

# Task 6.2.

## The Nordic Welfare State:

### **Social services**

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On Resilience and Societal Security



- Few words about the past and future tasks of 6.2
- Policy analysis: The formal role of social services in contingency planning of the EM systems
- Case study on Árborg in 2008



## Task 6.2 participated in *The Nordic Welfare Watch in response to crisis*

- One of three projects due to Iceland's presidency in the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2014-2016
- See <https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/nordicwelfarewatch/>
- **Aim: Examine the role of local social services in emergency management in the Nordic countries (2014-2016)**
- See ref. To all our reports in: <https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/felags-og-fjolskyldumal/norraen-velferdarvakt/frettir/nanar/2017/11/20/Lokaskyrsla-Norraenu-velferdarvaktarinnar/>



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# **SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISASTERS**



# Vulnerability and social status



- Socioeconomic status can determine the capacity to **prepare** for disastrous events, their immediate **impact** as well as the **outcomes**
- Some groups are **more vulnerable than others** due to various factors like age, health, gender, family and social –economic situation, etc.
- “The literature on disaster management reveals that vulnerable populations tend to be the ones that suffer most.” (Mathbor, 2007, p. 358)





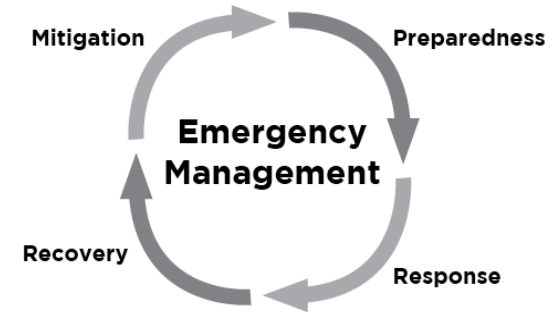
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# Importance of social services

- The local social services have important knowledge about the needs and strengths of vulnerable groups and the community
- The role of LSS is to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience of individuals and communities in everyday life (Cuadra, 2015)
- LSS: Emphasis on user involvement and community work



# Social services in all phases



- Important roles in disaster **mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery** (Cuadra, 2015; Dominelli, 2012; Elliott, 2010; Mathbor, 2007; Thomas and Healy, 2010, Rowlands, 2013)
- “The full range of community and social service providers needs to be integrated into **response and recovery processes**, through the recovery plan, so that these resources can be harnessed for the community” (Rowlands, 2013, p. 15).



# Lack of preparedness, examples from stressed evacuation

- In a hospital near the Fukushima plant, medical staff abandoned 128 persons
- In Katarina, few members of staff were left at the Memorial Medical Centre:: “Those who stayed behind faced appalling conditions and **apparently decided to “ease the suffering” of some of the elderly and debilitated patients.** Lethal doses of morphine and benzodiazepine sedative were administered during the ongoing evacuation. A grand jury would later refuse to indict Dr. Anna Pou and the two nurses for their actions, leaving the doctor free to become a passionate advocate for legislation provide legal immunity to physicians for their actions in times of disaster” (Barusch (2011, p. 348)



Guðný Björk Eydal 14. febrúar 2018



- **“Going viral can actually help.** Take for example this photo of an elderly woman legs vanished in the waist high as the flood waters overwhelmed a **La Vita Bella Nursing Home in Dickinson Texas due to Hurricane Harvey** in August. **The owners of the living center posted it to Twitter asking for help.** Rescue teams answered with air lifts. It was one of the many ways people harnessed the power of social media after disaster hit this year”.
- <https://time.com/4917743/la-vita-bella-nursing-home-dickinson-texas-photo/>

## In the NWW we asked:

- Do local social services have a formal role in the contingency planning of the emergency management systems in the five Nordic countries?



