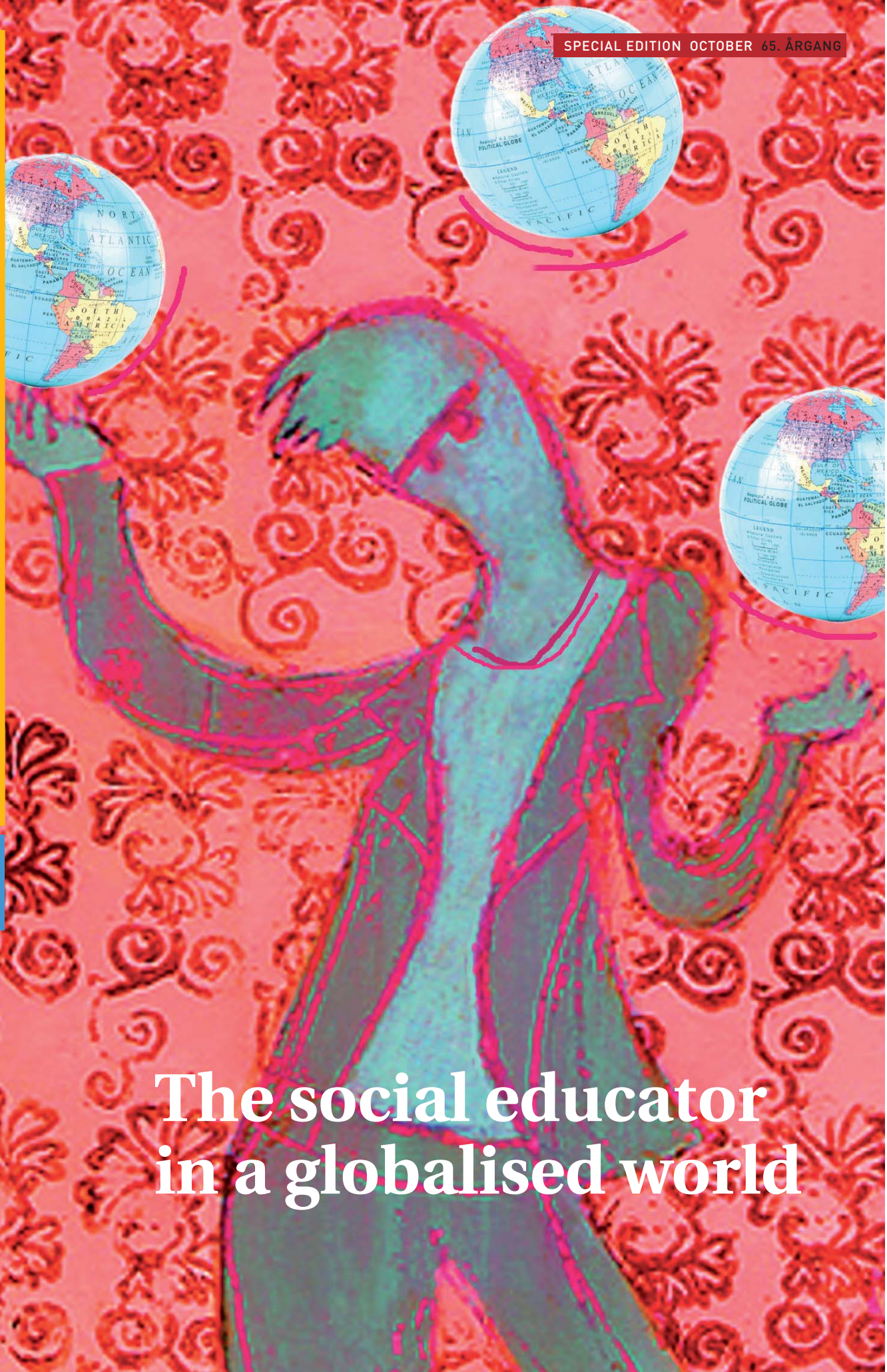


SOCIALPÆDAGOGEN



The social educator
in a globalised world

OCTOBER/2008
SPECIAL EDITION

ISSN 0105-5399

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Tryk og produktion
Datagraf Auning AS

Frontpage illustration:
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Translation:



Medlem af
Dansk
Fagpædagogforening



KOMMENTAR

It is vital for the recognition of our field that we subscribe to a broad, international and common tradition and understanding of our profession.

International cooperation makes sense

By Kaj Skov Frederiksen
Union Treasurer



FOTO: VIBEKE TOFT

“The social educator in a globalised world” is the title of the world congress which will be hosted next year by the Danish National Federation of Social Educators (SL). And the globalised world is precisely why international cooperation in social education makes sense. It has always been a tradition for SL to look outward, beyond our national borders, and cooperate with sister organisations in other countries. Not only because cooperation gives strength but also because it makes sense to share experience and knowledge across geography and systems. This is why SL in Denmark places such high priority on international work.

I believe that international cooperation in social education should primarily be based on our role as social educators within our own specialised profession. As social educators we have something very special to contribute to international cooperation, namely our profession and our speciality.

The challenges we meet – through our profession – are increasingly global. In our work with weak and marginalised groups across the world, we meet the same challenges when it comes to life conditions, recognition and roles.

Similarly, the challenges we meet in our profession as social educators are also global. Across states we see growing problems in areas such as integration, immigration, poverty and marginalisation. This is another reason why formalised international cooperation makes sense. And this is why there are actually many good reasons for meeting in an international forum to discuss the challenges, since many of the problems are international rather than dependent on geography.

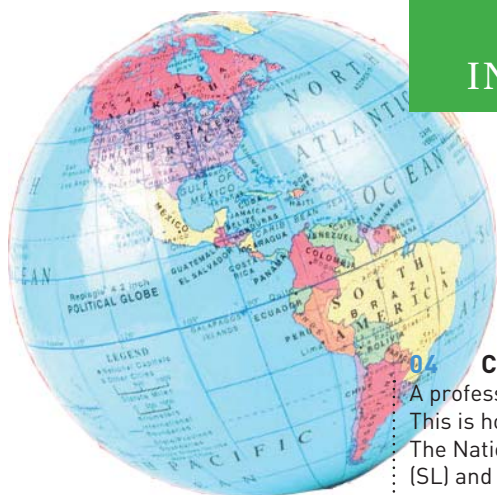
It is vital for the recognition of our field that we subscribe to a broad, international and common tradition and understanding of our profession. Accordingly, it is vital to keep the lines open between the international sister organisations.

This issue of our members' journal Socialpædagogen has AIEJI's 17th World Congress as its theme. For a very good reason! AIEJI is a major and important part of international cooperation in social education, and the Copenhagen congress will present a good opportunity to meet like-minded people from all over the world and discuss how we can grow together and envisage the solutions to our challenges as social educators in a globalised world.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Copenhagen for an international congress on a great scale. With the thorough and fundamental discussions that are being planned, I hope it will be a congress characterised by a lively debate and exchange of knowledge and experience – to the benefit of all of us.

See you in Copenhagen in May 2009.

INDHOLD



The theme of this issue of Socialpædagogen is next year's great event in social education, the AIEJI World Congress in Copenhagen. The congress will take place at DGI-byen in the centre of Copenhagen in the period May 4-7, 2009.

In this issue, we are introducing the themes of the congress, the background for AIEJI's work and a couple of keynote speakers. Furthermore, you can meet three social educators from Australia, South Africa and the United States.

Last but not least, you can read about your own possibilities for attending the congress or taking part in the many activities that are being planned.

The editors

04 CONGRESS

A professional experience of rare dimensions. This is how Benny Andersen, Vice President of The National Federation of Social Educators (SL) and President of AIEJI, terms next year's AIEJI World Congress in Copenhagen. Meeting peers from all over the world and getting to know each other provides a unique opportunity for social educators, he says in an interview about the congress and the ideas behind it.

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09 INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED

People with intellectual disabilities must make their own decisions. But social educators and others around them should take care not to let their own ideological battle for the right to self-determination be at the expense of precisely self-determination. Meet Karl Elling Ellingsen, a keynote speaker at the AIEJI Congress.

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World War II left thousands of children orphaned and homeless in Europe. The work with them was the reason for the creation of AIEJI. Nowadays it is the work with poor people in large cities across the world that is at the core of the organisation. A Danish pioneer in the organisation, Lars Steinov, tells the story of AIEJI's development from war to globalisation.



FOTO: STAFFAS/AGENCIJA

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The western world and modern society are draining the globe of its natural resources – and the same is happening with human resources, warns Martin Brokenleg, a psychologist and keynote speaker at the AIEJI congress. To a great extent, the victims are children and young people.

