

# Bulletin

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by Jan Agten



EASSW holds regular regional seminars to promote social work activities with its member Schools. This Bulletin is the third of a series that will provide information from these seminars to inform our members of new developments across Europe. If you are interested in holding a regional seminar with EASSW support and producing a Bulletin please contact us for more information.

## **Social Work Education in Turkey**

### **Background**

A regional seminar, “Social Work Education in Turkey” took place in Ankara on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 . This seminar was organised by Hacettepe University’s School of Social Work in co operation with the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) and Baskent University Department of Social Work.

Social work education in Turkey began in 1961 with the establishment of the Social Work Academy. The Academy was founded to train social workers to have knowledge of social work methods and professional skills and train social workers to participate effectively in social policy and planning. The programme which was offered at the Academy was influenced by social work advisers from the USA funded by the United Nations and Fulbright Commission. The Commission also provided financial assistance for Turkish social workers to study abroad.

Social workers trained by the Academy were employed from 1965 to work with a range of service users groups. In 1981 the Social Work Academy was affiliated with Hacettepe University, a public University in Ankara to form the first School of Social Work in Turkey. In 2002 the Department of Social Work at Baskent University, a private university in Ankara was established. These universities offer bachelor degrees in social work.

Turkey a country with 72 million people and a growing state and NGO social welfare sector still has only two departments of social work. Since the 1990s Turkish social work academics have been making more contacts with schools of social work in Europe. The opening of European Programmes like Socrates and

Erasmus to Turkey has supported these developments. A growing number of social work student and teacher exchanges are being made between Turkey and those European countries in which there are Turkish immigrant communities. Exchanges which are adding to the knowledge and skills which European social workers are bringing to work with these communities

The regional seminar was organised to further these developments by sharing with academics from other Turkish universities as well as social workers information about European social work and the Bologna declaration as well as facilitating an exchange with European social work teachers about the organisation and delivery of social work in Turkey. In addition there was a focus on global ethical issues in social work.

The seminar

200 people were invited to the seminar and 115 attended. The participants included academics from Alanya, Atalya, Baskent, Hacettepe, Izeu, Dicle, Haran, Istanbul universities, Turkish social work practitioners and managers and seven members of the EASSW committee. Participants from Adgerbeidjan and Cyprus also attended the seminar. The programme consisted of morning presentations from key speakers with discussion groups in the afternoon. Simultaneous translation was provided for the morning sessions. The morning presentations began with two presentations about social work in Turkey from Mr.Selçuk Karacık and Mr.Murat Altuğgil. These were followed by presentations from two EASSW Executive committee members Jan Agten and Gabor Hegyesi. Jan Agten placed the development of social work education in Europe in the context of the Bologna declaration. Gabor Hegyesi introduced the main features of the global code of ethics for social work.

The afternoon discussion groups offered participants opportunities to talk about social work practice in Turkey, the Bologna declaration and ethics in social work. Turkish participants were joined by other members of the EASSW Executive committee for these groups.

### **Summary of the workshop on Bologna**

The workshop on the Bologna process (or declaration) attracted about 40-45 persons from different areas within universities and social services/NGO:s in Turkey and also from Cyprus. After an introduction of Sevil Atauz, director of school of social work at Hacettepe University, Jan Agten, Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen in Flanders/Belgium, and Mona Franséhn, Göteborg University in Sweden, informed about the implementation process of Bologna in their home countries. In Flanders most of the work seemed to be accomplished already and in Sweden institutions were right now in the middle of the process. In both

countries Bologna was connected with a hard workload for teaching staff and director of studies.

After the presentations, the participants had a great number of questions in order to find out the main ideas of the project and also in which way Bologna would be relevant for Turkey in future. Importance of defining learning outcomes for social work practice as well as the need of a dialogue between institutions of higher education and the social workers/social field organizations were focused in the discussion. Most of the speakers were positive to the overall aim of the Bologna declaration and looked upon the project as an opportunity for further development of the social work education in Turkey.

Mona Fransehn

### Working group social work in Turkey

The working group about social work in Turkey was a rather big group with people from all over Turkey and different social services.

