 articles, six films, four posters and 18 other forms of presentations were submitted. "Other" means reports, descriptive texts, tool kits, guidelines, leaflets, links to web sites and pictures. By this it is clear that it is not only the practice that is wide and varying, the ways to present what is being done also take very different forms and shapes.

This report is one of a number of ways in which "social work and social development practice and policy to promote the dignity and worth of peoples" have been addressed in Europe. The theme has been the focus of regional conferences and activities associated with the two most recent World Social Work Days. The theme has also been explored in many local and national initiatives. This report focuses on the materials formally submitted to the ENSACT process.

The problems addressed

As the submissions are examples of good practice, most contributions presented methods, describing how the work takes place. They gave examples of developing social work practices and employees' competence, gap-mending in social work education; mobilization of service users in practice development; working with students to

influence future social workers; working in direct contact with people to fight against loss of social ties in society and to finding methods for supporting independency.

The target groups for the activities are also wide and varying. Children and young people, adults with intellectual disabilities or mental health problems, former drug users, refugees and asylum seekers are groups mentioned. These categories of people are described as being in many different social situations. Exclusion from employment, cultural diversity, foster care, homelessness, intergenerational reproduction of poverty, violence against women, sexual abuse in institutions as well as anti-malnutrition programmes are situations dealt with in the contributions. Even if this does not give us the ultimate full picture of social work, it still gives us an interesting glimpse of the width of the practice.

The report and further reading

This report aims to build a framework for the examples and a way for the reader to look closer into practices that those who presented them find interesting. There is no analysis of the practices as such, but in the end, the overall impressions from working with these examples are discussed in a summarising sections. The main reflection is not about the practices themselves, it is about the form of practice that is submitted – *the Project*. All submissions came from some kind of project, not from traditional everyday practice in continuous work. This finding fostered reflections that are highlighted and introduced in a short discussion at the end of the report.

The analysis of the submissions was made through reading and categorizing the material. I have read all material, watched films etc. Parallel to my reading, a social worker and master student in social work, Caroline Lundström, did the same. We met and compared our understanding and analysis of the material, and in this way we could determine that the impressions came from the material, not from our own ideas. This way of working could be regarded as the concept 'interrater reliability' in methodological literature. This way of working is a way to ensure that perspectives taken before, or on grounds other than the material, do not interfere with the understanding. The report should be representing the submitted practices, not the preferences of the author. Through dual analysis we hope to have limited this bias. The questions put and the themes that emanated from the analysis determine how the report is structured.

The following presentation is organized firstly on the basis of the three main areas policy, practice and education. None of these are in reality separated from the others, they are rather continuously integrated. The idea behind the analytical separation is that the areas provide different perspectives on the same issues. In the report, the contributions are sorted into one of the areas each, even though most contributions were said to concern more than one of the areas. Each contribution is presented only once, but they are present also in the more overarching parts of the report. All

contributions that have been sent in have been used for the analysis and all contributions are presented. In the text there are links to the presentations given from the contributors as only shorter examples and descriptions appear in the text. The links lead to submissions that most often are presented in English, but there are also several submissions in the language in the country from where the examples derive. The running text includes sentences directly taken from the submissions in the part where different actions and projects are described, but the text is mainly rewritten by the author of the report.

Each chapter (policy, practice and education) has a structure provided by the kinds of examples that are submitted, but starts with an introduction where the examples are summarised and contextualised, and ends with a short concluding section. The involvement of the people is an important aspect in promoting the dignity and worth of people and therefore it is presented under a specific title in each chapter. In many cases this is mentioned as 'service user's participation' but as we do not necessarily talk about any 'service' to use, I have chosen to use the generic term 'people'.

2. Policy

The submissions in which examples of policy work were presented, indicated that they also concerned either practice or education. That is obvious, policy has to be about something and in this case it is about social work practice or education.

The problems being addressed in the cases could be summarized as projects with the aim to influence policy so that people will have a better life and situation. The examples are about integration of specific groups of vulnerable adults either in direct work with them or in advocacy or policy work on a more structural and general level. The link with promoting the dignity and worth of the person could in brief be named *respect*. To advocate for respect for people can have many different meanings. It could be a way of talking <u>about</u> people, as well as talking <u>with</u> people. It could be a question of arranging for people as well as is said from one project, of "making the person an actress of her life plan".