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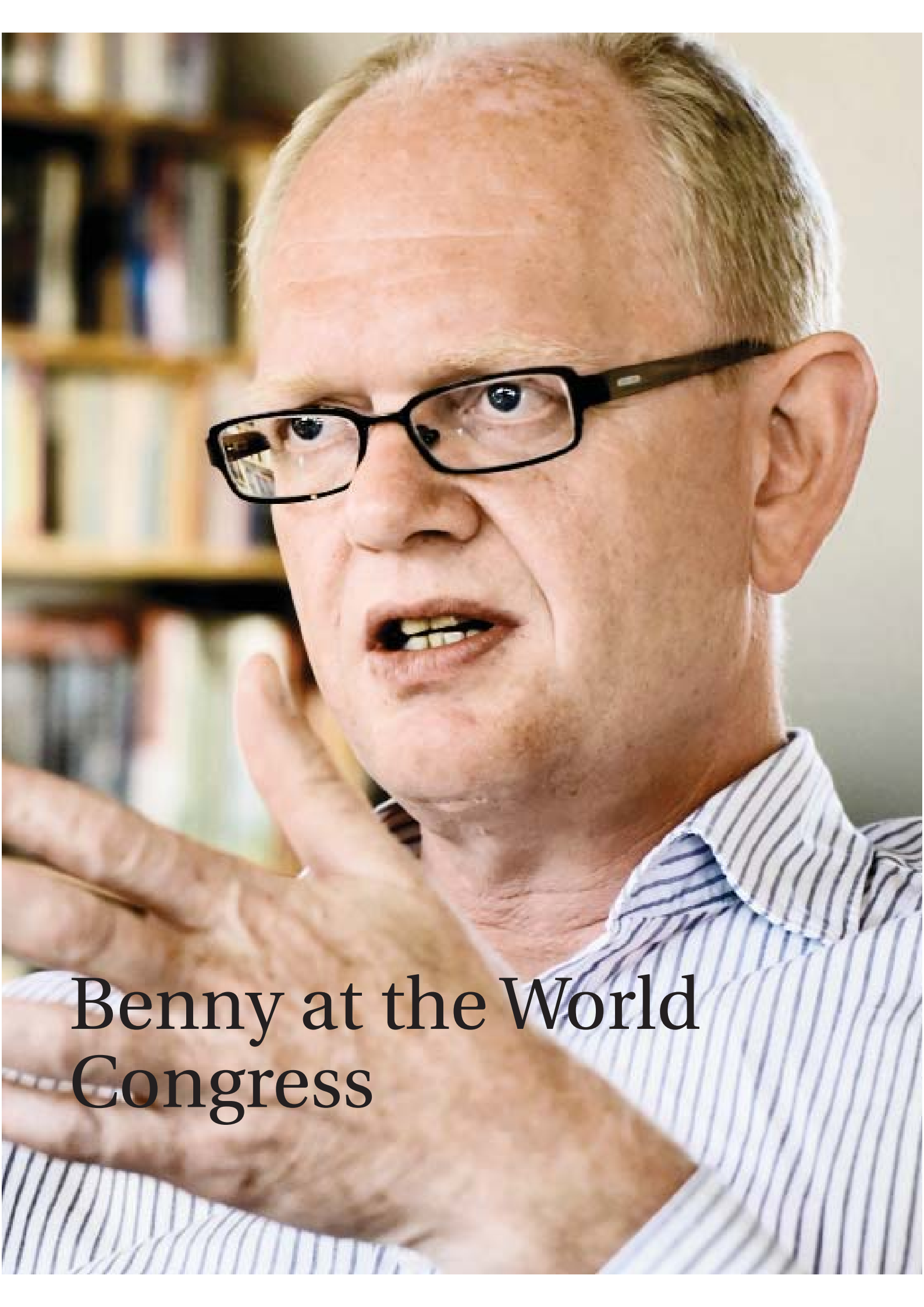
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FOTO: NICK PIERRE-SALINS

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Benny at the World Congress

AIEJI – KONGRES

AIEJI's president, Benny Andersen, is in no doubt: The AIEJI Congress is a great opportunity for all members of The National Federation of Social Educators (SL) to pick up an extraordinary experience - a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to discover what is happening outside Denmark and meet peers from abroad

By Lars Møller, redaktionen@sl.dk
Photo: Simon Jeppesen

Benny Andersen cannot get enough members to attend: Grasp the chance and join us! All of you! It will be fun and inspiring, he says although he knows that with this enthusiasm the budget for the number of participants is in danger of being overrun.

"But we'll sort it out. We can easily have 1,000 – and even more," Benny says tilting his head slightly sideways with a look that shows that he knows he may get into trouble with the accountants. Particularly when he promises free tickets to 200 SL volunteers who are needed as assistants and host families for the 350 foreign guests.

At the last world congress in Uruguay, SL's Vice President was elected president for the global network of social educators. For him, the four-day world congress is about much more than education politics.

It is as much about having a personal experience that counts at least as much as a week – or even several weeks of post training. At nearly no cost. In his mind, employers should let their So-

cial Educators have time off with pay during the congress. They will undoubtedly get back their money's worth.

Between practitioners

"You'll meet social educators from vastly different countries and still discover that their problems are similar to your problems. It is a giant lift for peers to meet in this way. It is inspiring and yields new knowledge that you can actually use in own work," he says.

Benny has problems finding the right words for the energy that is created when close to 1,000 social educators with widely different backgrounds meet to discuss social education – not social counselling or social work in general, but the exact intersection between people, organisation and social politics where social educators find their work.

"It is as much about getting together, discussing and generating contacts as listening to lectures from experts," he says.

The four congress days will be a mixture of papers and workshops.

"The professional input will be unparalleled. We will have the best theoreticians and practitioners from the whole world to present their papers," promises the AIEJI president.

His enthusiasm is genuine and the result of personal experiences. First as a rank-and-filer at the 2001 World Congress in Barcelona and three years ago again in Montevideo where he was elected to the post as president.

As a union man he loves the international work, the meetings in faraway countries, lobbying at the EU and the UN, the international board – but at the professional and personal level he really becomes passionate. It started in 2001 when he was in Barcelona with 11 other social educators from Denmark.

"Two of the other Danes gave a workshop, one about child psychiatry and the other about the work with homeless people while the rest of us



just attended the congress. It was really an eye opener," he says.

Icebreaker in social education

In 2001, the theme of the World Congress was the rather dry topic of documentation and quality. "I joined a workshop where an American re-entry institution for juvenile delinquents explained how they work with evaluation. That institution spent 10% of the budget on documentation and reflection," Benny explains.

Thirty people attended the workshop in which two social educators, a man and a woman, in the best American style droned on about performance, figures and measurable results.

"When we arrived at the question session, everything became more concrete. I asked them whether they had to prepare all this documentation to satisfy their sponsor, Kellogg's, but no – they were more preoccupied with the process than the result. They converted empirical knowledge to measurable knowledge with figures and data, and it was almost a compulsory part of post-training and professional development of the employees to reflect and try to improve," he says.

USD 20,000 was earmarked in the budget for competence development for each social educator plus USD 5,000 that the employees were free to spend on courses at their own discretion.

"It struck me how little we evaluate our work. As social educators we constantly produce new knowledge through our practice. At best we share it with our colleagues or write it down in a notebook, but it does not get any further than that," Benny says.

This was in 2001. When Benny returned home from the congress, he was inspired by the workshop and wanted to work with quality improvement at SL. Since then he has organised study trips to the institution in Michigan, and its employees have visited Denmark.

"We have had actual results from this. Two books on quality improvement 'Pædagogisk resultatmåling' and 'Hvad kan vi så lære af det?' are a direct consequence of the work that began with a workshop at the AIEJI Congress in Barcelona, he says.

The personal contact

It was also in Barcelona Benny met a Catalan, Jordi, and after a few beers one evening they became friends and have been so ever since. Like Benny, Jordi is an active union man, but he also works with homeless people in a Barcelona suburb.

"We had been at the General Assembly in the afternoon and had supported each our candidate for the presidency. We continued our discussion in the evening and came to understand each other's views. Since then we have met many times. He has showed me Barcelona and we have been at football games, and he has been to Copenhagen with visits to Tivoli and rock concerts," Benny explains.

Benny developed so much respect for Jordi that he suggested he stood for election for the AIEJI presidency in 2005. That this respect was mutual became obvious when, at the same time, Jordi suggested that Benny became a candidate. This was at the World Congress in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo.

"For me as a social educator, it was very interesting to visit an institution that works with street children in a slum area. Their methods are different from ours, but a common denominator is the fact that social educators must relate to the conditions that society provides us with, irrespective of whether it is Rio or Randers," Benny says.

"You'd be surprised at how many things connect us. We are together in the task of drawing the attention to the consequences of political decisions. We must act politically if we are to do our job properly – that is to be the voice of those who do not have a voice."

All this was something Benny already knew. But it was a great experience to travel many thousand kilometres and reach the same conclusion from an entirely different perspective, from poor children and an almost equally poor institution which made a tremendous impression.

We can mirror ourselves

But the World Congress does not only offer inspiration from the outside world, it also provides a foreign perspective on how we are doing things in

AIEJI World Congress 2009

AIEJI's 17th World Congress will take place in the period May 4 – 7 2009, at DGI-byen in the centre of Copenhagen.

