5th International Scientific Conference

"ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION"

31 May, 2023
Shkoder, Albania

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Department of Psychology and Social Work
Faculty of Educational Sciences
University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"

Citation:

Book of Abstracts, 5th International Scientific Conference "Achievements and Challenges of Social Work Profession", 31 May 2023, Shkoder, ALBANIA.

Copyright:

Layout
Arta Bajrami

Conference Organizers:

The Department of Psychology and Social Work,
Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"

In collaboration with

Department of Social Work and Social Policies
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana

Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education, Faculty of Education
Sciences, University "Aleksandër Xhuvani" of Elbasan

National Association of Social Workers of Albania

Order of Social Workers in Republic of Albania

Supporting Institution:

University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"

CONFERENCE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

President of the Conference
Prof. Dr. Suzana GOLEMI, Rector of University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA

Scientific Committee Members
Prof. Dr. Andrés ARIAS ASTRAY, University Complutense of Madrid, SPAIN

Prof. Dr. Artan HOXHA, University of Tirana, ALBANIA

Prof. Dr. David KALAJ, University of Montenegro, MONTENEGRO

Prof. Dr. Edmond RAPTI, University of Tirana, ALBANIA

Prof. Dr. Fatmir VADOHEJ, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA

Prof. Dr. Gennaro IORIO, University of Salerno, ITALY

Prof. Dr. Lulzim DRAGIDELLA, University of Prishtina, KOSOVO

Prof. Dr. Skender TOPI, University "Aleksander Xhuvani" of Elbasan, ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Ana Josefa CAÑAS-LERMA, University of the Balearic Islands, SPAIN

Prof. Ass. Dr. Elena PACETTI, University of Bologna, ITALY

Prof. Ass. Dr. Eliona KULLURI BIMBASHI, University of Tirana, ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Elisabeta OSMANAJ, University "Aleksander Xhuvani" of Elbasan, ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Fatbardha OSMANAGA, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Gianmarco CIFALDI, University "Gabriele d'Annunzio" of Chieti - Pescara, ITALY

Prof. Ass. Dr. Jorge Manuel FERREIRA, ISCTE - Instituto Universitário Lisboa, PORTUGAL

Prof. Ass. Dr. Marinela SOTA, University of Tirana, ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Rudina RAMA, University of Tirana, ALBANIA

Prof. Ass. Dr. Vjollca KRASNIQI, University of Prishtina, KOSOVO

Prof. Ass. Dr. Vladimir ILIEVSKI, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Chair of Organizing Committee
Dr. Visar DIZDARI, Head of Psychology – Social Work Department,
University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
Members of Organizing Committee
Dr. Brilanda LUMANAJ, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
Dr. Bujanë TOPALLI, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
Dr. Elona HASMUJAJ, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
Dr. Galsvinda BIBA, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
Dr. Sabina BELSHAKU, University "Aleksander Xhuvani" of Elbasan,
ALBANIA
Dr. Valbona MUÇA, University "Aleksander Xhuvani" of Elbasan, ALBANIA
MSc. Elidjon Cami, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", ALBANIA
MSc. Mirgit Vataj, Order of Social Workers in Republic of Albania, ALBANIA
MSc. Zyhra Gripshi, University "Aleksander Xhuvani" of Elbasan, ALBANIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

8

INTRODUCTION

The 5th International Scientific Conference of Social Work in Albania *"Achievements and Challenges of Social Work Profession"*, is an event organized by the Department of Psychology and Social work - University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi", in cooperation with the Department of Social Work and Social Policy - University of Tirana, and Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education – University "Aleksandër Xhuvani" Elbasan, in partnership with National Association of Social Workers of Albania and Order of Social Workers in Republic of Albania, are organizing the 5th International Scientific Conference "Achievements and Challenges of Social Work Profession".

The goal of conference is to explore, develop and promote different approaches of academic and scientific research, to build bridges of cooperation among social work professionals, in Albania, Europe and beyond. Another aim of the conference is to bring together national and international group of scholars and to engage not only in presenting diverse research and field experiences but to get the chance to meet and to discuss.

The conference is focused on main pillars of social work practice, such as: Education in social work, Social problems and policies, Social work and diversity, Social work and emergency crisis, Social work in digitalization area, Human rights, Gender related issues, Civic participation and community development, The impact of legislative reforms in social services, The impact of the recently established Order of Social Workers in Albania, Juvenile justice, Child protection, Mental health, Palliative care and Internationalization of social work.

The authors presented their research papers in four parallel sessions as below:

Session I: Challenges of social work
Session II: Social work education & research
Session III: Mental health & wellbeing
Session IV: Social work practices & social policies

SESSION I

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORK

Challenges faced by girls trafficked, during the reintegration process in Albania

Alisa Biçoku[1], Sabina Belshaku[2]

Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Elbasan "A. Xhuvani"[1, 2]

alisa.bicoku@uniel.edu.al[1]
sabina.belshaku@uniel.edu.al[2]

The political changes after the regime during the years 1990 – 1991 in Albania opened a new market of human trafficking, such was the phenomenon of exploitation of girls for the sex industry. Those people who wanted to enrich themselves through illegal forms, although Albanian state at that time had an anti-trafficking legal framework by trafficked, recruited, exploited girls and women. The phenomenon of exploitation of girls in Albania is still a serious social problem. Albania is still considered as the origin country for trafficking in women for sexual exploitation.

The purpose of this study is to analyze difficulties that have to face the trafficked girls during their reintegration in the society. The specific objectives of this study are: exploration of the opportunities, resources, systems and support structures that can help for a successful reintegration of trafficked women in Albania. The methodology used to conduct the study is qualitative, as an effective method in providing specific information and in-depth understanding of the subjects exploration. The sampling includes 20 trafficked girls and women, and a semi-structured interview was used as the measurement instrument. The instruments that were used are semi-structured interviews with the target group as well as existing information, which refers to data that are conducted previously by the respective institutions that have to treat such problems of trafficked women and girls. Among the main findings we single out: the many difficulties faced by women and girls during the social and institutional reintegration process. As a recommendation, we will suggest the review of the legal aspect on the length of stay in shelter centers for trafficked girls and women. Facilitating supporting procedures for their employment.

Key words: Victims of trafficking, Reintegration, Process, Sexual exploitation.

17

Challenges of the role of the social worker in the school

Armando Shëngjergji[1], Sabina Belshaku[2]

Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education, University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani"[1, 2]

armando.shengjergji@uniel.edu.al[1]
sabina.belshaku@uniel.edu.al[2]

The school social worker helps children and youth succeed in school, in society, and in solving emotional and behavioral problems. They collaborate with teachers, parents and other professionals to create safe environments that support the learning process, while also influencing the strengthening of the home-school-community connection for all students. The basic education and training of school social workers prepares them to provide a wide range of interventions, prevention, health promotion, as well as program development and evaluation of services with a special focus on child development processes and young people within the school context.The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the role and position of the school social worker as part of the psycho-social service in some schools of the city of Elbasan. The objectives of this study are aimed at pointing out the importance of the role of the social worker in educational institutions, the necessity of the existence of this service, its recognition and appreciation by all. The method used to carry out this study is the qualitative research method. The instrument used is semi-structured interviews with social workers, teachers, parents and students from different schools. A total of 56 interviews were conducted, from which 6 social workers of schools in the city of Elbasan, 15 teachers, 10 parents and 25 students of different ages were interviewed, who gave their perspectives and personal views. The results of the study in an integrated way show that the current state of social worker services as part of the school's psycho-social service is generally not in the best possible state.The findings of the study showed that there are some problems that make it difficult for the quality of services offered to individuals. The difficulties and problems with the psycho-social services that are currently offered in the school come from the marked lack of culture for this type of service, from the lack of cooperation between the professionals of educational institutions and those of the psycho-social service and especially the role of the social worker as part of this service.

Key words: Social worker, Psycho-social service, Students, Educational institutions.

18

Social work students' perceptions about practicum experience (Case of University of Shkodra, Albania)

Brilanda Lumanaj[1], Fatbardha Osmanaga[2]

Department of Psychology-Social Work, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Albania[1, 2]

brilanda.lumanaj@unishk.edu.al[1]
fatbardha.osmanaga@unishk.edu.al[2]

Practicum is an integral component of social work education included in the Bachelor program. Students' opinions play an important role in academic decisions. The aim of this study was to explore the social work students' perceptions towards the practicum experience during the third-year Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi". Furthermore, the study analyses the views of social work students about their personal and professional benefits and challenges, the practical implementation of theories and also identify their suggestions for future improvement in the implementation of practicum. The method used in this study was qualitative. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews and a focus group with respective students. In this study, 37 students from the third year of the Bachelor's program in social work, who graduated during the academic year 2021-2022, participated. It was concluded that students have generally positive and favorable opinions about the practicum experience. The results showed that students have achieved various benefits related to the improvement of communication skills at work, improvisation skills according to the occasion, the possibility of a future career, understanding more about the social worker's impact on people's lives, being more responsible, and better self-awareness. Students perceived their experience as a supervised practice that provides opportunities to reinforce theory in practice, by valuing them as complementary to each other. Difficulties in managing emotions, adapting to the dynamics of interaction with target groups, and the role of being more of an observer than a practitioner of concrete cases are some of the main challenges encountered during their practice. The students pointed out that some elements should be taken into consideration in the future. It was suggested that practicum should be included throughout all three academic years, accompanied by more space for students' contribution in the respective institutions and organizations. The findings from this study can serve as a database that can be used to discuss and improve the practicum curriculum.

Key words: Practicum, Social work students, Perception, Benefits, Challenges, Bachelor of social work.

Vulnerable youth employment; challenges and opportunities (Case of Shkoder Municipality)

Bujanë Topalli[1], Adelina Kakija[2]

Department of Psychology - Social work, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"[1, 2]

bujane.topalli@unishk.edu.al[1]
adelina.kakija@unishk.edu.al[2]

Nowadays the youth of our country are dealing with the social phenomenon of unemployment. Referring to this situation, a lot of social projects and programs are being implemented to promote their employment. The government and the third sector are contributing on this. The employability of young people, especially those considered vulnerable, has been the focus of many projects implemented by various NGOs that hold their activity in the Municipality of Shkoder. Such projects, in addition to promoting and intensifying interinstitutional collaboration, have highlighted many challenges expected to find solutions in the future, but have also included successful models and working practices for integration of youth into the labour market. In this study, based on qualitative approach and on analysis of 2 focus groups (one with youth beneficiary of workable projects and one with professional/project implementers), also in 10 interviews with young people, we'll try to offer a panorama about the challenges and opportunities of working with the target group of social disadvantages youth. The research questions are related to the difficulties that vulnerable young faced to find a job, and which are some successful practices or models suggested by project managers and their partners, that facilitate workability. In conclusion, vulnerable youth category represents a challenge for integration into the labour market, especially regards of lack to soft skills or internship experiences. In the meantime, the employers should develop working models, that help to keep workers motivation in high levels, as offering mentoring service.

Key words: Employability, Vulnerable youth, Challenges, Best practices.