# Results

	D	F	I	N	S
Are social services legally obligated to prepare a contingency plan?	Yes	<b>Yes</b>	Yes	<b>Yes</b>	Yes
Does the act on EM address the role of local social services?	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	No
Does the legal framework outline <u>distinctive</u> role/roles?	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	No

# Results

	D	F	I	N	S
Does the law on social services specifically address the role of the services in the context of disaster?	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	No
Are there specific guidelines for social service contingency planning?	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	Yes

# Recommendations:

- Cooperation on Nordic levels
- Make the role of LSS known to the emergency management and vice versa
- Sharing of knowledge between countries and municipalities
- Include social services in preparedness plans and exercise + education and research

# Already some success: The Svalbard Group

- One of the recommendations: Social sector preparedness cooperation should be enhanced under the umbrella of the Nordic Council of Ministers (**Svalbard Group**) and collaborate closely with the Haga-process
- The Svalbard group was given extended mandate to include, in addition to health services , social services
- (Þóra recommend to interview Merja Rapeli member of WP 6.2 and the Svalbard Group😊)



# THE CASE OF ÁRBORG



# One case - two crisis

- What was the role of local social service in Árborg municipality in 2008, comparing the response to two crisis:
  - **The earthquake in May**
  - The Icelandic bank collapses in October
- Ragnheiður Hergeirsdóttir wrote her MA thesis on the subject (<https://skemman.is/handle/1946/33043>) and task 6.2 is working on an article based on the results

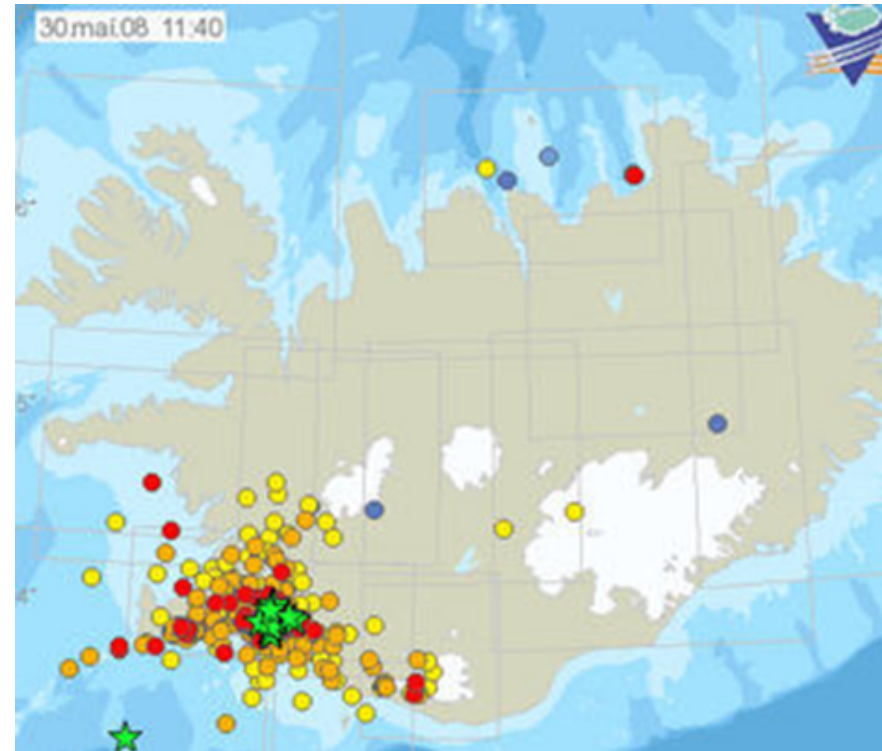


# Árborg municipality in 2008

- Lies in the Southwest lowlands of Iceland, in an earthquake zone
- The 8. largest municipality in Iceland out of 72
- Inhabitans in 2008: about 7.600
- Labour market in 2008: ~ 40 % of local business was in the building contractor, real estate and construction field.

