COMMUNITY WORK FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (18 ECTS).

Introduction

Community work is a planned process to mobilise communities to use their own social structures and resources to address their own problems and achieve their own objectives.

Community work focuses on participation and fosters empowerment, emancipation and change through collective action. Community work is closely related to work for human rights. The community work process is about people in communities creating opportunities for growth and change.

'Community' can be understood in different ways, as geographical areas, interest groups, organisations or institutions. Community work rests on a basic democratic ideal, antioppressive practice, equality and solidarity with the affected individuals. It aims to generate and communicate new insights with a view to effecting change.

As community work is an ideological, theoretical and practical approach to social life and the risk of social exclusion, it is ideologically sustained by a basic trust in people's ability to improve their life chances. Society is the outcome of collective action and is perpetuated and/or changed by action.

Content and objectives

This course will focus on different theories, methods and approaches in community work from an international perspective. The course consists of several parts. One part focuses on theories and methods, another part consist of a case-study related to a video/virtual case. Students will make a project plan related to the case, by collaborating and comparing different approaches.

The students will learn about community work and its historic background and come to understand the risk of manipulation when community work is not worked out from a grassroot level. Students will also learn about the advantages and power in approaches carried out from a bottom-up perspective. One of the main aims of the course is that students develop a critical understanding of the wide range of theories and methods of community work, develop the ability to recognize these in current projects and are able to design a project plan of community work, and show which steps and facilities are needed for realizing and managing processes and products.

Expected learning outcomes

This course is competence based. That is an integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which means that a student not only requires knowledge, but knows how to use it and what kind of attitude is needed in a specific situation.

The competences are:

- Methods and Theories in Community Work

This means the student is able to understand and demonstrate how to use theories and methods related to practical community work

- Cooperation

This means the student is able to cooperate in changing interdisciplinary national and international networks to achieve expected learning outcomes.

- Professional Development

This means the student is able to manage, justify and control his/her own educational development.

The expected learning outcomes are:

- The student is able to collect and analyze relevant information about communities and is able to report the findings.

- The student is able to see opportunities on macro-, meso- and micro- levels in communities and is able to create a plan for a community work project.

- The student is able to reflect on the understanding of a specific situation and is able to justify the chosen methods for community work.
- The student is able to reflect on his/her own continuing professional development.
Competence indicators:
Methods and Theories in Community Work
The student is able to describe, analyze, demonstrate how to use, and compare community work theories and methods.
-The student is able to make a project plan, including aims, participants, approaches, cost, and evaluation.
Cooperation
- The students will be able to work together with students and teachers from other countries in the virtual campus and take an active part in developing and evaluating the learning program.
- The students will be able to give and share information about their own community and compare commonalities and differences with those of others.
- The student will be able to demonstrate how to create a professional network to work collaboratively in community work.
Professional development
- The student is able to reflect on her or his personal and professional developmentfrom the start of the course and formulate personal strengths and learning objectives for community work.
-The student will be able to critically reflect on the relevance of community work in society.

Study Methods
Throughout the study program students will work with a solution oriented focus, and by solving tasks they will reflect on situations concerning community work from a social work perspective and compare with the situation in other countries. Students will work both individually and in groups.
The course will start with an introduction to the e-learning platform, class and the virtual classroom to acquaint students with the international group of students and teachers with whom they will be working. Every second or third week students will receive new learning material and new tasks to work on both individually and in the group.
The tasks given will be related to the objectives of the course. Students who deliver their tasks on time during the program will receive a response and guidance from the teacher. Participating as a student requires students to provide feedback to each other, both in terms of their own individual perspective and how issues might be seen from their country's perspective. Students who join the course have to enter the classroom at least once a week. Compulsory online conferences among students and teachers will be arranged during the study period.
All elements in the course will be organized and administrated through a common virtual learning management system.