The registration fee is 400 Euros, if you register before February 1 2009. After that date the fee will increase. Please note that some participants can register at special fee depending on country.

The fee covers all congress activities, lunches, reception at the City Hall (Monday evening) and congress party (Wednesday evening).

Online registration is open at the website where you can check out all relevant information
www.aeiji2009.dk

Why is it called AIEJI?

Acronym key to AIEJI, IFSW, FICE and NFFS:

AIEJI is an abbreviation of "International Association of Social Educators", while the French name is "Association Internationale des Éducateurs Sociaux". In Spanish it is "Asociación Internacional de Educadores Sociales" and there are similar names in German and Dutch.

But there is no language in which the organisation is called anything for which AIEJI can reasonably be the acronym. The reason is that the association in 2001 was renamed but retained the original acronym that was widely recognised. AIEJI is an acronym for "Association Internationale des Éducateurs des Jeunes Inadaptés – which means "International Association of Educators for Ill-adjusted Youth". Since then social educators who work with adults joined the organisation and it changed its name.

AIEJI should not be confused with the International federation of Social Workers (IFSW) of which SL (The National Federation of Social Educators) is a member. IFSW organises all forms of social workers including counsellors and caseworkers. The Danish Association of Social Workers and the HK/Municipal Sector trade union are also members of IFSW.

In the Nordic area, the social educators have their own organisation, Nordic Forum for Social Educators (NFFS), with focus on members' pay and working conditions as well as social education, social politics and educational issues. Finally, SL is a member of the International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE) which organises 24-hour care centres and residences. The main purpose is to enhance the childhood conditions of children and youth placed away from their birth parents.



Denmark. This is something Benny experienced firsthand during the Montevideo congress.

“During a workshop, the Uruguayans asked us how we work. I told them about the staffing in 24-hour day care centres and how important it is to work with relations,” he says.

The other workshop participants gawped. In many Latin American countries there are typically one social educator per 20 young people.

“After some amazement they asked: ‘who is then to replace the educator when the young people are to continue with their lives?’ And they were right because we must be conscious about personal ties which may be tight but still are transient,” he says.

Benny is certain that the Copenhagen Congress will give Danish social educators similar experiences when Danish institutions and working methods are being challenged by questions from the foreign visitors.

So come along to the many field visits in the Copenhagen area, the AIEJI president suggests to the Danish participants. For even though the places and methods are well-known, the international reactions are not.



The declaration of Montevideo

As social educators we must understand the complicated nature of globalisation in order to analyse and evaluate our possibilities to develop our profession in the globalised world. Our professional competences are being challenged – the competences which we defined as professionals – in the Declaration of Montevideo at the XVI World Congress of AIEJI in 2005 as follows:

We reaffirm and confirm the existence of the field of Social Education as a specific task oriented to ensure the rights of the people we work for, which requires our permanent commitment at the ethical, technical, scientific and political levels.

To accomplish this commitment, the role of the Social Educator must be consolidated, as well as the integration in work teams and group organisation.

This task requires Social Educators with a good initial and permanent training.

This training must emphasise practice, with a permanent critical analysis.

We see the importance of the systematisation of professional practice as a way to contribute to the training, professional improvement – which is a right of the users of the social education, and the approach of our political-pedagogical purposes in this process.

We reaffirm that ethics must be a permanent reference, collectively conceived and carried out with the critical participation of the subjects.

Social Educators renew our commitment with democracy and social justice; defend our cultural heritage and the rights of all human beings. We are convinced that another world is possible.
Montevideo, 18th november 2005

Talk to each other and let the intellectually disabled decide for themselves

Norwegian scientist advocates the right of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities to make their own decisions. But he also warns against an ideological battle for the right to self-determination because that will precisely be at the expense of the right of the intellectually disabled to decide for themselves

By Lars Møller, redaktionen@sl.dk

Self-determination, user participation, empowerment... We call it different things, but it is all about the same thing:

How do we help people with intellectual disabilities make their own decisions?

How do we strengthen the voices that are least likely to be heard?

These questions are among the main challenges of social education.

"We have talked about it since the 1970s and are still talking," says Karl Elling Ellingsen, a Norwegian social educator and research scientist and one of the keynote speakers at the AIEJI World Congress in May 2009.

But are we practicing it, he asks. And if so, how?

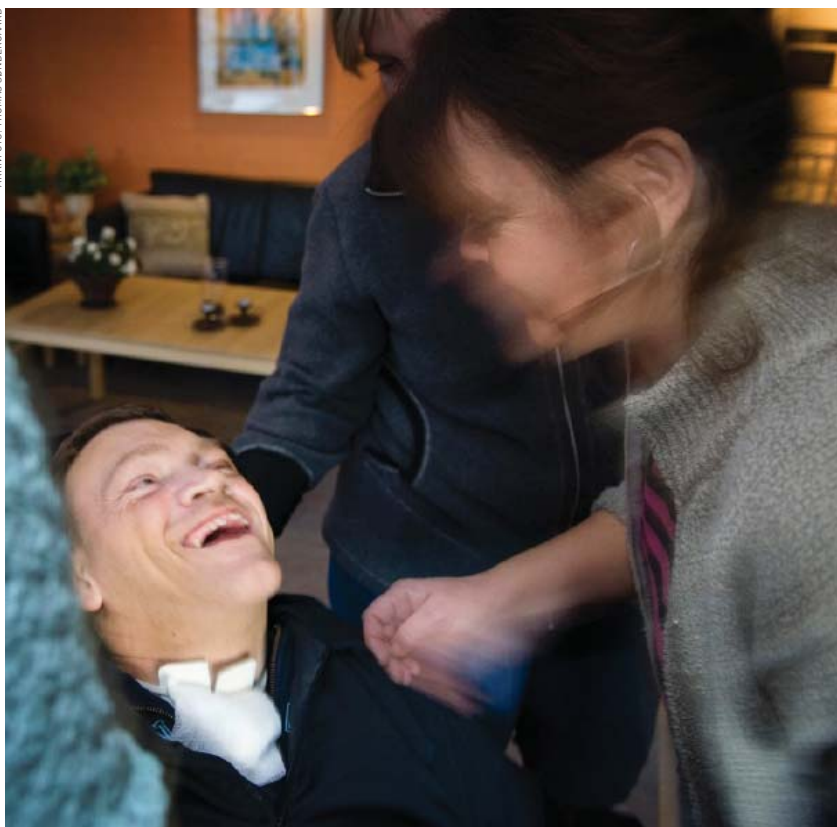
"Many are struggling with it – and for it. We are not only struggling with the inherent dilemmas in our work; there is also an ideological battle about what is right," Ellingsen says, stressing: "The most important – and the most difficult – starting point is always what the intellectually disabled thinks is important."

It sounds almost banal, but it isn't. When everybody disagrees on what serves the intellectually disabled best, the discussion easily becomes one about who is right – rather than about the big challenge of trying to interpret what the intellectually disabled person wants here and now!

Ellingsen knows what he is talking about. He has worked as care worker before he completed a master and later a PhD in health science. Today he is the director of the National Institute on Intellectual Disability and Community (NAKU) at Sør-Trøndelag University College in the Norwegian west coast city of Trondheim.

As a research scientist, Ellingsen has specialised in the development of practice in social education, and in particular in the reflections on practice by professional social educators. Most recently, he headed a large project on "Self-deter-

ARKIFOTO: THOMAS SØNDEBERGARD



mination for people with intellectual disabilities” from 1999 thru 2007.

Partner competences

In Karl Elling Ellingsen's own ideological background, the right to self-determination is a universal human right that cannot be compromised. In principle, even people with major learning disabilities and communicative difficulties have the right to decide for themselves.

But for Ellingsen it is less about ideology than inter-human relationships.

“For me it is not a slogan or embellished principle, but a question of being worthy of the trust. The intellectually disabled want to be respected and believed and they trust that we support them. The challenge is to do it in practice,” he says.

“But first we must understand that no person's right to self-determination is absolute. We usually make our decisions in correlation with others, not in a social void. What other people think has a bearing on us and our choices. That also applied to the intellectually disabled,” says Ellingsen.

“Secondly, nobody is able to make a choice that they don't know about. This applies also to intellectually disabled people with limited knowledge and poor abilities to understand the consequences of their choices,” he says.

According to Ellingsen, the key to a solution is called partner competences - with reference to a Norwegian concept developed by the psychologist Anne Nafstad. The point is that the intellectually disabled uses the competences of their partner to strengthen their own competences however limited they are. The social educator challenges and supports the user in his or her own preferences.

“It is like a tennis coach training strokes with a less competent player. The coach only plays suitably difficult balls enabling the player to return them. The coach instils in the player a sense of developing and being good instead of shooting balls that the player cannot hit,” Ellingsen explains.

The challenge of social educators is sometimes to demonstrate options lying ahead so that the intellectually disabled can make informed choices, and other times to show them in retrospect that they made their choice – in respect of their right to self-determination.

