

## II. Pedagogy

### Social Education and Social Work as an Inspirational Resource of Teacher Training

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Gulová, L. – Střelec, S. (2017). Social Education and Social Work as an Inspirational Resource of Teacher Training. *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal*, 9/2, 21–30.

doi: 10.5817/cphpj-2017-0010

*In the process of finding progressive and long-term strategies, programs and models for the Czech education system, social education and thus social work finds itself in a prominent position. Our study deals with selected knowledge of these fields, which became a natural part of teacher training in the current pedagogical theory and practice. Examples of integrating socio-educational thematic units into teacher education programs are also a reflection of social needs that result from the dynamically evolving life of Czech society.*

Key words: *ocial education; social work; social health; curriculum; educational activities of teachers; social pathologies; teacher education*

#### **The relationship of social education and social work to educational process**

Social education explores the essence of social phenomena and educational influence of the social environment on the lives of individuals and social groups. It takes interest in the changes in the social environment that favor optimal development of the personality. In this sense, it is also focused on the social and educational assistance to vulnerable groups of children and youth. It looks for the source of conflicts between individuals, groups and societies and at the same time it deals with their solutions through direct and indirect influence of the educational process. In other words – social education is a science that is aimed at helping to shape the optimal way of life of individuals and social groups and to facilitate the process of enculturation and socialization. We are inclined to this broader concept of social pedagogy, according to which this discipline focuses not only on issues of social-

pathological character, but on the whole population, to create harmony between the needs of individuals and society.

Social education includes two dimensions – social and educational. The social dimension is given by the social framework, social conditions, and situations in the given society. Society (state) produces, among others, conditions which sometimes complicates (eases) the process of socialization of the individual. Moreover, in recent years this social dimension of life is influenced by the rapidly advancing process of mechanization, automation, development of communications technologies, changes in forms of coexistence, socio-legal standards, environmental issues, generational, ethic and expanding globalization. It is therefore a changing environment in which the educational process takes place. The pedagogical dimension lies in the promotion and implementation of social demands, desired objectives, requirements and minimization of existing divisions by pedagogical means.<sup>1</sup>

Social work is based on altruism, its essence is to help and get involved for the needy. It takes various forms and its development took place in different parts of the world for centuries. Individuals, groups and entire communities maintained it and deepened it in many areas up to the present, when its meaning and content equated other disciplines. Social work seeks to fulfill humanity in the literal sense in which we are engaged for the needy quite naturally, and that not only in a spirit of coexistence but also in a specific professional context.<sup>2</sup>

At the theoretical level, it is scientifically based professional discipline, which through its methods, a variety of strategies and mechanisms, provides on a professional basis the desirable care for the needy. Its practical application has become a factor that enters the lives of socially disadvantaged groups in the form of services and activities that should help the clients so that they could gradually help themselves. To address the situation of the client, his own potential also plays a role, by which the client receives support and recognition for their difficult life situation and social work counts with him as a partner.<sup>3</sup>

The complex nature of social work also shows the need for cooperation with other disciplines. Especially with psychology, sociology

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<sup>1</sup> Kraus, B. (2000). Sociální pedagogika jako vědní disciplína a jako studijní obor. In *Sborník příspěvků z 1. mezinárodní konference na téma Sociální pedagogika jako vědecká a společensky užitečná disciplína.* Brno: Institut mezioborových studií a PdF MU, str. 68–76.)

<sup>2</sup> Gulová, L. (2011). Sociální práce. Pro pedagogické obory. Praha: Grada.