Policy work in different levels

The stories about policy work often come from doing something beyond what is normally done in ordinary practice. One example is a submission from the Danish Association on Social Welfare that had a campaign to raise public awareness. They engaged homeless people and artists to prepare for a one day happening in a park in the city of Aarhus and contact the media. The campaign was made under the name "*Fuck the Poor*" and received attention in Danish media ([video 1](#)/ [video 2](#)/ [video3](#)).

Another one day event was arranged by a social work student organisation in France, *Erasmix : video [link 1](#) and poster [link 2](#).* With the aim to raise awareness of the public sector and promote social diversity, they arranged a festival as a way to gather people. Local associations from the social sector got a chance to show themselves and do activities together with the general public and in the evening there was a party with DJ's and dancing. The festival gave the opportunity to show and share information in a positive atmosphere. The organisation concludes their event with the quote "Alone we can do so little, together we can do a lot".

Policy work is about changing, but it is hard to change how institutions work. In one of the example changes were even said to be one of the hardest parts of the project as there was reluctance from the already employed staff to work in a new way. In that sense, policy is not something that only exists on a structural level. Policy is also about how to perform in everyday practices.

In Greater Manchester Local Authority, UK, a residential home where seven adults had lived for the past 30 years was due to close and the people who had lived there had to move. The project submitted concerned adults with intellectual disabilities who do not always use verbal skills to communicate. Nevertheless, they were involved as much as

possible by developing communication techniques. In order to meet them with respect a humanistic approach on reciprocal communication called '*Total Communication Approach*' was used. Each person was regarded as unique and was met in his or her individual style of communication. It could be through speech, images, signs, objects, or in other ways. Two examples given are about using images in the communication. One way of getting knowledge on things the residents found important to bring along when they moved was to let them take pictures with a disposal camera. Another way was to show pictures already taken to learn how the person valued things.

The examples above show different ways of raising awareness and showing respect. In the first case, it is about a specific situation: homelessness, where action was taken together with the people it concerned. The second example highlighted social engagement in a wider sense and an organisation to reach the public. In the third we can see policy work on micro level, through practical work. Together these three examples show that policy work can be both specific and generic, both structural and practical.

Involvement of people

In some of the policy actions no specific persons or users are involved, as for example when it concerns raising general awareness. In the case above, with homeless people organising a happening, there is a high degree of involvement of those who are in the specific situation.

In a Spanish project '*The campaign'(video 1 / article 2*) social workers from The Spanish General Council of Social Work aimed to get awareness for the need of public social services. First people who were affected by the austerity measures were interviewed. Following this a session was organised at the European Parliament in Brussels, where people from different parts of Spain were invited to explain how social cuts were affecting them and their families. The social workers argue that by coming together with the people who are affected, the message got through in a better way. Parallel to the action as such, the organisation made a documentary about it, which made it possible to show it on World Social Work Day and have a debate open to a wider audience.

In the examples about policy actions, it is evident that the involvement of people was of great importance. On the one hand the people who are concerned are activated to influence their own situation. On the other hand the action becomes more reliable when those who are concerned are also involved. Making policy *with* people has greater influence than making policy *for* people. It is a way to show how stimulating democracy and participation could be used as a tool in the fight for respect for people.

Outcome

The outcome of policy work can be hard to measure. In some cases the aim is to change a social situation, but this kind of changes takes time. The same goes when the aim is to

raise awareness, it is also very hard to measure, even if it could be seen in for example the number of new members who engage in an organisation or activity. In one of the submissions the outcome is very clear as the action had direct influence in the way the police worked.

This example comes from an action in Iceland, _Operation Big Sister._ Here a story is told about how Icelandic feminists took action against prostitution. The law in Iceland forbids buying sex and regards it as violence against women; still there is a large amount of prostitution. Ads for prostitutions are forbidden, but they also exist. But almost no one is sentenced. The organisation 'Stigamot' is a free individual counselling centre for survivors of rape, sexual molestation, sexual harassment, pornographic exploitation and prostitution with services for both women and men. Women working for Stigamót and Icelandic feminists decided to act upon the stories they were told in their counselling work and to make prostitution visible. Operation Big sister was planned and completed by 85 anonymous women who announced themselves on websites and in newspaper ads. After having had several conversations with men who aimed to buy sex, the media and the police were contacted and given lists of names, phone numbers and email addresses. At the press conference about 50 women participated, dressed in burkas to stay anonymous. To the press conference they had also invited the buyers they had been in contact with, but under the name of 'The Icelandic model agency'. At the conference they showed the results of their investigation and demanded that the laws should be applied and that further action should be taken to stop trafficking and prostitution et cetera. The Big Sister campaign received a lot of attention and was also criticised for acting unethically. The police announced that they would not use the information to prosecute. A short time thereafter the Icelandic police got considerable funding to investigate prostitution and in a short time more than hundred buyers were found and prosecuted.