International ideological battle

In practice, the ideological battle is played out at several levels. In Europe disagreements are primarily over a modern or an old-fashioned view on equality. Karl Elling Ellingsen is speaking about the paternalism that has been common in social care since the middle ages when the “pater” of the church was the protector and sole decision-maker.

This paternalistic approach was also prevalent in the poorhouses and later lunatic asylums, and even in the Nordic countries we need to go to the



ARKIVFOTO: NILS LUND PEDERSEN

late 20th century before the intellectually disabled formally were granted human rights on equal terms with others.

The contrast between the feudal “pater” approach and the modern partner approach is found in the Nordic countries, in Southern European countries such as Spain and Portugal and in Central and Eastern Europe in countries like Romania and Ukraine.

“We should take care not to imagine that they are much more backward in the Catholic or Orthodox countries. We actually don't know because nobody has studied it,” Ellingsen says.

Ideological differences are also found between various modern approaches.

“In the United States they are more committed to teaching intellectually disabled people to make

their own choices. American social educators see it as one of their most important tasks to train the users to choose for themselves. In contrast the main idea of the partner approach is to support the choice of the users," he says, adding:

"The American approach is problematic because it retains the intellectually disabled in a learning situation all their lives. The modern European approach rather respects the intellectually disabled as they are, and starts from there."

Conflicts with relatives

Who knows what is best for an intellectually disabled person? The relatives who have known him or her from birth? Or the social educator who spends time with the user in question every day and with many other intellectually disabled users in the same situation?

Who is better at interpreting the wishes, spotting the potentials and thus supporting the right to self-determination of the intellectually disabled?

"This conflict will always exist," says Ellingsen.

The two parties even have a tendency to choose opposites when the choice is between security and risk. Or between control and freedom.

"The disagreement is latent and the result of conflicting interests, of different experiences and of a differing degree of analysis of the needs and wishes of the individual. But the conflict is also played out at a social level," Ellingsen explains.

On behalf of society the responsible authority will have a tendency to choose security, safety and control instead of slightly slackening the reins and giving the intellectually disabled more freedom to choose and be without surveillance.

Ellingsen believes that the challenge is to acknowledge and solve the conflict – each time and very specifically – rather than take it on in an attempt to win it. Often it is a communication problem between the two parties that can be solved if they speak together. Otherwise the conflict may develop further.

"For the intellectually disabled it is unfortunate if the conflict becomes long and lasting because it exactly affects his or her right to self-determination. Instead of focus being on the wishes of the intellectually disabled, it is moved to the wishes of the conflicting parties," he explains.

"It can even lead to the parties wielding their power over the intellectually disabled person in order to demonstrate that they are right."

Too little scientific research

Similarly, a conflict also exists between the individual social educator's approach and weighting of considerations.

"It is rarely verbalised. The conflicts are less about different educational approaches than specific personal assessments. But we know very little about it because there is no research in the area," Karl Elling Ellingsen says.

"We need empirical research in order to base our approaches more on knowledge and less on assumptions."

Karl Elling Ellingsen.

The fact that there is basically no research into how to support the right to self-determination of intellectually disabled people is partly due to the fact that the right to self-determination has hardly been manifested in practice. Another reason is that the empirical method is difficult; it is difficult to make measurements and to interview the intellectually disabled.

"We need empirical research in order to base our approaches more on knowledge and less on assumptions," says Ellingsen.

The absence of research-based knowledge is bad for the profession of social education. It means that the individual educator's interpretation of the wishes of the intellectually disabled becomes more personal than professional. This makes it difficult to have discussions and quality improvement – and even harder to track the quality of the work.

Maintaining the dialogue

Conflicting assessments of the wishes and needs of the intellectually disabled are often the result of prejudice. This applies irrespective of whether social educators disagree with each other or whether educators and relatives disagree on how best to support the right to self-determination of the intellectually disabled.

Among other causes, this prejudice is due to the fact that differing stories are told about the intellectually disabled, that the parties have differing expectations and finally that they have different patterns and ways of working. Sometimes it is simply due to inattention on a bad day.

"There is always a danger that the resource people interpret the signals as they usually do, or as they want to do," Karl Elling Ellingsen warns.

"The solution is to invite a dialogue. Even when you are having a conflict, it is essential to maintain the dialogue," he says.

Ellingsen recommends systematic attention to the problem rather than check lists.

"The staff must systematically discuss their interpretations of the individual, and they must discuss with the relatives. They can identify areas in which they have different experiences, or misunderstand each other, and then give particular attention to these areas," he says.

"Check lists have a tendency to end up as formalities which do more harm than good," he concludes.

Instead talk to each other.

Read more on [naku.no](http://prosjektselfbestemmelse.no) and <http://prosjektselfbestemmelse.no>

CV for Karl Elling Ellingsen

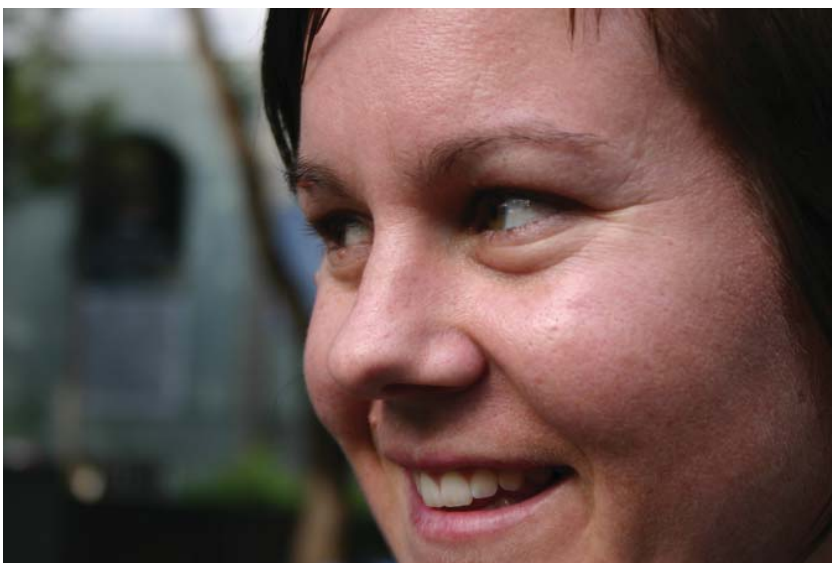
Karl Elling Ellingsen is a trained social educator and has worked with intellectually disabled people since 1976 – both in practice and as a teacher and scientist. He currently heads the National Institute on Intellectual Disability and Community (NAKU). He has a PhD in health science and social care and is studying professional practice, how to create changes to practice and how the professional reflects on his/her own practice.



Fighting two vicious circles

Australian social educators are struggling on two fronts in their outreach work with the country's indigenous population. They must help the individual break his or her social heritage and at the same time fight the apartheid-racism inherent in the system

Text and photo: Lars Møller, redaktionen@sl.dk



It is only 40 years since the indigenous population of Australia was classified as humans – that is as citizens with human rights. Before that they came under the 'Flora and Fauna Act,' explains Social Educator Rebecca Lewis, 29, with a straight face.

It is not her fault that the British colony first and later the Australian state treated the country's indigenous people – the Aborigines – as inarticulate beings who could be exterminated, forcibly removed or forbidden access.

But as an outreach social worker it is her responsibility to make up for the wrongs of the past – each day of her working life.

In a country that only in 2008 apologised for its quasi-apartheid past, her youth is an asset. Her past is not at stake –but her future is.

"The official apology from the new Labour government is only the first step. There is an entire political and administrative culture that must be broken down through openness and dialogue," she says.

As a re-entry social educator, employed by an NGO, in the prison service, Rebecca Lewis regularly sees the consequences of the institutionalised racism both in the system and in the human destinies she tries to redirect. The numbers speak for themselves.

"We are two social workers working with the re-entry of women prisoners in New South Wales. There are 9,000 women in the prisons. The aborigines constitute 30% of the inmates, but only 1.9% of the population," she says.

Rebecca Lewis' co-workers are government

For the past two years, Rebecca Lewis, 29, has worked with re-entry of women inmates for the private Community Restorative Centre, www.crcnsw.org.au. In her previous job, she helped people with acquired brain damage back to a normal life.



employees, but many of them feel that it is not their job to worry about how the inmates are re-socialised.

“Many of them are burnt out and only see the worst in people,” she says.

In a way she understands them. The colleagues in the prisons only see the repeaters who return to the prison, she explains, while her colleagues in the social services face new cases with child abuse basically every day.

“But we must break the circle. We must meet the aborigines as people who have a choice. We must ask them personally what they want. We must work with their history and their own networks of elders’ councils. And we can offer them education and meaningful work,” she says.

In Rebecca Lewis’ job, narratives and personal action plans are the most important professional tools. The female inmates sign up voluntarily for the re-entry programme and, in this sense, have to do the work themselves.

The action plans help to get the future sorted out. The clients usually have some idea about what they want to do, so the challenge of the social educator is to concretise these ideas and make the clients reflect and go through scenarios

This spring, Australia’s indigenous population received an apology from the country’s new Labour government. It heralds an enormous social effort for a population group with major problems. Many people, including the aborigines on the picture, were forcibly removed from their parents and grew up in militaristic boarding schools as part of a racist assimilation policy.

for what they are going to do once they are offered narcotics again.