<sup>3</sup> Matoušek, O. a kol. (2001). *Základy sociální práce.* Praha: Portál.

and legal disciplines that come into a range of methods of social work, but also with social education, adult education, pedagogy and gerontology that can be added to social work theory and practice. Framework of social work is determined by topics that relate to the changes and development of society. Global problems are poverty and misery, women's rights, unemployment and discrimination, migration, coexistence of minorities with the majority, etc. A specific topic is the area of children's rights: children are among the most vulnerable groups, many of them are neglected and abused by their relatives, they become victims of violence and they are exploited as cheap labor. People with different sexual orientations call for their rights. Solutions require the problems associated with old age because the population of western civilizations is increasing in senior groups. These and other topics form a content of social work, which thus becomes an important and natural part of civilized human societies.<sup>4</sup>

When we consider the broader social context of the fundamental bases for the institutionalized social or also educational strategies, we cannot ignore that one of the most versatile and determinative influence of mingling educational activities are from the beginning of modern institutional learning humanizing tendencies. This fact, alongside with other researches, is also pointed out by J. Skalková, who states that at the end of the old and the beginning of new millennium, this issue comes to the forefront with new immediacy and intensity. "The idea of humanism and humanization requirement became an international movement that permeates all spheres of contemporary life and relates to its daily practice."<sup>5</sup>

The causes of this phenomenon are seen in the characteristics of the current epoch, its manifestation, for example:

- *escalation of contradictions and complex problems, that lead to the risk human exposure, significant changes in the conception of the meaning of human life, the goals and values of human life,*
- *increasing the risk of threats to humanity by social, ecological, energy and economic failures (disasters),*
- *that the society of excess and waste costs, stands face to face with millions of people who are outcasts of the society, illiterate, without medical assistance, consequently malnourished and hungry, suffering and dying children and adults,*

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<sup>4</sup> Gulová, L. (2011). Sociální práce. Pro pedagogické obory. Praha: Grada.

<sup>5</sup> Skalková, J. (1993). *Humanizace vzdělávání a výchovy jako soudobý pedagogický problém*. Ústí nad Labem: UJEP, str. 41.

- *spread of drug addiction, growing violence, manifestations of religious and racial hatred, growing unemployment and outbreaks of economic and social extensions,*
- *economic profit as a priority for the individual and the society, rigorous cost competitiveness which leads individuals to promote themselves at the expense of others, etc.*

In connection with the search for socially acceptable ways and means to solve global problems, J. Skalková brings attention to activities of world's major civic initiatives and institutions. One of the main objectives of these efforts is the idea of "new humanism" that imposes alternatives to further social development, which can lead to overcoming the crisis of humanity, to the demand of "new quality life" and a "new quality" of a man. When searching for prospects of further social development, great importance is generally attributed to education and upbringing.

The focus of the new humanism is integral human personality, its possibilities and development of intrinsic value, including:

- *idea of human freedom (the basic human value),*
- *the need for social justice (the basis of stable development of human society),*
- *democracy, solidarity, consciousness of globality of central problems,*
- *the need to maintain a healthy environment,*
- *preservation of cultural diversity,*
- *human dignity, ability of human participation and empathy*
- *constructive behavior, critical thinking, responsibility, creativity and initiative.*<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, a public document issued by UNESCO called "Learning: The Treasure Within" came to the attention, containing plans for the formation of an educated society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These intentions figuratively called pillars of future education express (summarize) in a nutshell also the targets of educational action: learning to know, learning to act, learning to be, and learning to live together – learning to live with others.<sup>7</sup>

This document heralded, along with others, significant changes in the Czech education. In accordance with the National Program for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (i.e. The White Book) and the Law on preschool, primary, secondary, vocational and other

<sup>6</sup> Skalková, J. (1993). *Humanizace vzdělávání a výchovy jako soudobý pedagogický problém*. Ústí nad Labem: UJEP, str. 44–45.

