

***Thematic Network on Social  
Work in the UArctic.***

***Research project  
“Social Work with Families”.***

*Lidia Kriulya, NArFU, Arkhangelsk,  
30.01.2013*

## *From history to a story...*

The Thematic Network on Social Work was established the 15th of June 2006 at a conference at Kjerringøy, Norway. There are now network members from all eight arctic countries:

*Canada, USA, Island, Greenland, Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway...*

**We are today 10 universities participating in the network (Finland and Norway are represented with two institutions).**

- University of Nordland (lead)
- Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences
- University of Lapland
- Umeå University
- Northern (Arctic) Federal University
- University of Regina
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Finnmark University College
- University of Iceland

**Non-UArctic partner: Soc. Ped School, Greenland**

## *Activities in 2012*

“Social Work in the Arctic” a special issue 1- 2012 of the Journal of Comparative Social Work (see: [www.jcsw.no](http://www.jcsw.no))

### Special Volume on Social Work in the Canadian North

- Article: “Exploring the Intersection of Culture and Education in Nunavik”
- Article: “Building Healthy Northern Communities Through Strengthening Capacity”
- Article: “Exploring the Unique Features of a First Nations Graduate-Level Social Work Program”
- Article: “Implementing social policy – social workers’ experience from Estonia and Norway”

## *Activities in 2012*

- Students at UArctic institutions were offered access to the 2012 **VirCamp** ([www.vircamp.net](http://www.vircamp.net))
- Bachelor Course: *“Community Work in an International Perspective”* (15 ects).



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- The Social Work Virtual Campus –VirCamp - [www.vircamp.net](http://www.vircamp.net) – offer online courses. Through the UiN membership students from Arctic universities can apply for intake at:
- Eped course (self-study)
- “Community Work”- 10 ects
- “Community Work from an International perspective” – 15 ects



# University of the Arctic, TNSW

Memorandum of understanding signed 1<sup>st</sup> of  
May 2012 between:



University  
of Regina



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СЕВЕРНЫЙ  
АРКТИЧЕСКИЙ  
ФЕДЕРАЛЬНЫЙ  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ  
ИМЕНИ М. В. ЛОМОНОСОВА



HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Social Work

# Memorandum of Understanding related to Thematic Network on Social Work

- In order to achieve a successful and sustainable partnership
- The Umeå University and the University of Nordland aim at developing collaboration regarding 60 ects (30 ects Social Work and 30 ects Master thesis).
- All institutions will make every reasonable effort to encourage direct contact, educational, and research cooperation between their constituents, including students, faculty members, departments, and research institutes, and will endeavour to cooperate in the fields with which both institutions are concerned. Within spheres that are mutually agreed to, these institutions agree on the following general forms of cooperation:
  - Joint educational and research activities;
  - Cooperation regarding Master in Social Work;
  - Exchange of academic material and academic publications;
  - Exchange of faculty members for research, lectures, and discussions;
  - Exchange of students for study and research.





## *Activities in 2012*

- In 2012 SWArctic in cooperation with **VirCamp** developed a plan for an international e-learning master course “*Contextual Social Work*” (30 *ects*), which will be implemented *September-December 2013*.
- Four Newsletters from SWArctic were published in 2012.
- TNSW conference was arranged on 8.07.12 in conjunction with the *Conference on Social Work and Social Development* in Stockholm, Sweden (9-12 July 2012).

**TNSW FB-Group, started in July 2012, as a tool to create  
academic community**

Issues discussed and shared:

“Hunger strike pressures Canada PM, aboriginal protests spread”

“Anthony Giddens on The Politics of Climate Change”

“Finland's Revolutionary Education System”

“Cold War rhetoric worries Norwegian Foreign minister”

**A step over the level of  
Political correctness onto the level of Trust**

***Social Work with Families (SWF)***  
***Social Workers' constructions of family in professional practice:***  
***an International Comparative Study***

- “Social Work with Families” is a research project within SWArctic in collaboration with the EU Marie Curie project “Supporting Families with complex needs” (2010-2014).