The narrative is to help them sort out their past - a precondition for breaking the vicious circle. They can all tell stories about betrayal in their family and culture and about a generation of parents who were forcibly removed without distinction and sent to cruel boarding schools because the white said it was for the best.

It was an aspect of the same attitude when the previous, conservative government a few years ago tried to reduce alcoholism by banning alcohol in certain areas and deploying the army to enforce the ban.

“It was like the old days: We know what is best for you! But we need to send social workers instead of soldiers.”

From war to globalisation

AIEJI was founded in the wake of World War II in order to support the relief work among the tens of thousands of homeless and orphaned children. Since then the organisation has become a worldwide, modern and professional association in social education

By Lars Møller, redaktionen@sl.dk
Archive photo: Stig Stasig/Scanpix

The social challenge after World War II was extreme. Europe was in ruins, and children who had nowhere else to go hid among the rubble. In the absence of parents and a home

these children created their own laws and rules – for better or worse.

Something had to be done. The problem was unacceptable and crossed all boundaries. This became the start of AIEJI.

“In several countries they gathered the children in large camps hoping to give them some form of social care and safe upbringing,” explains one of the Danish AIEJI pioneers, 62 year old Lars Steinov, who is now the Director of the Enghaven centre for drug addicts in Copenhagen.

“It was the 24-hour care centre of its time – at a large scale. They had different forms of organisation and financing, but the project was the same, irrespective of whether the children came from one or the other side of the war,” Lars Steinov says.

The first step to AIEJI was taken in the late 1940s when the French High Commissioner in Germany wrote to his Dutch and German

The visions AIEJI

An action plan for AIEJI

AIIEJI's board has agreed to a work and strategy plan. Benny Andersen and Lars Steinov explain what should be done in the future in order to strengthen the organisation:

“Dating” for social educators. AIEJI's homepage should be developed so as to function

as a meeting place for social educators from all continents. It should contain a “dating” feature so that members could easily get help to organise field-trips to institutions, study trips or just an overnight stay if they are passing by.

International knowledge base. Social educators work with street children, homeless and disabled across the world, but

do not immediately have access to the experiences of others. A new international knowledge base at AIEJI's homepage should collect reports, evaluations and articles about projects and methods.

Global networks. AIEJI should strengthen the networks of social educators across national borders and institutions and, in this way, strengthen the struggle

for a decent life for all those people social educators are working professionally with. A vision is that AIEJI should create its own “Éducateurs Sociaux sans Frontières” (Social Educators without Borders).

A distinct professional profile. The entire raison d'être of AIEJI is the profession of social education. Across the world, social educators are struggling to win



counterparts suggesting an international meeting about the problems. The joint concern was one of social education: How to bring up the many thousand maladjusted post-war children and youth?

French frontrunners

In 1949 the European social educators met for the first time to exchange experiences as “educateurs”. Another meeting was held the following year.

The frontrunners were the French social edu-

cators and their association, and it was through inspiration from them that social educators in other countries founded their own professional organisations. The next logical step was a joint, international confederation, and at the next meeting in Germany in 1951, AIEJI was a reality.

“At the same time the various children’s camps and 24-hour care centres formed a corresponding association, FICE. But AIEJI is the absolutely only organisation in the world to focus solely on the

Street children in Riga. Children like these in Europe after World War II contributed to the creation of AIJI.



recognition for their unique profession among other occupations such as social workers, teachers, nurses and therapists.

More education. AIEJI works not only for a high educational level for social educators in the EU, but for independent basic education and continued training in the whole world.

Reflection and development. As a professional association it is AIEJI’s finest task to support the reflection of individual

social educators over their own practice and thus develop their personal competences. This means more exchange of experiences across national borders.

Ethics in practice. In many countries it is elementary to talk about ethics in social education, but for some it is new and AIEJI supports the development of ethical codes by member organisations. In all countries, the largest challenge in practice is to respect the users’ right to self-determination.

Strengthen the profession politically. AIEJI must reflect the fact that the work of social educators always has a political dimension. The work to improve quality and ethics in social education is inextricably linked with the conditions given to the work of social educators by society – in both the rich and poor countries.

At the international scene. AIEJI should lobby more actively for its members and stand out more politically in UNESCO,

the EU and other international fora – as the global voice of both social educators and the people who, due to disabilities, age or social exclusion, do not have a voice of their own.

International S-Day. It is thanks to AIEJI that the international calendar is now being enriched with a day for social education. In future, October 2 will mark a social education agenda in the individual countries - and at the global level.



profession of social educators," says Lars Steinov.

It was a period with lots of ideas and activities that turned ideas into action. A common symbol was also needed, and without much hesitation the social educators chose to make a road sign from the forests around the German city of Freiburg their logo.

The warning sign against leaping deer was well suited to the new movement that was to look after Europe's "wild" youth. With the help of a designer the idea was refined into "The leaping gazelle" that is still AIEJI's logo.

"In the beginning, AIEJI only concentrated on children and young people. But eventually the organisation also came to count social educators working with adults with physical and intellectual disabilities and mental disorders," Lars Steinov says.

As a quite unique feature, the membership of AIEJI is made up from organisations, institutions and individuals. Any social educator in the world can sign up for membership and get a vote at the general assembly.

Their votes are weighed differently, but a common denominator is that they are vividly committed to the mission of AIEJI: To unite social educators across the world to discuss the profession's practice, ethics and training.

Congress in Copenhagen in 1982

The Danish National Federation of Social Educators (SL) is a merger of four unions, and since SL's foundation in 1981, SL has been a member of AIEJI. In 1981, the new SL union leadership had plenty to do with the merger.

"Suddenly, SL realised that the old Union of Social Educators had promised to host a world congress. Now they were in a hurry because the congress was to be held the following year," Lars Steinov reminisces. At that time he was chairman of the Copenhagen branch of SL.

"Since the congress was to be held in Copenhagen it was natural that we had a lot to do with it," he says. We helped to organise field trips and accommodation for hundreds of participants.

"We hosted the congress with great success. Eight hundred participants came to discuss how disabled children and poorly adjusted youth could be integrated with other children and young people," he explains.

The theme of the 10th Congress in 1982 was "Between segregation and integration – the right to difference".

Although Lars Steinov entered the international work through the backdoor, he ended up with an international career – first as international secretary with SL and later on at AIEJI. It was obvious that he and SL would participate in the next

congress four years later. But that did not happen.

"The 1986 congress was held in Jerusalem, but all the Nordic countries boycotted it because it was impossible to convince the Israeli to invite the Palestinians," he says.

But SL was in New York in 1990 when AIEJI held its congress in the United States for the first time.

"Suddenly, AIEJI was added American know-how for how to organise a professional convention. It was a great success and a major step forward for the following congresses," he says.

Under new leadership

Gradually Lars Steinov became really interested in the international work. When he was asked to run for the board at the next AIEJI congress, he had no doubts. In 1992, he left the union work in favour of a job as social educator and Director of a centre for drug addicts and was now able to channel all his organisational enthusiasm into AIEJI.

In 1994, Lars Steinov was elected to AIEJI's





The AIEJI World Congress in Copenhagen in 1982 was a huge task for the newly founded National Federation of Social Educators. Despite a stumbling start it became a great success.

joint platform towards the European Commission.

Lars Steinov is on his way to Russia to convince the Russians to join the AIEJI, and another potential destination is Anglophone Africa with a similar mission.

In the EU, one of the goals is to ensure a homogenous and high educational level for social educators and at the same time improve their opportunities to work in other European countries.

"The whole idea is to promote the profession and the understanding that people like us can solve some important tasks for society," says Lars Steinov.

Apart from strengthening social education as a profession, it is the goal of AIEJI's board to profile the organisation and profession more politically at the global level. They believe that for social educators politics and profession are closely related. In many countries social educators have to fight a war just to be able to do their work.

"In many large Latin American cities social educators are almost frontline soldiers in a no man's land that is run by the local mafia and where not even the police dare go in," explains Lars Steinov.

"These fellow-educators need our political support and they need help to speak to their own governments. In those countries AIEJI's political statements makes a difference, for instance the most recent Montevideo Declaration that is used as a lever," he says.

board, and has been a board member ever since. From 1997 he has been the secretary general of the organisation.

By now AIEJI was becoming truly global – and in 2001 an American president, Arlin Ness, was elected. With him, Lars Steinov began to modernise AIEJI; the organisation was streamlined and became more stringent with fixed routines for membership fee collection and meeting times.

In 2005 SL Vice President Benny Andersen was elected to the board which chose him as president and Lars Steinov as secretary general.

A global-local agenda

AIEJI has regional offices in the Middle East, North America and Latin America as well as in Europe where the social educators now have a

"In many large Latin American cities social educators are almost frontline soldiers in a no man's land that is run by the local mafia and where not even the police dare go in."