20

Voluntary work and it's impact on youth employment in the city of Elbasan

Erjona Hasa [1], Elvira Dode [2]

"Aleksandër Xhuvani" University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education[1, 2]

erjona.hasa@uniel.edu.al[1]
elvira.dode@uniel.edu.al[2]

Voluntary work is valued as an activity that aims to increase social and professional skills as well as foster feelings of belonging to the community. Voluntary work in Albania is still a concept which is treated in different dimensions. Volunteering among young people is a social activity and as such makes possible the integration and creation of new social relationships. This study aims to present the impact and perceptions of students of the University of Elbasan on volunteer commitment, looking at it from a social and professional perspective. The main purpose of this study is to highlight the current situation through the perceptions of students who were committed in voluntary work during their years of study in higher education, as well as providing recommendations with a specific focus on voluntary work. The methodology used in this study is qualitative, as it offers opportunities for the analysis of students' perceptions of the voluntary work process. The study was carried out mainly with the students of the Faculty of Education Sciences at the University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani" in the two study cycles; bachelor and master. A sampling of 50 students was also used and a semi-structured interview was used as a measuring tool. The study showed that the majority of students who have been involved in voluntary work have a positive experience as participation in it has influenced them in such a way that they become more social, more communicative and able to improve their professional and personal skills. The data of the study shows that the majority of young people who are involved in volunteering do this work for a longer period of time. This means that they feel good and continue to volunteer longer. As a recommendation, we would emphasize the extraordinary role that voluntary work has in strengthening social ties, to build stronger and more united communities. Also, voluntary work contributes to the development of a democratic culture, of solidarity and reciprocity, enabling the benefit of new skills and providing a future employment opportunity that this commitment can offer.

Key words: Voluntary work, Social integration, Activation, Employment.

The challenges of implementing the deinstitutionalization plan

Irida Agolli (Nasufi)[1], Artur Rada[2], Lumturi Merkuri[3]

Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social work and Social Policy[1, 2]
Albanian University, Tirana, Albania[3]

iagolli@yahoo.com[1]
rada.artur@yahoo.com[2]
lmerkuri@hotmail.com[3]

Once upon a time, everyone assumed that children would grow up in a home with their mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, and that they would stay at home until they married and left to start their own families. Is this story real today? The majority of children in foster care and residential institutions are there because their parents have been declared by the courts to be abusive or neglectful (Kinard, 1987). In Albania, there are 9 public social care institutions (IPSH) for children, 5 development centers, as well as 18 non-public residential care institutions for children. The process of deinstitutionalization of the child care system is based on changing the typology of service provision, from residential institutions to day services, as well as other alternative, community-based services, focusing on the integration of children into the family, whether biological or foster, in communities and wider society, respecting the best interest of the child.

The double dependency of the current IPSH (between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the local government units) has brought difficulties in their daily management, in the selection and appointment and accountability of care personnel, which directly affect the well-being of children. Apart from the model of community centers in some municipalities, there is a lack of cost-effective, standardized, specialized services for the empowerment of families in all local self-government units. Current services provided in residential institutions are focused on physical care rather than individual development. Child protection workers are the backbone of the child protection system, responsible for addressing the needs of children who are at risk. Ensuring service quality is an essential component of an effective child protection system.

Key words: Deinstitutionalization, Children, Protection, Family, Social care service.

Social economic reintegration of return migrants in Albania-Obstacles, Policies and Challenges

Jonida Lesha[1], Eriona Vadinaj[2]

Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" [1]
Faculty of Economy, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" [2]

jonida.lesha@unishk.edu.al[1]
evadinaj@gmail.com[2]

This paper examines the social and economic reintegration of return migrants in Albania, along with the related policies, challenges, and achievements. The authors used a qualitative design and a thematic analysis approach to investigate the experiences of eleven families who have returned to Albania from Italy and Greece due to the recession crisis. The study reveals that the economic deterioration was the major reason behind the return migration, and most returnees faced challenges related to labor market reintegration. Additionally, obstacles such as bureaucracy, administrative constraints, lack of information and trust in institutions, cultural and social trauma, reintroduction to the education system, uncertainty over property rights, and recognition of qualifications prevented or decelerated the process of reintegration. The authors suggest that further efforts are needed to support the reintegration of return migrants, including the development of policies and measures to facilitate the process and address the identified challenges. This study provides valuable insights for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners working in the field of migration and reintegration.

Key words: Return migration, Reintegration, Social and economic challenges, Policies, Obstacles.

Standards of Social Care Services for children in residential care institutions under the perspective of the National Deinstitutionalization Plan 2020-2022

Julinda Vokopola

Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Tirana,Albania

julivokopola@gmail.com

Deinstitutionalization as an approach has been principally included in social policy programs drawn up in Albania since 2000, focused on child protection. Developments over the years have shown that the deinstitutionalization of children from residential care institutions is a process that faces many difficulties and challenges in its implementation. The Albanian government with attention to children without parental care placed in RCI decided to strengthen its political commitment by raising this process to the level of centralized inter-institutional cooperation and in cooperation with UNICEF and Save the Children in Albania, in 2018 started the assessment process of children placed in RCI and their biological families. The results of the assessment guided the development of the national plan for deinstitutionalization. For the first time, the assessment of 232 resident children in 9 public RCIs for the period 2019-2020 and their families was carried out. The methodology of the paper is based on the literature review of the package of legislation related to the process of institutionalization of children and on secondary data obtained from the assessment carried out for children in RCI and their biological families. Deinstitutionalization as a process of integrated planning of the transformation of institutions and the reduction of the number of children in RCI, providing them with alternative care-based families, and raising them in a family environment, are facing many difficulties. The typology of institutionalized children today has changed from the typology of the 90s-2000s.The reasons for their institutionalization are closely related to the social issues that affect vulnerable families. Today, children who are placed in RCI are taken into protection by local child protection structures, due to abuse from their parents or their inability to protect them, mistreatment, economic exploitation, sexual abuse, trafficking, etc. The number of

children who are taken into protection and placed in RCI is higher than the number of children who leave for adoptive or biological families. Review of current policies related to child care standards in RCI approved in 2005 in full function and in coherence with legal and social developments including new structures of child protection approved after 2010. Adapting of standards according to the age groups of children, including a special standard for the process of reunification of the child with the biological family or placement in another family-based service, clarifying the legal procedure for removing the child from institutions and to serve in a functionally way the process of deinstitutionalization until the complete transformation of RCI into family-based community services.

Key words: Deinstitutionalization, Reunification, Residential care, Alternative care, Social care standards.

Social Work with family in urban and rural areas of the Shkodra municipality (The case of community centers)

Ledina Preza

University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"

ledina.preza1@gmail.com

Social work in rural areas is a new field of the social work profession in our context, while in many established countries there are many continuous approaches to this field of Social Work. In recent years, even in Albania, there has been a move by the local government towards providing social services for rural areas. An important development with other social developments in the field of policies, among which is the process of decentralization of social services. Shkodër Municipality, in order to adapt to the needs of the community for social services that are always growing, is expanding: the areas of coverage with social services, the types of social services and has created community centers in its administrative areas. In the sequel of these changes and especially the expansion of social services in rural areas, it seems quite interesting to familiarize ourselves with social work in the urban and rural areas of Shkodër Municipality in order to see the differences between them, focusing on work with the family in community centers. The research method of this study is a qualitative method which is in line with the purpose of the study. 10 social workers who work in the twelve Community Centers of the city of Shkodra were interviewed. A special focus will be placed on the work they do with families the challenges, difficulties and skills they need to work with this target group. Regarding the results, were found some interesting topics which are related to the role of the social worker in the community centers of the municipality of Shkodra, the perception that the residents of the community had about the social worker, the challenges of the social worker with family and the differences between the social work with family in rural and urban areas. The differences between social work in rural and urban areas were mainly related to the lack of information that the rural areas have compared to the urban one, with the mentality of the rural area, the lack of services that were offered for the family in the rural areas, confidentiality, culture and tradition. To summarize based on the findings of the study some of the recommendations for the future are: to improve the coordination between central and local government and this not only at the level of communication but also of practical development. Another one is to open more community centers in rural areas and increase the number of professionals in these areas in order to better cope with the demands and needs of the community. Finally, in the future it would be a very good development for Social Work curricula to develop the subject Rural Social Work, since the skills of our profession in this context are greatly influenced by the social environment (culture, traditions, customs) of these areas.

Key words: Social work, Experience, Challenge, Social worker, Urban, Family.

Social work and social innovation: the need of liable indicators

Melisa Campana

Complutense University of Madrid, UNA4CARRER Program,
MSCA cofund.

melcampa@ucm.es

This communication is enframed in the research project entitled Frontline Innovative Practices Bank, under UNA4CAREER Programme of the Complutense University of Madrid (MSCA cofund). Our research project is based on the assumption that innovative practices are permanently generated during the frontline interventions, producing, disrupting and/or reconfiguring institutional routines and increasing the quality and impact of social policy. But those initiatives stay hidden, out of visibility and, thus, inaccessible to analysis and measurement. The paper offers a brief review of the state of the art on the relationship between welfare, social work and social innovation, seeking to highlight the urgency of building reliable indicators to identify, account and measure social innovation in welfare field and, in particular, in social services' frontline intervention. The results refer to the exploratory phase, as this is the initial phase of the project, which is planned to be developed over the next three years. Those innovative practices will be crucial in the coming years to face the new risks in the social field and we need appropriated indicators to catch them as well as reliable instruments to collect and share them. Our project focuses on welfare frontline interventions at local level -Social Services of Madrid- in order to identify and collect innovative practices that will be stored and shared in the Frontline Innovative Practices Bank, a collaborative and open access platform to disseminate innovative practices to improve both social intervention and welfare as a system all over the world, helping to disseminate successful experiences and smart solutions for increasingly complex social issues.

Key words: Social Work, Social Innovation, Frontline Intervention, Hidden Innovation, Indicators.

The challenges of the school social worker with bullying behavior

Sabina Belshaku[1], Erjona Hasa[2], Paola Dishani[3]

Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education, University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani"[1, 2, 3]

sabina.belshaku@uniel.edu.al[1]
erjona.hasa@uniel.edu.al[2]
paola.dishani@uniel.edu.al[3]

Bullying behavior at school is a very widespread phenomenon nowadays in Albania. The study aims to examine the perspectives of high school social workers on bullying behaviors that occur in the school environment. The method used to carry out the study is the qualitative method of the exploratory type. The sample selected to carry out the study were 12 social workers from high schools in the city of Elbasan, public and private schools, who have at least three years of work experience in schools. Participants were included in the study using the "snowball" sampling method. The instruments used to carry out the study were a demographic questionnaire, conducting face-to-face interviews that include questions about the understanding of bullying, the environment at school, bullying incidents that occur at school, the characteristics of students labeled as bullies and victims of bullying, and questions about the experience and training of social workers in managing school bullying cases. The study's findings showed that not only do bullying behaviors present themselves in different ways in different school settings, but there was great variation in how social workers described how their schools responded to bullying behavior. One of the most important findings of the study is that participants discussed how the nature of bullying behavior has changed due to technological advances, which allow young people to interact in ways that were not available to them in previous generations. The data suggest a need for further research that continues to focus on the perspective of high school social workers and the multiple environmental contexts in which bullying occurs. The conclusions of the study on school social work practices include the recognition of the instrumental role that social workers can play in the creation and implementation of effective anti-bullying interventions in schools by planning and coordinating the involvement of various actors inside and outside the school environment. Key representatives include parents/guardians, teachers, school leaders, community representatives and policy makers.

Key words: Bullying behavior, School Social worker, School environment.