# Participants

- Siv Oltedal, The University of Nordland, Norway ([siv.oltedal@uin.no](mailto:siv.oltedal@uin.no))
- Lennart Nygren, Umeå University, Sweden ([lennart.nygren@socw.umu.se](mailto:lennart.nygren@socw.umu.se) )
- University of Regina, Canada
- Lakehead University, Canada
- Saratov Technical University, Russia
- NARFU, Arkhangelsk, Russia
- The University of Queensland, Australia
- University of Birmingham, UK
- The University of Nottingham, UK
- Universidad Nacional Cordoba, Argentina
- The University of Malawi, Malawi
- Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México
- University of Complutence, Madrid, Spain
- Pontificia Catholic University, Chile
- University of Lapland, Finland
- University of Western Cape, South Africa
- Boston University, USA
- Umeå University, Sweden

## Project Description. Aim.

To contribute to an emerging need to gain more knowledge about **different conceptions of the *family*** and the role of the family in social work. In a globalised world, we need to investigate how 'family' is understood **by social work practitioners** who increasingly face the results of transnational migration such as multiethnic families and child-and granny-headed households. Since the concept of family has changed due to cultural, demographical, ideological and economic structural changes, there is a need for an increased awareness of **how social services and their workers regard families** as the target of their interventions. Social workers' practices impact on how they conceptualise 'family' and on family members as recipients of their services. It is thus imperative to investigate **how** these differing **conceptions** of family **impact on** the sorts of **services** provided and the **ways** in which **family members** and the practices they engage in **are evaluated** by social workers.

## Project Description. Aim.

- to obtain knowledge about how social workers work with families in child welfare and protection services in different national contexts.
- to describe and analyse different forms of contact: as support the child/youth, support to other members of the family, work with the whole family or with their relationship to different welfare providers as the community and other networks.
- to study child welfare and family policies and practices within gendered, generational and ethnic perspectives.

# Research Theme: How do social workers construct family in professional practice within child welfare and protection services?

## Some specific research questions are:

- When social workers have a working relationship with a child/youth; how do they negotiate and agree upon different forms of contact with the child/young persons' family from a gendered and generational perspective?
- What expectations do social workers have towards families they are working with?
- How do social workers who work with families understand the notion 'family'? (For example biological, juridical, cultural or professional)
- How do conceptions of 'family' vary across different national contexts?
- How do social workers describe, explain and justify social work practice with families within different contexts such as the state, NGO and civil society?
- How do these descriptions vary across cultural, social and political contexts?
- How do social workers understand the impact of institutionalised family policies in their practice with families in their own contexts?
- How do these understandings differ across national contexts?

## Theoretical Approach

- Discourse analysis
- Critical organizational theory
- Intersectional perspective  
(Bacchi, Butler, Fraser, Foucault, Crenshaw, Goffman, Mills, etc.)



## Method and research design

- qualitative research, formulated on a multiple case study design
- focus group based on Vignette
- **By the present moment:** focus groups are conducted, transcribed and translated into English; difficulties and limitations of the research are discussed at the conference in July, 8 in Stockholm; all TNSW institutions participated in data collection.

## What is it in research for us and non-arctic partners...

“I think it is vital for UArctic networks to continue to also collaborate with others who are indirectly linked to the North, with regard to the education of students and working together on research endeavors. I believe that we can only grow stronger as academics if we share our accumulated knowledge and resources. Students are our focal point, will benefit from collaborative knowledge and awareness of northern issues, regardless of where they are situated. From my perspective, I have already learnt a great deal from my short time with the network, and share this collaborative knowledge with my students... The partnership within the network allow for exposure to others in other countries, to hear their voices, to learn from them.

Incredibly exciting! ”

Professor Randy Johner, University of Regina, Canada

Thank you!