The main discussion point was how more social services could be developed and how the existing services could be improved. About 20 % of the Turkish population would need some kind of social services or support, but until now only between 1.3 - 1.5 % of the public services is used for this. As field where social services are urgently needed were named:

child protection, centers for young people and social work with the growing population of street children. Another missing services concern the elderly population, which is about 5 % of the Turkish population, what means more than 3 million people. Until now very few institutions for elderly people exist, the families are doing nearly all care.

Another big group, which needs more social support, are women, from whom more than 50 % work still agriculture and about 20 % are illiterate.

Another discussion point was the planned decentralization of until now from the central state organized services. In the future the municipalities will overtake them, which was seen as difficult.

Until now are not enough trained social workers in Turkey existing and other professions like sociologists and psychologists are working at their places.

The creation of 3 new schools for social work, besides the existing two (Hacettepe University and the private Baskent University, both in Ankara) should change this situation.

It was also discussed from younger social workers that the social work study programmes should more prepare for the still existing intercultural conflicts and the big gap between province and urban areas.

Christine Labonté-Roset

## **Working group Ethics in Social Work**

The presentation's goal was to give a frame of reference for the workshop in the afternoon on the same day. Its purpose was also to underline the importance of the new document of IFSW and IASSW that was accepted in 2004 at their joint conference in Adelaide, called „Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles”, with a strong referral to the new structure of social work education.

The presentation argued that ethical issues have been embedded in the very nature of social work profession from the very early stage of its professionalisation, and thus the presence of ethical dilemmas is unavoidable in the process of generic/generalist education and also in its generalist/specialist practice.

Then the structure of the document was described with special attention to the two types of principles e.g. human rights and human dignity, and social justice; and the conventions it relies on.

The presentation finally draw attention to the very fact that in the every day practice of social work there might be a constant clash between the values themselves, or/and the values expressed in the statement of Principles and the complex and controversial reality of the given case. Some examples were given to the audience in order to prepare for the workshop. Also, some ways to handle these ethical dilemmas were suggested that may help to prevent the burn-out of social workers.

A copy of the statement was offered to every participant.

**Gabor Hegyesi**

## **Workshop group on Ethics**

The group was attended by more than thirty participants working at various places (social workers in direct care, administrators, teachers) and from various parts of the region (Turkey, Cyprus, Azerbajdjan). A diversity of ethical problems and dilemmas were presented by the participants– for instance discrimination of clients due to the political and sexual reasons (a question of political activity and adoption, a question of homosexuality and adoption), the boundaries of professional and personal (also in connection with the scare sources) - and were discussed in very open and lively atmosphere from various points of view and connected with the items of the Code of Ethics. Although the International Code of Ethics was adopted in Turkey, sometimes it might be difficult to put the values into the practice.

Another topic which came up from the discussion concerned with the need of high quality services also in the terms of ethics and possible ways how to guarantee it (ethical committee, licensing system and so on).

Participants emphasized the necessity to have a frequent opportunity to set up discussion groups on ethical problems and to work on challenging „unjust policies and practices,, (Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles, point 4.2.4, IFSW, 2004).

**Mirka Nečasová**

## **Conclusion**

This highly successful event in which there was active involvement and openness from participants demonstrated the strong potential within the Turkish social work community to deal with substantial social and economic problems facing Turkey. At the same time there was a keen interest in the development of further and ongoing life long learning for social work education. This event led to the social work departments in Ankara deciding to send representatives to the working conference on curriculum development in Belgium organised by EASSW and Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen. Over the next year an intensive European programme is planned with Turkey on different methods of social work teaching between 8 departments of social work from Alicante, Debrecen, Vilnius, Tampere, West Jutland, Göteborg , co-ordinated by KHKempen.

The European Association of Schools of Social Work look forward to a strengthening co-operation in the future with social work educators and practitioners in Turkey, Co-operation which has the potential to bring a great deal to social work theory and practice across Europe.

Website for more information:

[www.eassw.org/Schools of Social Work/Turkey](http://www.eassw.org/Schools of Social Work/Turkey)