<sup>7</sup> Delors, J. et al. (1997). *Učení je skryté bohatství (dokument Mezinárodní komise UNESCO Vzdělávání pro 21. století)*. Praha: UIV.

training was applied to new curricular system for pupils from three to nineteen years of age. The principals of these documents are Framework Educational Programs (FEP). Framework educational programs are heralded as the new educational strategy, which focuses on the formation and development of key competencies of pupils. There is interdependence between competencies and programmed educational content. The makers of framework educational programs have paid significant attention to the aspects of applicability of the acquired knowledge and skills and personality traits as an equipment to everyday life. On the basis of FEP (which sets binding framework of education and define the standard educational content for a given stage of education), every school is profiled within their School Educational Program (SEP). FEP is characterized as an open document, which is at certain levels upgraded to meet the changing needs of society, the needs and interests of learners and teacher's experience with SEP. The newly formulated goals of basic education, key competencies, educational areas and cross-cutting themes are categories whose characteristics create a basic picture of the extent and quality of the changes, which Czech education seeks.

Another key objective to which education in developed countries is leading to, is the social health (of individual, social groups and entire communities). The term social health is interpreted in the literature on different levels and context.<sup>8</sup> Of all these approaches, it shows that the determinant and universal feature characterizing the social health is the term relationship. In study programs, teaching distinguishes, with a certain degree of simplification, three planes (dimensions) of social health – intrapersonal, interpersonal and social. At the intrapersonal level, social health is perceived as an inner transformation of personality expressing the relation of a man to himself, including his self-acceptance, self-control, autonomous acceptance of social roles, needs and values. At an interpersonal level, social health is seen as an expression of a certain level in relation to other people. In the case of the pupil, it includes, for example, the ability to cooperate with classmates, respecting the opinions of others, cooperation in common tasks, communication skills comprehension, and the ability to dispose of friendships, friends and partnerships. From the aspects mentioned above, it shows how social pedagogy and social work can be inspiring for the educational process because these disciplines are closely involved in

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<sup>8</sup> Krátká, J. (2010). Ideální třídní učitel a jeho kompetence v pohledu žáků a jejich rodičů. In *Pedagogická věda a školská prax v historickom kontexte*. 1. vyd. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, str. 435–442.

relationships in different social groups and aimed precisely to encourage relationships between people.

In this context we also ask the question: *What support does the creation and development of social health of the pupils have in the documents that are pertinent to current developments in the Czech basic education? For example, General Educational Program for Basic Education (hereinafter GEPBE) declares the following requirements among the main goals of basic education:*

- *teach pupils to actively develop and protect their physical, mental and social health,*
- *guide pupils to tolerance and consideration for other people, their cultures and spiritual values, to teach them to live together with other people,*
- *help pupils discover and develop their abilities and real possibilities and to apply these together with knowledge and skills in decision-making about their own life and career orientation.*<sup>9</sup>

In terms of social health of students, the school environment should provide conditions suitable for a whole range of pupils, encouraging the less gifted, protect and support the weakest students and ensure that every child, through education and training tailored to individual needs, satisfactorily developed its own way. This should also create adequate conditions for the education of pupils with special educational needs. A friendly and welcoming atmosphere should encourage pupils to studying, working and activities that suit their interests and give them space and time for active learning and to the full development of their personality.

A factor that has significant opportunities to influence healthy social development of individual pupils and the classroom is the teacher, especially the class teacher. There are generally associated considerable expectations connected with this entity. It is generally assumed that it is the class teacher that is best informed not only about the overall training and educational situation in the classroom, but it also has the knowledge and skills relevant to the development of the pupil's personal and social qualities. In other words, the class teachers should know the strengths and weaknesses of their students, they should also be suitably informed about their health, family environment, major leisure activities and their prospective study or vocational orientation. Adequate background information to the class teachers is particularly important in a direct relation to the pupils in their class, but also as the basis and foundation

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<sup>9</sup> *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání.* (2005). Praha: VÚP.

for integrating and coordinating activities focused on cooperation with other teachers, parents and pupils with other educational partners.<sup>10</sup>

