Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje
Faculty of Philosophy
Institute of Social Work and Social Policy

International Conference

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Social Work and Social Policy in Times of Global Crises

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SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS UNIVERSITY IN SKOPJE
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
"SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL POLICY IN TIMES OF GLOBAL CRISES"

19 - 22 SEPTEMBER 2023, OHRID

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FOREWORD

Multiple overlapping crises threaten the years of progress in many domains, creating a 'crisis within crisis' for many countries, communities and vulnerable groups already grappling with rising poverty, inequality and conflict. In such context, social work and social policies have been fundamentally affected. Challenging caseloads resulting from the pandemic, rise in costs of living, war, migration, etc. contribute to high burnout among social workers and professionals in the social protection system, who struggle to cope with increased expectations, even when legal responsibilities are not matched by the resources. In addition, social policies need to respond not only to idiosyncratic, but also covariate shocks. Such circumstances necessitate a wider academic discussion on new 'imaginaries' and 're-framing' of social work and social policies during the global crises.

This book of abstracts comprises of topics that tackle the issue of global crises from variety of perspectives relevant for social work and social policy. The papers are contextualised within broad domains of analysis, including: (i) Contribution of Social Work Education and Practice to the Global Crises; (ii) Welfare State and Social Policy Responses to Global Crises; (iii) Social Services in Context of Multiple Crises; (iv) Global Crises and Human Rights; (v) Impact of Global Crises on Socially Vulnerable Groups – children, older adults, migrants, refugees, victims of family violence, unemployed, etc. and (v) Impact of Global Crises on Social Protection, Child Care, Employment, Education and Health.

Abstracts on contribution of social work education and practice discuss their relevance in the context of sustainable development goals; engagement of social work theory and practice towards radical transformation of our world; social work training needs and adjustments needed in the 21st century; professional competencies of social workers in times of crisis; ethical conflicts and social workers' psychological distress; the gap between social work theory and practice; convergence issues between social work and social pedagogy, exploration of key elements of the "arc of field supervision' in social work, etc.

Abstracts on welfare state and social policy responses to global crises examine the: the welfare state in times of New uncertainty; policies of 'temporary' protection; re-awakening role of social workers in policy-making following a global pandemic; electricity subsidies; welfare state and welfare abuse; social policy trajectories in Central and Eastern Europe; supported housing in Ukraine during the war; dimensions of poverty framework; poverty and inequality in a small market economies; pre-emptive responses of financial institutions, and much more.

Abstracts discussing the social service provision in the context of multiple crises focus on: "crisis" practices of social services towards "poor" foreign nationals; de-institutionalization in times of crisis; social prevention of violent extremism; social services and rehabilitation of people with disabilities during crisis; social service providers between participation, professionalization, and empowerment; innovative solutions for elderly and disabled home care services; environmental and social sustainability in services for unemployed people and so on.

Global crises and human rights is another overarching topic of many abstracts, that analyze social work and social policies through the lens of: human rights and armed conflict; human rights and empowerment possibilities for social work with vulnerable groups; refugee integration through human rights and social development; dignified care in an inpatient institution, silence in the order of humanitarian aid; user involvement and human rights-based approach in social work, but also many others.

Impact of global crises on socially vulnerable groups is a joint theme of many abstracts in this book, that discuss: mental health of forced migrants; trauma informed care for child residential care; protection of children without parental care; impact of domestic violence on children and adolescents; students from vulnerable categories and the model of tutoring; care for persons with intellectual disabilities leaving the social care system; women with disabilities in politics; etc.

Finally, the impact of global crises on various sectors, such as social protection, child care, employment, education and health is a broad topic, contextualized through abstracts such as: policy implications from distribution of financial support for parents by child age and birth order; new models of employee leave of absences and their impact on family-work balance; harm reduction as an essential component of increasing human capital productivity; cyberbullying - challenge for school social workers during Covid-19 pandemic; games of chance as a youth problem - a challenge causing the need for social prevention in education;

We hope that this book of abstracts, as well as the discussions during the International Conference “Social Work and Social Policy in Times of Global Crises” (Ohrid, 19-22.09.2023) will further promote the academic research, policy actions, as well as social work practices that advocate improved welfare and dignity of vulnerable groups during multiple crises, encourage protection and advancement of human rights of vulnerable population, but also expand professional support and incentives for frontline workers during crises.

Editorial Team

Stein Kuhnle
University of Bergen, Norway

The welfare state in times of new uncertainty

Abstract

Uncertainty is not exceptional. The welfare state has for decades been regarded as being in crisis. But a new dimension of uncertainty has appeared due to the unforeseen Russian large-scale war on Ukraine and concomitant international political developments which have clearly escalated political unease about the future of the welfare state and scope of social policies in different parts of the world. Challenges abound. Welfare political priorities must suddenly compete with increased priorities for defense and overall security issues, and for issues such as energy, climate, and the environment.

The welfare state comes in different forms and sizes. Motivations for state responsibility for citizen welfare and well-being – as well as for the type and scope of responsibility - vary. Resilience and sustainability of the welfare state and social policies can be related to type or 'model' of welfare state. The fate of the welfare state and social policies is clearly a question of political and normative commitment to what kind of socially active state is desired. Why should a state be socially active? What were the historical reasons for developing welfare states, and what are more recent motivations for developing and maintaining welfare states? What are the economic, political, and moral dimensions of welfare state sustainability? Beyond possible national political responses to social challenges it can be argued that in a globalized world reinforced international cooperation, coordination and regulation may be necessary to achieve sustainability of (national) welfare states.

Annamaria Campanini
International Federation of Schools of Social Work, Italy

Social work education contribution to the SDGs in the context of multiple crises

Abstract

Social work education can contribute to the Social Development Goals, particularly in this period of multiple crises that are affecting the world. One first aspect that has to be taken in consideration is the internationalisation of social work education, in relation to the impact of globalisation on our society. Another interesting element is to use the contribution of some important authors that are introducing the concept of systemic thinking as a paradigm to engage professionals in concrete actions to reach the SDGs. In conclusion will be presented the initiatives related to the Global Agenda launched by IASSW-IFSW- ICSW.

Vasilios Ioakimidis
University of West Attica, Greece, University of Essex, UK

Rethinking Social Work Education and Practice in the Age of Concurrent Crises

Abstract:

The paper will explore how our societies are being shaped by consecutive and inter-related crises. The paper explains, however, that the manifestation of a "crisis within crisis" pattern has created a formidable challenge. Nowadays the risk of irreversible catastrophe (environmental, social and financial) is more profound and possible than ever. The paper will emphasize the fact that current crises are concentric; they share illogical, brutal and greedy market economy as their common root and core. The stakes could not be higher for social work education and practice. This paper will discuss how social work can be part of movements aiming at re-imagining socially and environmentally just societies. More importantly it will highlight both the necessity and realism of engaging with practice towards radical transformation of our world.

Panagiotis Pentaris
Goldsmiths, University of London, United Kingdom

The re-awakening role of social workers in policy-making following a global pandemic: lessons for education and practice

Abstract:

Social workers have largely contributed to policy analysis and planning since the rise of the discipline's professional identity. It is through lobbying, policy advocacy and macro-practice that responses about human rights and social justice are crafted and integrated in international and transnational social work practice. Yet, these roles have for a while been suppressed in an attempt to standardize and confine the profession in the limits of a given nation's legal and social status. Public crises like the recent novel virus SARS-CoV-2, come to force us to rethink what has been the role of social workers before such crises. Are we well prepared to take on these roles again, when for a long while education and practice has shied away from them, leaving contemporary practitioners in a predicament situation? This paper will explore both challenges and opportunities in social policy, arising from COVID-19, and will argue the need for re-emphasizing on the social workers' role in social policy, with the intention to make recommendations for education and practice.

Lisa Marie Borrelli, Stefanie Kurt
HES-SO Valais-Wallis, Institute of Social Work, Switzerland

"Crisis" practices of social services towards "poor" foreign nationals

Abstract:

The Covid-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of various already marginalised groups, such as foreign nationals, who were facing a higher risk of loss of employment, and an urgent need of financial assistance, food aid or other basic support. In consequence, those populations potentially ended up depending on social benefits. Given the restrictive Swiss Foreign Nationals and Integration Act (FNIA) that allows for the loss or downgrading of residence permits of foreign nationals depending on social assistance, social workers in charge of distributing social assistance are often facing dilemmas between care and control. While they contribute to the creation of 'client' images that exist along a continuum of "most deserving" and "welfare fraudsters", they also become part of circulating expectations that both state agents and clients have towards services provided and actively shape the implementation of policies. Social workers further face a broad variety of individuals and an increased political pressure to select those deem most "needy", underlining the need to study their daily challenges regarding ethics and client interaction.

Based on ethnographically collected data, deriving from two research projects between 2019 and 2023, we explore practices and discourses of several social services in Switzerland and trace how social workers implement "crises" practices as well how they position themselves regarding the legal consequences for "poor" foreign nationals and a restrictive migration framework. The contribution strengthens the knowledge on practices in a highly politicized field and explores the challenges of social work practices during "crisis".

Barbara Waldis, Marta Marques
Transdisciplinary Institute of Social Work ITTS, Switzerland

Vulnerable Groups in Times of Crisis: Balkan-Swiss Family Solidarity against all odds?

Abstract:

Family solidarity in Balkan Swiss families was challenged by the state border closures due to COVID-19. The interviewees in our exploratory study (2021, 2023) emphasize the additional geographical and emotional difficulties during the pandemic of staying connected with the seniors in the Balkan countries, as well as the increased sense of duty of care. For the families with senior citizens from the Balkans in Switzerland however, the question of family solidarity looks quite different due to the existing state social insurance. Within a situation of crisis, what happens to the much-cited family solidarity serving as a safety net in the Balkan countries in a situation of low social welfare? How can we compare Balkan Swiss families caring for seniors across

European borders with those caring within the welfare state of Switzerland? The qualitative, actor-centered content analysis of twelve family interviews is oriented by a decolonial social work perspective. The contribution therefore focuses on the action strategies of family members living in Switzerland vis-à-vis senior citizens living in Kosovo, Serbia or North Macedonia and contrasts these with the experiences of families with senior citizens from the Balkans in Switzerland. The experiences during the pandemic sharpen the comprehension for the challenges of a cross-border social policy, on the one hand regarding the differences to socio-economic positioning and on the other hand regarding the importance of family solidarity.

Helga Spadina, Una Kondas-Josipovic
University of Osijek Croatia, Croatia

Innovative Solutions for Elderly and Disabled Home Care Services in Post-Covid-19 World

Abstract:

Elderly and disabled persons depended on home care services suffered an unproportioned burden of COVID-19 restrictions. Their care services were either suddenly terminated or severely curtailed during COVID-19 lockdown. Social isolation and frequent inability to use digital technology or lack of access to digital tools and networks further aggravated pandemic problems because care providers could not reach their beneficiaries, which was particularly an issue of concern if elderly and disabled lived without families or close caretakers. Lack of digital skills or access to networks in COVID-19 meant that elderly and disabled persons were unable to use for example telemedicine services which had severe implications on their health and wellbeing. COVID-19 exposed the vulnerability of the home care system in times of public health crisis or any other emergency situation and showed us the necessity to engage in building a more resilient system of home care for elderly and disabled in post-COVID world.

