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## Kansainvälinen sosiaalityö: käsitteitä, käytäntöjä ja kehityskulkuja. Sosiaalityön tutkimuksen vuosikirja 2016.

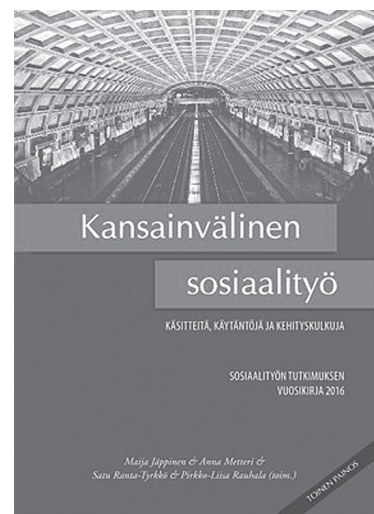
Tallinn: United Press Global

ISBN: 978-9949-532-68-1

The Finnish topic of the book can be translated as follows: “International social work. Concepts, practices and developments”. The book belongs to a series of thematic Yearbooks of Social Work Research, which is published by the Finnish Society of Social Work Research. The theme of international social work is rare among Finnish social work literature, thus, the book has an important role of filling the gap in the knowledge base of Finnish social work. Potential readers consist of researchers and developers in the field and also those undertaking practical social work. The book is additionally used as a textbook in university education.

In the introduction of the book, the editors describe the history of social work through some key figures such as Mary Richmond and Alice Salomon. The pioneers of social work realised quite early on that there was a social demand for international cooperation in this field, because social work emerged in national contexts and under approximately similar mega trends as industrialisation and urbanisation. Social work faced major societal challenges, which were common for many countries. Later, the period from the First World War to the end of the Cold War can be seen as an era of international conferences, which supported the theoretical and practical development of social work. National social work was influenced by international contexts. Notwithstanding, the discussion of social work’s societal task was lively. Social justice issues became more central in social work discussion, which created fertile ground for global issues. In the 2000s, globalisation has become a common denominator in international social work. Globalisation has set social work into broader frameworks by challenging traditional Western views of social work. The introduction of the book sets national social work into an international context, which creates a useful perspective for the reader.

After the editorial introduction, the book is divided into three thematic parts. The first section includes three articles, where the authors explore the



various kinds of influences social work has acquired from other countries. The section opens with an article that describes the significance of comparative research in developing the social work theory base (Juha Hämäläinen & Steven Swardlow). A comparative perspective is a useful method to develop social work within the international domain of social work. The second article is focused on the relationship between disability policy and social work, which has acquired influences from both national and international contexts (Marja Tarvainen & Raija Väisänen). For example, international agreements have influenced the societal position of people with disabilities because social justice issues are deeply universal in nature. The third article describes international connections in the development of clinical social work (Maria Tapola-Haapala).

The second section consists of six articles in which the respective authors describe how Finnish social work practice has been facing international challenges in different contexts. The case of the family with a disabled child reveals what kind of difficulties a family might meet in the system of social care services if it has an immigrant background (Mirkka Vuorento & Larissa Franz-Koivisto). Similarly, families with Russian backgrounds have also encountered difficulties in becoming integrated into Finnish society (Eveliina Heino & Minna Veistilä). Such immigrant issues are in tandem with religious issues that have become part of the secularised society in a new way (Ulla Siirto & Sari Hammar). Furthermore, traditional social problems such as homelessness have acquired new forms when immigrants are faced with this scenario (Marja Katisko). At the same time, immigrants have imported some problems on moving to the country. International wars and natural disasters are phenomena that are also met in Finnish social work with respect to immigrants (Kati Turtiainen). The issue of Roma people in Eastern and Central Europe has been transferred to Finnish social work along with the itinerant nature of the Roma people. The issue and its challenges are described through the scenario of a day centre which offers low threshold services for Roma people in Helsinki (Heini Puurunen, Anca Enache, & Airi Markkanen). The articles in the second section are focused on current international challenges and especially on how these challenges are met at the national and local level in Finnish social work.

The third section transfers the level of reflection on social work to the global level. The section consists of two articles. The first of them describes disaster work as part of the national and international fields of social work. The study is based on an integrated review of literature and aims to describe the nature and content of disaster social work (Merja Rapeli). The second article studies the relationship between human rights, environmental issues as well as the capitalist economy in the global world, and places social work in this context. This article is based on a global perspective in which social justice issues are underlined (Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö).

International social work is currently an important topic. Formerly, there have been no available books of a similar nature on this topic. In this sense, the book provides an important contribution to Finnish literature on social work. While the book is divided into three main sections in which the articles

form a versatile whole it does not avoid the typical problem of edited publications whereby articles can be somewhat fragmented. However, a reader may only choose the topics that interest them the most, depending on their interest and background. Among the twelve articles, there are certainly some very interesting topics for everybody. I personally preferred the articles in the second section, which describe how Finnish social work practice has been facing international challenges in different local social work contexts. While the articles did not provide solutions for challenging questions they succeed in awakening interest in international social work.

**Timo Toikko**