Lars Steinov, Secretary General, AIEJI

Helping young homeless in New York back on their feet

Up to 40% of New York's young homeless are homo-, bi- or transsexual, and many of them have heavy social problems. Tanino Minneci, a social educator, tries to help the young people get back on their feet

Text and photo: Sidsel Nyholm

Some have just been kicked out from home. Others have lived rough since they were 11 or 12. Many are suicidal and most have experiences with the dark sides of life in the form of drug addiction, neglect, crime, exclusion, violence or sexual abuse.

The people Tanino Minneci meets through his work as a social educator in the grass roots group MCCNY Homeless Youth Services in New York have often hit rock bottom. MCCNY (Metropolitan Church Community of New York) operates a drop-in centre and a shelter for young homeless homo-, bi- and transsexuals, and in counselling sessions with the users the 29-year-old social educator finds that, under one set of heavy problems there is often another set of equally heavy problems.

"When we first get in contact with the young people, they are usually in deep personal crisis and their situation is dramatic. They can be suicidal, some have been arrested by the police and some have just been kicked out by their parents. Their needs are extremely immediate. Later on, myriads of highly complex problems, often related to their sexual identity, surface," Tanino Minneci explains.

According to statistics, the streets of New York

are home for 20,000-30,000 young homeless or runaways. Between 25% and 40% of them are homo-, bi- or transsexuals moving to the Big Apple from all over the country. According to Tanino Minneci, the city's general homeless centres are often "unfriendly" in their attitude to sexual minorities, and that is why there is major pressure on MCCNY and the few other shelters that specifically address young homeless gays, lesbians and bi- and transsexuals.

The MCCNY shelter Sylvia's Place in the area of Hell's Kitchen accommodates 20-25 users between the ages of 16 and 24, and almost the same number frequents the drop-in facility, the Marsha P. Johnson Center, in Harlem. The MCCNY constantly struggles to collect enough government subsidies and private donations to finance its services, and the conditions for both employees and users are extremely tight.

As the organisation's only social educator, Tanino Minneci handles all kinds of assignments, including the formulation of user action plans, contact to the authorities, therapeutic counselling as well as mediation and conflict resolution. Conflicts and physical fights easily occur in a shelter where the users live and sleep in one large basement room.

"Sylvia's Place is definitely more secure than other shelters in the city, but it inevitably leads to problems when young people live closely together under poor conditions over a longer period of time. They quarrel, form couples and become jealous of each other, and a lot of drama occurs," he says.

The dramatic situations can also result from conflicts with the surrounding environment that often condemns the lifestyle of the users, Tanino Minneci explains.



Social Educator Tanino Minneci can recognise himself in many of the young users. He has also felt that his voice was not heard and that he was outside "normal" society. "At the same time I have a natural instinct for listening to others," he explains.

"There are tensions with the outside world. Many don't like to have homeless people in their neighbourhood and some are hostile towards sexual minority groups. There are people who are constantly trying to find something to submit a complaint about," he says.

Despite the sometimes very difficult conditions Tanino Minneci is extremely happy with his job. He helped to open Sylvia's Place five years ago and refers to his commitment to MCCNY as a "life-changing experience".

"I can relate to the personal struggles of many of the users. I recognise myself in them. I have also felt that my voice wasn't heard and that I was outside 'normal' society. At the same time I have a natural instinct for listening to others," he explains.

Tanino Minneci exactly calls the ability to listen the most important component in his work.

"Many of the users have never tried to be listened to before. I constantly hear about private matters that they have never told anybody about before. But once they feel they can openly speak and express themselves, then they become capable of handling much more and finding the strength to break negative patterns," he says.

The work with the marginalised and homeless youth is a lifelong project for Tanino Minneci.

"It is a passion. I am going to be involved in this or similar programmes all my life," he concludes.

We are starving human relations



Martin Brokenleg

Dr. Martin Brokenleg is Professor of First Nations Theology and Ministry at the Vancouver School of Theology, BC, Canada. He serves as Vice President of Reclaiming Youth International, providing training for individuals who work with youth at risk, in accordance with proprietary methods. He holds a doctorate in psychology and is a graduate of the Episcopal Divinity School. For thirty years, Dr. Brokenleg was professor of Native American studies and he has also been a director of youth projects, chaplain in a correctional setting and has extensive experience as an alcohol counsellor. He has led courses and training programs throughout North America, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. Read more about Martin Brokenleg on www.aieji2009.dk

It is no coincidence that the western world which is draining the earth of its resources is also killing off the relationship between people. And the price for the increasing isolation and alienation is paid by children and young people, says Martin Brokenleg who has worked with children and youth at risk, based on his own Sioux tradition

By Jens Nielsen, jni@sl.dk

He's talking about the basic things in life: The relationship between the child and the adult family members around the cradle.

And he's warning us: The number of adults around our kids with a genuine relationship to it has fallen to a minimum - or less.

From family groups and village environments of 200-300 people - that we know from native people and from a not so distant past in our own part of the world - to very small families who are often split into even smaller fragments.

Children are increasingly left on their own with too few adult contacts. This increases their risk of loneliness and vulnerability. A growing number of children and young people feel dejected and powerless and this can lead to crime, violence and (self)destruction.

This warning and radical message comes from Dr. Martin Brokenleg, a psychologist and one of the keynote speakers at the 2009 AIEJI Congress.

"As more people accept the artificial idea of the nuclear family as a liveable lifestyle, they will find themselves deeply dissatisfied with their lives and relationships thinking that there is something wrong with the one to four other people they relate to. In fact, since they are missing 296 other human relationships, there is nothing wrong with the people in their lives, only with

their idea of what constitutes a liveable and sustainable human environment," he says.

The Circle of Courage

As a psychologist, Martin Brokenleg has worked with children and youth at risk for almost two decades. The audience at the AIEJI Congress will be sure to hear a man who will connect his own personal background with the knowledge and experience he has gleaned from his professional life.

On the personal side, Martin Brokenleg is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and practices the culture of his Lakota people. Since 2004, he has been the director of Native Ministries Programmes and professor of First Nations Ministry and Theology at the Vancouver School of Theology in Canada. (See box)

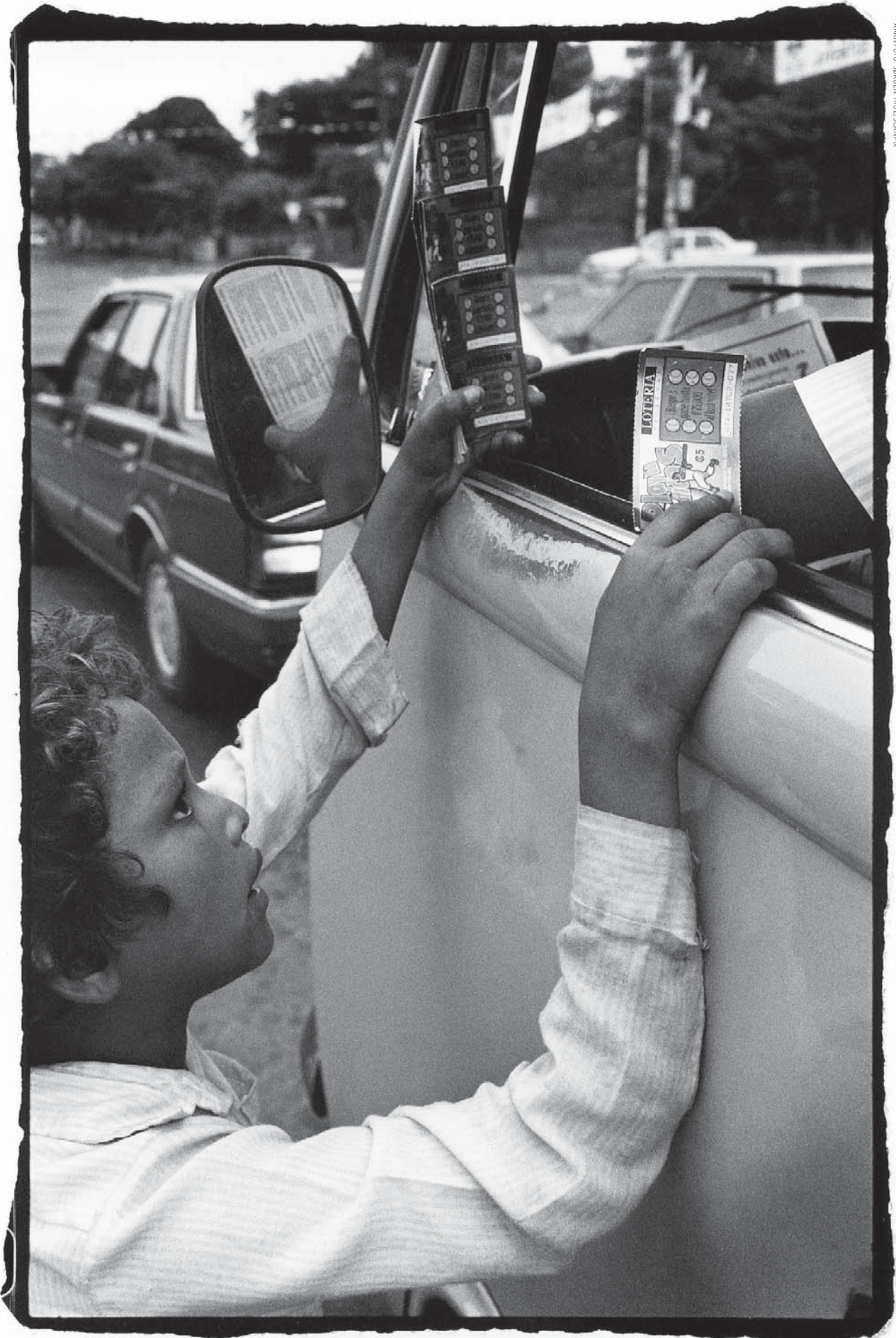
Together with his work as a psychologist, this was his background in the foundation of the Reclaiming Youth Network and the development of the principles of The Circle of Courage, 20 years ago.

