



VIA University College



Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin
University of Applied Sciences



UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED
SCIENCES
UTRECHT



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Linnéuniversitetet Kalmar
Växjö

ERASMUS network Social Work: Berlin, Aarhus, Utrecht, Lund, Kalmar

Chronology of partnerships (originally Socrates, then Erasmus and now Erasmus+):

- Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin, Germany (Erasmus 1988)
- VIA University College, Department of Social Work, Aarhus, Denmark (Erasmus 1988)
- Hogeschool Utrecht, The Netherlands (Erasmus 1991)
- Socialhögskolan, Lunds Universitet, Sweden (Erasmus 1994)
- Linnéuniversitetet, Kalmar, Sweden (Erasmus 2005)

Two previous partners have been involved for some years in the network:

- University of Łódź, Poland (Erasmus 2001)
- Universitat de Barcelona, Faculty of Education, Spain (Erasmus 2001)

The network originally began as a bilateral cooperation between Berlin and Aarhus when the first mobility programme was established by the European Union. Soon Utrecht and Lund joined.

For many years, the network met every semester as the original organisation of the mobility programme meant, that the partners as a network applied for and received grants directly from the Commission. The partners took turns on being responsible for application and reporting and the network meetings included quite detailed planning and allocation of grants for student and staff exchange.

Student and staff exchange

Much attention was given to every student exchange. The students primarily went for practice placements, which entailed that the student had to learn the language of the destination.

Staff exchange included teaching mobility as well as cooperation on curriculum development in various ways.

Examples of teaching subjects during staff exchange, incl. recent subjects:

- Methods in social work with children and families (incl. examples like Video Home Training)
- Home visits
- Ethics in social work
- Supervision
- Crisis intervention
- Community Work
- Future workshop and the Open Space model
- Social work with homeless people
- Social Work with refugees, social work with minority ethnic groups
- Domestic violence
- Young substance abusers
- Application of drama in social work
- Family Law
- Human rights
- Mediation
- Labour market access
- Labour Law
- Personnel management
- The professional encounter with the bureaucratic organisation
- Social policy, comparative social policy, European trends in social policies
- Racism and migration
- Service learning
- User participation

Examples of other types of staff cooperation

- Knowledge exchange between Aarhus and Utrecht on e.g. project work, supervision, and teaching re family work
- When introducing externally assessed exams, Lund invited a lecturer from Aarhus to participate as an external assessor for a couple of years.
- For a series of years, Berlin used a lecturer from Aarhus as an external assessor when appointing new lecturers in the field of law. Berlin still has a lecturer from Aarhus on the Advisory Board of the Master in Intercultural Conflict Management.
- The libraries and the IT departments of Berlin and Aarhus cooperated for a number of years to develop their study facilitation further.

- Berlin involved the partners in annual Summer schools for students and Winter Forums for lecturers.
- Aarhus contributed with an article to Berlin's magazine Alice, when the theme was poverty.¹
- Utrecht and Aarhus joint forces in developing modules in English on "International Development Work".
- Aarhus and Kalmar contributed to a book edited by the ASH in Berlin 2010².
- Berlin and Utrecht were research partners 2011/2012 (with Stockholm) and published an article about evictions.
- When the Social-Juridical department in Utrecht published a 25 years anniversary anthology in 2014, Berlin and Aarhus contributed with articles.³
- All partners have hosted study visits and field trips for each other for management and staff and/or students.
- All partners support each other with academic or practice contacts as well as sources whenever needed.

Thematic cooperation

In addition to mobility, the network began to cooperate on chosen themes when the possibility of applying for Intensive Programmes came up.

The principle was that the partners took turns on hosting intensive seminars on the chosen subject for up to 10 students from each partner. Teachers from all partners joined the students and conducted parts of the teaching during the seminar:

- Refugees and Asylum Seekers 1992 - 1996
- Social Work in Housing Areas 1997 – 1999

The seminars were very successful and had not only an impact for the participants but also a spill over effect on the curricula of the partners.

The network then decided to focus on the theme

- Social Work in Local Communities.

