
International Master's Program in Comparative Social Work

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BCBU in brief

- Barents Cross Border University (BCBU) is based on the cooperation between universities in Northern Finland and Northwest Russia
 - Altogether there are two participating universities in Finland and eight in Russia and three from other countries
 - Four Master's Programme:
 - Environmental Engineering (BEE)
 - Information and Communication Technology (GS3D)
 - Comparative Social Work (CSW)
 - Health and Wellbeing in Circumpolar Areas (MCH)

(<http://bcbu.oulu.fi/>)

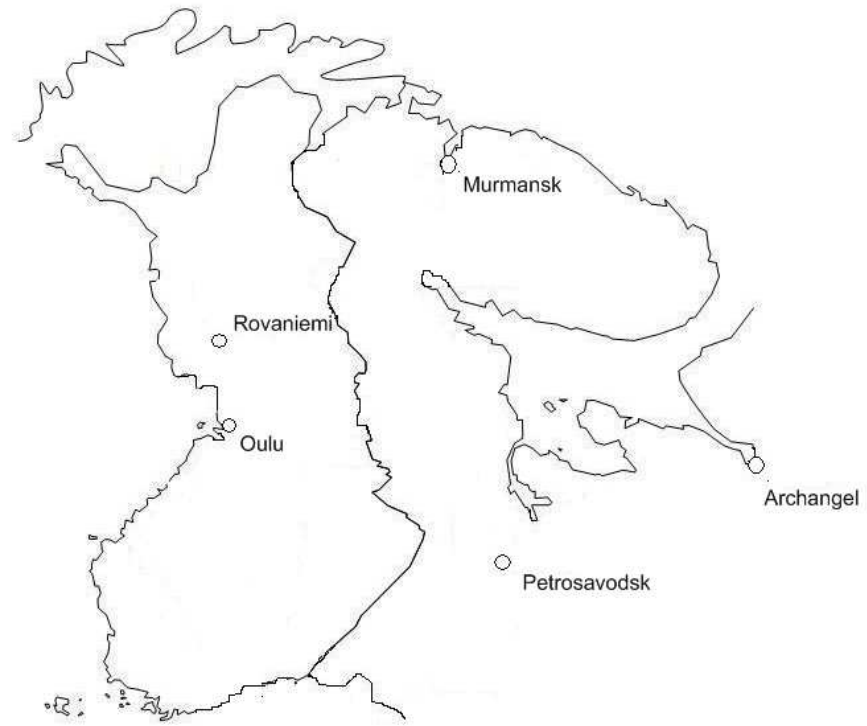
→ A Steering board
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The Barents Region and BCBU(1)

- ❑ The nature in these northern areas is ecologically sensitive and regenerates slowly
 - ❑ Long distances and scarce population make living in northern areas additionally striving causing e.g. social problems, and increasing needs for transportation of goods and people
 - ❑ Northern environment sets its own requirements in health issues, and in health care and services
 - ❑ Intensive industry and increasing needs to take the natural resources into use brings out a clear need to develop industrial processes more environmental friendly.
 - ❑ Additionally, it is important to find measures to prevent and diminish environmental damages and to restore existing damages.
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The Barents Region and BCBU(2)

- During the last 15 years significant societal changes have occurred in the Barents Region
 - A gap of standards of living at border area between EU and Russia as well as income differences inside Russia exist.
 - Social and welfare problems have set new challenges for social work and employees dealing with these issues.
 - Development of information systems and services is increasingly done in international and trans-boundary cooperation
 - International cooperation requires multicultural project skills in addition to systems and software development expertise
 - However, it is important to have clear procedures on how to treat information and collaborate with respect to information security
 - Also, mobility of labor force presupposes understanding of cultural backgrounds and multicultural skills.
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CSW: Some aims and topics in planning and implementation

- Sustainable social and economic development in Barents Region; prevention of social problems; not only individual but also societal aspects
 - Academic and scientific collaboration across the border; mobility of students and teachers
 - Developing of expertise across border, focusing on the neighbouring collaboration program, northern dimension and the needs of labour force: cultural understanding and multicultural skills of social work
 - Implementation of the Bologna process in Finland and Russia; transparency of curriculum and courses
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Aims of Social Work curriculum

- Comparative Social Work is
 - a programme for students with a prior academic degree in social work or related field and interested in acquiring
 - social work professionals who understand cultural diversity and the special characters of peripheral EU region
 - focused on acquiring a better understanding of national and global social work through a comparative approach and multicultural understanding
 - advanced skills for different careers
 - right for Ph.D. studies in social work
 - working language is english
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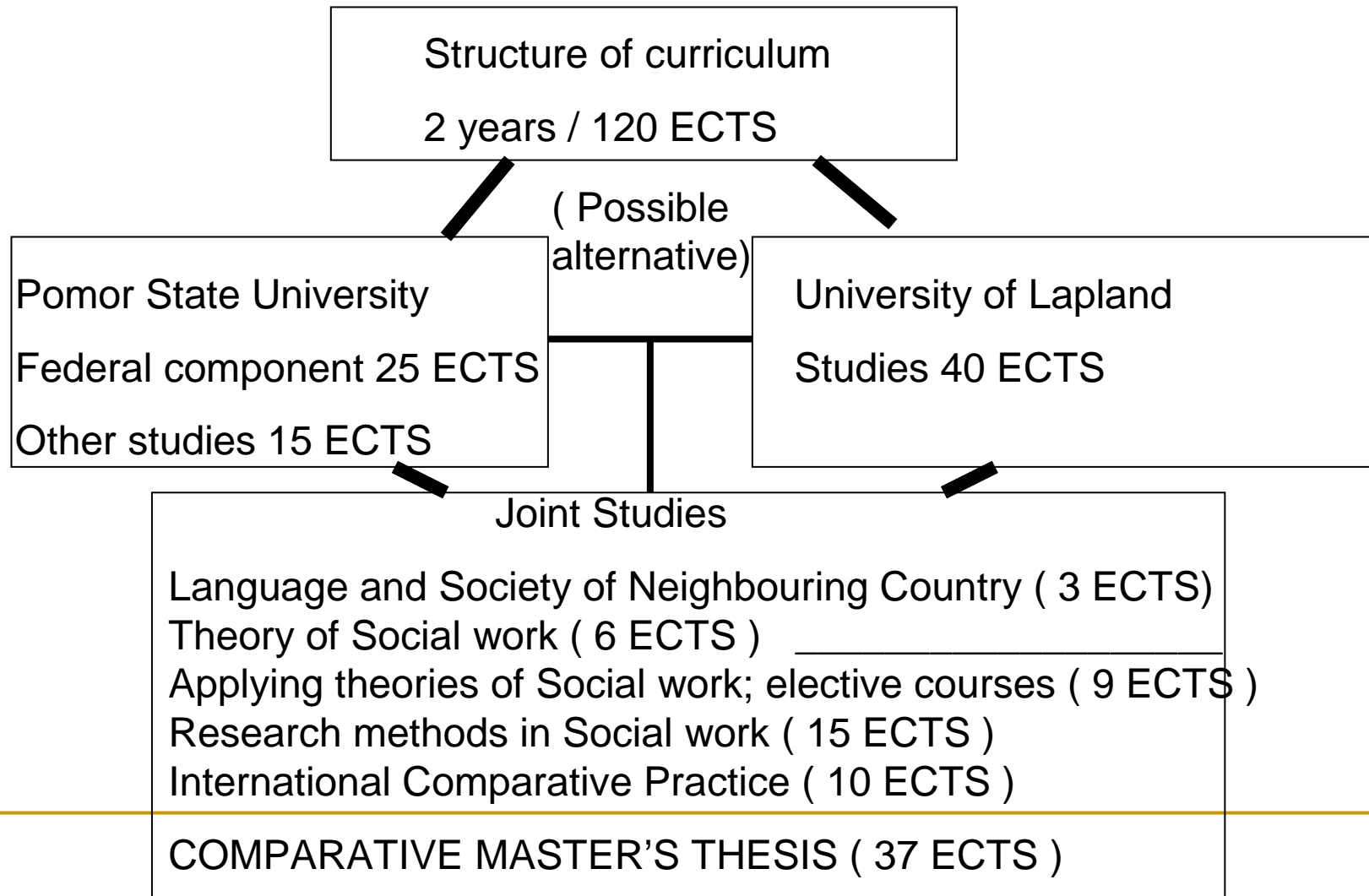
CSW: Partner Institutions and Responsible Units

- Full partner: Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work at the University of Lapland
 - Full partner: Faculty of Social Work at the Pomor State University (NArFU= Northern Arctic Federal University)
 - Karelian State Pedagogical University, Petrozavodsk State University, Northern State Medical University, Murmansk Humanities Institute, Murmansk State Humanities University, Murmansk State Technical University and the University of Oulu
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First Master's Degree in Comparative Social Work : A Pilot Programme (2009-2011)

- The university of Lapland: The intake of the students was 10, 5 approved and 4 started to study, in 2010 3 is still studying (1 from Pakistan and 2 from Russia)
 - The Pomor State University: all the Russian students are from Arkangel, no students from Murmansk and Petrozavodsk, the intake was 10, in 2010 4 is still studying (done the practise in Finland)
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Implementation of CSW 2009-2010



Practice Training in Social Work

- ❑ Study material: intensive courses, recorded and online courses and practise
 - ❑ Supervision in english, and working language is english => limits the training units => social work field units in multicultural setting are reserved to foreign students, what about basic students?
 - ❑ Social work practice training in Finland (5 weeks) and in joint studies in Russia => financing problems
 - ❑ Field placement
 1. Immigration Office of the City of Rovaniemi
 2. Refugee Reception Centre of Red Cross in Rovaniemi
 3. Friends of Youth (NGO/Oulu)
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The agreement concerning implementation of CSW: content

- Partners
 - Responsibilities
 - Background/Framework of Collaboration (general BCBU-agreement signed in 2007)
 - Purpose/Objective/Scope of the Agreement
 - Program/The Module within the Programme in Collaboration
 - Degrees and Diploma Supplements (only faculties have the authority of awarding degree certificates)
 - Decision-making concerning the Content of Program/the Module
 - Students (selection)
 - Teachers
 - Intellectual property rights

 - => The Content of the agreement has to be very carefully planned and negotiated (shared understanding of aims)
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Challenges in Collaboration

- Shared understanding of Social Work
 - Shared understanding of doing research (methods, qualitative/quantitative, rules of scientific writing)
 - Finance and resources (Kolarctic ENPI, Tempus, extra funding for development work)
 - Commitment (staff changes, English language requirements for teachers, no extra salary)
 - Confidentiality ("from speeches to action")
 - Applicable rules and settlements of disputes
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Nex Steps and Challenges

- Agreement on joint Master's programs leading to joint/double degrees between BCBU agreement signed in 2007
 - Study guide 2011- 2013
 - Model for a copyright agreement
 - Students rights for learning material
 - Virtual campus? (ENPI?)
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Next Steps and Challenges

- Quality assurance handbook (consolidation of study requirements, master's thesis, grades)
 - New round of marketing in autumn 2010
 - Next selection of students spring 2011
 - New beginning september 2011
 - Joint/double degree
 - Ph.D programme
 - Stronger role of associate partners
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