The Circle of Courage, which is presented at the end of this article, embraces the four qualities that must be nurtured in a child: the ability to form relationships and belong, the ability to master, the ability to be independent, and the ability to be generous and unselfish.

This may sound rather theoretical and vague, so we asked Martin Brokenleg how the ideas of The Circle of Courage relate to the everyday work and practice of social educators.

In your work with The Circle of Courage and the Reclaiming Youth network you talk about the different power structures and ideas of human relationships that are characteristic of the western culture on one hand and your Native American culture on the other. How will this development affect the work of a social educator?

"It's obvious that economic changes in our time of global cities are affecting family life - and children and youth are paying the price. Many adults prioritise family life far below earning power, self realisation and recreation. If this pattern continues, global society will have material growth at the loss of human structures and he-



althy, whole youth and adults,” says Martin Brokenleg.

The large family – and the small one

“In the Native American culture, where I grew up, family life was held above all other considerations - such as traditional cultures around the globe have done in previous times. You grew up with a much larger network of potential adult relationships.”

“In my youth 50 years ago, a small town - or my extended family of 300 - provided redundant safety systems for me. If my emotional needs were not met by my parents, my grandparents, aunts and uncles, neighbours, or church members filled in and I was cared for. Likewise a couple would not have to rely solely on one another for emotional strength since they would each have family nearby,” says Martin Brokenleg.

“That is not how things are today. Population growth and the economic pattern of the global city has dispersed close human individuals to jobs in far away locations, interrupting a caring human population in which all children and youth can grow,” he says warning against the glorification of the most common way of family life in the western world: the nuclear family

“The model of contemporary life is not one of functional human family living but rather one of global economics,” says Martin Brokenleg.

A vital role

In this dilemma he sees a vital role for social educators.

“Educators may be able to use their knowledge and training to transform the perception of contemporary adults to see the value of human communities where children and youth feel secure. Anonymity, urban isolation, the belief that the nuclear family is a human unit, all conspires to create environments which make young people alienated and disempowered,” he says.

So when social educators have to step in here, it is because the adults around the children do not have a firm sense of the culture they are living in, according to Martin Brokenleg:

“Adults who do not know the cultural patterns of their own community cannot teach their children and grandchildren how to generate the next cultural generation. Those ways of life and human communities will end with the current generation and will be replaced by the public culture created by and in the media.”

“Only a proper educator has the opportunity to teach the value of human community and the social environment that creates strong, resilient children,” Martin Brokenleg says.

Relationship is the key

What would be the best countermove for the individual social educator, for instance one who is

working with homeless children in a capital in the western world?

“Having a strong spirit is what we today call ‘resiliency’ – to grow and develop in spite of tough odds. This spiritual strength is an inner resource that keeps youth and adults functional even through the problems and conflicts that emerge in life. We cannot teach resiliency through academic activities. Resiliency is taught only through thorough experiences that shape your character. These are experiences of belonging, mastery, independence in the sense of self-responsibility, and generosity, and this is the task of the social educator,” says Martin Brokenleg and sounds the alarm once again:

“Without a generation of resilient youth we will see a generation polluted by public culture and with exhausted resources and no spiritual strength. It is not an accident that western culture, which has done so much good in the world, has exhausted the physical world and now threatens to do the same to the human community,” Martin Brokenleg points out.

As I understand the principles of your work with The Circle of Courage, you are working to recreate exactly these basic structures. Can you shortly describe how the idea for this came up?

“We were a few people who got together to compare Native American child care practices with contemporary psychological research and the result was our book ‘Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future’. European explorers stated their wonderment at how First Nations societies could produce respectful and resilient children when there were no systems of punishment used.”

“Using a different cultural system for understanding opens the way to the current research on brain function and youth resiliency; that relationship is the key to whole and healthy youth,” Martin Brokenleg explains.

Vital to belong

You have worked with youth at risk for almost 20 years - what are the most important experiences you can draw from the encounter between your work with The Circle of Courage and the development of western urban societies?

“Living in Western society is very costly in terms of human relationships. The economic systems of our times draw both parents away from family life into the world of economic production. The real cost of this move is a loss of fundamental human relationships between parents and



children and the loss of essential human experiences of belonging. Once lost these cannot be easily regained.”

Martin Brokenleg illustrates this loss with a

“The model of contemporary life is not one of functional human family living but rather one of global economics.”

Martin Brokenleg

small anecdote about one of his own ancestors:

“A Lakota elder in the 19th century was asked what he thought about white people not keeping the treaty promises that had been made. His response was that this was to be expected from people who beat their children. Lakota people thought striking a child was a sign of fundamental barbarism. What could be said in our times is that it is understandable that children and other human being will be mistreated by those who mistreat the earth...”

How could a social educator start the process of The Circle of Courage in the work with for instance the homeless children in New York that we describe in another article in the magazine?

“As with any child, a homeless child or youth needs a connection to a strong and open adult. Nothing happens until belonging happens. Once a healthy adult connects with a child, the direction of that child’s life can be altered for the good. The other experiences that strengthen a youth are listed in the Circle of Courage: Mastery, Independence in the sense of self-responsibility, and Generosity.”

How do you see the possibility of using the experiences from the Reclaiming Youth Network and from the The Circle of Courage in the work with other groups of citizens such as the mentally disabled?

“On the inside, human beings share a level of communality that is the focus of the Circle of Courage. Current research in brain science documents the universality of strength-based interventions that will enhance the lives of any human being of any age or condition. Meeting these universal needs creates the maximum inner resilience that allows a person to live fully,” says Martin Brokenleg. ■

Read more about Reclaiming Youth Network and The Circle of Courage on www.reclaiming.com

The Circle of Courage

The Circle of Courage was first introduced in 1990 and is the hub of the philosophy of the Reclaiming Youth Network. It focuses on four main principles:

Belonging: In short, the idea is that you perceive everybody you know as kin. Treating others as kin forges powerful social bonds that draw all into relationships of respect. This increases the feeling of security and counters the risk of isolation.

Mastery: In traditional cultures everyone is guaranteed an opportunity for mastery. A person with greater ability is seen as a model for learning, and those with greater experience are not seen as rivals. Instead the striving for mastery is about personal growth.

Independence: Power in Western culture is based on dominance, but in tribal traditions such as Lakota it meant respecting the right for independence. From earliest childhood, children were encouraged to make decisions, solve problems, and show personal responsibility. Adults modeled, nurtured, taught values, and gave feedback, but children were given abundant opportunities to make choices without coercion.

Generosity: Generosity and unselfishness are central virtues. In the words of a Lakota Elder, “You should be able to give away your most cherished possession without your heart beating faster.” In helping others, children and youth create their own proof of worthiness: they make a positive contribution to another human life.

According to the philosophy these are simply universal human needs.

The Circle of Courage is a resilience philosophy that is based on the wisdom of Native North American peoples. It is the common ground where all adults can create strength in all youth, regardless of where the youth live, what religion they practice, what language they speak, or what race they are. The Circle of Courage has become a tool for certified trainers in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

AIEJI – AKTIVITETER



Nationwide – literally speaking

Next year, when the AIEJI World Congress convenes in Copenhagen, social education events will have marked the occasion across the country. A superb opportunity to show our profession says SL Vice President Benny Andersen

By Jens Nielsen, jni@sl.dk

In one community, it could be a citizens meeting about the integration of the mentally disabled in local clubs and associations.

In another local community it could be a social education exchange visit with the twin town in Latvia.

In a third community it would be the presentation of a photo exhibition, "Our community from a frog's perspective", in the local library.

In a fourth area it could be a meeting about the establishment of interdisciplinary networks in social education.

And so on.

The goal is ambitious: One event in all of the country's 98 municipalities.

The options are plentiful, but the central plan is to reach as many as possible and tell the story about the work of social educators.

This is the idea behind the wave of events to be held across the country in the period leading up to the AIEJI congress in Copenhagen.