Conclusion

Policy measures are linked to both practice and education. Policy work for promoting the dignity and worth of people puts respect in focus. The aim varies from raising awareness to making a change. The examples are taken from both structural and micro level activities, as well as from activities both for and with the people they concern. It is evident though from the stories told that working with the people it concerns is both more meaningful and more effective.

3. Practice

Most submissions concerned practice. This is not surprising, as social work primarily is practice. The problems being addressed in this practice ranged from preventive health measures to rehabilitation of former drug users. The contributions dealt with homelessness, men at risk, parents with children in foster care, migrant families, children and youth, mental disabilities, sexually abusive behaviour and care leavers. All in all they represent very varying practices.

The links to promoting the dignity and worth of the person in these examples are more or less of two kinds. Some of the projects enhance the importance of working in partnership with the persons the work concerns. By doing that valuable knowledge is unlocked. The other projects tell stories about how their practices have facilitated integration and re-integration, enhanced quality of life and supported people on their way.

The purpose of the actions has in some cases been to systematically organise the practice and give tools to professionals. In others the focus is on those who receive services and their empowerment, rehabilitation or quality of life. To reach this the work is done through support, care or actions for facilitating and creating a supportive environment.

The following overview has the three sections: tools, initiatives by social workers and initiatives by people. Social workers are of course also persons, but here they are regarded in their professional role and the group called 'people' are those who live in marginalised positions, confronted with social and other problems.

Tools

In the complex practices of social work today there is a great call for models and tools to use in work. Among the submitted examples six different tools are presented.

The first one is a tool, or rather guidelines, to use for people with chronic illness or disabilities. IFSW Europe has participated in a European project, the *ENS4Care Project* / *website* coordinated by the European Federation of Nurses. The project was arranged to promote the use of Information Communication Technology by social workers and nurses to empower people affected by illness or disability to live as independently as possible. Guidelines on prevention as an e-tool were developed in cooperation between professionals, service users and carers. The guidelines give people access to information that could facilitate a change in lifestyle which could be more effective than medication. This is talked about as 'social prescriptions' that could be given by nurses and social workers.

While the first tool aimed widely at all European countries, the second one is developed in the Netherlands and has slowly started to also reach other countries. As a reaction on

the fact that many shelters worked problem-based, Movisie in the Netherlands developed a toolkit, '*The eight Steps Model*' . This toolkit frames a strengths based integrated model for working with homeless youth. Then they realized that homeless youth were provided with bed, bath and bread, but there was also a need for counselling. During a one year project a toolkit was developed in one shelter and could be spread to other shelters. The toolkit gives an overview of the model and provides samples of documents to use in the process when you are working with homeless youth. The model supports more goal oriented help, better communication and understanding between social worker and service users.

Yet another project from the Netherlands is *The flag system*. This is a tool developed and used in institutions in the Netherlands and Belgium in order to facilitate assessment of the sexual behaviour of children and young people. The idea is to teach young people positive sexual behaviour where it is important to have and to give consent based on free will and equality. Following these three basic criteria, there are three additional ones: age appropriate, context appropriate and self-respect. Each criteria was judged with flags from green (perfectly acceptable), to yellow (slightly inappropriate) to red (seriously inappropriate) to black (severely inappropriate) and from this, a 'flag diagram' was made. The diagram serves as a structure for the more extensive normative list where examples are connected to knowledge from literature. The flag system is both a pedagogical end ethical intervention.

The two mentioned projects from the Netherlands show tools aimed at supporting and organising social work. Some models for supporting the work itself are also presented. A tool in working with youth was developed by the organisation FICE in the Netherlands. The tool is '*Lifebook* for *youth - video' (website)* The idea behind the lifebook is that 'if we know where we came from we better know where to go' and is aimed at children with difficulties in their history. The purpose is to facilitate their development into healthy, strong and self-determined individuals by making them aware of all their positive aspects and characteristics, good events as well as positive encounters with people in their lives.