Challenges of social workers in the Shkoder District

Suad Arilla[1], Elidjon Cami[2]

Institution/Organization: Office for Boys and Girls (ZDB) [1]
Department of Psychology – Social work, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi" [2]

suad.arilla@hotmail.com[1]
elidjon.cami@unishk.edu.al[2]

Social work is a profession which, although it has been developing for a long time in Albania, when it comes to the positioning of this profession, the situation is still unclear in some cases. Specifically, in the city of Shkodra, as well as in many other regions, the social work professionals has often been placed in peripheral roles, or in the roles where they has been placed, they has had little influence due to not giving the total value that this profession represents. Through this study, my goal is to bring home the importance of this profession and get a general picture of what this profession represents today in the various workplaces in the municipality of Shkodra. This study has a qualitative methodology. The research questions are: 1. What are the social service sectors in Shkodër municipality covered by social workers and their characteristics?2. How does the job description fit with the concrete tasks that social workers perform? 20 social workers participate in this study, who represent various institutions and departments where this profession can assist, such as: lecturers, NGO, employees of Shkodër Municipality, social workers in education, etc. The analysis of the information collected through the semi-structured interview was carried out with the program Weft QDA 11. The main results obtained from this study are: 1) a part of the services provided in the city of Shkodra do not yet foresee social workers in their work organizations 2) in many positions where social workers are placed, they are mainly general appointments but with tasks directly related to this profession 3) in some other work positions, there is an unclear description of the role of the social worker or a conflict with other roles.

Key words: Social Work, Roles, Job description.

The current challenges of the Integration of immigrant families returned to the city of Shkodra and the social support programs for their empowerment by the Municipality of Shkodra and partner organizations

Case of Shkodër Municipality

Xhoelda Shelqetja[1], Bujanë Topalli[2], Edona Zenelaj [3]

Bashkia Shkodër[1]
University of Shkodër "Luigj Gurakuqi" [2, 3]

xhoelda.sh@gmail.com[1]
bujane.topalli@unishk.edu.al[2]
edonazenelaj200@gmail.com[3]

This study on the selected topic aims to evaluate the current situation of families returned from migration, examine the services offered in the city of Shkodra and the process of their reintegration into the community. The process of moving individuals from one country to another is accompanied by various social, economic, and psychological consequences affecting the increase in the vulnerability of adaptation to the community and its needs for reintegration. The realization of this study aims on evaluating the effectiveness of the services benefited for their empowerment from the programs offered by the municipality of Shkodër and the organizations operating in the territory. Also, great importance is emphasized in the challenges faced by the beneficiaries as soon as they return to Albania in relation to the support from the institutions in the territory. Furthermore this study examines female heads of households aged 30-45 who have voluntarily returned or been deported from EU countries such as: France, Germany and focuses on the services provided by Shkodër Municipality and other governmental or non-governmental institutions for their reintegration. Through qualitative research method we have used a semi-structured interview which was conducted in a sample of 15 interviews with heads of immigrant families) who have benefited or currently benefit from support from programs for their reintegration. In conclusion, even though many benefiters are empowered and resulted successful result is they still the need for direct support in long term services is considered valuable to integrate them in the community.

Key words: Migration, Reintegration, Integrated services for the family, Shkodër family.

Evidence of the problems faced by school social workers in the district of Elbasan: An in-depth analysis of the challenges and implications for practice

Zyhra Gripshi[1], Entela Kaleshi[2], Arjola Gripshi[3]

University "Aleksandër Xhuvani", Elbasan[1], Institute for Change and Leadership in Albania[2], "Luigj Gurakuqi" school Elbasan[3]

gripshizyra@yahoo.com[1], entela.kaleshi@yahoo.com[2], gripshi.ariola@yahoo.com[3]

The social worker of the psycho-social service at the school during these last years has taken on a very important role in the smooth progress of learning at the school by promoting a healthy environment in social and emotional terms. The social workers in the school has a key role in identifying and evaluating cases of students with social and emotional problems, learning and behavioral problems, and also in planning and providing services that help in the educational, social, and personal development of students. This paper aims to complement the work and scientific research that has been done in recent years regarding the role of the social worker and psycho-social service in the school, focusing the analysis on the local case of schools in the District of Elbasan. The paper brings data and analyzes the importance of the work of a social worker in the school and presents the challenges that these workers face in their difficult work in the pre-university education system. The methodology used in this study is the qualitative method, which includes 28 random interviews with social workers, and semi-structured interviews with social workers were used for data collection in 9-year and secondary schools in Elbasan District. Based on the analysis of these data, the study sheds light on the difficulties that affect the quality of the services provided, such as tools and resources needed when working with students, administrative workload, stress at work, management, and administration of various traumas and emotional burdens observed in students. The conclusions of the paper present some recommended measures that the involved institutions, colleagues, and parents can implement to overcome these challenges and increase the performance and quality of services of school social workers.

Key words: School social worker, Challenges, Psycho-social service, Social problems, Students.

SESSION II

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Analytical paper
The use of municipal administrative data: A framework for supporting research and policy analysis in social care

Eliona Kulluri[1], Lantona Sado[2]

Department of Social Work and Social Policies, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Tirana-Albania, Scholar of READ Program Albania[1]
Research and Development Unit, SGI and University of Roma Tre-Italy, Scholar
of READ Program Albania[2]

eliona.kulluri@unitir.edu.al[1]
stat.urs@societageografica.it[2]

The present paper discusses the various dimensions involved in the use of municipal administrative data for approaching social care services in Albania with analytical work, and the ways in which these dimensions interconnects. Data at municipal level in Albania are increasingly available, and the database of social services of Tirana Municipality is the richest and most consolidated example. However, the literature on administrative data in the country is sparse, and there is little consensus regarding what should be done for stimulating social care research and analyses. In light of continuous reforms of social protection and social care services, including data collections, strengthening systems and practices that support quality research implementation and knowledge sharing gains a particular importance. In addition, academics, and researchers new to this practice, are expected to face several challenges in understanding and using these data as a result of wide quantity, issues of inconsistency in terminology and standardization. Here we present a conceptual framework research in social care, and provide examples and context that guide the answers to the following analytical questions: What are the core components of social care services that need investigation? Which aspects of administrative data we need to carefully consider, the opportunity and possibility they offer of being transformed into research data? What are the expected outcomes in relation to high-quality and impactful social work research? International and national literature publicly available and grey literature including reports and documentation form public institutions in Albania, web pages, government policy statements, are reviewed through an online search using a systematic approach. The content and structure of data from Tirana Municipality is examined to make our case more concrete. In sharing this framework, our ultimate aim is to promote best practices in accurate data use for good quality research that may advance the goal of social care reform in Tirana and then in Albania.

Key words: Administrative data, Municipal data, Social care, Conceptual framework for Research.

Social services in the county Elbasan under the optics of changes of the framework legal

Elisabeta Osmanaj[1], Emanuela Dervishi[2]

Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education,
University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani[1, 2]

eli.osmanaj@gmail.com[1]
emanueladervishi@yahoo.com[2]

The law defines the role and responsibilities of public institutions charged with its implementation, as well as clearly divides the categories of beneficiaries according to the need and type of service. The right to use social services belongs to individuals or families who do not have the minimum means of living and are not able to provide them with work or income from properties or other sources. The purpose of this study is to present a detailed analysis of the Elbasan District, the sicure and provision of social services according to Law 121/2016 "On social care services", approved in November, 2016 through institutional and non-institutional forms of care, in order to help improve the quality of life and for people to be part of the society. Law 121/2016) on social care services in RSH, which aims how to regulate and provide social care services in order to help the well-being of the social inclusion of families and individuals who need social care as a mission of special importance in the Republic of Albania. By researching this issue, it is possible to provide a clear consensus for the clarification regarding the regulation of the legal framework, the beneficiaries of the services defined by law, as well as the impact that these services have on the beneficiaries. The study aims to present the main findings and provide supplementary explanations. This is an explanatory research and such a qualitative methodology was used with focus groups as its main instrument. The participants in the study were a total of 36 people, organized in 4 focus groups. The focus groups were organized based on leaders, local coordinators and social services specialists. In the general analysis of the focus group data, the social services that are offered according to the legal framework to the beneficiary categories, the organization of social services offered in the community and family, the challenges and the impacts of the socjal services on the beneficiaries are mainly explained.

Key words: Legal framework, Social services, Service beneficiaries, Analysis.

Loneliness and empathy among Educational Sciences students: A cross-sectional study

Elona Hasmujaj

Department of Psychology and Social Work, Faculty of Educational Sciences,University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi"

elona.hasmujaj@unishk.edu.al

Loneliness and empathy are two important psychological constructs that have received significant attention in the literature. Loneliness is a subjective feeling of social isolation and has been associated with a range of negative health outcomes, including depression and anxiety. Empathy, on the other hand, refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, and it has been linked to positive outcomes, such as prosocial behaviour and improved interpersonal relationships. Recent research has found an inverse correlation between loneliness and empathy among younger adults. Accordingly, the objective of this study was to investigate this relationship utilizing a cross-sectional quantitative design. A sample of 172 students (145 female and 27 male) from the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Shkoder was selected through a purposive non probability sampling. Participants were administered online the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Multidimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (MEES) to assess their levels of loneliness and empathy, respectively. The results revealed a weak but positive correlation between loneliness and empathy, with loneliness predicting a small but statistically significant portion of the variation in empathy levels. Female students demonstrated higher levels of empathy than male ones, although no significant differences in loneliness were observed between the two groups. Additionally, no significant differences in loneliness or empathy were found across different age groups. However, students of psychology exhibited higher levels of loneliness, while students of social work higher levels of empathy. Furthermore, students in their first year of study showed higher levels of empathy than those in later years of study. These findings have significant implications for educators and mental health professionals who work with students and may inform interventions and programs aimed at addressing loneliness and promoting empathy. Although this study has made some important contributions to the existing body of knowledge on prosocial behaviour, further research is required to comprehend the underlying mechanisms of the relationship between loneliness and empathy in this population.

Key words: Loneliness, Empathy, Prosocial behaviour, Quantitative study, Students.

The phenomenon of bulling in lower secondary school of Tirana

Emanuela Ismaili[1], Edmond Dragoti[2]

Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana[1, 2]

emanuela.ismaili@unitir.edu.al[1]
edmond.dragoti.unitr.edu.al[2]

Bullying in school is a problem worldwide and has negative effects on individual students and on the school climate as a whole. Bullying is any behavior that is initiated by one or more students against a victim or victims that causes physical or psychological intimidation. Bullying behaviors can be classified as either direct (such as teasing, threatening, hitting, or stealing) or indirect (such as rumor spreading or social isolation). Boys typically employed direct methods of bullying, while girls tend to use in direct methods. Either way, behaviors must occur repeatedly overtime to be classified as bullying. International studies on the prevalence of bullying show that a large number of students are involved or affected by this phenomenon with serious psychosocial consequences that can lead to suicide. The safety of all members in the school environment and the absence of aggressive behavior is an essential condition for promoting an effective school that enhances the academic, emotional and social well-being of its students. The Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the importance of protecting the quality of life of the child and their right to be educated in a safe environment, free from violence, harassment and neglect. In Albania, they are little attempt to study this phenomenon. So, this study aims to make an in-depth analysis of the prevalence and nature of bullying in 9 years old schools in the city of Tirana. The selected grades are grades VI to IX, which are known in the literature as lower secondary education. The researcher used quantitative research strategies, n = 853 students from eleven 9-year schools of the city of Tirana participated in the study. The results from the standardized questionnaire with students showed that bullying is an integral part of the schools studied. Approximately 42.3% of students are involved in the phenomenon of bullying, of which 12.9% are only aggressors; 21.7% of them are victims and 7.7% are both victims and aggressors at the same time.

