

## Examining Professional Challenges for School Social Work in Swedish Elementary Schools: A Focus Group Study

**Authors :** Maria Kjellgren, Sara Lilliehorn, Urban Markström

**Abstract :** Critical components that influence the role and performance of school social workers in Swedish elementary schools will be described and analysed, such as formal regulations, professional self-understanding, and the SSWs' role in the interplay between professional domains involved in elementary school. The data collection was conducted through four semi-structured focus group interviews with a total of 22 SSWs in four different regions in Sweden. The result reveals three main challenges for the School Social Worker (SSW): (1) To navigate in a pedagogic and medical arena within a multidisciplinary team, (2) To manage ambiguity without any formal regulations and unclear settings and leadership and finally, (3) To negotiate tasks at different levels, with a health promotional and preventive focus, where the SSW ends up, mainly in remedial work with individual children. The results also disclosed that SSWs hold a vague professional self-understanding position with a little formal mandate to perform their work.

**Keywords :** school social worker, multidisciplinary team, counselling, professional self-understanding, formal regulations

**Conference Title :** ICSW 2022 : International Conference on Social Work

**Conference Location :** Zurich, Switzerland

**Conference Dates :** September 15-16, 2022