



Report from World Social Work Day 2008 in Denmark

Supported by the Danish Association of Social Workers, The Danish Association of Students of Social Work (SDS) celebrated World Social Work Day on April 15.

Derived from the IFSW European theme "Social Workers Promoting the Realization of Human Rights", SDS decided to focus on equality. Though it may not seem so from the outside, we do struggle with social problems in Denmark – some of them even increased by laws that discriminate specific groups of people (the weakest).

Through different events in four cities students drew attention to the importance of equality and the social workers' great contribution to cause it.

In Odense and Holstebro students celebrated social work by distributing postcards, flyers and balloons and telling people on the street some positive stories of social work and why social workers are indispensable.

On University Colleges in Copenhagen and Aarhus some speakers introduced to debates about the conditions of equality in Denmark in a perspective of integration and the social worker's abilities to make a change for the better.

In Copenhagen sociologist Morten Ejrnæs demonstrated how Danish social policy has moved from being "equal, humane and jointly" to be "of a market outlook, individualized labor policy" and concluded that one of the Danish social workers' biggest challenges is to maintain and insist on the anti-discriminating perspective of human rights, especially as long as new citizens receive lower social benefits than "true" Danes. Social worker Mette Blauenfeldt followed up by saying that many more objectives of integration can be fulfilled if just the politicians will stop discriminating and let social workers use their professional knowledge to empower people. In Århus three lecturers with foreign background talked about the importance of weighting equality and similarities between people rather than differences and distances, which is food for thought in all sorts of social work.

To increase the knowledge of World Social Work Day, SDS created an open World Social Work Day group on Facebook, where anyone can join and discuss relevant subjects and some hopefully will share some of the many positive stories of social work that demonstrates our worth.

SDS will in all probability celebrate World Social Work Day next year as well, as we have only received positive attention on our involvement.

Rasmus Balslev
Vice Chairman of SDS