

Editorial

Social work and cultural diversity

by

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Cultural diversity and creating more human dignity in our societies are highly appreciated visions and values in public spheres. These aspects are also core aims that we as social workers and human beings associate ourselves with. We need research to investigate how we are interacting with people, and to distinguish between how social workers talk and act. Social work processes underscore that different approaches are important, and that we need to be aware of details that make a difference in people's lives.

This issue offers three articles and one essay in a European context. The articles deal with social work and cultural awareness in different ways, thereby contributing to a greater understanding about social work practice in various contexts.

In the first article: '*Unpacking social innovation by nonstate service providers in the challenging social work practice*,' Aleksander Bozic investigates how NGOs deliver social services as social innovation practices for vulnerable groups. He analyses interviews with people in NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bozic identifies several processes related to transnational networking, borrowing and adapting, contextual modification, relationship-building, pioneering novel solutions, knowledge production and transfer. This area is highly dependent on international donor-driven funding. This innovation plays an important role in social work practices. The findings make it possible to obtain an increased understanding of the involvement of NGOs and their capacities to activate social innovation.

The next two articles unpack how welfare professionals navigate cultural diversity within an institutional context. In the second article '*More than health care: The implications of cultural diversity for health care practice in Norway*,' Lydia Mehrara interviewed mid-wives and public health nurses about how they provide maternal and child health care services for immigrants. She identifies those providers who offer services within the balance of indifference and care when they use their discretion as frontline workers in an institutionalized system. The article explores the implications of cultural diversity for practices in a universal system, thus challenging the providers to improve their cultural awareness through a tolerance of harmless differences, hence avoiding personal curiosity and working within the limits of their own institutional framework.

The third article, *'The construction of a "traumatized" refugee child in need of safety in Norwegian kindergartens,'* Eric Kimathi explores how kindergarten teachers relate to the concept of safety in the integration of refugee children. Based on interviews with kindergarten teachers, he identifies that the concept of trauma and safety is important in the relationship toward children and parents. Safety is understood as emotional support and comfort for the children. Most of the teachers have participated in learning programmes, in which the knowledge mediated can contribute to a dominant discourse of refugee children as being potentially traumatized. The author mediates that practitioners and policymakers must be aware of how we victimize and categorize them before meeting the individual child.

In her essay, Mascha Wiechmann critically writes about: *'Gender-based Violence and the Nordic Paradox: When things are not what they seem – A short critical reflection.'* This is a short paper based on an exam paper as a student at The Nordic Master in Social Work and Welfare. She examines three articles, and concludes that: 'There is no definite answer as to why high gender equality and violence against women seem to go hand in hand.' The reasons for this can be that measuring gender equality is difficult, gender equality might not be studied profoundly enough in dealing with individual experiences in daily life, and that cross-country research is challenging regarding, e.g., definitions of words and phenomena.