The social organization '*Atspirtis'* in Lithuania works with individual support for former drug users. Those who join the project have a wish to change their lives. Many of the people who work as volunteers in this project are former drug users. The project runs a salad bar with two purposes: to provide high quality catering and to have socially useful activities. Working in this salad bar is one of the stages in the organisation's rehabilitation programme; other parts are for example accommodation and consultations with social workers, psychologists or other professionals. Taking part in the work in the salad bar promotes the dignity and worth of people as they feel they are doing something 'real' that is part of ordinary society and not just training. The salad bar has twice won the title 'Vilnius' most hospitable café'.

The last example comes from Finland and is more structured than the other examples mentioned. In cooperation between several organisations in Finland a tool for the systematic organisation of information in social work with individual clients was developed, '*the RSA-model'*. The aim was to analyse the clients' problems in relation to certain cultural contexts so that the practice developed in a direction that matched the clients' goals. In a follow-up study they could use data collected with the tool and therefore show the amount of time people have been service users, but they could also demonstrate a very strong correlation between motivation and success in case management with substance abusers. The obstacles occurred in structural areas, e.g. problems of getting a job and an income.

These six different tools show ways to structure either the organisation of the work or the work itself.

Initiatives by social workers

The projects in which social workers, volunteers or others help people are built on cooperative collaboration between the parties involved. The workers and volunteers aim to facilitate and support people by organising places to meet and discuss. One such project is presented by a master student in health anthropology at the University College Copenhagen, Denmark. This student made a project together with a church and a group of volunteers where they created a room of '*togetherness'.* The focus was on 'men at risk' that visited the church. Many of the men had a history of unemployment, psychiatric problems as well as alcoholism. During half a year the volunteers provided the visitors with dinner in the church. They ate together and socialized around seeing a movie, playing a game of chess or talking about news or the weather. One of the experiences described by the student is that it was easier to relate to the men if you focused on similarities. She, being a woman, couldn't identify with them as men, but she could relate to living a single life in Copenhagen and benefitting from free possibilities.

Some projects aim wider, for instance to reach the whole family. A Lithuanian welfare society for persons with mental disability '*Viltis*' worked with psychosocial rehabilitation of people with mental disabilities and their families to create an atmosphere of equal opportunities through arranging festivals and camps. The activities also engaged people from Belarus. As the service users and their parents participated in the arrangement they raised their competences parallel to the possibilities to share experiences and knowledge.

In Sweden, in a municipal social service unit, '*Slussen'* made a project with families in order to analyse the situation for newly arrived migrant families. In this activity parents and children participate together in activities during four weeks, while teachers map the children's skills and abilities. During the four weeks they focus on information about Swedish society including norms, laws and traditions. By working together with the whole family the social services provide a safe environment and possibilities to get a

good start in the new country. At the same time, it saves time for all the involved professionals to be in the same place and to be able to share information.

The last example here comes from France. It was estimated that 141 500 people were homeless in France in 2012, an increase of 44% in 11 years. The right to housing remains nothing but a promise for tens of thousands of applicants. In this context, *the Maison Goudouli project* / *video* was created to offer to people in precarious situations a roof and medical and social support. These people are very fragile: they lived in the street for many years and have a life expectancy of 47 to 50 years, serious health problems and complex social situations. For over 15 years, social workers in charge of support for people in precarious situations deplored the lack of a structure adapted to accommodate these people. Before the creation of Maison Goudouli, this group of people was not considered, or at least existing provisions did not take sufficient account of their specificities and needs: centres opened during nights only, alcohol consumption prohibited, pets not allowed. In fact, people in precarious situations were excluded from key provisions.

In one of the submitted examples they stress that their participants are named students as they are in a process of learning. That comes from *Kofoed Skole*, a training school in Denmark for jobless and socially marginalized groups that aims to free their students from their dependent client status.

The projects initiated by professionals and volunteers have very different foundations. We can see some connected to the church, some to public social services and some to other kinds of organisations, while one was initiated by a student for her thesis.

Initiatives by people

When the people concerned create their own projects, they take a slightly different form and shape than when social workers do it. It is a question of whether it is arranged for 'us' or for 'the others'. Both examples given that describe initiatives from people concern children leaving home, but for very different reasons. The first case is about involuntary separation between children and parents and the second one about the situation when young people leave care as they turn 18 and then have to find ways to live their own life in society.