The paper explores whether and to what extent innovative solutions for home care services for elderly and disabled developed during COVID-19 crisis could be integrated in regular home care services for vulnerable groups in Croatia. Our research question is whether pre-pandemic home care programs, such as project initiative Zazeli implemented in remote and rural areas of Croatia with limited infrastructure to provide institutional services, could be modelled to incorporate home care services that would not be disrupted during any type of emergency situation entailing restrictions of movement.

Zdenek Meier, Lukáš Novák, Kristýna Gábová, Martin Heveri, Peter Tavel
Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic

Loneliness in an epidemic and its possible implications for social work

Abstract:

Research on loneliness has become an increasingly important topic in recent years. Loneliness is widely recognized as a risk factor for physical and mental health. Some authors speak of an epidemic of loneliness, while others highlight the impact on mental and physical health. Some of the research findings are surprising, e.g. during the COVID-19 epidemic, we would have expected a significant increase in loneliness (given the measures introduced by various governments), which surprisingly was not confirmed by the meta-analysis (Ernst et al., 2022).

Based on these premises, our paper will present the results of our research - a quantitative survey conducted in April 2021, when about 10% of the Czech population had already received their full vaccination (loneliness was tested using the 3-item TILS scale), and a qualitative study (12 interviews were collected in the same period on the lives of seniors over 65 years of age).

Implications for social work, particularly in times of crisis, are suggested by the research findings. The research clearly shows that although loneliness is a burden on the health system and consequently on society as a whole, the solutions (or effective interventions) are not primarily to be found in the health system but in the client's environment and in the fieldwork of the helping professions - especially social work. There are a number of food for thought in this paper that may be of interest to practitioners.

Tyyne Ylinen, Vera Ylinen, Laura Kalliomaa-Puha, Satu Ylinen
Tampere University, Finland

Gerontological social workers views on the multiplied and deepened social problems of their clients during the COVID-19 pandemic in Finland

Abstract:

Older people are at the greatest health risk from COVID-19, since age and age-related risk factors are positively associated with the severity of illness and mortality. Global crises tend to cause more social repercussions to people who already have different life difficulties. In Finland elderly social work clients have been affected in many ways, also due to the governance of the pandemic. Due to the restrictions, closed services and the fear of the virus, many older people have been in isolation for relatively long periods. In our paper, we ask, how were the lives of elderly social work clients affected by the pandemic and its governance, in the view of the gerontological

social workers? Our data consists of two focus group interviews with gerontological social workers (n=8), conducted in autumn of 22 in two cities in Finland. We analyzed the data with content analysis. Our preliminary analysis shows that the pandemic and its governance has deepened and multiplied many social problems of elderly social work clients and will cause long lasting social consequences. Clients' mental health and memory problems have gotten worse, overall coping has got more difficult and the loneliness has been devastating. The restrictions have also had serious consequences, resulting in violations of older peoples' self-determination and their right to participate.

Denise Burnette
School of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, U.S.A.

Global Population Ageing: Rationales, Roles, and Responsibilities of Social Work Education

Abstract:

In one of the most profound social transformations of the 21st century, the world's population has reached record longevities, and the pace continues to accelerate. UN 2022 global population prospects show 771 million people aged 65 years and over–representing almost 10% of the population and projected to reach 16% by 2050 and 24% by 2100. Causes and solutions to challenges of this trend vary regionally. Within three decades, for example, one-in-four European, North American, and Asian residents will be over 65 years old. Less developed countries are ageing more slowly but have fewer resources for managing the demands of their ageing societies. Population ageing impacts virtually every sector of society, including labor and financial markets, housing and transportation, and kinship structures and intergenerational ties. Social work has both a key role and professional responsibility to inform and support governments, non-governmental organizations, and civil society in dealing effectively with population ageing and the developmental potential and dependency needs of older adults.

Beginning with the 1982 Madrid Plan of Action, I will briefly review the evolution of key international policies and programs that underpin strategies to address global population ageing by promoting equity and inclusion of older adults. I will then discuss several research projects in which I have aimed to address important issues of ageing in low- and middle income countries and implications for policy, practice, and social work education, i.e., cognitive impairment in India; social isolation in Mongolia; intergenerational relationships in China; and climate-related migration in Puerto Rico and Peru.

Vladimir Ilievski, Suncica Dimitrijoska, Sofija Georgievska, Ivan Trajkov
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Professional competencies of social workers in times of crisis

Abstract:

The constant social changes happening to us at the global and national level impose the need for constant professional development of social workers while performing their work activities in different areas of action. Professional competencies are defined in accordance with the tasks that are performed within a profession, which contributes to a build up of the professional identity of the experts who belong to it. The question arises: To what extent do social workers develop knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for mastering work tasks in crisis situations? In conditions of serious crisis situations, social workers are required to possess specific competencies that will be enable them to realistically respond to the real needs and social risks that people face.

The paper is based on the field research (2023) undertaken among social workers working in different fields of social protection in North Macedonia. The paper aims to assess the needs for specific competencies and skills in social work in crisis situations (the Covid-19 pandemic, floods, earthquakes, fires and other natural disasters), as well as the needs of specific competencies and skills in social work in conditions of idiosyncratic shocks (when individual households are affected, for example, in case of death, trauma, violence, etc.).

Bonnie Lee
University of Lethbridge, Canada

Chance Bell
University of Nebraska Kearney, USA

Counsellors' Readiness to Engage in Relationship and Religious/Spiritual Issues during Crises and Disasters

Abstract:

In times of crises and disasters, relationship and spirituality/religious factors are known sources of resilience based on international studies. We posit that a holistic systemic approach to counselling should consider relational and spiritual factors in the assessment of risks and

resilience. We conducted a survey of Canadian counsellors' degree of engagement with relationship and religion/spirituality issues during the COVID-19 pandemic in their intake assessment. Three distinct counsellor profiles emerged from our analysis in terms of their demographics, experience and training. Predictive factors of whether counsellors will engage with issues of relationship and religion/spirituality are

identified. We will discuss the implications of these results for the training, education and preparation of counsellors and ways to approach these issues to better serve those afflicted in times of crises.

Vladimir Lazovski
SOS Children Village, North Macedonia

De-institutionalization in times of crisis: To stop or to speed up, the question is now?

Abstract:

This paper briefly presents the experiences and lessons learnt in furthering de-institutionalization and social services reforms of: (1) North Macedonia during the global Covid-19 pandemic and (2) Ukraine since the launch of the Russian invasion. In both countries, these unexpected, massive-scale, lasting and largely unpredictable crises situations almost instantly led to temporary suspension of de-institutionalization and reforms, expected to last until the 'normalization' of the situation. However, large crises lead to change of both social risks and needs of communities, as well as change in the modalities in which these risks and needs can be addressed. The paper argues that such changes stress the need to continue and even intensify de-institutionalization and social services reforms, albeit in volatile circumstances. On one hand, experiences show that non-institutional services (particularly those that include placement out of the user's family of origin) are more resilient, flexible and provide better protection of the user and their rights. On the other, the involvement of communities in service delivery is a contribution to the community's overall resilience and ability to respond to the crisis. Establishing coordination and cooperation with all relevant actors at national and local level – institutions, civic organizations, other relevant groups (even if they are informal) is the key to use the crisis as an opportunity for furthering de-institutionalization and community-based services.

Nikolina Kenig, Kalina Sotiroska Ivanovska
Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Exhausted, vigorous, or indifferent? Work engagement, counterproductive behaviour, and exhaustion among male and female employees during the economic crisis

Abstract:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine battered the world economy in 2022. Inevitable this was reflected in the Republic of North Macedonia as well, which was also faced with an economic crisis. This study investigated the relationship between exhaustion, work engagement, and work performance among

blue-collar workers and pink-collar workers during the economic crisis. A total of 297 (59.9% female) employees, at the mean age M=38.9 (SD=12.3) and mean working experience M=13.2 (SD=10.4) from various North Macedonian enterprises voluntarily and anonymously participated in the study. All participants answered the online based instrument which included demographic data, the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), sent at their personal e-mail addresses. Hierarchical regression was conducted to test the hypothesis whether different aspects of work engagement along with gender, age and tenure predict work exhaustion.

Results indicated that only counterproductive behavior (beta=0.46, $p<0.01$) and gender (beta=-1.72, $p<0.05$) predicts exhaustion (R^2 =42.5). The study advances the up-to-date understanding of exhaustion, work engagement, and work performance in organizational settings among male and female employees that might be severe issues due to the decreased face-to-face interactions in coping with economic crisis.

Nadiia Kabachenko, Oksana Boyko
National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Supported housing in Ukraine during the war

Abstract:

Supported housing is an alternative to a large number of boarding schools, psychoneurological dispensaries for people with disabilities and institutions for elderly people which are still acting in Ukraine, and, due to the war, there is a tendency to its growing. Supported housing envisages a significant level of inhabitants' independency, but, at the same time, provides relevant support for them. The importance of such support is being significantly increased during the wartime when a large number of people, in the first instance those who belong to vulnerable populations, loose their house, relatives and close people, who might be providing them with the relevant support in case of other circumstances. Thus for the purpose of the study it was important to explore how the Ukrainian state regulates the number of institutions where supported living is organized and to understand what creates barriers for creation and development the units for supported living in communities.

Based on the study outcomes it is possible to state that the number of such institutions acting in Ukraine is quite small. One of the most important reasons for the above is that the standards developed by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine which the place for supported living has to meet are quite high. In addition, according to the requirements, accommodation for 6-12 persons has to be provided by a large number of personnel, specifically, an administrative and economic personnel, social workers, home assistants and a psychologist. There are lots of communities which are not able to provide relevant requirements, especially within the war conditions when there is a large lack of resources, both material and human ones. Thus, it's very actual, in the first instance, to simplify the relevant requirements, to organize training that would ensure an opportunity to community representatives to arrange supported living for their inhabitants and to prevent them from being accommodated to the institutional facilities.

Anna Kasten
Ernst Abbe University of Applied Sciences Jena, Germany

and

Marta Wiatr
Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

Welcome Culture in Poland in the Context of Russia's War of Aggression against Ukraine: On Silence in the Order of Humanitarian Aid

Abstract:

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine forced people to flee. A million refugees are seeking protection in Poland, mainly in large cities such as Warsaw, Wrocław and Poznań. Chris Melzer, spokesman for the UN refugee agency UNHCR, spoke of the solidarity of the Poles and the willingness of the Polish population to help. However, the first empirical analyzes showed that this humanitarian aid is also characterized by racism against Roma and Sinti, among others. In this lecture we focus on "silence" (Hark 2014) in the order of humanitarian aid. we understand silence in the sense of the non-intelligible. The following questions will be addressed: What does the welcome culture look like? With which practices is the need for help recognized? How are the articulation im/possibilities of refugees from Ukraine problematized? To what extent

are violent dominance relationships fabricated in the context of humanitarian aid? To what extent are these challenged?