Key words: Bullying, Aggressive behavior, Victims, Aggressors, Aggressor-victim category.

Parental influence and normative beliefs of students in career choices

Etleva Haxhihyseni[1], Elvira Dode[2]

Department of Psychology, Education and Sports European Faculty of Human Sciences, Education and Liberal Arts, European University of Tirana[1]
Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University "A. Xhuvani" Elbasan[2]

etleva.haxhihyseni@uet.edu.al[1]
elvira.dode@uniel.edu.al[2]

In this paper we aim to analyze one of the main factors that affects the success of individuals in life, the career choice. Parents play an important role in young people's career choices. They influence the direction and level of education that young people achieve; the understanding of different professions; beliefs and attitudes towards them, including motivation towards success. The parent's role is internalized unconsciously. Adolescents are implicitly influenced and shaped by their parents' attitudes and expectations towards them from an early age. Instead of being supported and assisted by their parents, they can feel more confidence in their ability to choose a career that would be interesting and exciting for them. The purpose of our mini-scale study is to identify the features for an efficient practice of career guidance, including the need to start in an earlier age the process of unfolding and promoting the vocation of students and exposure to the world of work and the labor market. Mix, quantitative and qualitative methods were used as a research method, and a semi-structured questionnaire was used as a measuring instrument. Efficacy review and help-seeking patterns for educational and career planning issues were analyzed in a sample of 103 individuals, where: 92% of them were employed and 8% were students of second level with employment experience. Even though career guidance is the most common source of support for their direction, 61% rate it as useless as a process, 17% are neutral and 22% rate it as helpful. The reporting of parental influence and behavior in a second choice chance varies significantly from 15% to 3%. The interviewed adults say that they have chosen the fields of study under the compelling encouragement of their parents. On the other hand, the analyzed results show a lack of efficiency in career orientation that is reflected in the uncertainty of the choice. This makes decisions more difficult, with personal, family and social costs that manifest in skills mismatches and unsatisfactory employment prospects. We recommend the need to design alternative intervention strategies to increase the efficiency of career guidance.

Key words: Career orientation, Normative beliefs, Career choice.

The effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on the work practices of social workers in Albania. An empirical research with survey and semi-structured interviews

Laura Bini[1], Giorgia Bulli[2], Erika Cellini[3], Giulia Mascagni[4], Raffaella Nurchis[5], Eltona Tila[6]

Ordine degli Assistenti Sociali, Regione Toscana, Italy[1, 6, 5]
Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, University of Florence, Italy[2, 3, 4]

laura.bini@unifi.it[1], giorgia.bulli@unifi.it[2], erika.cellini@unifi.it[3], giuliamg.mascagni@unisi.it[4], raffaella.nurchis@unifi.it[5], eltonatilaj@yahoo.com[6]

The 2020 Covid 19 pandemic not only disrupted the lives of people and communities globally, but also has had problematic implications for public and private public-facing services and has placed social workers on the front lines. Numerous researches on social services in Italy during the pandemic describe the disorientation of social workers in the various dimensions of their work. In particular, the study by Gui and colleagues describes *environmental disorientation,* due to the shift to virtual spaces enabled by online communication; *relational disorientation*, due to the effects of barriers to virus transmission on interpersonal communication; *instrumental displacement*, with the rapid readjustment of instrumentation due to the alteration of boundaries between professional and personal; *organizational disorientation*, at a time when the inertia of an established organizational set-up in the forms of professional bureaucracy had to give way to different forms of adhocracy, which would allow for sudden adaptation to changing context conditions. After having analyzed the characteristics and transformations of social services in Albania with an Erasmus Plus European Project entitled Towards Increased Awareness, Responsibility and Shared Quality in Social Work (T@sk), ended in 2021 and carried out in the midst of the pandemic, we thought it appropriate to study and bring out the pandemic's impact in the ways and rhythms of work of social workers in Albania by investigating precisely the dimensions identified by Gui. Then, for each of the 4 areas, we asked what were the learnings for social workers in terms of innovation, what were the main critical issues and the most difficult knots to resolve, and how this challenging path led to changes in the post-pandemic period. Since

empirical studies on social workers in Albania are not many, we carried out research that could gather the voice of members of this profession: we did so by means of a questionnaire survey administered by face-to-face interview to 70 social workers throughout Albania. In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with some social workers who also participated in the survey, in order to explore some key issues that emerged. Initial analysis results are quite in line with what has emerged on the international scenario: most of the interviewees state that during the pandemic their work activities slowed down, which did not prevent them from working but did result in major difficulties; also in the Albanian context is found confirmation of the organization's ability to readjust to circumstances with even positive outcomes on the quality of services offered, precisely because of the organizational and technological innovations introduced. Social workers have a privileged position in that they stand at the intersection of the micro and the macro, if they are included in the thinking of a welfare that protects the community. The social workers interviewed pointed out that during the pandemic there was a recognition of the profession and the role of the social worker by both citizens and other professions.

Key words: Pandemic, Social workers, Disorientation, Survey, Semi-structured Interviews.

Including the social in the individual. A reflection about groupwork teaching methodology in Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Linda Ducca Cisneros[1], Andrés Arias Astray[2], David Alonso González[3], Renata Nunes[4], Juan Brea Iglesias[5]

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Faculty of Social Work[1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

lducca@ucm.es[1], aariasas@ucm.es[2], dalonso@ucm.es[3], renunes@ucm.es[4] jubrea@ucm.es[5]

In UCM Groupwork has been taught through experiential learning. Students form their own groups, choosing the topic and typology; and participate performing different roles: facilitator, observer and participant. After the Covid 19 pandemic the tendency is to carry out groups related to self-help and mutual aid with stress, self-esteem, personal development, and anxiety as the most common topics. It was observed that these issues are approached from an individual perspective, disregarding the increment in mental health problems of the society in general. The objective of the study is to analyse the manner students integrate (or not) the structural and social dimensions in their group experiences. The study is carried out through a qualitative methodology. The techniques include: participant observation, content analysis of the students 'group chronicles and evaluation and group discussions. Results show that besides the difficulties for including the social and structural students highlight the importance of groupwork interaction and the sense of belonging to understand these problems from a collective perspective. Challenges and possibilities for including the social justice and find joint solutions against the tendency to individualise and medicalise problems are explained.

Key words: Groupwork, Mental health, Experiential learning, Social work education.

Implementation of ICT standards in subject programs

Loreta Mamani[1], Mimoza Çarka[1]

Department of Education and Teaching Methodology, "Eqrem Cabej"
University, Gjirokastra, Albania[1, 2]

loretamamani@hotmail.com[1]
mcarka@uogj.edu.al[2]

In the debate about the role of technology on learning, the question of whether ICT exerts a positive influence, or how important this influence is, remains an open issue for debate and empirical verification. This study analyzes the implementation of digital learning technology during the didactic processing of knowledge in the teaching and learning process and precisely if the teaching model reflects the standards of the learning process based on the 9-year schools of the city of Gjirokastër. The analysis is based on data collected from ninth grade students, teachers, school principals, in the schools of Gjirokastra. The data contains information from schools in urban areas for the period 2022, after the introduction of ICT, the degree of knowledge and use of technology by students and teachers, as well as the degree and quality of the introduction of technological infrastructure in schools and learning. In this paper, we will analyze how the packages of standards designed for educational institutions in order to facilitate and enable the integration of technology in subject programs, find application or not in the teaching and learning process. The analysis shows that the city's schools have problems with the quality of the technological infrastructure, with the level of knowledge and use of ICT, the relationships that ICT builds between them, the Teacher and the Student, as well as with the teaching model. The analysis finds that schools should work harder to implement technology standards in the learning process.

Key words: Learning through ICT, Technological knowledge, Use of ICT, Standards.

Using action research in co-construct supervision practices with social care services' staff of Municipality of Dimal, Albania

Marinela Sota

University of Tirana

sotamarinela@yahoo.com

Staff of social care services in Albania is facing many challenges due to the reform in administrative reform and and the recent reforms in social protection and social care. They have to perform tasks related not only with assessment and planning, but also with case management and intervention, especially in small municipalities. This action research aimed to identify the needs of staff of social care services for supervision and develop supervision plans according to these needs. The research focused in identifying staff's needs and exploring capacities in them focusing on their context of practice. Methods used to fulfill the aim and objectives of the research were semi-structured interviews and taking field notes. The data collection and analyse wer realized during February-March 2022. Results from the research were: a) staff was overload with different tasks, some administrative and some related with case mangment and intervention; b)intervention work took less time than planning and administrative work; c) supervision was not provided at all: d) they hardly applied reflective practices; e) due to the lack of supervision they hardly thought about a practice in the context f) there were few efforts to help and assist each-other in a non-formal way; there was an urgent need to provide formal supervision for social care services'staff. Research helped to co-create supervision's plan together with participants and to respond to their needs taking into consideration the capacities and the context of the services. Supervision seances adressed the needs using the approach of reflective practice and social worker focused in process in the context.

Key words: Supervision, Staff of social care services, Supervision's needs, Supervision's plan.

Young people's dilemmas about cohabitation or marriage

Valbona Muça[1], Emanuela Dervishi[2]

Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education Sciences,
Elbasan/Albania
"Aleksandër Xhuvani" Elbasan University[1]
Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education
University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani"[2]

bonamuca@yahoo.it[1]
emanueladervishi@yahoo.com[2]

The concepts that creating a family is a necessity of the individual, whether male or female, and that marriage between couples of the opposite sex is the only legitimate way to create a healthy family, which in the past have been ingrained in the mind of each one. , today are experiencing shocks and serious changes. For today's Albanian society, cohabitation has a growing tendency, turning into a phenomenon that can no longer be ignored. The main focus of this research is the presentation of a research contribution on the social representations of the family, cohabitation and marriage expressed by a group of young people from the city of Elbasan. The sample selected for this study is young people in the age group of 20-25 years. Qualitative method is the chosen method for conducting our study. Qualitative research, in fact, asserts itself as that investigative methodology that aims to capture attitudes, impressions, social representations of specific facts or human experiences, in order to highlight not only the immediately visible events, but also those that are not perceived immediately. The survey technique used for the study was the questionnaire divided into specific sessions. By analyzing the data, it is concluded that the interest in investigating the social representations of the aforementioned phenomena is related to the assumption that motivations, attitudes, opinions and behaviors are closely related to a represented field that is the result of the interactions and experiences of a community; after we have seen, through the data presented, what are the behaviors of young people in relation to marriage, cohabitation.

Key words: Family, Coexistence, Marriage, Phenomena.

School dropout and the role of psychosocial school services

Veronika Duci[1], Elton Noti[2], Izela Tahsini[3]

Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana[1, 2, 3]

veronika.duci@unitir.edu.al[1]

elton.noti@unitir.edu.al[2]

izela.tahsini@unitir.edu.al[3]

School dropout is a phenomenon that has received substantial attention, but only recently. However, upper secondary education and particularly vocational education is barely part of this discourse, which is more focused on compulsory education. An unclear definition of school dropout in upper secondary education accompanied with unrealistic expectations for vocational education and a vague methodology for the assessment of dropout are only some of the reasons affecting dropouts and its assessment. The double dependency of vocational schools both from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Finance and Economy have made this part of the education a "niche", particularly in respect to psychosocial staff capacity building and continuous development. The aim of this paper is to analyze the influencing factors for school dropout within and out of school, to explore the role of the key institutions in mitigating this phenomenon and to discuss improved policies and practices that contribute to the reduction of school dropout. The study has used mainly a qualitative methodology, where teachers and staff of the psychosocial unit participated through interviews and focus group discussions. A purposeful and convenient sampling was employed. Additionally, secondary data analysis of the school databases was conducted to understand dropout reporting and reasons and further explore on them. A total of 9 schools in vocational education participated in the study. Results showed that there is a need to have a precise conceptualization of school dropout and an improved methodology to assess and mitigate the phenomenon. The role of the psychosocial staff within schools was proved to be very important in these processes and in addressing the needs of students at high risk for dropout.