### **What is the basic framework of the tasks of class teachers in promoting social health of the pupils?**

Generally, it is for example said that already J. A. Comenius's Great Didactic notes that the main responsibility for what is happening in the classroom should have one teacher. Comenius anticipates the importance of the class teacher, although the term class teacher is not used. Less encouraging is the fact that despite the centuries of proven positive experiences, until this day, we do not have a comprehensive official document that would declare the status and duties of the class teacher in current Czech school. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoE) commented the functions and activities of the class teacher only through partial information via several methodological guidelines and regulations, which are generally not just classroom teachers, but teachers in general. Therefore, so far are the specific activities of the class teacher defined locally and to a greater or lesser extent, included in the internal documentation of every school. Decree (no. 48/2005 Coll., on basic education and some matters of compulsory school attendance, educational measures, §17 – educational measures) characterizes the class teacher as a pedagogical worker, who is commissioned by the school director, and who is responsible for the performance of specific tasks resulting from the delegation which is under the direct authority of the director of school. Methodological instruction of MoE (ref 10007 / 98-26 on ensuring safety and health at work in regional education) mentions that the class teacher should teach students about common rules of safe behavior, on the school rules, about behavior on public roads, rules on fire protection, warning against harmful effects of alcohol, smoking etc. Decree (no. 72/2005 Coll., on providing guidance in schools and school guidance facilities) states that the class teacher should work with the school counselor and school prevention methodologist, respectively, school psychologist, special education teacher, etc. Other recommendations for the work of classroom teachers can be found in Methodological Guideline of MoE, ref. No. 10194 / 2002-14 to a uniform procedure for apologizing and

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<sup>10</sup> Krátká, J. (2010). Ideální třídní učitel a jeho kompetence v pohledu žáků a jejich rodičů. In *Pedagogická věda a školská praxe v historickém kontextu*. 1. vyd. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, str. 435–442.

releasing students from school, truancy prevention and punishment; or in Methodological Guideline of MoE ref. no. 28275 / 2000-22 to prevent and deal with bullying among pupils of schools and school facilities. In addition, it is expected that members of the school management and in an appropriate extent also class teachers, are acquainted with the contents of other documents, which include, for example:

- ✓ Methodological Instruction of MoE for education against racism, xenophobia and intolerance, ref. no.: 14423 / 1999-22 (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education Workbook 5/1999).
- ✓ Cooperation of preschools, schools and educational institutions with the police in the prevention and investigation of juvenile crime and crime against children and youth committed, ref.: 25884 / 2003-24 (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education Workbook 11/2003).
- ✓ Rules for parents and children to safer use of the Internet, ref. no.: 11691 / 2004-24 (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education Workbook 6/20004).
- ✓ Strategy of prevention of socio-pathological phenomena of children and youth in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for the period 2005–2008, ref. No.: 10844 / 2005-24.
- ✓ Methodological Guideline for ensuring the safety and health of children, pupils and students in schools and school facilities established by the Ministry of Education, ref. No. 37 014/2005 (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education Workbook 2/2006).
- ✓ Methodological Guidelines for primary prevention of socially pathological phenomena of children, pupils and students in schools and school facilities, ref. No. 20006 / 2007-51 (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education Workbook 11/2007).

When we review these regulations Ministry of Education from the perspective of school and class teacher to, we cannot help thinking about an expanding trend in this documentation and potential negative consequences resulting from this non-stabilized methodological-legislative basis for schools and teachers; especially if we take into account the inconsiderable underestimated importance of the educational activities of the class teacher in practice.<sup>11</sup>

The previous data also underscores the need to unify information, to meet the school management, teachers and especially class teachers in their educational work and unequivocally geared overview of their rights and obligations towards their pupils, their parents and other participating

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<sup>11</sup> Střelec, S. – Krátká, J. (2010). Conditions for the class teachers' work in affesting healthy development of their pupils. In Řehulka, E. (ed.) *School and Health 21. Papers on Health Education*. 1. vyd. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, str. 93–101.

educational officials. The starting point for these efforts may be, in our opinion, the State Ministry workbook Bulletin 7/2005, which states that the class teacher:

- ✓ motivates students to create internal class rules, which are consistent with the school's rules, and ensures compliance with them (creating an open safe atmosphere and a positive social climate in the classroom); it supports the development of positive social interactions between students in the classes,
- ✓ facilitates communication with other members of the faculty and guarantees the cooperation of school with parents class
- ✓ acquires and keeps track of the personality traits of students and classes about their family background,
- ✓ collaborates with educational-career counselor in providing consulting services related to further educational and career paths of students in the class,
- ✓ collaborates with school methodologist of prevention to detect the warning signs, participates in the implementation of the minimum preventive program, diagnoses relationships in the classroom,
- ✓ cooperates with the school psychologist / special education teacher / in activities aimed at preventing school failure pupils class (remedy, leadership, etc.), in creation of conditions for integration of pupils with special educational needs in the classroom and according to the instructions of the director and other areas of educational and consulting work with pupils in the classes.

There are new subjects entering the training of future teaching staff which enable them to acquire knowledge in a wide range of topics. Future teachers are submitted to subjects such as social pathology, multicultural education, environmental education, and more. These subjects can help educators facilitate orientation in challenging practice into which are reflects social changes associated with globalization, the rise of social pathologies such as aggression, poverty, divorce, etc. Students have the opportunity through both theory and practice to understand social phenomena and they can translate this understanding into effective teaching of children and young people, which is often distorted by these phenomena. If the child finds itself in uninspiring environments, belonging to socially disadvantaged groups, does not have support from the family or parents are workaholics, it requires an increased attention from the teacher associated with various methods and educational approaches. Here, teachers offer precisely the subject of social pedagogy and its emphasis on making the environment more pedagogic through, on methods associated with minimizing and compensating of difficult situations of children and adolescents. Another subject that could enter, at least at the

basic level of teacher education, is social work. This subject has become an important part of social education or special education teachers, which are expected to use the possibility of working in the social sphere. However, unfortunately they still largely miss the teaching profession, which seemed oblivious to the importance of cooperation of social workers and teachers in challenging situations of pupils. In the research from L. Gulová from 2010, demands of teachers on safe and open school have appeared while analyzing the interviews. Teaching staff talked about verbal aggression among pupils, about crises in families that children can name. It was surprising that the crisis many children have seen the end of life as the solution of the crisis. Perhaps media contribute to this fact, especially movies, series and video games experience. Teachers surprisingly indicated that they have a lot of space for educational work with children, particularly those who have a complex situation at home, but they lack knowledge in the field of social work and outline opportunities for cooperation with social workers in various professions.<sup>12</sup>

Social work touches all of us and is most effective when the problem solving involves more stakeholders together. An example might be the claim of specialists, social workers, who express themselves in the sense that if, in individual cases, also teachers get involved alongside their parents, and educational workers (judges, police officers, senior rings etc.), the success of interventions in favor of pediatric clients much larger. Today, there is very little knowledge about the fields of social work among the teachers, especially in relation to social pathologies that affect different groups of young people more intensively, whether we are talking about increasing aggression, bullying among peers or maltreatment of children in a family environment. The teacher may first notice that there is something wrong with the child, or that his family situation is oppressive and that the child lives in a pressure he cannot defend himself from. Basic information about the methods used by social work, how to proceed and whom to address in such cases, should be an integral part of teacher training.

Social pedagogy and social work can be inspiring for teachers not only as teaching subjects, but it also offers cooperation on the level of teacher – social worker – social educator. Many schools have long or collaboration with social workers, non-profit and public sector, as well as at some schools it is possible to find new non-teaching professions, such as social educator, special educator or teacher's assistant, enabling a more comprehensive approach to pupils especially in the light of modern trends in education, as an inclusive approach and open school.

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<sup>12</sup> Gulová, L. (2011). *Sociální práce. Pro pedagogické obory*. Praha: Grada.