

SYSTEM INTEGRATION ISSUES FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK¹

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The topic of my research fell on a less stressed area of the social work, into the school social work. The child affecting the schools and a youth protection system aroused my interest in more flavors already, and the question till when the present system is operational. Verifiable one, which it is in the system of school social work that that professionalism is missing from the child's and a youth protection system's functions, got it. The question, which is the school one, what it is occurs to many people with a full right social work stable one, reliable one, makes it maintainable, the child working currently and as opposed to a youth protection system. The school social work is on only very little place on a sign in the educational institutions despite the needs, problems. I look for the answer for it in more flavors in the course of my research, how the school social work may be operational as what the present one social- between economic frameworks. The factors that are the essential accessories of a social service which can be maintained on long distance structured well are that. What regulates the function of the trade? First of all essential to examine what kind of special knowledge the school social worker needs, and this is insured between the frameworks of the present social training. What kind of proposals are there in the interest of the strengthening of the vocational identity? Somebody else helping helps that of separating from trades, and insures easier cooperation if the trade has a particular, area which can be delimited well. Where does the border last long? Furthermore anyway important to mention the legitimacy of the system, the measure environment in which the trade is rooted, and the future one gives a uniform guarantee from sustainability. Important to examine, that before the birth of a new trade the frameworks of the regulation, the financing, the definition of the vocational background is based on a situation analysis on a suitable need survey, since this influences the sustainability on big one. I look for the answer for the issues outlined above in the course of my scientific examination continued on an area. Trust it, that a system integrated so well will be born commenting on the needs, for which the specialists lay a big emphasis on the examination of the

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honed outlined issues in the course of his development, since his essential prerequisite for a maintainable service.

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Social work has always been present in the society and if you want to determine it more precisely you would say that it is as old as mankind itself but, to your surprise, the concept itself is only about a hundred years old (Szociális..., 2008). It was also difficult for it to gain outlined because humanity had to face various problems which worsened over the past few decades and the solution to them was very different both in methods and importance. In today's society people are more dissatisfied and their feelings are affected by existential uncertainty. You need to think of that whether the aggravation is our historical heritage and we must learn to live together with the changes in the society or these responses must help to solve the original problem (Krémer, 2008; Jankó, 2008). You should take in consideration that, by what means, how and where to intervene, which could not be a simple task because the professionals may find themselves confronted with very many cases that go beyond the limits of their competence.

There is a new system, the school social work, and the introduction of this system raises some thoughts. The first one: how can a helper act if there are not laws to regulate their work, however, the importance and necessity of their work cannot be questioned? On the other hand, if it is not regulated by law, how it will be spread widely and how the legitimacy of the system will be ensured in the legislative context in which a profession is rooted?

Social workers have extensive experience in different areas; however, they are required to have special knowledge, too. During their higher education social workers can learn many of the skills that are essential for their later work but you need to know that the school social work is an area, which requires special knowledge and methods according to the needs of the target groups (Jankó, 2010).

If you want to separate it from the other helping professions and make it more prestigious then it needs to have a well defined area with its legal rules to regulate the powers of the school social workers. In addition, we use our old methods or tools to find solution to the new types of problems. How long will the new system be able to operate effectively in such circumstances (Budai, 1996)? In my works I am trying to find some answers to the questions described above.

Social work has a wide range of action since it helps in a variety of areas (communities, individuals, groups, families) and the professionals work with various target groups: with children, young adults, people with different addictions, with ex-convicts, homeless or unemployed persons, with elderly or handicapped people, etc. The areas mentioned above have different emphasis for various reasons (Gergál & Máté, 2008; Szociális..., 2008).

In my work I have chosen a less high-lighted area of social work: the social work in schools. Nowadays school social work is increasingly at the centre of attention, but in my opinion, it is not sufficient to create a well integrated system operating effectively.

Today only very few educational institutions offer school social work including their services. Currently, the law does not oblige the public educational institutions to provide this type of service. However, the school social work is more broad-based than you think because it operates not only

at school but also in homes and in the community and as a three-way connector is becoming more and more important (Jankó, 2010).

The system of the children and youth protection in schools has already attracted my interest several times and for me the question is that how long the present system will be operating.

The system of the child and youth protection is lacking for the professionalism which the school social work system has. It can be asked what makes the school social work sustainable, reliable and well-operating, which the currently operating child and youth protection system does not have. Despite the problems and the needs, the school social work is present in very few institutions (Gergál & Máté, 2008).

During my research, I'm looking for the answer to the question how the school social work can operate within the framework of the current social and economical situation. What essential factors should be there so that a well structured scheme of social service could exist for long time? What controls is the functioning of the profession based on? First and foremost, it is essential to consider the question what special skills school social workers do really need and whether the current training system for social workers can ensure the knowledge they need.

What proposals are there to make professional identity much stronger? It helps to separate it from other helping professions and the co-operation is easier if the profession has a specific, well-defined area. Where is the dividing line? In addition, it is important to note the legitimacy of the system, the legal regulation the profession is rooted in, which gives a kind of guarantee for the future sustainability.