The *Dandelion Parent Association* in Sweden emphasises that no parents have a right to their children, but all children have a right to their parents – to the highest extent possible. They have organised 'future workshops' with parents whose children are taken into custody and placed in foster care. The workshops are led by persons with the same experiences, with training in leading this kind of workshop. The Future workshop is a participatory model for empowerment. During the workshop the participants work with the barriers they experience, and from that they start pointing out needs for change. In the end they formulate wish lists of activities that ought to be included in the process of

separation between children and parents. In the wish list we see issues such as the need for support for the parents by an external support person, support in parenting skills, clear action plans for reunification and more equal views regarding mothers and fathers in custody issues.

A project with a totally different formation comes from the Netherlands, where the organisation _FICE_ _(website)_ has submitted an example of their work with care leavers. The project emanated from an initiative taken by young people themselves as they found that they needed help in their everyday life after they turned 18 and ought to provide for themselves in their everyday life. The idea was to develop an app explaining where they could find information about everything that needs to be arranged and is going to happen when you live on your own.

The two examples show how different kinds of projects can facilitate people's lives in very different situations. Both concern information and how it makes life easier if you are included and informed.

Outcome

In the submitted examples on practice the outcomes of the projects are seldom mentioned explicitly. Only a few submissions show results from evaluations of practice. One of them is an evaluation of reports from social workers in mental health. In England, social workers have a key responsibility under Mental Health legislation to write social circumstances reports for Review Tribunals. Tribunals are held as a response to service users appealing against their detention in hospital. The social worker gathers evidence and information from service users, their families and carers. In an action by _St Andrew's Healthcare_ the quality of social workers' reports was compared before and after a new template was introduced. There was a significant improvement in the quality of social circumstances reports written by social workers after the introduction of the new template. Therefore service users had better quality information submitted to the Tribunal on which to consider their legal status under Mental Health legislation.

One of the few stories told about the success of the action directly by the people the actions concern comes from The Salvation Army in Denmark, _Frelsens Hær_. This organisation received sponsoring for taking poor families and children to holiday camps and amusement parks. 7 500 children and parents took part in this during 2015. In their example they quote a letter from a mother who had taken part in a one day trip to an amusement park together with her daughters of 14 and 17 years old. In the letter one part is (translated from Danish):

> _I think I have heard them say thank you for this day more than ten times. But I am not the one to be shown gratitude. They are so happy! And everything has been so perfect. Your arrangement was just what all three of us needed and I think that it is absolutely wonderful that we have had_

this chance. It gave my girls the right, the time and the desire to be just ordinary young girls again. Our days can be filled with conflicts, and today, there has not been a single one. It is therefore not only the girls who have put so much value in this day, but certainly also their mother. I have had the most beautiful day with them, and have been able to put economic concerns, as well as mental, far away and just been able to go and be together in a really nice way.

Conclusion

The examples from practice show different tools and methods for practice. All the examples aim to accommodate the people the practice concerns, whether it is a question of prevention or intervention. There is a pervading perspective based on the importance of partnership and understanding for the people involved, and the ideas presented are about structuring the work, giving people access to resources and information, and working in partnership.

4. Education

The problem being addressed in education concerns general issues around making it possible for social work students to understand the perspectives of the people they will work with. There are some projects that more specifically focus on mental health, poverty, refugees and intercultural issues. Mostly the promotion of dignity and worth of the person has a wide focus in education and highlights service users in varying services, people of different cultures and social marginalisation amongst youth in Europe. It could also be phrased as emphasising the human rights perspective in social work education.

The link to promoting the dignity and worth of the person is reached through integration of service users in education, letting people tell their own stories about their situations and solutions in order to build respect and acceptance. The methods used aim towards interaction, exploration and awareness. In conclusion it can be said that the methods take their starting point in sharing experiences to provide perspective.

The purpose of the action overall is to bridge the communication gap. It is about encouraging and strengthening openness to meet "the other" and to work without discrimination. The methods used are mainly collaborative work, where perspectives are intertwined both in the process and as outcome of the projects.