The article is based on an empirical qualitative pilot study in which parents at various schools in Warsaw were interviewed about their commitment to refugees from Ukraine. The data were analyzed using Kathy Charmaz' (2013) Grounded Theory.

Seifert Ruth
University of Applied Sciences Regensburg, Germany

Social Work, Human Rights, and Armed Conflict

Abstract:

The self-identification of social work as a „human rights profession" put forward by the big international organizations of social work has been immensely influential in the global professional debate. It carried with it the promise to provide clear guidelines for action and a solid foundation for social work practice. Moreover, it was to self-empower the profession by giving it a „relative professional autonomy" (Staub- Bernasconi) vis-a-vis the state institutions or NGOs into which social work is embedded. Urgent questions as to the relation between social work, human rights and the legal provisions of welfare states as well as questions regarding the concrete translation of human rights into professional practice still have not been clarified (cf. Scherr 2020; Ife 2009). These issues become even more pressing when relating to the

position of social work in armed conflicts. Human rights violations are at the core of armed conflicts. International Humanitarian Law, the aim of which is to regulate armed conflicts, tries to mitigate these violations but basically accepts a right to kill and do harm to others – including civilians. Human Rights on the other hand do not incorporate a right to kill and cause pain and suffering to others. The paper discusses the legal, political and ethical conflicts that result for a profession that puts the defense of human rights as its principle objective and nolens volens becomes involved in armed conflict.

Vesna Šućur-Janjetović, Andrea Rakanović Radonjić, Draško Gajić
University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Are the human rights providing empowerment possibilities for social work with vulnerable groups in Republic of Srpska?

Abstract:

Vulnerable groups represent special categories that are in a higher risk of being socially excluded, vulnerable and sensitive to spectrum of risks, including poverty. Disabled persons, children, youngsters, women, elders, victims/survivors of violence, illiterate people, people living in rural areas, members of certain minority groups, refugees and displaced persons, members of LGBTIQ+ communities etc, are considered to be vulnerable. Human rights as a universal concept are guaranteed by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), which guarantees the implementation of human rights for all citizens of B&H. The obligation to implement the international documents that secure the standards, obliging the state to enforce guaranteed human rights is also anticipated by the Constitution. Human rights are the foundation and the framework for social work and social policy when it comes to working with and in favour of vulnerable groups, however, in reality of social work practice, these groups remain on the margins of society.

This article focuses on possibilities of social work in helping vulnerable groups to move from the margins of society. The article represents the results of the analysis conducted on gathered relevant documents that include information regarding the current state and processes, status and changes regarding the vulnerable groups' human rights enforcement in Republic of Srpska. The theoretical framework used for understanding and trying to search for possible answers to the defined question is underpinned by the critical social work perspectives. The content analysis was used as an independent theoretical-empirical method when research on relevant documents was conducted.

David Androff
Arizona State University, United States of America

Refugee integration through human rights and social development

Abstract:

One in every seventy-eight people on earth has been forced to flee home, more than ever recorded. Global refugee policy, developed over 70 years ago, is meant to find permanent homes-known as "durable solutions"- however fewer than two percent of refugees were able to return, locally integrate, or resettle last year.

This study applied a case study method to analyze the socio-economic dimensions of local integration –often called the forgotten refugee policy–in the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, Kenya. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic participant observation from 236 individuals (152 refugees, 26 policymakers, 58 professionals).

Secondary data from UN, government statistics, nongovernment reports, and research literature was analyzed alongside the primary data to produce a nuanced case study.

Results indicate that socio-economic integration was facilitated by innovative programs including e-voucher for food aid, cash for housing, entrepreneurship, and integrated education and healthcare. Refugees were reframed from passive burdensome dependents to active productive empowered agents within an enabling environment. Economic and social wellbeing included increased employment, improved nutrition, greater satisfaction, and self-reliance. A market-based approach led to overall economic development which benefitted host and refugee communities alike and contributed to positive social relations.

This research indicates the need for significant policy reforms which include strengthening asylum, prioritizing socio-economic integration, and increasing international burden-sharing.

Implications include increasing socio-economic integration through social work practice and social development, not only narrow legal or political integration. Social workers can use social development to promote refugee rights and integration.

Ivana Jakšić, Zoran Vesić
University of Belgrade, Serbia

Predictors of Professional Burnout Among Employees in the Social Welfare System in Serbia During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract:

This study aimed to identify factors of professional burnout among employees in the social welfare system in Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 1267 participants were examined (89% women), including 715 employees in centers for social work, 326 employees in accommodation facilities, and 226 employees providing community services. As part of a broader, electronically administered questionnaire, the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Helpers (MBI-HSS; α2022 = .92) was administered. The following predictors were analyzed: increase in workload, satisfaction with various aspects of work, satisfaction with social support, application of different stress coping strategies. The strength of individual predictors was tested using hierarchical regression analysis ($F(16, 473)=26.31$, $p<.01$). The tested predictors explained 49% of the variance in employee burnout. Increased workload explained only 2% of the variance. Satisfaction with various aspects of work accounted for as much as 41% of the variance in professional burnout, with greater importance placed on aspects related to the ability to help clients and professional achievement, rather than job aspects related to compensation and recognition. Aspects related to specific adaptations to pandemic conditions had the weakest predictive power. Social support accounted for an additional 2%, with support from family and colleagues being the most important. Coping strategies explained 6% of the variance in burnout. Positive thinking and optimism did not have a protective effect against burnout, while various maladaptive strategies worsened burnout. Active coping strategies and social support from colleagues had a protective effect.

Vesela Ivanova, Vaska Stancheva-Popkostadinova, Ivaylo Ivanov
South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria

From Small Emergencies to Large-Scale Disasters: How to plan, prepare and protect the public

Abstract:

Emergencies can strike at any time, from small-scale incidents like car accidents, building fires, and local storms to large-scale disasters like nuclear or radiological incidents. Over the years people have developed abilities to manage and cope with small-scale incidents on a daily basis, but the respond to large-scale disasters remains fragmented and insufficient.

The article discusses the importance of preparedness and response measures that take into account not only physical but also social and psychological impacts to minimize the overall harm caused by nuclear or radiological incidents.

Social policy and social workers play critical roles in addressing the needs of individuals and communities affected by large-scale emergencies, such as natural disasters, pandemics, and terrorist attacks. In these crises, social policies provide a framework for the delivery of emergency services, while social workers work on the front lines to support individuals and families.

Nina Schniederjahn
Evangelische Hochschule Berlin, Germany

The Role of Social Workers in Education for Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the SDGs

Abstract:

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a critical component of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it promotes the development of knowledge, skills, and values necessary for creating a sustainable future. Social workers have a unique role to play in ESD, given their expertise in working with diverse communities and promoting social justice. This paper examines the role of social workers in ESD, with a particular focus on the opportunities and challenges of integrating ESD into social work education and practice. The paper explores the potential benefits of integrating ESD into social work curricula, including the promotion of critical thinking and sustainability literacy. Furthermore, practical possibilities for social workers to promote education in sustainability in the areas of early childhood education, school and non-formal and informal learning are examined. Obstacles in the implementation of ESD, such as a lack of legal foundations, are identified and possible solutions are outlined.

Issie Jacobs
North-West University, South Africa

Social work training needs and adjustments in the 21st century

Abstract:

Present day global crises are forcing social workers out of their comfort zones to deal with aspects on a mezzo and macro level that challenge their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The question, however, is whether social workers are adequately trained to deal with these aspects to the point that it serves the best interest of the clients they are servicing. The paper intends to look at what should be included in social work training to be relevant within a 21 st century context. The paper hopes to contribute to a discussion on what will it take for social work to be recognized as important role player on a mezzo and macro level of intervention during different crises.

Ingo Stamm
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Integrating environmental and social sustainability in services for unemployed people: A challenge for ecosocial work

Abstract:

Services for unemployed people and environmental sustainability are rarely interlinked in social work research despite the emerging discussion about ecosocial work and sustainable welfare in Europe. This paper is based on a Finnish case study within a broader cross-national research project. It focuses on the inclusion of unemployed people and the impact of social work regarding environmental and social sustainability by examining the meaning of sustainability in the field of social work services in a medium-size city in Finland. The case study aims at the policy and practice dimension and is structured by two main questions. 1) How is 'sustainability' perceived and interpreted in the context of services for unemployed people? 2) What potential for eco-social policies can be identified in the field? The data was collected through expert interviews with various actors in the field. The data analysis followed the constructivist grounded theory approach, as well as sequential analysis according to objective hermeneutics.

The results reveal a number of valuable ideas and concepts for future ecosocial work and eco-social policies. However, an interdisciplinary, integrated eco-social approach was largely missing from the field. The analysis further reveals a fragmented picture of numerous meanings, interpretations, and concepts of sustainability. In conclusion, social work would need to clarify its own role regarding sustainability, drawing for example on the concept of its third mandate by Staub-Bernasconi. This would enable social workers to become experts not only regarding the social inclusion of their clients but also regarding the goal of sustainability.

Svetlana Trbojevik
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

"Pre-emptive response of financial institutions on the effects of global crises: the case of Republic of North Macedonia"

Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the ability of financial institutions to predict global crises and to identify their potentials for timely response in protecting weaker economies. In particular, the paper focuses on the assistance of financial institutions to mitigate the effects of the world crises on the Macedonian society.

Special attention is given to the COVID-19 crisis and the crisis related to the war in Ukraine. In that context, the empirical analysis refers to the "(in)visible hand" of financial institutions in guiding policy makers, in the domain of health and social protection, education and agriculture, to identify key weaknesses of the sectors and designing an appropriate responses for protection of vulnerable groups of population. The paper analyzes the inventiveness of financial institutions in creating instant measures of interventions in vital segments in different sectors as well as the flexibility of transferring resources between sectors.

Einav Segev, *Yael Hochman*
Sapir Academic college, Israel

Thrown into the Water: Early career. Social Workers' Job Challenges and Time Management Coping Strategies

Abstract:

The present study examined the early-career experiences of Israeli social workers in their first years in the profession. The study also sought to examine the participants' coping with the challenges posed by entering social work. Using a qualitative methodology, two focus groups of eleven social workers with eighteen months of work experience were conducted. The participants were asked about their professional role and workplace experiences. The findings pointed to two main challenges: stress and emotional overload, and dissatisfaction with organisational and employment conditions. The participants felt that social work education had not prepared them adequately for the complex reality of their practice. At the same time, they also described coping strategies related to time management. The implications discussed include requisite preparations of social work education and employing organisations to support early career social workers.

Suzana Bornarova, Natasha Bogoevska
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Social prevention of violent extremism - European trends and Macedonian conditions

Abstract:

Different practices in the prevention of violent extremism are present in European countries depending on the socio-political, historical and cultural context. Dominant trends are those related to a combination of security and social protection approach, integrated services: social protection, health, education, employment, housing and others, as well as various programs for prevention, de-radicalization, reintegration and rehabilitation.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the gravity of this problem is insufficiently recognized, the measures taken are not systemic, but rather based on ad-hock interventions in emergency situations, while prevention is insignificant. The institutional capacities for dealing with this issue and its prevention are weak, while multi-sectoral cooperation, despite the introduced initiatives, is still underdeveloped.