Key words: School dropout, Vocational education, Psychosocial school services, Methodology for assessment, School dropout definition.

Review and analysis of the curriculum of study Bachelor in "Social work" at the University of Shkoder

Visar Dizdari[1], Galsvinda Biba[2], Bujanë Topalli[3]

Department of Psychology – Social work, University of Shkoder "LuigjGurakuqi" [1, 2, 3]
visar.dizdari@unishk.edu.al[1]
galsvinda.biba@unishk.edu.al[2]
bujane.topalli@unishk.edu.al[3]

The aim of this paper is to present the results of a review and analysis of the bachelor program in "Social work" curriculum of studies at the University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi". These analysis were part of a wider study undertaken in the frame of the project "Increasing the capacities of social workers in service and enhancing the education in Social Work in Albania" (implemented by DSWSP, University of Tirana and funded by UNICEF – Albania), one of which objectives was to provide a comprehensive review of the existing curricula in Social Work Education in the three public Albanian universities, Tirana, Shkoder and Elbasan, in order to know the level of knowledge they offered about social services. More specifically, the review of the curriculum of studies in Social Work intended to define the level of inclusion of social services in Albania; their organization; the roles and responsibilities about planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating aspects of social services at national and local level. Another objective was to understand the level of knowledge and practical skills the students receive relating to the social services. The methodology used was a curriculum content review, aiming to identify if the theoretical knowledge about the functioning of social services, is included in the study program and in the different syllabi. The analysis included the review of 10 courses and their syllabi of the study program Bachelor in Social work 2019 – 2022. Main findings are that, despite the plan of study does not have a specific course entitled to exclusively treat social services at national and local level, there are courses related to different aspects of social services. The inclusion of such aspects is seen especially in characterized formation subjects. It is during the second and the third years of study the students take deep knowledge about the organization and the functioning of social services at national level. And, mainly in the 3rd year students see, throght internship in institutions, how social services are organized in the local level, Municipality of Shkoder and in other municipalities in north Albania. Finally, we suggest changes in the curriculum of study and the syllabi of the Bachelor degree in "Social Work" at the University of Shkoder for a better inclusion and the improvement of the level of knowledge and practical skills on social services.

Key words: Social Work Education, Curriculum content review, Social services, Shkoder.

The role of the social worker at school with students with Asperger's Syndrome

Sabina Belshaku[1], Darina Coni[2], Alisa Bicoku[3], Zyhra Gripshi[4]

University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani", Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education[1, 2, 3, 4]

sabina.belshaku@uniel.edu.al[1]
darina.coni@uniel.edu.al[2]
alisa.bicoku@uniel.edu.al[3]
zyhra.gripshi@uniel.edu.al[4]

Asperger's syndrome presents itself in different forms in affected children. Individualization in these symptoms is a defining feature of SA and a challenge for those working with children with SA. (Bellini, 2004; Green, Gilchrist, Burton, &Cox, 2000; Myles & Simpson, 2002; Simpson, 2005). Characteristics of SA typically appear in the following categories: social, emotional, behavioral, sensory, academic, and intellectual. In school settings, damage to individual strengths as a result of SA can affect children, colleagues and teachers.The purpose of this study was to examine the interventions and perceptions of school social workers on students with Asperger's Syndrome and their families. The study focused on three areas: (a) strengths and challenges experienced and faced by children with AS and their families (b) interventions used by school social workers with children with AS, with families and with the wider community and (c) training of children with AS in schools by social workers.The methodology used in this study is the qualitative method. Structured and semi-structured interviews with three focus groups of teachers, students with AS and parents of students with AS in three nine-year old schools in the city of Elbasan were used as an instrument. The findings of the study showed that school environments can be problematic for students with AS, that they struggle to fit in. In their focus, they have empirical difficulties and the inability to participate normally in conversations often sets them apart and this makes it difficult to develop friendships. It is important for teachers and practitioners to be aware of these SA-related behaviors so that children are not blamed for unwanted actions.

Key words: Asperger's syndrome, Competence, Academic achievement.

SESSION III

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

The importance, role and work of the assistant or special teacher in resource classes

Aida Sotiri[1], Valbona Caushi[2]

"Eqrem Cabej" University Gjirokastër [1, 2]

aida_sotiri@yahoo.com[1]
valbona.caushi@gmail.com[2]

Creating school inclusion policies is an integral part of all inclusive school plans. The comprehensive school takes measures so that every student with special needs has the opportunity to use every environment. One of these environments is the resource class. A resource classroom is a special setting, either a classroom or a designated smaller room, where a special education program can be provided to a student with special needs, either individually or in a small group. This study aims to explore the importance of these classes and the role of the assistant teacher in them, in the way that assistance is given to students with special needs, and their families. For its realization, we relied on the qualitative method and direct observation. The instruments used are interviews with parents, assistant teachers, heads of middle schools in the city and in two rural schools of Gjirokastra. The findings of this study showed that resource classes in schools exist, but are not attended or used by teachers. There is a lack of didactic tools that should be used by teachers for the student's disability, assistant teachers have limited knowledge to adapt individual learning techniques to the function of the student (difficulties, pace, age), time is an important problem for teachers. Under these conditions, a work plan for refreshing these classes and training teachers on the role, furnishing and use of the resource class in the function of students and parents of children with special needs is necessary.

Key words: Resource class, Special needs, Assistant teacher, Planning, Inclusiveness.

Management of the post-covid situation under the influence of anxiety and locus of control in students of Psychology & Social Work branches

Arben Hoti

University of Shkodër, Albania

arben.hoti@unishk.edu.al

During 2021 and the first half of 2022, we have been in the post-covid situation, which we have tried to overcome by respecting the conditions and measures in our own way. A way that has shown various influences like our level of anxiety and locus of control. In a sample in the form of a census of about 200 students, the follow-up and compliance measures under the influence of anxiety and locus of control variables are presented in this article without forgetting the influence they can have on each other. All this under a study carried out last year, the results of a part of which are presented in this conference article, being included in the group of numerous studies that have been carried out around the world. The article in question tries to reveal the psychosocial influence in overcoming the postcovid situation, the manifestations of anxiety levels and locus of control, as well as the relationship between them in the selected sample.

Key words: Covid-19, Students, Vaccination, Anxiety, Locus of control.

Factors influencing parents' anxiety in hospitalization of their children

Artemisi Shehu Dono[1], Alberta Shkëmbi[2]

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Tirana[1, 2]
artemisi.shehu@unitir.edu.al[1]
alberta.shkembi@unitir.edu.al[2]

Illness and hospitalization are often critical events that a child faces, as well as his parents, especially mothers, who are in more frequent contact with the child. Parental stress and anxiety can affect the child in two ways, by transferring the stress to the child, as well as by interfering with the mother's ability to care for the child. This study aims to analyze the relationship between anxiety levels and hospitalization in parents who have hospitalized children. The sample for the study was selected conveniently. 61 (N=61) people participated in the study. The Deborah Beidel Anxiety Disorder Assessment (ADA) Questionnaire was used to measure anxiety levels that was completed by parents who had hospitalized children. The questionnaire is self-reported. For the realization of the topic, a review of previous and contemporary literature was made and this topic is an attempt to bring a panorama of how the hospitalization of the child is related, with the reporting of the anxiety levels that parents experience when they have children hospitalized, including variables that are directly related to hospitalization, such as the specific diagnosis or not, the number of previous hospitalizations of the child or not, the time spent in the child's hospitalization, as well as other variables that are indirectly related, such as education level, status socio-economic, age, etc. The IBM statistical program, SPSS Statistics 20, was used for data analysis. From the statistical analysis, it can be seen that the most frequent symptoms were related to: constant feeling of fear, inner feeling of nervousness and insecurity, feeling of tension, crying immediately/too often, loss of appetite, headache, difficulty fall asleep It was seen that there was a high statistical significance between the time of the child's hospitalization, the number of the child's hospitalizations, the child's diagnosis and the self-reported levels of anxiety by the parents, where for all three of these ($p<0.05$). Other variables taken in the study showed relationships of all types, including: strong negative relationship between level of education and self-reported level of anxiety by parents ($r= -0.71$), moderate negative relationship between socioeconomic status with self-reported levels of anxiety ($r= -0.69$). The study data would constitute an innovation in the field of psychology study and to further understand and intervene in the reduction of anxiety symptoms in parents of hospitalized children.

Key words: Anxiety, Hospitalization, Influencing factors, Diagnosis.

Mindset and Mental health

Arjeta Pelinku

Social Worker

ar_jeta86@hotmail.com

When we talk about humans, very often we define them as homo sapiens; wise men or men who thinks. Since the key to mental health, our perspectives, and the way we evaluate different situations is related to the way we think, preserving mental health is the key stone to support growth. There is where it stands the importance of mental health as part of our lives and development. The aim of this research is to explore the importance of parent's mentality and how it affects and shapes the children's mentality, very often by passing on their trauma. At the same time this research aims to bring into light the difficulties social workers go through while trying to access the parents of these children. This study intends to describe etymologically the concept of mentality bringing into light the definitions of it. It also aims to identify the most common mental health problems in teenagers, exploring the impact that the parent's mentality has on children's mental health and how it affects their growth, bringing in solutions and suggestions on how social workers can bring in/develop new perspectives in this actual problem. To conduct this study is used the qualitative methodology of scientific research. The literature is made of compilation of articles, studies, books and scientific articles from different experts in the field of psychology and other fields directly and indirectly linked to the topic of the research, and participatory observation. The study concludes that the way how teenagers think is affected by their parent's mindset. Most of the parents are concerned about their children's grades more than their mental and emotional health forgetting to teach them human values, emotional intelligence, and self-control. Pressure for grades causes frustration, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, emotional problems, etc, in youth, causing decrease of their performance in different fields. It is often said that mindset is the key to shaping the perspective from which we see the glass of water; and indeed, it is. Parent's Mindset plays a key role in creating mental health problems in children and teenagers. Social workers have a special role in helping kids and families with the way they shape their mindsets. Social workers should be more involved in the processes that have to do with education in our country. Parents must be the main focus of the work being done by the social workers, so the problem can be examined from the roots. Nowadays mindset and mental health must be treated with the proper importance so that we can raise young people with mentally healthy mindsets. Kids should not be defined by their grades but from their core values and skills.

