

**ПСИХОЛОГО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ ЗАСАДИ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ  
НАВЧАЛЬНОГО ПРОЦЕСУ: ПИТАННЯ АДАПТАЦІЇ ТА  
ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ ІНОЗЕМНИХ СТУДЕНТІВ**

**Concept of education in social work**

**Budayová Z.**

*Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology  
Catholic University in Ružomberok  
Slovakia  
e-mail: zuzana.budayova@ku.sk*

Abstract. In order to keep up with the changing trends of the outside world, innovations are needed that emphasize the importance of developing the competences of social workers so that they can provide highly specialized, qualified and professional social assistance. A necessary part of education in social work is lifelong education and development of knowledge and skills of a social worker.

Key words: education, social worker, innovation, competences, skills

Theoretical foundations of social work. Knowing the theoretical foundations of social work is a priority duty of every social worker. Influencing clients' life destinies with the aim of bringing something new, positive into their lives, is possible only by knowing what the practice itself has brought and confirmed. Social work is a path from subjective non-solving of social problems towards full responsibility for solving problems of personal life, group life as well as solving problems of the whole community. Among other things, those who perform social work are bearers of social responsibility for solving client problems with the aim of preserving social stability. Sporadically, we come across the claim that every human action in the social space

has a social dimension and can therefore be considered as social work. Such a claim is populist and easily accepted by the layman. But from the point of view of social work with an individual, family, group or community, such a statement is absolutely unacceptable. The basic difference is expertise, science, systematicity and targeting when entering social relationships. They are also methods that are used to achieve change. They are not created intuitively, but verified by practice and verified by theory. A person does not make his problems available to anyone without being convinced of his ability to identify the problem and eliminate it [10].

"Social work is a real, cultural science that deals with the individual, group, society and mutual interactions between them. It tries to eliminate disturbed individual and social problems, settle disturbed interpersonal relations, problems of a global, societal nature by trying to prevent the emergence of problematic situations, tries to mitigate social problems that have already arisen and prevent their possible reoccurrence." [2, p .16] Social work is a professional activity that focuses on helping people in various life situations and difficulties. Social workers work with different groups of people, including children, families, older people, people with various health problems and disadvantaged groups such as the homeless, abused or mentally disabled [11, p. 14].

If we were to look at the term social work from the perspective of the International Federation of Social Workers, we could define it as a practical profession and an academic discipline that promotes:

- social change,
- social development,
- building social cohesion,
- empowering and liberating people [4].

The subject of social work is a social worker whose main task is to always perform social work conscientiously, responsibly and at the highest possible professional level. However, it can achieve the highest standard of professionalism only if it proceeds continuously innovatively and with the help of modern methods of

education in the social field. Learning can be defined as a form of behavior transformation that occurs as a result of experience and practice. Education is primarily about the development of values, knowledge, and knowledge from all areas of life that an individual has acquired on the basis of school education. Vocational education develops skills, knowledge and habits. In recent years, new trends in technical education using information and communication technologies have entered education. They represent a wide range of different devices [1].

In social work, we encounter the term innovative education more and more often. Innovative education can be one of the key tools for social work in the process of adapting to changing conditions. Its goal is the deepening, expansion and innovation of professional competences, which are necessary for the performance of work activities. Innovative education also means the application of the latest knowledge and practical experience in education and training. We can consider universities, Catholic pedagogical and catechetical centers, school facilities, social assistance facilities, etc. as providers of innovative education in the social field. [6]

Innovative education focuses on the introduction of new approaches, technologies, methods and philosophies into the educational process in order to improve the effectiveness, relevance and preparation of students for the challenges of the modern world. Its importance depends on several factors:

- Adapting to rapid technological developments: innovative education is essential for educational institutions and programs to remain relevant in a rapidly changing technological environment. Integrating new technologies and digital tools into curricula and methods is key to effective education.

- Development of critical thinking and creativity: innovative education supports the development of critical thinking, creativity and problem solving in students. Actively involving students in processes such as discussions, project work and experimentation supports their ability to apply knowledge in real life.

- Preparing for the labor markets of the future: education must take into account the needs of modern labor markets and prepare students for jobs that may not

yet exist. Innovative educational programs seek to develop skills and abilities that will be needed in a global and technologically oriented economy.

- Promoting inclusive education: innovative education can provide new opportunities to promote inclusive education, which means ensuring that all students, including those with special needs, have access to high-quality education [13].

- Personalized learning: innovative learning often involves personalized learning that adapts to students' individual needs, preferences and learning pace. This enables better adaptation to different learning styles and increases student engagement and motivation.