# The case

- An **earthquake** on Thursday 29th of May 2008, measured 6,3 on the Richter scale and hit without warning



# How did the quake affect the community

- Disruption on the lives and daily routines of those affected.
- No serious injuries to people but property damage was large





# How did the quake affect the community

- Psychological and psycho-social effects
- A huge increase in the work load of the municipality
- A long term project to recover from the disaster, for individuals as for the community in whole



# Housing became a big task for the LSS



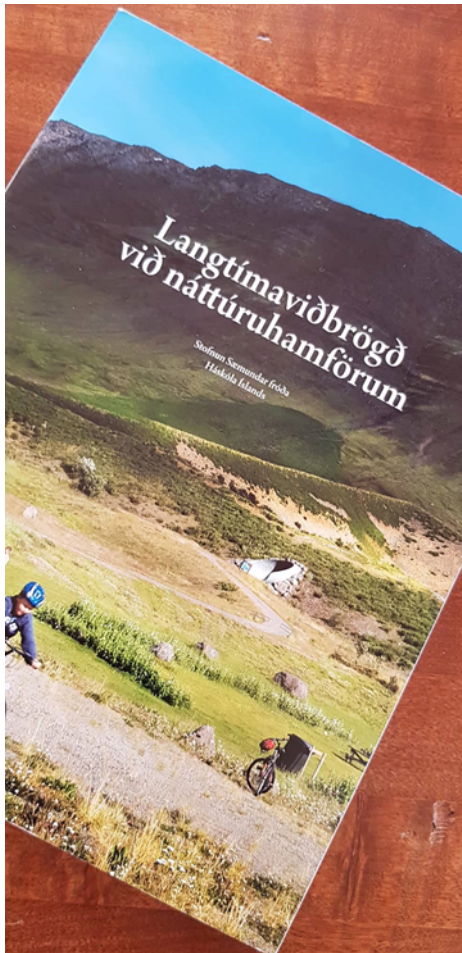
- **Research questions**
  - How did the local social services respond?
  - How was the guidelines implemented?
  - What lessons can be learned from this case for future disasters regarding the role of local social services and the importance of guidelines?’
- **Qualitative case study**
  - Document analysis
  - Nine interviews with four experts from local social service and five with other agents from emergency management



# Is the social services addressed by the Emergency Management?

- According to law from 2008 the social services are obligated to make their own contingency plans, **but no such plans had been implemented** when the earthquake did hit
- A group of experts and scholars had just finished a manuscript of a book on guidelines for local authorities and gave Árborg access to it few hours after the earthquake did hit!

# General Guidelines



- Guidelines for Long-Term Response to Natural Disasters
- ***Relief and recovery team with three clusters:***
  - **Welfare**
  - Economy
  - Environment
- ***Three teams with in the welfare cluster:***
  - Social service team
  - Team for housing affairs
  - Team for crisis help

# The roles of the welfare cluster

- Take care of the **physical, mental and social wellbeing** and needs of those affected.
- The Welfare cluster ensures continued
  - Education
  - Social services, including home help services for disabled etc.
  - Day care
  - Culture
  - Youth programs
  - + services in cooperation with health services

# Social service team

Responsible for:

- arranging psychological trauma counseling and long term psycho-social support
- **housing** for those in need
- monitoring **residents with social problems**, individuals with no family or social network, people of foreign nationalities and the elderly, the disabled, and the sick
- The team also organized the support for **the staff of the municipality** and to service units such as daycare for the elderly, kindergartens and elementary schools

- **Team for housing affairs**
- Responsible for providing housing for those who must leave their homes due to damages, for longer or shorter time
- **Team for crisis help**
- Responsible for organize, manage and coordinate crisis help for those in need

# How did local social service respond ?

- Social service operated according to the guidelines
- Experts from local social service in Árborg report that the guidelines **made a huge difference** for social service following the earthquake
  - Cooperation regarding the crisis help
  - Arrangement and structure of housing affairs
  - Outreach to inhabitants
  - Accessibility of the local social service
  - Consistency in response and reaction

# Lessons learned

- It is of vital importance for local social services **to have clear contingency plans and guidelines**
- The staff within LSS needs to know the guidelines and **practice** the implementation regularly
- There is need for more **community work** in order to enhance social capital and the community resilience





Picture from The River Ölfusá in Árborg

# Thank you