Key words: *Mindset, Mental health, Kids, Parents, Social workers, Values.*

54

The impact of stress and the socio-emotional situation on students in the exam. Case of students of University of Gjakova

Behxhet Gaxhiqi[1], Zeqir Hashani[2], Ferdi Kamberi[3]

University of Gjakova "Fehmi Agani" – Gjakova, Kosovo[1, 2, 3]

behxhet.gaxhiqi@uni-gjk.org[1]
zeqir.hashani@uni-gjk.org[2]
ferdi.kamberi@uni-gjk.org[3]

Exam stress usually is the feeling of tension and worry that comes from test-taking situations. It is normal to feel some stress about upcoming tests, exams, papers or presentations. But, if the stress continues to be as chronic, then problems can appear in many forms and ways. The study is related to the field of education. At its center, we put the problem of connection between stressful situations students face during and after exams and their academic results, in order to mark the current problems and to suggest taking effective measures which provide a higher performance in students' academic achievements. The research methodology used in this study was the quantitative method. The sample in the study include 300 students from University of 'Fehmi Agani' in Gjakova. As a main instrument for collecting empirical data was used the questionnaire, whereas for data analysis was used the method of statistical analysis, the SPSS program package and the statistical interpretation of variables, making also comparisons among results in compliance with the aim and objectives of this study. All the findings that come out of the proof of the raised hypotheses in this paper prove that in the majority of cases students had stress during the pandemic at the time they were locked down and held lessons online than outside of this time. The research revealed that students showed lower results in exams during Covid-19 pandemic, due to their aggravated socio- emotional conditions. The study results also showed that students experienced a lack of concentration and focus in exams. The level of comparisons between faculties has also exposed that we have a big difference between students when it comes to facing with the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Key words: Exam, Stress, Socio-emotional, Situation, Students.

Perceptions of vulnerable young people on social care services at the local level

Daniela Kalaja[1], Eliona Kulluri[2]

University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work and Social Policy[1, 2]

dkalaja07@yahoo.com, daniela.kalaja@unitir.edu.al[1]
elionakulluri@gmail.com, eliona.kulluri@unitir.edu.al[2]

Albania is one of the few European countries that continue to have a young population. The latest population census shows that young people make up 25% of the total population. It seems that the low birth rate and emigration have affected the number of young people in Albania. The prolonged transition and the dynamics of the country towards development have complicated the challenges of young people, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups to adapt to change. The realization of this study was necessary to understand the situation of vulnerable young people in the regions of Tirana, Kamëz, Elbasan, Krujë and Durrës and to assess the provision level of social care services at local level in these five cities. A qualitative approach was selected for the realization of this study. The instrument used for data collection is the focus groups discussion with vulnerable young people from the above mentioned regions. Qualitative methodology helps to better explore the issues that concern young people the most and the reasons behind them. This allows for a better understanding of their perception on services provided by local government; trust in social care workers, accessibility and quality of services provided. The results of the study show that most of the interviewees have very little or no knowledge about social care services at the local level or other services for young people, especially for the ones being part of vulnerable groups. Few of the social care services known by these individuals are connected with the experiences of family members or acquaintances who have received such services. However, there is still confusion regarding services in general such as (transportation, health centers, emergencies, social-cultural activities, sports, etc.) from social care services at the local level. There is a spirit of mistrust in the responses of young people in relation to services, as well as a lack of real policies and institutionalized local mechanisms for this target group. The lack of

infrastructure and public funding penalizes all young people, not only vulnerable ones, when it is noticeable that services for vulnerable young people are missing in both large and smaller cities or are difficult to access. Some of the suggestions identified by the young people interviewed are related to the addition of community centers where they exist and their opening in cities or areas where they are absent. Some of them are suggested to be genuine youth centers with activities for young people, rehabilitation centers, parenting programs, libraries, etc. Meanwhile, specific services for vulnerable youth should include vocational training courses, foreign languages, free counseling for young people, as well as the expansion of services by NGOs operating locally in small towns and rural areas. The main priority remains the need to raise and strengthen the capacities of institutions at the local level, including the increase of human resources and financial resources in social services for this category.

Key words: Vulnerable young people, Needs assessment, Social care services, Social worker, Social inclusion.

Conflicts in Albanian society

Darina Çoni (Kacollja)[1], Amarilda Thërrmija[2]

University of Elbasan "A. Xhuvani", Faculty of Educational Sciences,
Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education[1]
Office of Education, Durrës[2]

darina.coni@ uniel.edu.al[1]
ildathermija@yahoo.com[2]

Conflicts between the generations are a characteristics of every civilization, from the early civilizations until in our days civilizations, Prof. Beqja wrote: "As long as human society exists and also does its smallest unit, the gist of it, the family, there will always have a relationship between generations and in this relation will always exist problematic and conflictual situations. The new generation is attracted by new things and its goal is contemporan, progressive, looks ahead and of course that can make mistakes. Every generation tries to be new, original: have a need to feel useful, aims to say something that isn't yet said and to contradict what is already said. Not being like that, even our live wouldn't have a goal and even the history any dynamics. But is it that simple to be original? The old generation always tends to be supported at the past, sometimes at the old one. It appreciates tradition and the values from the past, but sometimes it exaggerates their importance. In Albanian nowadays, although in reduction there are still prints of patriarchal families.

Key words: Conflict, Family, Society.

The nature, origins and consequences of the Albanian shame - proneness

Fatjona Haka

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

fat.haka@gmail.com

Despite the wide amount of research on shame on an international level, in Albania it still remains an unresearched emotion. Furthermore, the nature, origins and its effects on psychosocial functioning are not well – understood, or defined (Malinen, 2010). Additionally, according to the same author as shame is considered a taboo topic sometimes it goes unnoticed even among scholars. In many cases this apathy towards the study of shame is favored by the cultural features of a society. This is the case of Albania. The purpose of the current research is to offer a phenomenological explanation about the nature, origins and consequences of the Albanian shame – proneness. Therefore, the following research questions were raised: (1) What are the conditions and circumstances that create the predisposition for the Albanian shame – proneness development? (2) What experiences cause and shape the feelings of shame and its various experiences? (3) What kind of strategies, tactics and defenses do the Albanians use in their childhood, adolescence and adulthood to cope with shame? (4) What styles of communication do people use to describe their shame related feelings and experiences? (5) How does shame influence people's mental well-being in different ages? (6) How does shame influence people's interpersonal relationships in different ages? This is a conceptual replication of the Malinen (ibid.) research which was applied in the Finnish culture. Invitations were made to 120 graduates and undergraduates of various programs. Among them, 92 responded positively by sending back to the researcher a written narrative of their shame and guilt experiences. In the next step 21 participants were selected for in depth interviews. Additionally, they completed the TOSCA -3 measure. Shame proneness was discussed in relation to other emotions, constructs, dimensions and behaviors. Actually, the categories and themes as well as the TOSCA 3 scores are still being processed. Although the results are not finalized, considering the existing research in the field it may be stated the upcoming findings have important implications for the study of psychopathology, for the experiences related to distressing emotions, for the inner experiences and for the interpersonal relationships.

Key words: Shame – proneness, Guilt, Childhood issues, Psychological well-being.

Situating Gambling.
For an intersectional reading of lifestyles and health risks

Giulia Mascagni

Dipartimento di Scienze Sociali, Politiche e Cognitive (DISPOC), Università di Siena giuliamg.mascagni@unisi.it

Just as there are social drinkers and occasional smokers, so there are social gamblers, for whom gambling remains an amusement: about 95-96% of gamblers or those who drink alcohol (Azienda Usl Toscana sud est 2023). For some, however, what seemed like a habit turns into a real "bondage". It is a real gambling addiction in which the person no longer controls their playful behavior, reporting effects and damages both from a psychic and social point of view. *Pathological gambling* (PG) is a growing phenomenon all over the world, the causes of which can be traced to biological, psychological and social, but also cultural and economic factors (Sulkunen et al. 2019). Furthermore, it is during periods of greater economic uncertainty that the amounts of money destined for gambling increase, as people rely on the (illusory) hope of gambling and betting to achieve the desired standard of living (Caritas Roma 2019; Federsanità Anci Toscana 2022). This contribution aims to offer a framework of the gambling phenomenon from a multidisciplinary and intersectional perspective (Crenshaw 1989), highlighting the (circular) relationship between the individual, territory, resources, and lifestyles. From a literature review and analysis perspective, the theoretical and research contributions (Dal Lago, Quadrelli 2003; Mascagni 2015; Rolando et al. 2021) and the data presented (EGBA 2021; Agenzia delle Dogane e dei Monopoli ADM 2017; ARS 2022; GAPS-ESPAD 2020) will provide new and targeted resources: I. to read the complex dynamics of well-being and malaise; II. to identify the contexts and behaviors most at risk; III. to better intercept and interpret individual and collective requests and needs. As regards the analysis of this phenomenon and of the possibly taking charge of those in difficulty, it remains difficult to identify the point at which the physiological and psychological expressions are transformed into affections (Bury & Gabe 2004): the concepts of disease and health are strongly linked to historical periods and social contexts, they are filled with different contents from time to time, they are affected by social and cultural changes and by the different configurations of power. Contributing – at both at the policy level and at the operational level of social intervention – to clearly identifying the socio-cultural causes favouring gambling addiction and to building structured, lasting and interdisciplinary methods of removal/contrast is an important and at the same time extremely delicate and challenging objective, especially at a particularly complex historical moment from an economic and political point of view and fragile from a social point of view, like the present one.

Key words: Gambling, Lifestyles, Health risks, Area deprivation, Social intervention.

Family strengthening in the context of COVID – 19 pandemic in Albania

Izela Tahsini[1], Veronika Duci[2]

Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana[1, 2]

izela.tahsii@unitir.edu.al[1]
veronika.duci@unitir.edu.al[2]

Several measures were introduced from the Albanian government since the beginning of the pandemic to respond to the needs of citizens. However, as highlighted in different rapid assessments, provision of social services has been a challenge and families have been struggling to meet their needs, especially in vulnerable communities. In this context, this study was undertaken with the aim of conducting a rapid assessment of the current situation of family strengthening service provision, the services' typology and the challenges faced by the social care workforce in two of the largest municipalities of Albania, in the context of COVID – 19 pandemic. 38 participants were involved in the assessment. The methodology of the study was qualitative. Primary data were collected through six semi-structured key informant interviews with municipality social services representatives and four focus groups, two with municipality specialists, including need assessment and referral units worker, child protection worker, domestic violence coordinators, social administrators and community centers workers, and two with representatives of non-governmental organizations providing family strengthening services, while secondary data were collected through a review of relevant legislation and reports. Main findings show that provision of services on family strengthening does not follow a systematic approach; the pandemic added new challenges to social services structures in this regard; also, there are challenges related to inter-institutional collaboration, lack of coordination among services providers, weak sustainability, and a need for diversification of services and building new services; social welfare workforce capacities are limited; data management systems are developing, but lack crosslinking.

Key words: Social services, Family programs, Family strengthening approach, Pandemic.

The level of anxiety in pregnant women during the Covid-19 pandemic

Lediana Xhakollari[1], Sabina Karmaj[2]

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"[1, 2]

lediana.xhakollari@unishk.edu.al[1]
sabinakarmaj25@gmail.com[2]

The main purpose of the study is to determine the level of anxiety among pregnant women, who attend the public maternity and private gynaecological clinics in the city of Shkodra, during the period of Covid-19 pandemic, September 2022. The health and psychological consequences of Covid-19 pandemic have affected the entire population, bringing health and psychological damage, and even the loss of many lives. Pregnant women are special target group in terms of health, as another creature is being created and growing inside them, as well as from the psychological side with its stresses and hormonal changes. And being such a special and delicate group, the study aimed to determine the level of anxiety among pregnant women during the period of Covid-19 pandemic and the causes that may affect the possible increase of anxiety in their lives. Part of the sample were 135 pregnant women ranging from the age of 17 to the age of 46. The Beck Anxiety Inventory was used for data collection which is a rating scale used to evaluate the severity of anxiety symptoms. Inventory contains 21 self-report items with a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3 and raw scores ranging from 0 to 63.The results of the study regarding the level of anxiety showed that 16.3% of the pregnant women who participated in the study were experiencing a low level of anxiety, 47.8% a moderate level of anxiety and 45.9% a high level of anxiety.