This paper will present the European trends in the social prevention and coping with the problem of violent extremism, as well as domestic conditions and challenges, with a focus on social protection.

Sanja Cukut Krilić
Sociomedical Institute, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia

Mental health of forced migrants: between stigma, culture and policies

Abstract:

A series of losses, insecurities and distresses that can be among the risk factors for the prevalence of mental health difficulties accompany the process of forced migration. Such losses can be physical (loss of home, family members) as well as symbolic (loss of language, cultural codes and traditions) and relate to factors experienced by forced migrants before, during and after the migration process. Stigma in relation to mental health difficulties refers to cultural and structural barriers of help seeking for such difficulties and greatly impedes the process of recovery. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of migration/asylum/mental health (e.g. social workers, psychotherapists, cultural mediators, asylum counsellors, etc.), the contribution will explore the main factors related to mental health difficulties among forced migrants in Slovenia. These are identified before their migration (war, political instabilities, violence, losses), during the migration process (insecurities, lack of information, violence on the move) as well as after their migration (stigmatisation, discrimination, inadequate housing, lack of employment and educational possibilities, social and migration policies, etc.). Special importance will be afforded to the temporal aspects of their migration (prolonged waiting for uncertain futures) and to how they affect their health and well-being. In this respect, the contribution explores some proposals for more inclusive migration and social policies.

Pierre Klein
International Movement All Together in Dignity - ATD Fourth World, France

The dimensions of poverty framework – impact on social work and social policies

Abstract:

"The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty (2019)" is the report presenting the learnings of a multi-year participatory research project, led by Oxford University and the International Movement All Together in Dignity – ATD Fourth World. This research project connected people who have a direct experience of poverty with other experts, in six countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States. A key aim was to complement "top down" definitions of poverty with experiential ones, and to demonstrate that it is possible to develop research methodologies that enable the fulfilment of human rights obligations to engage people in poverty in global policy making.

The paper first addresses the innovative and insightful description framework of poverty. This framework identifies nine interdependent characteristics common to countries in the global north and south. Elements such as "social and institutional mistreatment" or "unrecognised contributions" receive the same focus and attention as more traditional aspects such as insufficient resources or lack of housing. A second part of the presentation focuses on the impacts of the Dimensions of Poverty Framework on social work practices and social policies. One of these impacts relates to the methodological approach used in the research: the "Merging of Knowledge" approach was used over a period of three years, people with a lived experience of poverty worked alongside academic researchers and professionals who work directly with people in poverty, such as teachers or social workers. This approach can inspire participatory practice and policy design.

Maja Gerovska Mitev
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Social Policy Trajectories in Central and Eastern Europe: from post-socialist to post-welfare states

Abstract:

The paper provides a scoping overview of main social policy discourses and developments in some of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe (North Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Czech Republic) since the 199ties. It frames the analysed countries within the literature on comparative welfare models. It outlines trends and indicators related to social protection expenditure, poverty, unemployment, income inequality, material deprivation and social exclusion in CEE. It aims to outline main trajectories and developments related to politics of social

welfare since the post-socialist transition.

In the context of ongoing demographic, migration, economic and other challenges, the paper also analysis the post-welfare state developments in CEE from the standpoint that governments cannot do it all on their own. It analyses trends related to: replacement of universality in income security policy with progressive income-testing; balance between 'active' and 'passive' social programs; between reactive and preventive approaches; use of partnerships between public, private and voluntary sector in social policy. In doing so, it provides an outlook on future tendencies and challenges of welfare states in Central and Eastern Europe.

Łukasz Jurek
Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, Poland

Wefare state and welfare abuse: empirical evidence from Poland

Abstract:

Although development of the welfare state enables to overcome crucial social and economic problems, it also causes a series of unintended outcomes, such as abusing welfare benefits. Today this problem seems to be one of the major challenge for theoreticians and practitioners of social policy, as it reduces efficiency of welfare programs, and provides waste of public funds.

The aim of the paper is both, theoretic and empirical. In theoretic part I will present the theoretic background of welfare abuse. In empirical part I will present results of survey that was conducted in Poland in 2022. On the basis on obtained results I will discuss the attitudes towards abusing welfare benefits.

Kristijan Fidanovski
University of Oxford, PhD Student, United Kingdom

What Policy Implications Are Contained in the Distribution of Financial Support for Parents by Child Age and Birth Order? An Analysis of 29 European Countries

Abstract:

This paper examines the distribution of financial support for parents over the course of childhood (child age) and between birth orders (parity). We use the term "positive age bias" to refer to distribution patterns skewed towards older children and the term "negative age bias" for more generous support among younger children. Similarly, we refer to distribution patterns tilted towards later birth orders as "positive parity

bias" and to those that favor earlier birth orders as "negative parity bias". Based on a list of four classical policy objectives of financial support for parents (child cost compensation, fertility incentivisation, poverty reduction, and child development), we formulate four (sets of) hypotheses for the age and parity distribution of financial support for parents.

To assess these distribution patterns, we examine monthly financial support (allowance- and tax-based) for the first four birth orders at child's ages 2, 9, and 17 in low-income and middle-income households across 29 European countries. Using a microsimulation model, we find negative average age bias in both income categories and negative average parity bias in the low-income category, yet positive average parity bias in the middle-income category. We also find considerable cross-country heterogeneity for both age and parity distribution, with fertility incentivisation and child development being facilitated by more countries than child cost compensation and (especially) poverty reduction. Our analysis sheds light on previously underexplored trends and implications in the design of financial support for parents in Europe, which is the most generous family policy in many European welfare states.

Jovan Pejkovski
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Income, poverty and inequality in a small market economy

Abstract:

In times of crisis, incomes decrease and poverty increases. This leads to serious social inequality and confrontations. The incomes of a very small part of the population are growing, while the majority of citizens do not have enough means of subsistence. The middle class is shrinking and impoverishing.

The aim of the paper is to show the relationship and impact of the crisis on income and poverty in a small market economy. The crisis multiplies unemployment, loss of income, and widens the gap between the rich and the poor. It is being investigated to what level of impoverishment the population can move in a country with a market system of orderliness. Minimum wages demotivate workers, and the supply and demand in the labor market are derogated from.

The appearance of enormous salary growth in the Macedonian elite, in contrast to minimal salary and pension growth, creates polarization and possible social conflicts. The growth of incomes and pensions does not cover the rate of inflation, which has the role of an imposed tax on the incomes of the population.

The low GDP growth rate does not allow dynamism of social changes. Double-digit inflation is not reduced by the mix of monetary and fiscal policy influences alone. A stabilization macroeconomic policy is necessary to prevent pauperization and mass emigration. Therefore, specific measures and policies must be taken by the welfare state, which has the obligation to maintain growth and stability, but also social peace and development.

Ida Kolinovic
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro

Electricity Bill Subsidy Program as a Measure of Assistance and Support for the Socially Most Vulnerable in Montenegro

Abstract:

Electricity represents a basic human need in modern society and it is necessary for decent living and the preservation of a wide range of basic human rights. It has a great influence on the standard of living of the population because it is of essential importance for meeting basic human needs such as nutrition, health, education, culture, information, lighting, internet, telephony, etc. With the continuous increase in energy prices, more and more households have been faced with problems paying their electricity bills. Poor households face significant challenges in terms of heating costs and paying electricity bills, so they often set a temperature to lower/higher than needed for that particular season, which has an adverse effect to personal hygiene, healthy eating, mental health, education, etc. That is why it is necessary that the state support in the field of supply of electricity to vulnerable groups of the population becomes an integral part of all systemic programs in the field of social protection and poverty alleviation programs.

This paper presents the program of subsidizing electricity bills as a measure of assistance and support for the most socially and healthy vulnerable in Montenegro. The average number of beneficiaries of electricity subsidy rights was 18,823 in 2019, 20,645 in 2020, 20,430 in 2021, 20,951 in 2022. For this program, the Government of Montenegro allocated over three million euros annually from the budget in the last four years.

Marijana Majdak, Olja Družić Ljubotina, Marion Trcol
University of Zagreb, Croatia

Perception of Professionals in Social Care System about stigmatization of children and youth with behavioural problems

Abstract:

The main goal of this paper is to gain insight into the perception of social care experts about stigma of children and youth with problems in behaviour. The research was conducted by using qualitative methodology and the technique of semi-structured interviews to find out how experts perceive children and youth with socially unacceptable behaviour and what they consider important in working with this population. Four research questions were formulated with emphasis on the perception about children and youth with behavioural problems, expert's experiences about social position of children and youth with problems in behaviour and their

chances for the future. The participants were 8 experts who work in different social care institutions with children and youth with behavioural problems. Data were analysed by using thematic analysis method. The results show that experts perceive children and youth through the possible causes, which influenced their problems in behaviour, as well as through their personality traits. They perceive them as people who need help and they expect that in the future this children and youth will continue expressing behavioural problems. According to experts, the social position of children and youth with problems in behaviour depends on several factors: position of children and youth in educational institutions, the role of legal regulations about children and youth with behavioural problems, the connection between problems in behaviour in childhood and adolescence with the quality of life in adulthood.

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Sheruze Osmani Ballazhi, Ibrahin Neziri, Luljieta Bexheti
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Ask Me What Matters To Me! The Importance of Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study in the Republic of North Macedonia

Abstract:

The awareness that adolescence is an essential period for later health and well-being is increasing, therefore the importance of timely and accurate data is emphasized. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborative cross-national study, is an international research study that aims to increase understanding of adolescent health, health behaviours, and their social determinants as the settings of family, peers, and school, across different countries. The survey is implemented every 4 years according to the common study protocol. In North Macedonia, the survey was first conducted in 2001. The North Macedonian sample consists of randomly selected classes from all public schools. All students aged 11, 13, and 15 completed questioner containing three types of questions: core items, optional packages, and national items. The survey is administrated in the school setting using paper and pencil, and for the first time in 2022 electronically. The HBSC data delivers evidence on health behaviour, health outcomes and social environments of boys and girls in language of instruction: Macedonian and Albanian. The results provide country profile and give a scientific basis for improving the health and well-being of adolescents. The national government, the academic community, parents, media, and governmental organizations should use the HBSC data for policy and advocacy purposes to enable young people develop their full potential.

Rajhvajn Bulat Linda, Sušac Nika, Rezo Bagarić Ines
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Adolescents' mental health problems – Which adolescents engage in self-harm behaviour and how can we protect them?

Abstract:

Deliberate self-harm (DSH) in adolescence is in great increase in the last decade. At the same time, both non-suicidal self-injury and DSH often precede adolescents' suicidal behaviour and suicide itself. The aim of this paper is to detect which personal and social characteristics differ between youth with and without DSH, in order to develop the best possible interventions for the protection of youth mental health.