The importance of innovative education for the practice of social work can be seen above all in the fact that social work clients will benefit from deepening professional specialized education and the newly acquired knowledge and skills of trained social workers. Clients will thus have better prospects for solving their unfavorable situation or social exclusion, or they will be able to prevent the deepening of unfavorable social situations that have already arisen [7].

Social changes. After the social changes that took place in 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe, but also on a global scale, the position of education in general, as well as education with a focus on social work, is beginning to change in individual national social contexts. In the Slovak environment, the first changes came as early as 1990, when specialization in social work began to be realized within the so-called related fields of study, such as pedagogy, andragogy, or sociology, which culminated in 1991, when the first independent Department of Social Work was established within the Faculty of Education of the Comenius University in Bratislava. Interest in the study of this field exceeded the capacity of schools, which was the result of various motivations and determinants of wider social development: on the one hand, based on the Civil Service Act, state administration employees had to have completed at least a bachelor's degree in their professional activities, which reflected in the situation that workers of a wider range of offices, such as district offices, labor offices, social and family affairs offices, etc. applied for this study; on the other hand,

several specialized professional profiles, such as members of the police force, social insurance company, local and local self-government, criminal justice, but also bank officials, customs officers, etc. they chose this type of study as the most appropriate for increasing their expertise for the performance of their profession [5].

It seems that social work is discriminated in a certain way, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it allows itself to be discriminated against by some professions. Now, for example, we are trying to get social work among the health professions and the position of social worker to get into the structure of health professions. We encounter strong resistance not only from formal medical institutions, but often also from cooperating colleagues, especially from the ranks of doctors. One of the clearly formulated cardinal administrative conditions is that a social worker who wants to apply for a job in the health sector must supplement his education with a long-term specialized course in the health sector. And we repeat that, it is not only a request of ministerial officials, but also of colleagues with whom we have been cooperating in the social field for many years. At the same time, a social worker in the health sector would not perform medical, curative actions, but would use his qualifications when working with the client, his family and the social environment. A lot of workers with medical qualifications work in social facilities (in some residential facilities they are several times more numerous, another question is why these facilities are declared as social) and no one asks them to supplement their education with the field of social work [3].

Today in Slovakia it is possible to study social work at more than a dozen specialized accredited workplaces. Among the most important are the departments at the individual faculties of several universities: Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovak Medical University in Bratislava, Trnava University in Trnava, Janos Sely University in Komárno, Comenius University in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Pavel Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, University of Sládkovičov, University of Health and Social Work St. Elizabeth in Bratislava [5].

Newer initiatives for education in the field of social work in Slovakia after 1989 could be confronted with the results and status of this type of education in individual foreign contexts. The wider context of activity and, consequently, education in the field of social work abroad is diverse and based on various previous experiences; as an example, it is possible to cite the very fact of financing this area of education: somewhere it is financed from the state budget, in other environments from the church sphere, and in some contexts we find a combination of these two models. Differentiation and different approaches can also be observed according to the type of educational institutions, within which three options are more clearly profiled: education for social workers is carried out outside higher education institutions, as the second option appears to be a combination of higher education and other institutions (this model is also characteristic of Slovak republic) and the third model is based exclusively on the context of the higher education system. [12]

In the third group of variants in which, as mentioned above, the education of social workers is carried out in a university environment, Great Britain is also located, where this type of education is the most centralized in all of Europe. The central authority, which establishes the so-called the competency criteria that must be met by schools wishing to apply for social work education is the Central Council for the Education and Training of Social Workers (CCETSW). Graduates of this type of study receive the title DipSW - Diploma in Social Work (Diploma in Social Work), to obtain which, in addition to theoretical knowledge, it is necessary to master six basic skills: to communicate and engage; support and help self-sufficiency; evaluate and plan; intervene and provide services; work in an organization; develop professional competence. For higher and post-qualification degrees, it is necessary to complete specialized programs focused on the research field, work with several vulnerable groups, services for the family, management field, pedagogy, etc. [12].

The Netherlands, on the other hand, belongs to the first of the mentioned groups, where education in the field of social work is carried out within the system of non-profit organizations, or the focus of this form of education is on non-university

studies. The Dutch system prefers a practical professional approach and the completion of the educational process results in a bachelor's degree. Even if this first higher education degree is realized in a non-university environment, the system is set up in such a way that after its completion it is possible to continue studying and obtain a professional-professional or university education and also acquire the rank of master as well as the scientific rank of PhD. One of the basic tendencies that appears in the current context of education in the field of social work is the effort to develop elementary standards in the field of practical performance of social work, as well as in the field of education of social workers. This effort tends to establish certain universal educational programs, as well as their curricula, which would be valid at the national level [12].