In spite of several brave attempts the network did not succeed in getting funding for more IP's and it was decided to focus on the theme within the framework of the available mobility resources. Network meetings therefore focused on the theme in all sorts of ways, sharing sources, methodologies and examples across the countries. The partners benefitted immensely by this inspiration and meetings were combined with teaching at the hosting institution with an 'internationalisation at home' effect for students. Nevertheless, the high level of ambition did not quite match the low level of resources, so in 2007 the network decided to organise the thematic cooperation in the format of seminars for

¹ Vincenti, Gordon: Poverty vulnerability of ethnic minorities in Denmark. Magasin der Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin, alice 14/2007

² Labonté-Roset, Christine/ Hoefert, Wolfgang/ Cornel, Heinz (Hg.): Hard to Reach. Schwer erreichbare Klienten in der Sozialen Arbeit. Praxis • Theorie • Innovation. Berliner Beiträge zu Bildung, Gesundheit und Sozialer Arbeit. Schriftenreihe der Alice-Salomon-Hochschule, Band 9

³ Bollinger, Stijn/ van't Blik, Hans (Hg.): SJD en de nieuwe kwetsbaarheid. Een caleidoscopische blik op 25 jaar Sociaal Juridische Dienstverlening. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers <https://www.sdu.nl/sjd-en-de-nieuwe-kwetsbaarheid.html>

students, practitioners and teachers with the themes below as they were defined by the hosting partners:

Host	Topic
Kalmar	Integrating Theory and Practice in Social Work Education - examples from partners - suggestions of best practice
Berlin and Utrecht	Values, Attitudes and Ethics of Social Work - The Normative Professional (when social work intervenes into users' private lives and identity when working multi-disciplinary)
Lund	Integrating User's Perspectives in Social Work
Aarhus	Social Work Identity: Values, Attitudes and Ethics from International Perspectives

By 2011 the network had been enriched with several new members and a phase of reorientation was needed. It was decided to focus upon getting to know each other's institutions in terms of curricula, special projects, cooperation with practice and offers for incoming students. Network meetings are still combined with teaching host students in the format of international weeks or as an integral part of themes defined by the host partner.

Current theme

Inspired by a brilliant world café about student mobility during the 2014 meeting in Berlin, the network had a preliminary discussion of future themes and the following suggestions came up:

- Internationalisation – translating buzzwords into relevance for social work education
- What can be learned by student mobility experiences; how do social work students define the added value in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies?
- What can be learned by practice/employers; how do practitioners define the added value in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies?

What defines the added value of staff exchange, effects on curriculum, for students and for practice? During the Kalmar meeting in March 2015 the teaching included sessions with Swedish students who were considering going abroad as an integral part of their studies. Inspired by the sessions and by a world café, the network redefined the future theme as follows:

Added value of international perspectives in social work education

- Knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to social work
In the curriculum and in the format of mobility.

By October 2015, the network began a series of focus group interviews within the theme with a focus on mobility:

	Host	Activity
Autumn 2015	Aarhus	Interviews DK
Spring 2016	Utrecht	Interviews NL

Autumn 2016	Lund	Interviews S
Spring 2017	Berlin	Interviews D
Autumn 2017	Kalmar	Processing

The hosting partner invites relevant interviewees and forms 3 focus groups, each including a fourth year student, who has conducted an integral part of her/his studies abroad, a practitioner, who has conducted an integral part of her/his studies abroad and an experienced practitioner who, in a capacity of e.g. colleague, manager, consultant etc., can contribute with observations of competencies gained or enhanced by studying abroad.

The visiting colleagues conduct the interviews whereas the hosting colleagues have more observing or facilitating roles. The same interview design is used throughout all interviews.

Each partner may apply their 'local' material as they please (with the acceptance of interviewees, of course) and the plan is to use the full material as a joint material for research and/or publication depending on relevance and resources.

Although the process is not completed yet, there are already a variety of types of application of the material – going on or in the making:

- Aarhus identified a list of competences in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies, which is used by the staff at the department in Aarhus and in the work with outgoing students
- Utrecht used the material for an article in the national professional magazine Vakblad Sociaal Werk (1. Februari 2017)
- Partners use examples and quotes from the interviews in readers/brochures/information sessions/tuition sessions for students considering going abroad
- Staff meeting presentations
- To be used in development of policy papers
- The partners consider presenting findings at the IASSW Dublin Conference 2018

Anke Beuck, 27. March 2017