Key words: Anxiety, Pregnant, Covid-19.

The impact of anxienty on teaching process of teachers during the online learning

Ortenca Kotherja[1], Elvira Dode[2]

University of Elbasan "A. Xhuvani", Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Psichology[1]

University of Elbasan "A. Xhuvani", Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Social Sciences and Civic Education[2]

kotherja_ortenca@hotmail.com[1]
elvira.dode@uniel.edu.al[2]

Anxiety is the total reaction of human being to threat or danger. Every anxiety experience involves a perception of danger, thoughts of harm, and a physiological alarm and activation process. Anxiety does not feel the same for everyone. Individuals may experience some of the physical symptoms and some of the psychological symptoms, reflecting the effects in different areas of their lives. The purpose of this study was to explore how returning to teaching during the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic impacted teachers' anxiety. The present study included 189 elementary teachers from 333 that was the total number of participants. Teachers were randomly selected in the city of Elbasan and ranged in age from 29 to 63 years. The purpose of this study is to address the importance of anxiety in the teaching process of teachers throw online teaching. In this study was used quantitative method were the data were collected through the Beck Anxiety Inventory . The result of the study show the importance of factors that affect different symptoms specifically rapid heartbeat that teachers experienced. Based on the result the study also gives some recommendation for motivating teachers to reduce the symptoms of anxiety, give encouragement, positive climate ect.

Key words: Anxiety, Teacher, Distance learning.

The importance of cultivating emotional intelligence in schools

Valbona Caushi[1], Aida Sotiri[2]

"Eqrem Cabej" University Gjirokastër[1, 2]

valbona.caushi@gmail.com[1]
aida_sotiri@yahoo.com[2]

Over the years, interest in emotional intelligence in education has increased. Along with IQ (Intelligence Quotient), EQ (Emotional Quotient) ranks among the efforts of every teacher to create complete and successful individuals. EQ is defined as the ability to signal, use, show and manage emotions in a healthy and effective way. This helps teachers and students to empathize with others and themselves and to face difficult situations without getting confused. It affects relationships, performance and how students and teachers cope with pressure. The teacher has to play a role model for the children and he must have a well-balanced emotionally developed. This feature of academic growth is becoming more and more difficult in a world where everything is focused on students. In academic knowledge, there is a lack of knowledge about the value of developing Emotional Intelligence, among students and teachers. More and more articles these days are talking about how emotions affect our students. In fact, this article aims to reflect a theoretical framework, in relation to studies and different authors in relation to emotional intelligence in education. In this present paper attempt were made to make a clear understanding regarding the concept, nature, models and implication in the field of education.

Key words: Emotion, Emotional intelligence, Education, Teacher, Teaching learning.

SESSION IV
SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES &
SOCIAL POLICIES

Current housing programs for vulnerabel groups, in Shkodra Municipality

Arnisa Bushati[1], Bujanë Topalli [2], Xhulio Haxhija[3]

Department of Psychology – Social work, University of Shkodër "Luigj Gurakuqi" [1, 2]
Housing Specialist - Directorate of Social Services, Housing and Public Health/Shkoder Municipality[3]

arnisa.abu@gmail.com[1]
bujane.topalli@unishk.edu.al[2]
xhulio_haxhija@live.com[3]

The fulfillment of the need for housing is considered one of the most important human rights, also reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and involved in many other legal instruments of international law. It is precisely the multidimensional feature of this right, that has also brought obstacles to it's concretization, especially to the vulnerable groups. In the current Law on Social Housing in the Republic of Albania, some of its articles set out the opportunities offered to the most vulnerable groups and the obligations that local governments have for the implementation of this law. Starting from 2014, the programs of Housing in the Municipality of Shkodra are part of the Office of Social Services, Housing and Public Health and this sector is represented only with one housing specialist. Already, more and more housing programs are being combined with social ones, in aid to layer with vulnerable. The municipality has been very active and has supported the development of some social programs such as: lease subsidy in the free market; subsidizing credit interests. Financial instrument of immediate grant as well as social/container housing. Exactly, in this paper based on the analysis of the documentation will present in detail the way of functioning, benefiting and implementing each of these programs and focusing on the achievements, the challenges facing the local government in an attempt to meet the need to housing the additions with it marginalized, as well as the panorama of future plans related to the social housing service.

Key words: Vulnerable groups, Housing programs, Achievement, Challenges, Future.

Social workers and their role in policy making

Eglantina Gjermeni[1], Irida Agolli[2]

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the OSCE[1]
Social Science Faculty, University of Tirana[2]

egjermeni@hotmail.com[1]
iagolli@yahoo.com[2]

Social work is a practice-based profession that promotes social justice and advocates for the individual, groups in need, and the community at large. Although direct practice with the individual, groups, family and community are considered essential components of the profession, the participation of social workers is equally important in identifying the needs of groups and communities, designing policies to address them, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. Jansson (2018) defines the role of social workers in policymaking as "attempting to change policies in legislative, agency, and community settings, whether by establishing new policies, improving existing ones, or defeating other people's policy initiatives." Social workers engage and contribute to policy-making processes, protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups, rasing their voice, offering choices closer to their real needs and making them part of decision-making processes. Even in some ethical codes of social work, it is evident that social workers contribute to social changes and policy-making processes, on behalf of poor, disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. This article sheds light on the relationship between social work and policy-making, the role of the social worker as a change agent in all aspects of policy-making processes.

Key words: Social worker, Change agent, Policy making.

Factors that increase dropout school in Albania

Galsvinda Biba[1], Migena Kapllanaj[2]

Department of Psychology – Social work, University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi" [1]
Department of social work and social policy, University of Tirana[2]

galsvinda.biba@unishk.edu.al[1]
kapllanaj.migena@gmail.com[2]

Dropping out of school is a complex problem that involves poverty, ethnicity, family situation and composition, the level of education and employment of parents but also cultural and social issues and is geographically extended. Studies show that dropping out of school has a negative impact not only on children and families but also on schools and communities. According to Baker (2001) *"The negative impact of dropping out of school results in a less educated workforce, costs associated with higher rates of criminal activity, lost businesses as a result of youth shoplifting, and higher government spending for social services"*. In addition to individual factors, family, school and other contextual factors have been identified as risk factors for dropping out of school. Family factors include poverty, family conflict, parental education, parental attitudes toward education, and parental involvement in their child's education. The purpose of this study is to create a profile of school dropout. The following methods were used to collect the data: (1) analysis of studies and reports related to the situation of children who have dropped out of school in Albania and an analysis of the legal framework related to the treatment of the problem, (2) a survey of 141 children from 6 cities in Albania and (3) an open discussion with experts in the field, representatives of the institutions responsible for the administration of the benefit scheme provided for in VKM no. 666. The data showed that the main reasons why children do not attend school are closely related to the family and community context. Almost half of the children, 49% do not attend school for economic reasons, 15% because they do not like school and 10% because the family does not let them. Other identified reasons are the fact that children work, take care of sick family members or sisters and brothers, they have school far away or they have problems with school registration. The contribution of community, parents and every member of society has a direct impact on strengthening and increasing efficiency of the school dropout prevention scheme. Increasing awareness and continuing information about programs to support children with scholarships or services to facilitate their going to school should be an integral part of informing and raising awareness of public opinion on issues of school dropout.

Key words: Dropout school, Raising awareness, Roma and Egyptian children.

Gender approach in decision-making: The improvement of legislation and social policies in Albania

Geldona Metaj[1], Daniela Kalaja[2]

University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work and Social Policy[1, 2]

geldona@gmail.com, geldona.metaj@unitir.edu.al[1]
dkalaja07@yahoo.com, daniela.kalaja@unitir.edu.al[2]

The reform of the legal framework and the policies for gender equality are in the attention of the policy makers in Albania, with fundamental human rights principles and the protection and empowerment of women and girls at the forefront of these reforms. This paper aims to bring an analysis of the political journey of women and the impact on the improvement of legislation for social and gender policies. The paper article is based on literature review and quantitative data about the participation and representation of women in political discourse platforms to influence social and gender policies. The gender quota for the underrepresented gender at no less than 30 percent of the composition of the Assembly of Albania, the units of local government bodies, and all levels of the electoral administration ensures gender representation for the elected bodies and the electoral administration. The number of women elected in the Assembly has increased significantly since the first adoption of the gender quota in Assembly elections in 2009, when women held 16 percent of the mandates; by 2023, they hold 35 percent of the mandates. Women's political participation in political decision-making aims to promote democratic representation and diversity of the characteristics of political representatives, representing different groups of the community. Women share common experiences with other women. When women are elected to positions of power, they protect the interests of women and marginalized groups. In this context, this paper identifies and examines the role and decision-making power of women at policy-making levels to ensure that social and gender policies and social services address the interests and needs of women and the community.

Key words: Social policy, Legislation, Gender representation, Women's political participation, Decision-making, Social work, Social services.

Legal framework and policies related to social services in Albania

Irida Agolli (Nasufi)[1], Daniela Kalaja[2]

Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social work and Social Policy[1, 2]

iagolli@yahoo.com, irida.agolli@dswsp.edu.al[1]
dkalaja07@yahoo.com, daniela.kalaja@ dswsp.edu.al[2]

The changes taking place in the social care system in Albania should demonstrate Albania's readiness to become a modern European state. This means that the developing system of social care should be built on the principles of equal access to social care services acceptable to individuals and groups, continuous improvement of access and quality of service. The article aims to describe and analyze the policies and the legal framework in the historical context of the development of social services with the main focus on children and the family.The concept of reform has been seen in the plan of the main developments of social services, with the beginning of the establishment of the first social services in 1991-1996, the developments in 2005 where the responsibility for social services was delegated to the level of local government and with the territorial reform and the basket of services provided by the law on social care services in 2016. The social protection strategies that have been approved over the years aimed at reforming the economic assistance scheme for poor families, establishing social services that focused on the individual, the family and the community, protecting children and ensuring the social inclusion of minorities, persons with disabled and elderly.The analysis includes all the main developments of the legal framework related to social services that has been developed from the 90s until today. All components of the framework, including legal, policy and institutional, are subject to continuous change and updating. In line with efforts to update national legislation in the field of social services, Albania has made progress in drafting/updating policy documents, including strategies, action plans and other policy documents.

Key words: Social service, Legal framework, Children, Strategy.

The universal importance of human rights: upholding dignity and freedom for all

Lorenca Bejko

CEDS Paris-Lecturer
University of Sorbonne
University Vrije Amsterdam

lorenca.bejko@yahoo.com

Human rights are a set of rules and principles that everyone has, no matter what race, gender, nationality, religion, or other status they have. These rights are based on the idea that everyone has the right to dignity, respect, and freedom, and that these basic values should be protected by the law and upheld by society. The idea of human rights comes from different philosophical and religious ideas, but the modern framework for human rights didn't start to take shape until the 20th century. People generally agree that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, is the most important part of the modern human rights system. This document lists 30 rights that are considered basic for all people. These include the right to life, liberty, and security of person; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; and the right to education, work, and social security. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was passed, the international community has worked to promote and protect human rights through a variety of legal instruments, institutions, and advocacy efforts. Issues like gender equality, racial justice, freedom of speech, and access to health care and education have been at the center of these efforts. Human rights violations still happen around the world, despite these efforts, and they often have terrible effects on both individuals and communities. The ongoing fight to promote and protect human rights shows how important it is to keep advocating, educating, and working together to protect each person's dignity and worth.