"It is simply an obvious idea to use the congress and all the work that is being carried out in connection with it to involve our members across the country. We have a superb opportunity to demonstrate our profession and show both politicians and citizens what we are doing," says Benny Andersen, Vice President of SL and President of AIEJI.

For him, it is essential that the AIEJI congress is not only a Copenhagen event, but becomes a matter for all members of the SL federation.

"We will naturally draw on the members in the Copenhagen area when it comes to accommodation for congress participants who cannot afford a hotel room. But since the congress is the main challenge for all of SL in 2009, it would be stupid not to use this energy to spread out as much as we can all over the country – in the media and in the streets. It is such an occasion we are often yearning for, and it gives our members who are not attending the congress an opportunity to commit themselves in union work in an entirely new way," says Benny Andersen.

He was pleased to note that the board of SL was equally enthusiastic about the prospect of reaching out to all municipalities in the country. Similar to several other board members, Benny Andersen believes that the local events are a way of involving members who are otherwise not active in union work.

Enthusiastic districts

SL districts that are already looking forward to the events prior to the AIEJI World Congress include Sydjylland and Lillebælt.

District Chairman Michael Madsen, Sydjylland, is convinced that they will receive many good ideas from members and institutions.

"Our district is on! It is obvious that we must draw on the board, the local management section and union representatives, but it is also clear that we should involve the networks and the workplaces and make them take the lead," he says.

The activities have not been finalised – that will only happen after the district's general assembly in the autumn – but Michael Madsen envisages a long list of potential subjects for the events.

"It could be focus on the role of management in the new municipal structure or the living conditions for the growing number of older people with mental disabilities," he says.

District Lillebælt is also in the planning process:

“The AIEJI World Congress will be a benchmark for us in 2009, and we are already in the process of appointing some of the participants and activities,” says District Chairman Hanne Ellegaard.

“We have 12 municipalities and one region and we expect to implement activities in all of them. This is simply going to be our 2009 visibility campaign,” she says.

Local campaign

Another added bonus to all the local activities is the fact that in combination with the congress they can direct attention to the work and profession of social educators prior to local elections that are due in November 2009.

“If we can win the attention and place focus on our profession and work already from next spring, it may turn out to be a giant benefit later in the

year. There will be a much greater chance that the politicians will know who the social educators are, and we are more likely to be involved and listened to and can get influence on the central issues of the election campaigns,” says Benny Andersen.

He underlines that other welfare areas such as schools, day care and care of the elderly will also be in the competition for attention but that, with the activities prior to the AIEJI congress, SL can get off to a flying start.

“The social educators are the mouthpiece of citizens who do not have a voice of their own. We cannot avoid taking a stance on the political conditions of the people we work with. And for this the activities before the AIEJI World Congress can make a good megaphone. They can help to place us, our profession and the citizens we work for on the agenda,” Benny Andersen concludes. ■

AIEJI

Zooming in on the flip-side of globalisation

In itself, the congress is a living example of the benefits of globalisation: trans-border communication, international understanding, and inspiration across nations. But it is on the flip-side of globalisation that the World Congress is to find its theme and cases: in the social exclusion and marginalisation.

With a much used slogan, social educators think globally but act locally. At the global level, the congress will fight social inequality and exclusion and strengthen the discipline of social education. At the local level the congress will contribute to an exchange of experiences that better enable the individual social educator to make a difference in her work.

Specifically, the various workshops and papers will

focus on the core areas of SL: Children and young people with special needs, Disabled adults, and Homeless and marginalised groups.

The congress is also to take a close look at cultures and culture work. It is exactly in the era of globalisation that roots and identity become both objectives and methods in social education. But how? The introduction to the congress raises more questions than it answers: How do social educators tackle the challenges of globalisation?

The ambition is that the answers become so specific that they can be used in the day-to-day work of social educators:

New territories – global networks. The nation state and physical localisation lose significance against a network society

that crisscrosses nation states and enterprises. How can social educators in the whole world build networks that underpin the struggle for a decent existence for all?

New divisions of labour and new forms of power. The new divisions of labour contribute to production zones with hard physical work for adults and children in the poor world and modern network production in the rich world. At the same time there is a development of less visible forms of power that we, as social educators, are subjected to and are made to execute. How do we develop our discipline so that our work is not integrated in the new power forms, but becomes a help to a decent life?

The media of globalisation and the globalisation of media.

The development of network production and the flexible control society depend on digital developments. The media contributes to creating efficient and flexible producers – and consumers. But it is also in the media that globalisation can lash back because the abuse of power, abuse and misery become increasingly difficult to stow away. How do social educators become familiar with the global media and learn to master them so that they can attract public attention to social exclusion – wherever it takes place? And how do we use the new media in the struggle against social exclusion?

Im ■

Apartheid – the new version

It used to be simple in South Africa! The black population lived in townships. The white folks in big houses, and the coloured in between. But now 14 years after apartheid, the black townships have been invaded by immigrants – from Somalis to Chinese – and this has created a new kind of hatred: Blacks hate blacks – and the Chinese

By Helle Maj/Mayday Press, redaktionen@sl.dk
Photo: Nick Pierre Salling and Jørn Stjerneklar



Most children in Mandela Park are not badly off because their parents are on drugs or are alcoholics, but because they are poor, says Social Educator Pumla Madikezela.

Last May, the picture of a Mozambican man set on fire in a South African township hit media around the world. Almost as if on cue the country broke out in a spate of xenophobia that made people run in all directions. But it was not black against white - it was black against black and against all other neighbours.

"It is actually quite easy to understand xenophobia if you are poor," says Social Educator Pumla Madikezela.

"You live in a wooden shed and have no job. You see your neighbour go to work every day. He lives in a shed too – but he is not from your country. His salary is below the minimum pay. A scab. He is to blame for the misfortune of your family. You talk with the others and you agree that the foreigners must go."

In the township Mandela Park in Hout Bay near Cape Town they took it out on the owners of a Chinese supermarket. The Chinese managed to escape but their shop was ripped of products. It was the cheapest supermarket in town and people loved to shop there.

"We had a week in May when all foreigners fled the area. We prayed for them because they are our sisters and brothers. And most have returned. But I must admit that many South Africans hate the foreigners. They say they take our work, our women and our houses. But deep down, it is all about poverty and unemployment," says Pumla Madikezela who works for Cape Town Child Welfare.

Personally, she is a living example that still 14 years after apartheid it is a bummer to be a black South African. After four years of university studies she is paid USD 465 per month as a social educator.

"I am almost embarrassed to say it out loud because that money cannot keep my family alive. But I like to help people and I am never short of work," she says with a smile.



The Chinese open shops in the South African townships on a large scale. But xenophobia affects them too.

Hout Bay is a charming tourist town with the apartheid heritage so obvious that it almost hurts. The Rainbow Nation only has three colours here: The 16,000 black people live in the Mandela Park township. Some in houses, but most in sheds made from carton boxes and corrugated iron. The poorer you are, the further up the mountain you live.

Children are the big losers

Near the top, 900 people live – most of them are refugees from other places in Africa; they share six toilets and one tap.

In contrast, there are 20,000 white people in houses and apartments around them. And behind the port the 8,000 coloured people live. All segregated and yet together!

But these three colours are not fighting each other at the moment.

“We go for our own in Mandela Park. It is mostly the Somalis who suffer. People really hate them. But the only thing they are doing is to cooperate in their shops so that they can buy in larger quantities and thus sell the products more cheaply than my people can,” Pumla Madikezela explains.

She lives in Mandela Park and sees the effects of the desperation every day.

“One day I went into my neighbour’s house and saw a man trying to rape their three-year old daughter. I don’t know what’s happening in the heads of people! But the children here in Mandela Park have a hard life,” says Pumla. She spends



most of her days helping children whose parents can no longer care for them.

“People are running away from their responsibility. There are good reasons for it, of course, but it is painful for the children. They are so innocent,” she says.

The National Federation of Social Educators in Denmark

Some facts

The Danish National Federation of Social Educators or as it is called in Danish, *Socialpædagogernes Landsforbund (SL)*, is a trade union for about 34,000 professionals. The members are social educators, foster carers, directors, assistants and artisans. They work with children, young people, and adults who need special care due to physical or mental disabilities, or social problems.

The National Federation of Social Educators is the key negotiation partner for its members. The union has the right to represent and negotiate on behalf of its members. The aim of the National Federation of Social Educators is both to improve salary and employment conditions for its members as well as to participate in the development of the content and practice of the profession. Furthermore, the union sees the development of the Danish welfare system as an important goal.

The National Federation of Social Educators is a decentralised union divided into 10 district organisations.

At the national level the National Federation of Social Educators is a member of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, and collaborates with a number of other unions under the Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations in Denmark and the Organizations of Public Employees – Denmark.

At the international level the Danish National Federation of Social Educators is a member of:

- Public Service International (PSI)
- European Public Service Unions (EPSU)
- Nordic Forum for Social Educators (NFFS)
- International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)
- International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI) and
 - International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE)

The National Federation of Social Educators publishes the biweekly magazine *Socialpædagogen* as well as a number of other publications.