



New Initiative on postgraduate developments in social work in Europe

Darja Zaviršek, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work

In September 2004 five European Schools for social work started to develop an international doctoral studies program in social work. The initiative came from the Faculty of Social Work Ljubljana and the meeting was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The partners designed a mission statement which is now published for the first time.

International Doctoral Study in Social Work (INDOSOW)

Initiated by University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Work, INDOSOW is a joint project of Anglia Polytechnic University (Cambridge), Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences (Berlin), University of Birmingham, University of Ljubljana, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, and Stockholm University.

Today European societies are experiencing profound economic, political, cultural, and social changes. Two processes with uncertain outcomes are shaping this change: the integration of Europe and the development of global structures. Social work has a part to play in this changing world academically and professionally.

Amongst the changes, the Bologna Declaration has launched a process that will affect higher education throughout Europe, making academic standards comparable. INDOSOW complies with this process and benefits from it. Students will have an opportunity to combine the best knowledge and practice from the partner institutions in their chosen field. Upon completion of the study the student will be awarded a doctorate in social work, which will be acknowledged across national borders. INDOSOW supports the creation of a European accreditation system; until such a system is established, the degree is recognised by the partner institutions, and therefore by their national systems.

INDOSOW offers the student an opportunity to experience and explore the social realities of different regions. It seeks to complement the objectives of education, accumulating knowledge and training for practice, with those of social work: social justice, inclusion, anti-discriminatory action, and autonomy. Following lessons from social work, it aims to establish a network of teachers and students and build an international community of academics, users, carers, and practitioners, both as a source of pertinent knowledge and a foundation for good practice. INDOSOW encourages participatory, comparative and joint research from the activist perspective with all stakeholders in the domain of social work.

Author's address:

Prof Dr Darja Zaviršek

University of Ljubljana, School for Social Work

Topniska 33

SL-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tel.: +386 61 137 7606

E-mail: darja.zavirsek@uni-lj.si