Internet Access
The students will need consistent access to the Internet to participate in this course. The speed of the Internet connection will influence the student's access to the study material. Some of the course material is produced as media files and broadband is recommended. If connecting to the Internet through a dial-up connection, the download rate for accessing documents and media files will be significantly slower than with a broadband connection.

Assessment
The assessment in this course will be by submission of a portfolio. This means that the course will be task centred and as part of the learning process students will receive

feedback on their tasks during the course. As a result, students will have an opportunity to improve their initial presentations.

All tasks must be completed before the final assessment. Teachers will check this two weeks before the final assignment. Completed tasks will be assembled into a portfolio and a number of these tasks will be required for the presentation portfolio. The maximum number of words in the presentation portfolio is 8000, plus a further 1000 words for reflection on the learning experience. The portfolio consists of a group task that counts for 40 % of the final mark and individual tasks that in total count for 60 % of the final mark. However, students have to pass for both parts.

Students can't take part in the final assessment if they don't participate in the group work during the course or if they don't present all the tasks in their e-portfolio at the announced date.

Information about which tasks student will be required to deliver for the final assessment/presentation portfolio will be given to students approximately three weeks before the final assessment is due. The final marks will be given from A-F (where F means not approved).

Target group.
The target group for the programme is social work students undertaking a bachelor's programs in their, second, third or fourth year. The programme is open to students at postgraduate levels and professionals who are interested in getting an international perspective on community work issues and subjects. The academic level of the programme is undergraduate 5.

Credits and Certificate
The course leads to 18 ECTS credits. The student's university issue a certificate with credits to students.

Starts/ends
The course will run from 27 January 2014 and ends 2 June 2014

Readings
(changes in the reading might be done before the course starts)

-Adams, R. (2009). Being a critical practioner. In Adams. R., Domminelli, L. & Payne, M. Critical practice in social work, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmilliam. Ch 21, pp 233-248.

-Borrop. T. (2006). The Creative Community Builders´s Handbook. How to Transform Communities using Local Assets, Art, and Culture. Fieldstone Alliance.

-Bracht, N., Kingsbury, L. & Rissel, C. (1999). A five-stage community organization model for health promotion. In Bracht, N. (ed.) Health promotion at the community level: new advances. 2.nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif, SAGE Publications, pp 83 - 104

-Ife, J. & Fiske. L. (2006). Human rights and community work. International Social Work 49 (3) pp 297 308

-Ife J. & Tesoriero, F. (2006). Community Development. Community-based alternatives in an age of globalisation. Pearson Education Australia. Chap. 3-7 og 9-13

-Larsen, AK., Hole,GO (2007) The Role of the Virtual Classroom in Opening up the European -Curriculum pp 73-89 in: Frost,E,;Freitas,M.J.; Campanini,A. (2007) Social Work Education in Europe. Rome. Carocci.

-Mast, T. (2006). Logical Framework Approach with an appreciative approach. Sida Civil Society Centre

-McKnight, J.L & Kreetzmann, J.P. (2005). Mapping Community Capacity. In Minkler, M (ed) Community organizing and community building for health, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press.

-Ronnby, A. (2009). Empowering people by community building. In Strand Hutchinson, G (ed.). Community work in the Nordic countries- new trends. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

-Rohleder, P. Swartz, L., Carolissen, R., Bozalek, V. & Lebowitz, B. (2008): ''Communities Isn't Just About Trees and Shops'': Students from Two South African Universities Engage in Dialogue About -'Community' and 'Community Work'. Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology 18:, pp 253–267

-Swanepoel, H. & De Beer, F. (2007). Community Development - Breaking the cycle of poverty.

-Landsdowne, SA: Juta & Co Ltd. Twelvetrees, A. (2008). Introduction: What is community work?. In Community Work. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillam.

-Wallerstein. N. (2006). What is the evidence on effectiveness of empowerment to improve health?

-WHO Europe, Health Evidence Network Report February 2006

-Økland & Henriksbø. (2009). Community work in the Nordic countries- new trends. In Strand Hutchinson, G. (2009) Community Work in the Nordic Countries – new trends. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget