



## **International Network for School Social Work**

**<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>**

**Contact [mhuxtable@olympus.net](mailto:mhuxtable@olympus.net)**

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Editor: Marion Huxtable

#### **Mauritius**

We now know of school social workers in 41 countries. Mauritius, a democratic island republic in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar, is the latest one. Dominique Catherine, social worker in the Ministry of Education in Mauritius, writes that the position was created in May 2006 to assist schools with children that they cannot manage on their own. The social workers mostly hold a degree in social work and apply generalist techniques learned at the University, although they are moving towards a more specialized approach.

#### **New Address for the School Social Work Association of America**

School Social Work Association of America,

2 Pidgeon Hill Drive, Suite 340,

Sterling,

Virginia 20165

US.

Phone: (703) 444-0968 Fax: (703) 404-3746

The email address remains [sswaa@aol.com](mailto:sswaa@aol.com) but will be changed soon.

#### **An overview of child well-being in rich countries**

The main concern of school social workers in all countries is the well-being of school children.

**The Innocenti Report Card Number 7 published in 2007 ([http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/rc7\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/rc7_eng.pdf))** provides an overview of child well-being in 21 rich countries. It is a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations. (Insufficient data from some developed countries meant they could not be included in the overview table reproduced on the following page). The study, conducted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, provides school social workers with a way to measure the quality of life of children.

**The Introduction says:** “The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.”

The results of the study speak for themselves and a summary table from the report is below.

		Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	Dimension 5	Dimension 6
Dimensions of child well-being	Average ranking position (for all 6 dimensions)	Material well-being	Health and safety	Educational well-being	Family and peer relationships	Behaviours and risks	Subjective well-being
Netherlands	4.2	10	2	6	3	3	1
Sweden	5.0	1	1	5	15	1	7
Denmark	7.2	4	4	8	9	6	12
Finland	7.5	3	3	4	17	7	11
Spain	8.0	12	6	15	8	5	2
Switzerland	8.3	5	9	14	4	12	6
Norway	8.7	2	8	11	10	13	8
Italy	10.0	14	5	20	1	10	10
Ireland	10.2	19	19	7	7	4	5
Belgium	10.7	7	16	1	5	19	16
Germany	11.2	13	11	10	13	11	9
Canada	11.8	6	13	2	18	17	15
Greece	11.8	15	18	16	11	8	3
Poland	12.3	21	15	3	14	2	19
Czech Republic	12.5	11	10	9	19	9	17
France	13.0	9	7	18	12	14	18
Portugal	13.7	16	14	21	2	15	14
Austria	13.8	8	20	19	16	16	4
Hungary	14.5	20	17	13	6	18	13
United States	18.0	17	21	12	20	20	-
United Kingdom	18.2	18	12	17	21	21	20

## Significant findings

- The Netherlands ranks in the top ten in all six measures
- Northern European countries dominate the top half of the table
- The US and UK are at the bottom third of the list in five out of six measures
- There is no obvious correlation between GDP and child well-being
- In educational well-being Finland, Canada, Australia and Japan head the table (Japan not included in summary table)

## Measurement

The study points out that to change something it is necessary first of all measure it. Measurement fuels advocacy, guides policy, sharpens accountability and helps keep track of efforts towards progress. For school social workers the message is clear: identify important goals and measurable objectives, develop ways to track achievement of objectives and use the results to influence policy in schools, school systems and agencies that affect children.

For member countries in the International Network for School Social Work, the Innocenti Report Card measurements show where school social workers can learn about improving the well-being of children, including their education, relationships and behavior.