A study within the research project "Intergenerational risk transmission for adolescent mental health", funded by the Croatian Science Foundation, was conducted with 854 1st grade high school students (Mage=15.18, SDage=0.423). The questionnaire included items on sociodemographics, perceived family financial status, perceived earthquake effects, adolescents' self-harm behaviour, risk and delinquent behaviour, parental behaviours, parentification, experienced family violence, peer relationships, school attachment, stress and coping. 28.6% students had harmed themselves at least once. Compared to those without DSH, their scores on all variables indicated that they had more problems in various areas of life. These adolescents also showed more risk behaviours and engaged in peer violence more often. Moreover, the youth who perceived their family financial status as worse and those whose families had had greater material damages due to recent large earthquakes in Croatia were at greater risk for DSH. Escalation of adolescents' mental health problems should serve as a warning for social workers who work with families at risk. In the discussion, we will present guidelines for developing empirically based programs for protecting and encouraging youth mental health, in the context of social work interventions.

Emina Borjanić Bolić, Vladimir Ilic, Veselin Medenica
College of Social Work, Serbia

Trauma informed care: a holistic approach for child residential care

Abstract:

The number of children in child residential care that are affected by traumatic experience is not negligible so all the professionals involved in childcare face a very challenging and emotionally demanding job. Their engagement in meeting children's needs and providing all the necessary support, sometimes exceeds their professional boundaries. As a result there is a substantial number of professionals suffering from these secondary exposures to child-traumatic materials thus there is a strong widespread urge to deal with these issues. This article focuses on what trauma

informed care is and why it is important for all the sides involved in child residential care. The accumulated knowledge about trauma has risen in recent years leading to new concepts and strategies which trauma informed care model represents. Trauma informed care may not represent a new model, actually it is a holistic approach in practices with traumatized children. It suggests that knowledge of prevalence of trauma and understanding the impact of trauma issues makes a frame for planning and incorporating services which promotes safe environment and positive interaction with children. Trauma informed care model appears to be a standard which enables to respond to the needs of children in order to overcome the impact of traumatic experiences and reduces possibility of vicarious trauma among residential workers. On the other hand it can also help reduce avoidable care and excess costs for both the health care and social service sectors.

Dragana Šćepović, Ljubo Lepir
University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Protection of children without parental care in the Republic of Srpska

Abstract:

The paper presents the results of the research, the aim of which is to analyse the circumstances in the field of protection of children without parental care in the Republic of Srpska and review current events with special reference to the change in legal regulations (Family Law). The research sample (N= 250) consisted of social work centre managers and professional workers who work directly on the protection and care of children without parental care. The data were collected using two research instruments designed specifically for the needs of this survey: an Analytical Form that obtained data related to the work process of legal guardianship bodies and the current state of affairs in the field of protection of children without parental care, and a Questionnaire that examined the attitudes and opinions of professional workers about the measures and forms of protection, state and current events in this area.

The preliminary results of the research showed that in more than half of the centres the traditional concept of care for children without parental care is represented, which implies a significant presence of institutional care, a lack of resources for foster care, which is recognized as a desirable form of care for children, but is still not represented in the expected scope (less than 50%), as well as the burden of the adoption procedure with very demanding procedures.

The proposed changes to the Family Law, which refer to the involvement of the court in making decisions on the separation of children from the family and on maintaining the child's relationship with the parent with whom he/she does not live, the mandatory introduction of a trial period during the implementation of adoption and the program for preparing potential adopters for adoption, have been recognized by more than two third of professional workers as a way of improving the protection of children without parental care.

Marsela Allmuça, Eliona Bimbashi
University of Tirana, Albania

Gender Based Violence in Albania - the role of perpetrators program in Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRM) at local level

Abstract:

Gender-based violence and domestic violence remain serious problems in Albania. Poverty, unemployment, internal and international migration as well as deprivations on various levels due to the massive economic, political and societal transformation are big challenges in the country, however domestic violence can be considered as one of the most problematic issues of Albania's transition. According to the latest survey of INSTAT (2018), 1 out of 2 or 52.9% of women aged 18-74 'ever' experienced one or more of the five different types of violence during their lifetime. The number of domestic violence cases reported to the police is increased year by year, from 3866 cases in 2015 the figure of 2022 is 5199 cases. Programs for the treatment of abusers are relatively new and have been offered since 2014 by CSOs and only in 2020 they have been integrated as legal obligations that derive from the obligations of the Istanbul Convention.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the situation of perpetrators program in Albania and their role in addressing Gender based violence as part of Coordinated Referral Mechanisms at local level.

The methodology is qualitative based in available secondary data in this field and semi structured interviews with professionals in field.

Results based in available secondary data in this field: CRM and perpetrators programs are limited all over the country, lack of specific approach or program for other types of perpetrators, the quality of work with abusers is still a problem, as there are no approved standards offered for this type of service.

Sarah Otto
Leipzig University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Unseen Victims: Understanding the Impact of Domestic Violence on Children and Adolescents - Implications for Policy, Research and Practice

Abstract:

This conference contribution will explore the impact of domestic violence on children and adolescents, focusing on the unique risks faced by this vulnerable group. Domestic violence is a pervasive and complex social problem, with significant consequences for individuals and families. Despite widespread recognition of its

negative effects, the experiences of children who are exposed to domestic violence are often overlooked in research and policy. This paper aims to address this gap, by drawing on recent empirical research and theoretical frameworks to understand the experiences of children affected by domestic violence.

The paper begins by providing an overview of the prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on children, highlighting the specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by this group. It explores the range of negative outcomes associated with exposure to domestic violence, including mental health problems, social and behavioural difficulties, and increased risk of future victimization or perpetration. There will be an examination of the ways in which children's development may be affected by exposure to violence, and the role of social and cultural factors in shaping their experiences. Additionally the factors that contribute to resilience in this context will be explored.

Drawing on this overview, the paper will then conclude the policy, research and practice implications of these findings. We will examine current approaches to working with children in this context, and consider the challenges and opportunities for future policy, research and practice in this area. Overall, this contribution will provide a critical analysis of the impact of domestic violence on children, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and integrated response to this complex social problem.

Vanja Branica, Marijana Kletečki Radović, Jelena Ogresta, Linda Rajhvajn Bulat
University of Zagreb, Croatia

The role of parents and the school in mental health care: youth perspective

Abstract:

Mental health is important topic today, especially when it comes to young people who, in addition to the usual developmental challenges, grow up exposed to social risks and crises in the modern world (COVID-19, earthquake). Earlier research showed an increase in mental health problems among young people (anxiety and depression) with negative effect on their well-being. So, this research was conducted with the aim to gain insight into how high school youth understand the role of parents and schools in caring for the mental health of young people. The research is part of the project *What is happening to Us? Experience of mental health difficulties from the perspective of young people*. Young people participated in 9 focus group discussion, 56 male and female from 6 Zagreb (Croatia) high schools (gymnasiums and secondary vocational schools). The results indicate that young people perceive both, parents and school, in two ways: a) as sources of difficulties that affect mental health and b) as those who have a place in providing support for the mental health of young people. Parents and their relationship towards young people are recognized as a source of stress if family relationships are broken, parents are overloaded with work and their worries, and regarding the availability and understanding they show towards young people and their needs. School is recognized as a source of stress related to grades, the amount of obligations and assignments, especially when it comes to students' apprenticeship.

The obtained results will be discussed under the guise of international guidelines on improving the system of providing mental health support services for young people in the educational system, which includes the support of the school mental health professionals and cooperation with parents.

Elizabeta Tomevska-Ilievska, Natasha Angeloska-Galevska,
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Supporting students from vulnerable categories though the model of tutoring in higher education – attitudes, needs and expectations

Abstract:

Tutoring is considered as an additional and extracurricular academic support for students, with aim to help individuals in acquiring knowledge and developing new skills.

The aim of the research is to make survey with students and to learn more about their attitudes, needs, experience and expectations toward the tutoring system in the higher education. Broader goal of the research is to gain data that will be used in developing model of tutoring that can help students to overcome the difficulties in the learning process and easily to face the challenges in the academic and everyday life.

Data were gathered with survey of current students attending the study programs at the Faculty of Philosophy.

According to the responds of students, the tutoring function should be implemented by providing literature and teaching aids according to the needs of particular students who need support, explaining the tasks for exam preparation, helping with administrative tasks, instructions for using the university software, registering courses to be taken in an exam session, registering and certifying a semester, and other academic tasks during their studies. In order to achieve this, an individual higher education plan should be developed that involves adjusting the educational standards and contents made by the tutor, with the assistance of the professor.

The ultimate benefit and recommendation from the research is the creation of conditions for developing an educational model for supporting students from vulnerable categories, which can further be improved and applied in work with all students.

Jelena Maksimović, Jasmina Veljković, Aleksandar Novaković
University in Niš, Serbia

The role of action research in successfully adapting members of national minorities to the social and school context

Abstract:

Bearing in mind that the action research with its specifics tends to introduce certain changes in order to improve educational practice and raise the quality of teaching, in this case the goal of the same is to facilitate the members of the Roma population to adapt to peers in the fastest and more efficient way, both in school and in society. Very often it is talked about the difficulties that Roma children encounter in the classroom, accordingly, the aim is to conduct research in order to raise awareness of equality of all and mutual acceptance. The technique of observing and analyzing the current situation was used, while other techniques were applied in accordance with the designed activities. Action research is proof that many obstacles and difficulties in interpersonal relationships can be successfully overcome in a creative and unusual way. The special importance of the positive results obtained is reflected in the alternation of cyclic circles, where useful procedures are repeated and dissatisfaction disappears. The unavoidable segment is the length of the research and the possibility of equal involvement of participants. The conducted research can be useful to many practitioners who are trying to innovate in their work, find an effective solution to problems, both at the school level and at the level of society.

Nina Krivokapic Bakrac, Mehmed Djecevic
University of Montenegro, Montenegro

Possibilities and perspectives of older minors in decision-making processes in Montenegro

Abstract:

The youth population in Montenegro constitutes a demographic of strong significance for study. The theme that stands out is their involvement in conventional forms of political participation. Decreasing the voting age from 18 to 16 would enable the youth population to participate in the voting process, directly impacting policies that would affect their societal status. EU member states such as Malta, Austria, and Germany serve as strong examples of good practice with regard to the voting rights of youth. The objective of this study was to assess the political awareness and will of the youth in Montenegro to take on more societal and political responsibility, and to compare the political knowledge between newly eligible voters and older minors, in line with trends in the EU. In order to examine the attitudes of youth and obtain research findings, a combination of quantitative research through a survey and

qualitative research through a semi-structured interview conducted with relevant actors such as psychologists, teachers, young people, and representatives of the non-governmental sector was conducted.

The research survey was conducted on a sample of 186 participants who completed the survey online. The respondents were youth attending high school or university in the Podgorica area. The results indicate that older minors reject the idea of decreasing the voting age from 18 to 16, and that older minors have the same or comparable degree of political knowledge as young adults who are already eligible to vote. Another finding points to the fact that older minors have confidence in electoral processes but do not want to participate in them. They have a higher level of trust in the non-governmental sector and believe that it is through these organizations that they become active participants in society.

Mehmed Djecevic, Nina Krivokapic Bakrac
University of Montenegro, Montenegro

Primary Family of Psychiatric Patients in Montenegro: Sociogenesis of Mental Disorders in a Transitional Society

Abstract:

The family is one of the most important agents of personality socialisation, including in terms of providing for predispositions for a psychopathological response. In terms of the types of disruptions that can exist in a family, families can be divided into those with a disrupted structure and those with disrupted relationships. Research conducted in the West shows that, on both grounds, primary families of psychiatric patients carry certain specificities.

