Abstract

Title: Seeing the possibilities in real life. How to develop sociocultural competence in social work in a rural area - North Bohuslän.

Authors: Lars Bergström, Elsebeth Fog

Key words: Social work, rural areas, sociocultural competence, personal knowledge, life-forms, modes of help, local solidarity, non contemporary actions, gender specific praxis, local organisation theory

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For more information and ordering contact Ann-Sophie Helde@socwork.gu.se The subject of the dissertation is social work in small municipalities in a rural area. The main purpose is firstly to understand the necessity for the social worker of locally anchored sociocultural competence and secondly to contribute regarding knowledge how this competence can be developed. To analyse life-forms and modes of help in daily life and the social services in North Bohuslän a theoretical frame has been developed by means of participant action research in five small municipalities. The research process is seen as a pedagogic process with the social workers as co-learners. It is claimed that the learning acquired by the social worker from participating in work and daily life in the area, and from recognizing the ethical dilemmas and personal knowledge emerging from this process is an important aspect of the development of sociocultural competence. To understand why certain values in the area have been resistant to all change in social policy both local and national development of social policy are analysed. It is found that the concept of subsidiarity based on personal responsibility is a phenomenon that still exists in Sweden- following the recommendations of the pioneers in social work. In North Bohuslän of today it can be seen as local solidarity, where both help and helper are sought and found first in the extended family, among neighbours and workmates, then in insurance and finally in the social services. This helping hierarchy is seen as a social capital. The life-forms are analysed and the gender specific praxis constructed from the conditions of life is examined. It is found that the values of the independent life-form are dominant. The analysis of the life-forms with their corresponding modes of help is implemented and developed in men's counselling and in a locally anchored, organisational change process in the social services in one of the municipalities, Strömstad. © Lars Bergström och Elsebeth Fog