Films

Films could be regarded as tools for education as they contain stories told that provide a common base for discussions in educational settings. The films focus on issues which the producers want to highlight for students, or for social workers. The submitted films are made in cooperation between teachers, students and service users. The first example comes from the United Kingdom, where a film was made about problems with communication, *Mending the communication gap.* It is a film made by refugees and asylum seekers based on their direct experiences with professionals' poor communication. The idea behind the film was to mend the communication gap between service users and professionals by sharing people's experiences and promoting cultural understanding.

Another film was made in cooperation between education and service users' organisations: *Mend the gap - A challenge for social work education.* It shows a way to combine education for service users and social workers. The film was sent in by Power Us that has practices in several countries. In the film service users are interviewed about their experiences of participating in education.

The third film shows another way of sharing experiences and focus on the communication gap between social worker and service user, *Mending the communication Gap. Between service users and professionals*. The film is made to enhance professionals' knowledge about how service users from other cultures can experience social workers.

At Esslingen University of Applied Sciences, Germany, service users and students of social work participated in a two-day weekend seminar devoted to reflection on the question "*What is good social work practice*". The main aim of the seminar and the film developed from it was to show both students groups how user competence and professional competence can complement each other in order to better understand perceptions of social work practice. One main focus in the course was to empower service users by providing a platform where students of social work and service users were able to interact on an equal basis. Using a number of different approaches (one-on-one discussion of personal experiences, group discussions, world café), service users were encouraged to voice their experiences.

All films mentioned show how social work is perceived by service users and aim to share experiences. The films are mainly made for students and social workers by service users and others and they endeavour to enlighten social workers with the perspective of the people they meet. In the fourth example we get a description of a context that could generate a film.

Involvement of people

Apart from making films, service users and participants from different organisations and from community in a wider sense can participate together with social work students also in other ways.

The organisation *Qualificar para Incluir* in Portugal established cooperation protocols with the Social Security Agency that enable them to conceive and implement social insertion programmes for 450 families under the umbrella of the Social Insertion Income policy. The project was run by staff connected to the Social Work School as either social worker or student on internship. The project aimed at enhancement of knowledge on the social, economic, cultural and political rights of individuals (particularly single mothers) affected by persistent poverty and social exclusion, transmitted from generation to generation and in a context of highly unsuitable housing conditions; to prevent and repair family ruptures and breakdowns; assure the children's right to grow up in educational contexts free of social and cultural discrimination. With this aim the organization has invested in the organisation of cultural events, involving users in theatrical plays, music concerts and poetry readings. In the last four years, in partnership with a theatre company they promoted three public events around the work of Bertold Brecht. In 2012, they started a new effort in the promotion of social, economic and cultural rights of young women, most of them single mothers: the development of a social enterprise that provides job and training opportunities in the hotel, cleaning and catering market. After participation in the projects many families found jobs, studies and children found support in activities that enhance their well-being.

In Bulgaria, the Department of Public Health and Social activities at University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev" engaged in "*Together for cultural diversity, tolerance and non-discrimination*" for inclusion of students in social work, related to intensive intercultural dialogue with representatives of various ethnic minority communities from their direct environment and from society, and with information about their culture and experience in integration and discrimination. Students and teachers participated in discussions with representatives from six ethnic minority communities. The students prepare their own productions for each discussion (panels, posters, brochures, presentations and essays) and present their positions on the announced topic. The students of social work were from different ethnic backgrounds and were motivated and actively involved in the preparation and conduct of the discussions. For the production, a guest was invited to the discussions (the creator of the first Museum of comics in Bulgaria), who prepared and presented comics on diversity, tolerance and non-discrimination at his own initiative. The project was evaluated through a survey that demonstrated the importance of building an educational environment in which persons and professionals are educated and trained with skills and behaviour consistent with the values and principles of tolerance and non-discrimination.

The *HEI Inter-Professional module,(link 2)* is a three year project where marginalized youth, practitioners and students work together. It is based on collaboration between five universities and universities of applied sciences (HEIs) from five different countries and four local practitioners from each country with vast expertise in working with marginalized youth in practice. Furthermore, marginalized youth from these institutions are involved in the development. In this project the participants co-created teaching materials based on listening to the narratives of the marginalized youth and practice partners. Through the project knowledge is exchanged between the national participants as well as between the countries involved.