In order to determine the characteristics of the primary family of psychiatric patients in the Montenegrin society, as a transitional and relatively traditional one, research with a quasi-experimental design was developed in this paper. The control group in the sample consists of research participants who have not been diagnosed with a mental disorder, while the experimental group consists of individuals who have been diagnosed with psychotic or depressive states. The results of the research illustrate the characteristic family relations, i.e. the family atmosphere in families of individuals with a mental disorder. Regarding disruptions in the structure of the family, no relationship has been identified between the existence of a mental disorder and a disrupted family structure. However, this relationship exists in different degrees depending on whether an individual has siblings, as well as their birth order. Research has shown that socio-pathological phenomena, such as domestic violence, often occur in conjunction with psychopathological phenomena. Therefore, family empowerment, from the standpoint of social work, would be a protective factor for prevention of both phenomena.

Buda Methadžović
University of Montenegro, Montenegro

Family and child protection - regulation and practices in Montenegro

Abstract:

Domestic violence is a sociological and public health problem that integrates complex consequences for all segments of family and society's life. It results in the collapse of the family, insufficient cooperation with the institution, psychophysical and emotional consequences for the victim. Domestic violence is viewed from different angles through the activities of various state bodies, each of which individually has specific responsibilities in combating crime, and therefore domestic violence. The increase in violence in society is directly related to the increase in domestic violence, and the psychological aspect of the problem of domestic violence has been neglected. Today, the perception of domestic violence has changed, it is today a social problem and a form of criminality, because it has become clear that, due to the consequences it causes, it cannot be socially tolerated, so active opposition to violence and protection from violence is one of the basic obligations of every democratic state . which respects and protects human rights. The key roles of the institutions with which the Center for Social Work must cooperate are the Police Directorate, the State Prosecutor's Office, educational and health institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

The procedures and actions of all institutions are precisely defined by the Protocol on Procedures in Cases of Violence, however official figures on reports of violence show that the actions are not synchronized and their synergistic effect is missing. Montenegro has certainly made a good introduction to face the problem of domestic violence.

Sanja Đurđević, Zilijeta Krivokapic, Rosa Sapic
College of Social Work, Serbia

Divorce as a normative transitional crisis-systemic development model vs model of psychopathology

Abstract:

Every year, a divorce rate is increasing globally. In the Western countries, 40-50% of couples end in divorce. Although a divorce represents significant stress and risk factor with numerous negative consequences for adults and children, it is estimated that "difficult" divorce rate is around 10-15% of all cases. Such "difficult" divorce most often led to developing psychopathology. In the literature, significant evidence was found for the intercorrelation of divorce and a wide range of negative psychological behavioural outcomes for both parents and children, in comparison to fewer studies proving correlation between divorce and resilience.

The starting point for this paper was that most families in the aftermath of divorce continue to function without developing pathology. Therefore, family relations after divorce are not necessarily damaged but only change their form. This paper aims to present a systemic family model that explains complex and multi-layered processes that parents and children go through in the divorce. In theory, linear approach aims to respond to the key questions of why and how much parental divorce affects children. Contrarily, systemic circular model addresses how and in which way some children experience serious and long-term clinically significant outcomes, while others see little or no adverse effects after the parental divorce.

This paper will summarize evidence related to mechanisms (such as emotional exchange, communication, life cycles, differentiation of self, family rules, transgenerational transmission) aiming to explain differences in children's adaptation to divorce and inform about effective prevention strategies in the area.

Makedonka Radulovic
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Biljana Todorova
University of Shtip, North Macedonia

New models of employee leave of absences and their impact on family-work balance

Abstract:

The balance between work and family is one of the three key dimensions of the European Union's family policy. It is also one of the biggest challenges of contemporary families. Many European countries are trying to establish policies and provide instruments to help families. Among those instruments, absences from work due to having and/or raising children and their flexibility play a major role. Determined by EU membership, The Republic of North Macedonia makes continuous efforts to unify with the European legislation. In the context of this, the Law on Labor Relations is on the way to be change, where a package of employee leave of absences for the birth of a child (maternity, paternity and parenthood leave) is proposed. The main goal of this paper is to analyze the existing and new proposed employee leave of absences and to evaluate their potential impact on the family-work balance. Additionally, a research survey on the opinions of the respondents regarding employee leave of absences for the birth of a child will be conducted. The results will provide us with a broader picture and will help us to achieve the main goal of this paper.

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Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia
Pavlina Stefanova
International Growth Agency (IGA), North Macedonia
Elena Galevska
Sopro, North Macedonia

The abilities of recruiters and methodology of the selection process as factors for employment

Abstract:

The strategies for recruitment and selection of candidates are increasingly evolving as main factors for successful employment of candidates. In a society where companies compete for suitable candidates, recruiters have the responsible role of representing the company and making the first impression. The recruiters are the link between the labor population and the labor market. The abilities that recruiters possess and the selection strategies they use are a crucial part of this interconnection.

The **aim** of the paper is to analyze what methodology recruiters use in the selection process, as well as the main abilities they must possess as a factor to create match between suitable candidates and the job position.

By studying the point of view of recruiters and candidates, we describe the variety of strategies used in the process of hiring candidates. With the scope of ensuring positive candidate experience as well as a pleasant recruitment process in a limited labor market such as the current one, recruiters need to possess strong soft skills, especially in terms of communication, active listening, and empathy. When deciding upon the methodology they need to work closely together with the hiring managers and HR managers and choose the most adequate steps such as interviews, personality tests, various tasks.

Empirical results from the study give a glimpse of the methodology and tools used in sourcing and selection of suitable candidates and provide consideration of other practices to be developed in the recruitment process in order to increase and improve employment.

Irmgard Schroll-Decker
University of Applied Sciences Regensburg, Germany

Dignified care in an inpatient institution: What does it mean and how can it be evaluated?

Abstract:

The percentage of people who are in need of care in old age is rising continually in Germany: In 2021 a number of 4,69 mio people were entitled to care benefits according to the long-term Care Insurance Act; about 1/5 of these are in inpatient treatment in care homes. Most of those in care homes are over 80 years of age and have been categorized into a higher care level due to multiple impairments. State and society have a special responsibility regarding protection of these people who are dependent on professional care for a number of reasons.

A number of legal provisions have been introduced to secure the rights of patients in these care homes reaching from human rights to the implementing ordinances in the federal German „Länder". Human rights are the basis for assessing the quality of nursing care and are also a benchmark for evaluation. Moreover, there are recommendations such as the „Charta of Rights for People in need of Help and Nursing Care" passed in 2019, which outlines in eight articles what dignified care is supposed to be.

The German Social Security Statute Book XI (Care Insurance Act) obliges care homes to offer care services that respect human dignity. In 2019 the so-called „Law to Incentivise Nursing Staff" was passed consisting of a three-tier evaluation system for quality in inpatient institutions. This law exclusively addresses „nursing quality" and does not use the term „human dignity". The question is whether the concept of „quality" includes the protection of human rights or if reference to human rights has been jettisoned.

In this paper, a number of evaluation reports are offered assessing quality deficits in various nursing fields. These deficits are discussed with reference to illegal violations of human rights.

Finally, possibilities to avoid human rights violations in care homes are shown.

Tomislav Cvetkovski
PhD Student Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

The need for personal assistance and help in the home as social services in the home

Abstract:

With the Law on Social Protection from 2019 in the Republic of North Macedonia, a systemic solution was introduced in the scope and access to social services for citizens. The purpose of these social services is aimed at supporting the fulfillment

of people's daily needs in order to maintain the quality of life and prevent or delay placement in institutions. One set of these Social Services are services in the home. Users of services in the home are persons with temporarily or permanently reduced functional capacity, and these services are provided in cases where support from the family is insufficient or professional care and assistance is required in accordance with the established individual needs of the person. These social services are provided as personal assistance and help and care in the home.

The services are provided through licensed service providers, whereby the service of personal assistance is provided through 4 providers, and the service of help and care in the home through 11 providers.

This paper will provide a detailed overview of the way the services are delivered, the scope of users with different providers, as well as the needs and problems in the delivery of the services and the opportunities for their improvement. An analysis of the legal framework will be made, as well as a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the state of service delivery.

Eliona Kulluri, Daniela Kalaja
University of Tirana, Albania

Challenges of professionals in local level social care services for young people from vulnerable groups

Abstract:

The purpose of the paper is to assess the situation of young vulnerable people in five regions of Albania, in order to understand what are the major issues and challenges faced by young people in these areas. The study also assesses the provision level of social care services for vulnerable young people and their quality. The qualitative methodology was selected for the realization of this study. The instruments used for data collection are focus groups discussions with young vulnerable people and semi-structured interviews with key providers such as representatives of central government, local government and NGOs. Qualitative methodology helps to explore more deeply the issues that mostly concern young people, to understand their perception and level of knowledge and trust in the services provided by social care workers at the local level, to explore existing programs and services for young people in vulnerable situations as well as to understand the professional and institutional challenges of social care service workers in working with young people in vulnerable situations.

The results of the paper show that the local government, organizations and institutions should expand and strengthen services to support vulnerable young people at risk on their way to dignified employment and their social inclusion, their families and the community to increase the level of awareness in matters related to the development of young people and their engagement as promoters of community transformation and the creation of cooperation networks.

The results of the paper lead at specific recommendations related to strengthening the capacities of social workers in assessing the needs of young people to support programmatic interventions in the field of social care protection and services and also improving the quality of social services provision for this specific target group.

Sinem Tekin
Nuremberg Institute of Technology, Germany

Muslim welfare organizations in Germany – between participation, professionalization, and empowerment

Abstract:

Since the growth of the Muslim population in Germany the demands for a Muslim welfare organization are getting louder. For this reason, the German Islam Conference started some projects to develop Muslim interests in welfare organizations. The landscape of the German social welfare system is dominated by six umbrella organizations. Three of these are faith-based organizations. A Muslim organization is still missing, despite some empowerment projects. There are attempts of different Muslim communities to build social services which meet the needs of spiritual and cultural sensitiveness of Muslim people and allow them to participate in the existing system.

The paper is analysing perspectives of experts on a possible concept for a Muslim welfare organization. The aim is to show a possible way of organizing and implementing a national organization. The issue is discussed in expert interviews and an additional group method of a world café. The major results can improve the ongoing efforts for a culturally sensitive welfare organization.

One of the key topics is the professionalization of the existing social services in mosques and other community centers. They must meet the requirements of social work to get tax exemptions and to receive government funds. Another point is to separate religious and social services in the community centers. The heterogeneity in the Muslim population has to be respected and integrated in a new form of welfare organizations, which can be different from the existing faith-based welfare organizations. Another point is to implement these tasks in borough, county and national levels.

