

Thematic Network of Social Work, University of the Arctic: Profile document

[A part of the international community of social workers.](#)

Being a part of the international community of social workers, implies that we support the international definition of social work as a common understanding of our field:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels”.

[A part of University of the Arctic](#)

Being a part of the University of the Arctic (UA) entails that our network is committed to the vision, mission and values of this cooperation. These concepts are described as follows on the UA website:

Our Vision

An Empowered North – With Shared Voices

Our Mission

Empower the people of the Circumpolar North by providing unique educational and research opportunities through collaboration within a powerful network of members.

Our Values

Circumpolar

UArctic promotes northern voices in the globalizing world, reflecting common values and interests across all eight Arctic states and among all northern peoples and cultures.

Inclusive

UArctic promotes cultural diversity, language plurality and gender equality while highlighting the partnership between the region’s indigenous peoples and other northerners.

Reciprocal

UArctic promotes respectful relationships in education, science, research and policy based on reciprocity, equality and trust between northerners and other partners. This approach values the inclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, together with multidisciplinary perspectives from the arts, social and natural sciences.

An Arctic perspective

The thematic network of social work (TNSWUA) contributes to the development of social work educations in universities and colleges the High North. The network does this by activities that put focus on topics with a specific relevance in our part of the world. These topics may vary over years and the development of knowledge. But the following topics are central to the network:

- The rights and the social conditions of the indigenous peoples in the High North.
- The relation between peoples in the High North, their living conditions and the utilization of the natural resources in this part of the world.
- The social changes in the High North, including changing family patterns, urbanization and poverty.

To develop knowledge in these fields, research of different kinds are useful. It can be comparative, by looking at conditions and situations in the Arctic and compare them to similar phenomenons in other parts of the world. Or the works may focus on developing knowledge by looking at them in the specific context of the Arctic.

The activities

The network will be involved in:

Research:

- Research by initiating and coordinating applications for research funding.
- Do research by cooperating across countries and universities.
- Arrange conferences and meetings – virtual and physical – where researchers can present their findings and ideas.
- Continue the cooperation on “Journal of Comparative Social Work” as a channel for publishing social work research in the High North.

Teaching:

- Have conferences discussing contents and curriculum in social work educations to inspire the schools to implement findings and knowledge of social work in our part of the world.
- Offer students placement possibilities in the Arctic.
- Offer working groups and other supportive measures to students who study these topics as part of writing different kinds of products for study purposes.
- Run courses and conferences for students and teachers on the topics the network focus on.

Inspire and inform:

- Spread knowledge and other forms of information on the network and our topics by using newsletter, website and the channels of UA.
- Support memberships institutions and their contact persons in their efforts to put our concerns on their academic agenda.