The Viadem Service-Learning project in Denmark is a project that strives to involve reciprocal collaboration between students, faculty/staff, community members, community organizations, and educational institutions to fulfil shared objectives and build capacity among all partners in a "social laboratory". The social laboratory is aimed at providing students with a voluntary learning environment as a supplement to their other learning activities. The partnership agreement stipulates that the School of Social Work in Aarhus recruits 15 – 30 students willing to develop their knowledge and skills of community development through commitment to and participation in projects. The students receive supervision and guidance and the individual concrete projects can be located within civil society or in public sector initiatives. The students together with the practice field have ownership of the activities and projects and gain hands-on experience and learning of the challenges and forms of community development, experiences and knowledge that can be developed through other activities such as bachelor thesis or be embedded within the 3rd year 15 ECTS optional module.

The four examples presented show different innovative ways of bringing wider perspectives into social work education and allowing room for perspectives given directly from people about their own life and situation.

Facilitating education

The problems social workers deal with are sometimes problems "others" have, but sometimes they can be problems and issues that also exist within the group of students.

One of the submitted examples for education concerns awareness on mental health and is aimed towards both students and staff. The aim of the training is to increase the awareness about the specific situation of students with mental health difficulties among the university students and academic staff. The *Institute for Therapy and Social Education* – Association (ITIES) in Poland has organized two training cycles in cooperation with the University of Cracow. One cycle was arranged for the faculty and the university administration and one for students. Each of these cycles consisted of three or four meetings. These included the necessary introduction to mental health issues, as well as separate meetings to bring the participants closer to the different types of disorders or mental illnesses. The meetings topics related to specific mental difficulties people experience, psychiatric treatment possibilities reconciling with the requirements of academic life, experienced discrimination by university staff and other students, as well as methods to support students with mental health difficulties.

Widening perspectives

The projects in education most often concern raising awareness in a more general sense or in the education of students becoming social workers. Two of the submitted examples aimed at more specific awareness, awareness through specific knowledge that widens the perspectives for students and social workers. The first one concerns knowledge about international social work and the second education of social workers in practice.

A project at *St Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work* in Slovakia was aimed at health care for marginalized people (mostly with HIV) and decreasing malnutrition. It is a worldwide project where foreign and local staff work together with the help of Slovak experts, students, volunteers and local students offering education, shelter, food health care for marginalized and handicapped groups (e.g. children). The University organised the pilot, was sole financial supporter or looked for cooperation, and was often directly involved in management and implementation. The University had the initiative role in projects proposals and selection. There was a strategic partnership with national, local or international partners, because resources and possibilities of the University are limited and not enough for 102 projects and programmes in 35 countries. University staff and students played an initiating role, prepared local people, cooperated with partners and sometimes were only involved. In this way education and practice were

united in the same project and raised awareness, global sympathy and humanity, not only among students but in society at large. In this way students are better prepared to work in a globalized society.

Outcome

Education is about bringing knowledge and awareness further, but its results are hard to measure. In the submitted examples the recurrent outcome is that projects enhance awareness. As all education has that aim, there has to be something special that motivates the projects. In the examples given we can see tools, films and forums for exchanging perspectives in non-traditional ways as well as new themes in education. From that one could reflect on whether the non-traditional teaching methods promote awareness better than traditional teaching. We cannot prove it, but it is worth thinking about.

Conclusion

The projects presented in education all concern bringing other people into education, live or in films. Whether they are service users, representatives from organisations, volunteers or professionals, the key issue is about changing the perspective and breaking the traditional pattern that is inherited in the teacher-student relation. Bringing other people in, with other perspectives, changes the traditions in education and creates openings for new ideas and new ways of thinking.

5. **Concluding discussion**

The emphasis in the given examples could be summarised in a few words:

Respect, Awareness, Perspectives, Facilitation and Partnership.

The examples are filled with stories about understanding and respecting the perspectives of people who live under hard circumstances. There is an aim to promote better lives for people, either by direct interventions, or indirectly through raising awareness and added perspectives for social work students, practitioners or even the general public. Just like social work does in general, all examples are about facilitating people to find ways to better lives, in one way or another. The actions taken in the projects show different ways to work in partnership, especially in partnership with people who are concerned about the issue focused on in the action. A wide variety of methods are presented; they range from tools for practice and education to descriptions of special events that have been held. Irrespective of the form of the action, the descriptions are made in a way that they can both inspire and be transferred to and used in other contexts.