Andon Damovski
Centre for helping persons with intellectual disability Poraka Negotino, North Macedonia

Civil partnership in social policies in North Macedonia

Abstract:

Civil partnership as an idea is deeply rooted in the tradition of the philosophy of the new century. With the development of capitalism, in modern philosophy civil partnership appears primarily in liberal political thought that describes the sphere of social activity separate from the state. This term within liberal thought has different conceptualizations. The most common and influential is the concept of civil partnership/sector, which refers to the public space between family communities and the state, unrelated to the market, where citizens can come together to achieve

common interests within the framework of the law guaranteed by the state. Civil partnership affirms the self-organization of citizens, independent of the state. The role of civil partnership in the development of a democratic society enjoys a growing trend of approval, but there are also many uncertainties regarding the exact meaning of its existence. What defines civil partnership is the fact that it is the space where citizens can freely associate and organize themselves in groups and organizations at different levels in accordance with their interests. However, civil partnership cannot be understood as an opposition of the state and the economy. The participation of civil associations in the processes of creating public policies has been a subject of interest for a long period of time. In that context, civil society took a more significant place in the development and implementation of social policies in the world and in our country. A growing number of civil associations and organizations are involved in the implementation of social policies, which leads to the creation of productive social policies.

The paper analyzes the origin and basic characteristics of the functioning of civil society, as well as the role of this sector in the creation and implementation of social policies, in a national context.

Marijan Tustonja, Sandra Karabatić, Anđelka Čuljak
University of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Care for persons with intellectual disabilities leaving the social care system in BIH

Abstract:

Care for people with intellectual disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is based, in a broader sense, on care within the institutional framework. People with intellectual disabilities represent a broad and inadequately integrated group of people within the general population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are 521,218 beneficiaries of social protection living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which represents a share of 15% of the population, of which 110,813 are minor beneficiaries of social protection or 3% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The paper aims to show what happens to children with intellectual disabilities who grow up in homes for children without adequate parental care (997 users or 39.2%) after they reach adulthood and are forced to leave that form of accommodation. The previous indicators of the state's care are reflected in the placement of this population in institutions for persons with disabilities and institutions for the care of children with mental disabilities, which continues to encourage the institutional care of this population, which leads to the violation of the legal framework of fundamental human rights: the right to life, rights to freedom, rights to participate in public life, rights to independent living. What will be highlighted in the paper is precisely the area of the non-governmental sector that succeeded, to a certain extent, in developing protection mechanisms for this population of society, providing them with a housing model in the local community with the support that ensures the satisfaction of the fundamental human rights of freedom, self-determination, dignity and quality of life community. This model of housing is far more developed in Bosnia, while Herzegovina

still has not recognized the expediency of this form of accommodation for children and young people after leaving homes for children without adequate parental care.

Elena Kocoska
Polio Plus-Movement against disability, North Macedonia
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Woman with disabilities in policy

Abstract:

This paper examines the gender dimension in relation to the representation and involvement of women with disabilities in political life, in order to obtain theoretical and empirical knowledge about the involvement and extent of women with disabilities, as well as their role and the influence of the gender balance from the aspect of the situation of disability in governing political structures.

In the context of the right to political participation and according to international human rights standards, political participation from a gender perspective (access to the decision-making process and full participation in it) is a key element for realizing and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. taking into account gender representation and intersectionality in the given political and social constellation.

Therefore, this analysis studies the direct effect that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the existing constitutional and legal provisions have on the political participation of women with disabilities in the country and aims to show the practice and situation on the ground through a discussion with the political and the academic community, as well as the community of persons with disabilities. In addition, this paper, based on research, proposes measures that could be taken to harmonize the existing legal framework in accordance with the Convention, as well as issues that could be overcome, with the aim of ensuring a (higher) degree of political participation of women with disabilities, as a step forward towards achieving inclusive equality.

Vlado Krstovski
Republic centre for support of persons with intellectual disability– Poraka, North Macedonia

Social services for persons with disabilities: policies, conditions and challenges

Abstract:

The social policies aimed towards persons with disabilities in the past years in the Republic of North Macedonia are emphasising the need for transition from institutional to community-based care, through enabling social services that are following the human rights-based approach towards disability.

The reform of social services sector is being implemented thorough the ongoing process of deinstitutionalisation, which foresees that the institutionalised care system primarily aiming to protect persons with disability by their exclusion from the society, should be transformed into a system that enables participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities, respecting the principles of choice and self-advocacy. This process is fundamentally related to the development of new types of social services for persons with disability that will provide continuous support for independent living, education, rehabilitation, employment, mobility, leisure etc.

For the development of these new social services, it is important to introduce pluralism in the service provision, where the civil organisations will have a major role. Decentralisation of the responsibilities in the field of social services provision is another key element of the reform, which embraces transfer of the responsibilities, capacities and resources from national level to the local authorities.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the needed changes are development of the social services in the community, introduction of new quality standards for the services, monitoring and evaluation of the services, strengthening of professional competencies of the staff in the services, awareness raising and advocacy, as well as user involvement in the whole process of service provision.

Suzana Poposka
Association of Social Workers of North Macedonia, North Macedonia

Vocational rehabilitation: social service establishment, development in crisis, positive outcomes and what is missing

Abstract:

Vocational rehabilitation refers to a series of complementary services designed for persons with disabilities with remaining working ability in order to provide support for active inclusion in the labor market. It could be achieved through acquiring work skills and employment skills, work and vocational training, professional support through their employment and adjustment of the workplace and environment, as well as support for retention of the workplace when certain obstacles that have emerged affect the work process and work tasks performed by the person with a disability. In 2020 the first Service for professional rehabilitation and supported employment was established within the Public Institution for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth, as part of the process of modernization of social services. The service was established right before the corona crises started and has been since developing in specific conditions regarding the virus and its consequences, as well as other social developments that followed up.

This paper is a result of the practical experience and observation from professionals who are working on modeling and applying services since their introduction, as well as direct work and satisfaction assessment of service users, long-term beneficiaries of non-family social protection in the institution.

Widely available and systematically applied vocational rehabilitation is a crucial social service that supports the employment of persons with disabilities. This service should contribute to the active participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market, reducing the unemployment rate in this population, aiding their independence and individual improvement of life quality and satisfaction.

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Labor market and persons with disabilities – The case of North Macedonia

Abstract:

In the context of a rapidly changing world, the future of work is an issue drawing the attention of many individuals and organizations. It is a global concern, posing important challenges that need to be addressed urgently. One such challenge is how to ensure that the future of work is inclusive, leaving no one behind. Recognition of inclusion as the key to achieving the right to education has strengthened over the past 30 years and is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first legally binding instrument to contain a reference to the concept of quality inclusive education. Nowadays, it is seen as a response to increasingly complex and diverse societies. It treats diversity as an asset which helps prepare individuals for life and active citizenship in increasingly complex, demanding, multicultural and integrated societies. Inclusive education and access to labor market aims to promote citizenship and the common values of human rights, freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination.

However, despite the many efforts, employment and competitiveness of people with disabilities on the labor market is one of the most challenging issues, not just in North Macedonia, but also worldwide which is due primarily to the specifics of this vulnerable category of people. This paper will provide an overview of the current situation with the professional training and employment of persons with disabilities in the Republic of North Macedonia, the inclusive approach and the needs for re-organization of the system.

Sandra Perić
Chamber of Social Protection, Serbia
Miroslav Brkić
University of Belgrade, Serbia

Improvement of professional work through licensing procedures - towards better protection of users

Abstract:

The reform of the social protection system in the Republic of Serbia began in 2000, and one part of it involved the development of standardization and control mechanisms. Licensing procedures have been introduced at two levels - licensing of service providers and licensing of professional workers. The Chamber of Social Protection was founded with the aim of performing the licensing of professional workers. The licensing process began in 2013. To date, around 4,200 professional workers have been licensed in the social protection system. The social protection system employs social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, andragogists, defectologists and lawyers. All professions are licensed under the same conditions, and licenses are issued based on the work performed and not based on the profession. In accordance with the Rulebook on Licensing, licenses are issued for the performance of: basic professional work, specialized professional work, supervisory work and legal work.

The aim of the work is to present an analysis of the current process of licensing professional workers in the social protection system in the Republic of Serbia, the way of performing internships and conducting the license exam. The results of the analysis indicate that the educational profile of professional workers, the type of institution where the internship is carried out, mentoring and the motivation of the interns are of the greatest importance for professional competences. Previous experiences indicate that the most successful in the exam are professional workers who are trained as social workers and psychologists, who completed their internship in centers for social work. The improvement of professional work in social protection institutions will entail changes in education, in the preparation of trainees and young employees for work in the social welfare system through quality internships led by mentors, while encouraging professional curiosity and motivation of trainees for professional development.

Einav Segev
Sapir Academic college, Israel

Between Despair and Hope: Israeli Social Workers' Perceptions of the Profession and of Student Supervision

Abstract:

This study examines social workers perceptions of their profession and of supervision of social work students. We gathered from 403 social workers metaphors related to the profession and supervision. We found that most of the metaphors concerning the profession revealed a positive view of it, though criticism was also expressed. The metaphors concerning supervision revealed a view that was even more positive than that of the profession itself. But the difficulty noted by some participants and the criticism of the employment conditions and low esteem of the profession must be addressed by the academic institutions and society in order to maintain the positive attitude toward the profession among the supervisors who are grooming the next generation of social workers.

Branka Žugić
Institution for Execution of Criminal Sanctions, Montenegro

Social entrepreneurship – a new model for innovative social work practice

Abstract:

In the present global crisis, social workers are uniquely positioned to help solve the new and complex social problems that have arisen. In the last decade, the practice of social entrepreneurship, or social e-innovation, has developed, allowing social workers to create long-term, innovative solutions for vulnerable populations. This article examines the link between social work and social entrepreneurship, analyzing the characteristics and knowledge of social workers that can be used in social entrepreneurship, and analyzing challenges that social workers face when engaging in social entrepreneurship. Special attention is given to the lack of education in the field of entrepreneurship and to the ethical considerations regarding the role of social workers in entrepreneurship. Finally, recommendations are made for improving the education of future social workers and for future research on social entrepreneurship as a model for applying innovation in social work.

Jovana Škorić
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

The gap between theory and practice in social work: experiences, opportunities and challenges in the Republic of Serbia

Abstract:

The primary outcome of the helping professions is focused on how practitioners integrate the formal knowledge with field practice, or, in what ways it is possible to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The paper aims is to examine the experiences, opportunities and challenges of practitioners in the field of social work and social welfare in the territory of the Republic of Serbia in the context of integration of theory and practice.

The paper starts from the position that the division into theory and practice is actually an artificial demarcation, and that the core of this profession is the integration of theory and practice. The results of research show that professionals believe that there is a high level of discrepancy between theory and practice in the territory of the Republic of Serbia and stated the main reasons are: inapplicability of current laws, uneven practice in social welfare and social work in different territories of the Republic of Serbia, underdeveloped cooperation between practitioners and academic community and the politicization of the profession of social work. At the end of paper, room is left for discussion on the application of an integrative approach when it comes to theory and practice, as well as on conclusions in the domain of more consistent and synchronize inter-sectoral cooperation that would contribute to a holistic view of theory and practice.