A decisive role in the creation of global standards is played by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), which since 1984 began coordinating, preparing and issuing individual documents that would regulate and guide activities in this educational sphere at the international level. The document that was published in 2004 under the title Global standards of education and training in the profession of social work and according to which all schools focused on the educational process in the field of social work should proceed can be considered as key. This document focuses on several areas of activities of the schools in question; in the sphere focused on students, the document determines that schools should focus on precise criteria for the admission process of students, clearly established criteria for evaluating students' academic performance in professional practice, ensuring non-discrimination of any student, enabling students to acquire knowledge in the field of human rights, etc. On the other hand, in the field of training social workers for practice, the main tasks include the development of practitioners with critical and self-reflective thinking, the ability to recognize the mutual relationship between personal life experiences, respectively personal value systems and the practice of social work, the ability to use and apply national and international codes of social work that occurs in specific situations, the preparation of social work workers in a

holistic structure (ethnic, racial, gender, cultural, and other forms of diversity), the ability of social workers to conceptualize social work from the wisdom of different cultures, traditions and customs so that they did not violate human rights, etc. These internationally accepted ethical principles from 2004, also known as the International Social Work Code of Ethics, state that "social workers should be willing to collaborate with schools of social work to support social work students in obtaining quality practical training and up-to-date practical knowledge" [5 , p. 49-51].

Activities in the Slovak context also follow these stated intentions. In the pan-European environment, it is possible to trace three basic blocks of professional training that are part of education programs: general and professional theoretical knowledge; the second block is practical skills (there is a certain consensus that the scope of the practical part of the education of social workers is not mandatory, even though practice shows that it varies from 30-50% of the total scope of teaching) and the third is the prerequisites for research activity. A significant shift in the outlook on the field of social work is the change of focus from the philosophy of social care to the field of social development of the client's personality. This shift has caused that in the educational content itself, more emphasis is being placed on the development of social competence, health, education, culture, etc. [12] .

In the context of the Slovak Republic, it is interesting to observe the development of interest in studies in the field of social work. The legislative determinations mentioned above, especially the law on civil service, but also other social determinants have caused that, since the beginning of the new millennium, it is possible to observe significant support from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in the establishment of the social work study program at Slovak public universities; a further increase in interest in this study was determined by the opening of private and other public schools. This support was also motivated by the effort to increase the total number of university-educated people, where Slovakia was significantly behind compared to the developed countries of Western Europe. In Slovakia, it is also possible to complete the so-called doctoral degree in the field of

social work - and it is possible to consider obtaining the rank of PhDr. in the so-called rigorous procedure [9].

In the current theoretical and methodological reflection on the issue of social work, Pamela Trevithicková draws attention to three areas of knowledge that prove to be important for the practice of social work: the first area that appears is the area of theoretical knowledge, which points out that the basic knowledge base of social workers is related to the interdisciplinary nature of this profession - in a certain sense, there is a penetration of information from the fields of psychology, philosophy, law, medicine, political and economic sciences, which acquire a new dimension and use in the context of theoretical reflection of social work. This sphere, of course, is also determined by the development and transformations of scientific theories as such. The second area is factual knowledge, which is based on the use of various data, statistics, knowledge from research, etc. These seemingly indisputable facts must be subject to verification, review and control. On the other hand, certain phenomena are shown to be elements of factual knowledge, such as "knowledge of valid legislation in the given field of activity of the social worker, knowledge of accessible resources in the given environment, supported social network and relevant aid institutions, including their competence" [8, p. 170-171].

The third area is practical knowledge, or skills, abilities or competences. They find their application in the use of one's own person in the context of practical activity, the use of critical approaches and abilities in reasoning and practice. This knowledge helps social workers to answer questions about the nature of the work itself, that is, what and why to do something and what impact it has on practice. According to current opinions, the mentioned three areas should be a guideline for educators in social work; such an approach is also compatible with the latest standards and directives for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA, 2009) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EU, 2008). In the stated intentions, the result of "university education (learning outcomes) should be a system of knowledge (knowledge), skills (skills) and

competences (competence), which are key not only for individual growth, but also competitiveness, employment and social cohesion" [8, p. 170].

Conclusion. Innovative training methods can help social workers gain skills and knowledge that will help them in their work with clients. Education has been the subject of attention in recent years throughout society. Teaching methods are constantly being developed and modernized. Education and complex development of employees is lifelong. The aim of including modern methods of education and development in social services and overall increasing the efficiency, motivation, productivity and quality of the given educational activity currently appears to be essential.

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