The examples come from many different forms of social work in different contexts. In this report they are categorised into the three areas policy, practice and education. We could relate the examples to Malcolm Payne's[2] three well known views of social work: the reflective-therapeutic, socialist-collectivistic and individualist-reformist view. The reflective-therapeutic view sees social work as seeking the best possible well-being for individuals, groups and communities by promoting and facilitating growth and self-fulfilment. The socialist-collectivistic view is about facilitating people to take part in processes of learning and cooperation and thereby creating institutions which can be owned by and participated in by all. The individualistic-reformistic view meets individuals' needs and improves services so that they can work more effectively. Looking at the examples given to the Observatory, we can see that irrespective of what perspective one takes on social work, you can find examples in this report representing all of these views. It is indicative of the width of the examples, but it also says something about the core ideals and ideas in social work.

Promoting the dignity and worth of people is one of the core issues in social work. That is why good examples about it are collected to be distributed widely. Through the given examples we see the enhancement of the importance of *regarding people as people*, not as roles or representatives of categories. This is central in promoting dignity and worth and this recurs in the stories told about good practices. The basic principle is asking people about their situation instead of telling them what to do.

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[2] Payne, M (1996) *What is professional social work?* Birmingham: Venture

Another important aspect in social work is *time*. It is about having time to engage with others and to take the perspective of the other, regardless whether it is a person in need or a person who represents another organisation. Time is also important as time to reflect.

Further, the examples show that there is still room for creative work and innovation in Europe. Austerity, hard times, questioned solidarity as well as tightened bureaucratic regulations tend to dominate the discussion about social work in many contexts. Yet there is room to move beyond normal practice and to find new ways for social work. The examples in this report demonstrate this. . Lorentz (2016) writes about "the social question' and the role of social work in safe-guarding society, but also that society could be seen as a project that needs to be attended to, organised and shaped according to principles.

The examples presented here are based on 'projects'. Projects that all have their specific focus, but that in a wider sense are part of the project of keeping society together. Projects are characterised as being something not to be taken for granted as they are not permanent. Often there are discussions about making projects into permanent practice, but it is worth looking at social work from the opposite perspective. Maybe there is a reason for presenting ways to promote the dignity and worth of people in the form of projects. In projects we have to continuously negotiate and re-negotiate what we are doing, who are and should be involved, why we are doing this and which perspectives are to be taken into consideration. These basic components in social work risk to be forgotten in the systematic schedule in traditional practices.

The aim of this report is to make these examples of projects in which dignity and worth of people are promoted accessible and to raise a reflecting discussion on the possibilities and difficulties in social work when promoting the dignity and worth of people is concerned. One of the main discussions should perhaps be how to organise social work so that it can build on projects to a wider extent?

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Organisation or consortium making this submission
Participating organisation(s)
Country
Contact person
Email

This example shows good practice in:
- Education
- Practice
- Policy

Tick all those which are relevant

Type of submission:
- Article
- Film
- Audio
- Poster
- Other

Tick all those which are relevant

What is the problem being addressed in this practice?
What is the link to promoting the dignity and worth of the person ?
What was the purpose of the action?
Describe: what are the roles of organizations and participants involved in this action
How were service users involved?
What did you do?
What was the outcome?

By submitting this information I give permission for analysis, reproduction and publication. Tick box: Yes

Appendix 2: Contributing organisations

The organizations that contributed were (in alphabetic order):

- Atspirtis, Lithuania
- Dandelion Parent association, Sweden
- Danish Association on Social Welfare
- Department of "Public Health and Social activities", University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev", Bulgaria
- Dept of Social Work, VIA University College, Denmark
- Erasmix, student organization, France
- Esslingen University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Work, Health Care and Nursing Sciences, Germany
- FICE, The Netherlands
- Frelsens Hær, Denmark
- Institute for Therapy and Social Education – Association (ITIES), Poland
- International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), European Region
- Kofoed skole, Denmark
- Kristianstad Municipality, Department of child education, Sweden
- Lithuanian welfare society for persons with mental disability "Viltis"
- Maison Goudouli, CRFMS-ERASME Toulouse, France
- Movisie, The Netherlands
- National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland
- PI Social Support Projects, Lithuania
- Power Us, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, United Kingdom
- Qualificar para Incluir Associação de Solidariedade Social, Portugal
- Social Work Area, Law Department, Spain
- Spanish General Council of Social Work
- St Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work, Slovakia
- The Icelandic Association of Social Workers
- UCC Professionshøjskolen, Denmark
- University of Salford, United Kingdom
- VIADEM, Denmark
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