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Nuremberg Institute of Technology

Nina Erdman
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Hannah Wachter
Nuremberg Institute of Technology, Germany

A closer look at social work field education: Learning through the professional relationship

Abstract:

Social work education includes one central element outside the university: field education. Field education's goal is to teach students through a supervised and guided work experience in social work practice (e.g. Krainer 2017; Asakura et al. 2018; Erdmann et al. 2022). Internationally, field placement (often referred to as "Praktikum" in Germany or "practice learning" or "field education" in the UK) is identified as the

signature pedagogy of social work (Bogo 2015). Despite the importance of field education, research on this learning processes in Gernany is still limited. One remaining research question is how field supervision is implemented and experienced in the different practice fields, which vary greatly in their structures and working principles. Subsequent questions are: How are relationships between supervisor and students formed? How are roles ascribed and secured? What ideas of "learning" are present among the supervisors?

The project "ALFOSA" (Anleitungsforschung in der Sozialen Arbeit / "Research on field supervision in Social Work") addresses these questions. The underlying theoretical concept is Anselm Strauss' notion of an "arc of work" (Bromberg 2012; Strauss et al. 1985), that encompasses all the tasks necessary for the fulfilment of a project. The empirical basis to identify key elements of the "arc of field supervision" are narrative interviews with field supervisors in Germany. Preliminary findings on key elements of an empirical model on the process of field education will be presented.

Suzana Miovska-Spaseva
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Social pedagogy and social work: Convergence issues in theory and practice

Abstract:

The article examines the development of the relationship between Social pedagogy and Social work during the last hundred years. Within this time frame several meeting points of the two disciplines and fields of work are identified in various national contexts. The first linkage was established by the German educationalist Herman Nohl in the early decades of the 20th century, who interpreted social pedagogy as a theoretical framework for professional social work and an instrument of social policy. In the period following World War II, as a result of the ideological abuse of upbringing and education in national-socialist Germany, social work took precedence over social pedagogy, as an ideologically neutral and scientifically based alternative. Nevertheless, since the 1970s, when the traditional vocational education of social workers in Germany was raised to a higher level, Social work and Social pedagogy have become interrelated studies at higher vocational schools (Fachhochschulen). With the spread of social pedagogy in the Anglo-Saxon countries in the second half of the 20th century, it has appeared as a new approach to social work: a holistic approach that builds bridges between the traditionally separate areas of education, child protection and social protection. Hence, the professional identity of social workers and social pedagogues largely overlaps, and although it reflects a specific national tradition regarding professional titles, it's been formed within a universal inclusive humanistic and transdisciplinary approach in dealing with the social changes and challenges of modern living.

Snezana Filipova
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The parabola of the camel and the needle ear

Abstract:

The parabola of the camel and the needle ear indicates the impossibility of the rich to enter heaven as understood in Christian societies. Yet the rich has efficiently overcome the problem by financing the art and the church.

This text will deal with some of the Eastern and Western examples of ktetorship by using historical method, and iconography method where applicable. The modern example of this aspect in the work of John Baldessari's Camel (Albino) Contemplating Needle (Large), 2013 proves the idea is timeless and requires several approaches and readings.

The expected results lead towards conclusions on human intelligence and art in overcoming crucial moral dilemmas and social policy the Church put into practice to enable the rich to use their income to beautify the world and glorify God and the church. At the same time to ease their burden of not being admitted to Heaven and enlarge hope their sins will be no large obstacle if helping the society by helping the Church (religion, and its role to help people, improve their morality etc). Thus the rich through art has helped themselves become not forgotten, and beautified the lives of people, helped development of art, and architecture.

Even though sinners, rich men devoted to God , had approached heaven through art, and through giving became not forgotten. Many people had benefited through royal or rich men donations to the church to help poor people and development of art, thus improving quality of live and their society. Rich Church has the power to help less fortunate, to enable their education, well being, to improve human dignity and ambitions.

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Harm reduction as an essential component of increasing human capital productivity

Abstract:

The need to develop measures for harm control and prevention is increasingly capturing the attention of the scientific and expert public. According to the most recent research on social acceptance of the concept of harm reduction (for things like noncommunicable diseases, cardiovascular and cancerous diseases, smoking, a lack of physical activity, alcohol use, and so on), encouraging innovation and making harm reduction policies help improve all parts of society.

The significance of investing in people is an integral part of economic development, with a focus on quality education, a universally accessible high-quality health system, and a long-term social protection system. In the world's economic literature, most people agree that human capital productivity as one of the critical factors that determine the degree of economic development of countries, encourage economic growth and development, and lead to an increase in the population's standard of living and well-being.

In order to move the Republic of North Macedonia toward more sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development, it is crucial to improve the quality of human capital and, in doing so, to recognize the concept of harm reduction. Numerous relevant analyses from domestic and international sources are available in the RNM, indicating the country's extremely low human capital productivity.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to conduct a more in-depth examination of the country's human capital productivity conditions and their relationship to harm reduction. As a result of the work, the current state of productivity and the identified problems and causes of low productivity would be revealed. Within the framework of the conclusions, recommendations will be made for the use of a scientific approach to encourage innovation in the development of policies to reduce harm and increase human capital productivity in the country.

Aleksandra Coneva
Association of Social Workers of Skopje, North Macedonia

The role of the social worker in the multidisciplinary team at the Day Hospital

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to present the role of the social worker part of a multidisciplinary team who contributes to the treatment of curing of patients in the Day Hospital through the application of methodical approaches in social work and psychosocial interventions.

The social worker works individually with each patient, encouraging social change, solving the problem through interpersonal relations and strengthening the capacity of the person to improve the quality of its life. The interventions are aimed at helping people to become independent in solving the problem, marriage counseling, counseling, referral, psychosocial support, connection with the resources of the system, etc.

Social worker also works with a group whose main goal is to discover the capacities and potentials of the individual, nurturing interpersonal relationships with other patients and relationships with family members and the wider environment that enable a quality life and their better social functioning.

Group work is applied in order to recognize and develop basic and developmental needs, strengthen adaptation abilities, build self-confidence, self-affirmation in the group, improve and maintain interpersonal relationships between patients, eliminate

the negative impact of institutionalization. Group work allows for the improvement of communication, enrichment of social life, improvement of social interaction between patients, development of community, learning and improvement of social and communication skills, manifestation of hidden and repressed feelings, sense of belonging, modification of preoccupation with one's own state of psychological isolation, reduction of anxiety, acceptance of one's own individuality, acceptance by others.

Other than this, social worker is also responsible for organizing activities which occur outside the clinic in the community.

Afan Elezi
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Agron Rustemi
South East European University, North Macedonia

The health care system in the Republic of North Macedonia

Abstract:

The health care system in RNM, as everywhere in Europe, has evolved over the years. Healthcare systems in the future should and must be adaptable, flexible and more efficient. Scientific development and clinical development are advancing at an ever-faster pace. Population and demographic development continue to evolve. Health strategies must allow for continuous adaptation and correction in the rapidly changing social and health environment, and not just remain a declaration on paper. The dynamics of changes in healthcare are moving at a great pace, at an ever-increasing speed. It is necessary to identify the key strategic issues and priorities, to determine a sequence of concrete development and actions, the purpose of which will be to overcome the important systemic weaknesses and trace the path for the key modern development in terms of services and supporting systems and, finally, progress in the direction of improving the health condition of the population and the performance of the health system, both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is necessary to use a framework based on services and key players - public health facilities, primary and secondary health care, and other stakeholders. Population surveillance - health promotion - primary prevention - early disease detection - improved diagnosis - appropriate referral/utilization - emergency medical care - rehabilitation and follow-up care - secondary prevention - health maintenance.

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Cyberbullying - challenge for school social workers during Covid-19 pandemic

Abstract:

Cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges that school social workers currently face. This paper aim is an analyze about how the COVID-19 pandemic is presently modifying the trends and threats of cyberbullying, which were already at high levels prior to the pandemic. Considering cyberbullying as a challenging frontier of analysis in the social sciences, we find ourselves today with the duty to analyze it within a much broader social context. The following modifications in environmental, social and economic factors are of specific consideration in this paper: the increased time children spend online for amusement, social and educational purposes; the closing of schools and consequent change to virtual learning environments; limited access to community support services, child care and educational personnel who habitually play a crucial role in detecting and reporting cases of cyberbullying.

The paper is grounded on current literature in academic journal databases and own research.

Online gaming, chat groups, phishing email attempts, contact through social networks and educational applications became the main places for cyberbullying. School social workers when encounter incidents of cyberbullying, they must do two things: support the victim(s), and provide consequences to the perpetrator(s). As technological advancements are continuously converting the global economy, they have directed to the appearance and increase of several cyber-enabled offences, containing cyberbullying. School social workers should collaborate with other school staff and school administrators to set up structures that prevent cyberbullying on and off schools. Cyberbullying is reportedly one of the crimes adapting most quickly to and capitalizing on the opportunities offered by technology.

Slavica Shekutkoska
Association of Social Workers of Skopje, North Macedonia

Games of chance, youth problem - a challenge causing the need for social prevention in education

Abstract:

Gambling or games of chances is a progressive addiction that has many negative psychological, physical and social consequences for the person. They are classified as addiction diseases, where there is a disturbance of impulse control. Gambling is a behavioral, non-chemical addiction that is chronic, relapsing, and complex in treatment. Compulsive or problematic gambling leads to a number of serious psychological disorders of the personality such as: bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and others.

The rate of compulsive gambling has been increasing globally and nationally in recent years. Due to its high prevalence, harmful consequences, gambling addiction has become a serious problem in many countries of the world. Having in mind that it is not only a medical problem, but also a serious social problem, the need to implement measures for social prevention in secondary schools is necessary, by the expert teams in schools, in cooperation with the Centers for Social Work, health institutions and civil organizations.

The paper will analyze and present the results of the conducted empirical research in certain categories of questions that cover the problem of the research. For this purpose, a representative sample of 4,000 respondents, students from secondary education in eight cities in the country, was included. The purpose of the research was to see what is the current state of interest among youth for games of chance in our country.

The obtained results from the research show that games of chance represent a serious problem among youth and the relevant institutions should take more directed measures to prevent such problem.

Katerina Kostovska
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Social networks: potential social risk of addiction

Abstract:

Social networks are necessary for communication and have a significant place in the development of humanity, education, communication, technology, industry, globalization, etc. Social networks are used by all actors of society, so despite all the benefits, social networks can still cause a series of inconveniences. Social networks become an addiction when they start to interfere with a person's relationships or when they represent a brake on the goals they are striving for, such as good grades or contribution to a sports activity. Based on that, addiction to social networks is

defined as a primary, chronic disease characterized by impaired control over behavior. Addiction can also be defined as a disorder with strong negative consequences in a person's social, work, family, financial and economic functioning. There are cases in which participants use social networks excessively, isolate themselves from all forms of contact, mostly social contacts and devote themselves entirely to social networks rather than life events, but there are also those who, in order to be in trend with posts on social networks and to record an attractive post they risk their own lives. Just like gambling, social media users can become obsessed with the social media world and neglect family, friends, and school. Anyone who has experienced social media addiction knows it's real.

For individuals whose user habits have transitioned from hobby to addiction, there are multiple areas of life that can be negatively affected. Of course, not everyone who overindulges in social media will experience the same negative impacts.