Key words: Human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Dignity, Freedom International community, Advocacy, Education, Collective action, Gender equality, Racial justice.

Foster families in Kosovo

Magbule Koci

Senior Officer for the Protection of Abandoned Children
Division of Social Services, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Kosovo

magbulekoci@gmail.com

Kosovo's basic forms of legal, social, and family protection have a history of development. One of these forms is Foster Care, designed and standardized to protect children without parental care who, for one reason or another, become subject to social and institutional protection. This form of protection is carried out through the Foster Care Program, with foster families as the implementing subject, through which this form of protection is realized.Kosovo is a transitional country with a medium level of education, low economic development, high levels of unemployment and poverty, political instability, and high levels of inflation, especially in recent years, where we often see cases when the family unit fails to meet its obligations to its members, for various reasons such as poverty, unemployment, insufficient income, limited ability, domestic violence, and other reasons. This study aims to provide a general analysis of the dynamics of the development of foster families in Kosovo in implementing the Foster Care Program, where quantitative and qualitative data will also be presented within this analysis. Additionally, the need for the development of new profiles of foster families and the need for the advancement of training modules for foster families will be analyzed. Within the paper, the main fields studied are the history of the development of foster families in Kosovo, their institutionalization, current profiles of foster families, state financial support, etc. Additionally, the paper includes the role of central and local political institutions, social service professionals, and Non-Governmental Organizations, which are the main axis of the development of Foster Care in Kosovo and the subject of this study. A summary of conclusions and recommendations will be provided at the end of this paper.

Key words: *Children, Foster families, Children without parental care, The form of protection, Foster care.*

Legal and institutional framework in addressing gender-based violence in Albania

Marsela Allmuça[1], Eliona Kulluri Bimbashi[2]

Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana[1, 2]

allmucamarsela@gmail.com, marsela.allmuca@unitir.edu.al[1]
elionakulluri@gmail.com, eliona.kulluri@unitir.edu.al[2]

Gender-based violence and domestic violence remain serious problems in Albania. The number of domestic violence cases reported to the police in the last three years is increased from 4951 reported cases in 2019 in 5312 cases in 2021. The increasing trend of reported DV cases reaffirms that DV violence remains a persistent phenomenon in Albania and the increased number of criminally prosecuted cases for 2021 is an encouraging indicator of state institutions commitment to bring perpetrators to justice. Albania is a signatory of several binding international treaties which guarantee the equality of men and women and prohibit gender-based discrimination such as United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)3, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)4, Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs. A series of laws and sublegal acts, policies and action plans with a specific focus on gender equality have been adopted which include (i) Law No. 9970/2008 on Gender Equality (2008), (ii) Law No. 9669/2006 "On measures against violence in family relations", which sets out legal measures for prevention and reduction of DV. Furthermore, the Government has adopted the new National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021-2030. The aim of the paper is to analyze the legal and institutional framework on addressing gender based violence in Albania. The methodology is qualitative based in available secondary data (legal framework, reports, studies in the field of GBV, etc.) Despite some improvements in the legislation and public structures to deal with domestic violence, the government still does not fully address the needs of the survivors of domestic violence. Civil society organizations are providing most of services to survivors of domestic violence and in most cases they

are financially supported by donors, with very few exceptions. Amendments in the law no. 9669 «On measures on domestic violence» were made in 2018 and 2020 leading to improving the legal definitions of domestic violence in line with the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW, as well as strengthening the protective and procedural measures fora more effective response to domestic violence by providing the mechanism of issuing the Order of Precautionary Measures of Immediate Protection. The law "On Social Care Services" established the Social Fund as a dedicated budget to support financially social care service. The implementation of the legal framework on social care services and provisions of services to women and girls, survivors of domestic violence, is facing a number of challenges, which can be summarized in: i) lack of adequate public services and specialized services, particularly in rural areas, ii) difficulties to achieve the social reintegration of survivors in job market, iii) survivors of DV are not prioritized in social housing programs, and lack of a coordinated response in some Coordinated Referral Mechanisms, etc.

Key words: Gender-based violence, Situation, Legal framework, Institutional framework, Improvements, Challenges.

Profile of school dropout in Albania

Migena Kapllanaj[1], Galsvinda Biba[2]

Department of social work and social policy, University of Tirana[1]
Department of Psychology – Social work, University of Shkoder
"Luigj Gurakuqi"[2]

kapllanaj.migena@gmail.com[1]
galsvinda.biba@unishk.edu.al[2]

The development of a sustainable system to protect children from drop out situation is still a challenge for the Albanian child protection system. Previous data and reports from agencies working with children that leave school show that there are some groups of children who are at higher risk of leaving schools such as: (a) children with disabilities, (b) children returned from emigration, (c) children with various social problems, (d) children from the Roma and Egyptian communities, (e) children who work to help their families, (f) children victims of violence and trafficking, (g) abandoned children, etc. The purpose of this study is to identify different profiles of school dropouts. 141 children from 6 cities, (Bulqizë, Durrës, Kamëz, Korçë, Peshkopi and Tiranë) that had left school during 2020-2021 were interviewed from trained experts. 53% of the interviewed children are girls and 47% are boys, most of them are from the Roma and Egyptian communities, respectively 27% and 30%. The two-step cluster analysis helped us identify 4 groups of children at risk of dropping out of school: Roma/Egyptian and poor children 27%, Children from violent and poor environments 20.6%, Children in street situations, Roma/Egyptian and poor 16.3%, poor children 36.2%. The number of boys is higher than the number of girls and they are in a higher percentage in three of the groups, poor children, children from violent families and poor families and children in street situations, Roma and Egyptians. Meanwhile, girls are more in the group of poor Roma and Egyptian children. The created profiles clearly show the complexity of the situation of dropping out of school and the fragile reality from which these children come. Although the common denominator remains poverty, the situation of children becomes difficult when it is combined with other difficulties, which also clearly indicates that different strategies are needed to prevent drop out.

Key words: Dropout school, Children poverty, Roma and Egyptian children.

76

Uncovering gaps and needs: a desk review of policies and reports on violence against marginalized groups in Albania

Rudina Rama[1,] Marinela Sota[2], Rebeca Revenga Becedas[3], Carmen Sant Fruchtman[4], Daniel Cobos Muñoz[5], Sindi Shehu[6], Arvina Dibra[7]

University of Tirana[1, 2, 6]
Women to Women Organization[3]
IAMANEH Switzerland, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Switzerland [4, 5]
Counselling Line for Women and Girls[7]

rudina.rama@unitir.edu.al[1], sotamarinela@yahoo.com[2], rrevenga@iamaneh.ch[3], c.santfruchtman@swisstph.ch[4], daniel.cobos@swisstph.ch [5], sindi.shahu@hotmail.com[6], arvina.dirbra@gruajatekgruaja.org[7]

In Albania, numerous quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted to examine gender-based violence and domestic violence. However, research pertaining to marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities, minorities, individuals with varying sexual orientations, and the elderly, has yielded limited and vague results. While international mechanisms such as CEDAW and Grevio have shed light on the situation of marginalized women and girls, the overall picture remains unclear and requires further attention.

The paper aims to identify gaps in existing literature and policy frameworks, and propose strategies to address violence against these groups through comprehensive data collection, targeted interventions, and stakeholder engagement. The study's methodology involved a comprehensive desk review of policies, legal frameworks, and various reports concerning violence against marginalized groups in Albania. Through this review, gaps in existing literature were identified, emphasizing the need for further research and interventions to address violence against marginalized groups in Albania. Organizations working in the field of disability, Roma and Egyptian communities, and LGBTI have taken steps to identify and address issues of violence against women and girls. However, recent data confirms that the problem of violence within these groups persists, and it remains underreported and unidentified for

various complex reasons. Furthermore, the data generated by information systems from sectors such as the police, health, and court systems do not collect data related to disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others, with the exception of REVALB. In light of these findings, it is imperative to develop strategies to address violence against marginalized women and girls in Albania. Such strategies should prioritize the identification and reporting of violence in these groups and facilitate the collection of accurate and comprehensive data from information systems.

Key words: Gender based violence, Domestic violence, Marginalized groups.

Residential housing as a form of basic social protection for domestic violence victims in Kosovo

Shqipe Prekaj

Division of Social Services, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Kosovo

shqipep@hotmail .com

Domestic violence is one of the most negative phenomena in our society. Kosovo is a poor country, with a lack of political, economic, and social stability where a large percentage of the population remains unemployed. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the basic social protections in place for victims of domestic abuse (with a focus on violence against women and children), which the legal framework recognizes as "Residential Housing". It includes sheltering and rehabilitative services apart from the family of the affected and outside the abusive environment of the victim. The Government designs protection programs legal, social and family in Kosovo, as part of this is also the form of protection for victims of violence have a history of designed development history and standardized based on Standards European. The study aims to provide a general analysis of the dynamic of the development the government social policies and programs, aims to achieve the protection of human rights and a better welfare system for all citizens in need. As part of this aim, the programs pertaining to the treatment follow national and international legal frameworks that include the treatment of victims as a constitutional, legal, and social right. The paper deals with the topic related to the protection of victims in the case of sheltering, by presenting the history of the development of this form of protection, as well as the legal, institutional, and professional framework in implementation of this form of protection. In this paper qualitative and quantitative data will be reflected where it shows the situation between years and current situation. At the end of this study will be summary with conclusions and recommendations.

Key words: Victims, Woman, Child, Domestic violence, Residential housing.

From Medical to Bio-Psycho-Social Assessment of Disability in Albania: The Need to Transform the Traditional Model

Xhulia Musta[1], Rudina Rama[2]

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana[1, 2]

xhulia.musta@unitir.edu.al[1]
rudina.rama@unitir.edu.al[2]

Along with health, disability is an old phenomenon for human society. According to WHO (2021), about 1 billion people worldwide have some type of disability, of which 2-4% have severe functional impairment. In Albania, State Social Service (2023) reported 71.056 citizens with mental or physical disability, paraplegia-tetraplegia and blindness during 2022. Disability assessment and treatment has changed overtime and has been subject of debate by professionals and researchers. There are at least three core models of disability assessment- medical, social and bio-psycho-social. Assessment of disability in Albania was based on the traditional medical model until 2019. Since November 2019 State Social Service started implementing the bio-psycho-social model of disability assessment in Tirana, extending afterwards to all districts at the end of 2022. The aim of this paper is to present the emerging need to transform the assessment model from medical to bio-psycho-social and describe how the bio-psycho-social model is developing in Albania. Conclusions are based on literature review. The traditional disability assessment model was ineffective, fragmented, highly abusive, bureaucratic and non-interactive with other important social protection systems. In response to the need to make the assessment system effective and efficient, MHSP started the implementation of the bio-psycho-social model, through 37 multi-disciplinary teams near citizen's residence. Each multi-disciplinary team has a doctor and a social worker in order to provide an assessment that covers the biological aspects and psycho-social needs as well. The multi-disciplinary team provides a holistic assessment, sets cash payment level and recommends services in accordance to medical conditions. It is too early to talk about tangible results because the implementation of the bio-psycho-social model of disability assessment in Albania is in its first steps. Therefore, this process will require continuous monitoring to detect problems and address them in time.

Key words: Disability, Assessment, Medical, Bio-psycho-social, Albania.