Before the birth of a new profession it is important to consider that whether the financial regulation, the determination of the appropriate professional background is based on a survey of needs and a real assessment of the situation, since it will greatly affect the sustainability.

Considering the issues of integration of the system of school social work, it is necessary to look at what traditions this area of the profession goes back. Since when can we talk about school social work, though? The pioneer in the history of the school social work was the United States. In 1906, they started the first school social work in Boston, New York, and Hartford. At that time it was discovered that behind the problems within the walls of the educational institutions there were some external causes, such as problems derived from homes, social problems, or even immigration reasons. There were so-called "visiting teachers" who worked as social workers and played a mediating role among the families, the school and community (Herczog, 1994).

Watching the Hungarian aspirations, it can be concluded that the initial steps here began relatively early, in the 1930s. The profession went through several phases of development so that it could response to the increasing number and types of the problems. After the Second World War school nurses worked in schools and their tasks were very similar to those of today's school social worker professionals, including the individual case management and social work with families as well. It is important to note that the tasks were done by teachers, who were members of the teaching staff. So there was no doubt how important it was, especially on the fields of school failures, drop-outs or loss of productivity (Pik, 1994).

The major step in the development of the national school social work was in 1964, when child protectors were appointed to kindergartens and schools, who were teachers working there. If we analyze the arrangements taken in 1964, we can discover some similarities to the child care in today's schools

since teachers who are members of the teaching staff work as the child and youth protection officers because of the lack of specialists.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the child protection system underwent some major changes, including the system of the school-inspectorate in child welfare in 1975.

There was a really big breakthrough in the 1990s. These transforms radically changed the economy and the society, which even affect our today's life, for example, the unemployment rate, the transformation, impoverishment and marginalization of social classes. This process impacts on children directly and indirectly. Schools have to face the problems, but they have to realize that they can not be solved with the techniques of pedagogy.

Several models have already been made but they responded to the situation differently. One of these attempts was when the school inspectors in the child welfare were employed with higher working hours, or independent inspectors were responsible for the child protection in schools, or they used so-called "inside" and "external" model of the school social work (Gergál & Máté, 2009).

The above-mentioned models serve as a very good basis to break into the history of the school social work with a few reform ideas. Reforms are necessary, as the surveys show an increasing trend in the number of problems (Jankó, 2010). Well-known professionals and respected experts have made serious efforts in order to introduce the school social work. In several places in the country various initiatives were successfully launched so that the schools could provide the school social work services, for example in Székesfehérvár and Pécs. Thanks to their efforts, school social work is more and more emphasized and its importance is recognized. Nowadays we can mention – as a very good example - the Government's 1430/2011. (XII. 13th) Government Decision, with the action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for bridging the social gap.

During my research I have been interested in several questions but the laws related to regulation were the most important ones. It seems that something has already started and I hope it will be continuing. I do not think the system of school social work without legal regulation will be effective in the long run. It should be needed to create a system so that the qualitative approach could replace a quantitative one. It means that not only the number of assistance as indicators should be considered – although it is also very important - but the quality of the assistance. The Government Decision states that school social work should be integrated into the basic services of child welfare system. It would be a very important step, but its effectiveness could be increased if a united information system was built up in parallel. The third level of the national child protection system is the basic child care system and the school social work service should be integrated into it (Barcsi, 2007). I think it would be helpful if the first and second levels were developed as well. The first level is prevention; the second level is child protection, detection and warning system. Prevention covers many areas such as health care, family protection, sport, crime prevention, etc. The development would be very important because a process aimed at prevention could start (Barcsi, 2007).

We must settle clean cut lines which determine school social workers' activity. It is important for the school social workers be aware of the limitation of their competence, on the other hand, the teachers, parents and students should know that in what cases they can apply to them. In many schools these experts are expected to find solution to all problematic situations while the children and young students look at them as a magician

who can help them. Unfortunately, it is not true. The system has to cope with a lot of deficits. It can be said that professionals in the educational institutions are overwhelmed, but they make serious efforts in order to solve the problems.

Nearly two decades ago *István Budai* (1996) drew attention to the defectiveness in the fields of the child and youth protection. The biggest problem is that the system has not changed much even today. The Child Protection Officers (who are usually teachers) are overwhelmed and they carry out only symptomatic treatment because they are not really successful in the problem solving as there are more and more (Budai, 1996). If you wish to write that how the current system works, then I think Budai's statement reflects the current situation. It can be seen that the shortcomings of the system were formulated much earlier and it can make it clear what areas should be developed.

Budai's (1996) study is outlined that there is a need for a change in attitude as well and my interviews also support it. It is clear cut; effective problem solving is based on the cooperation between the professions such as cooperation between the teachers and school social workers. Experts encounter the set of problems in schools and the children even in hopeless situations can hardly carry the presence of the school social worker, it is only an extra balance for them. That is why there is a need for a change in attitude because everyone should take into consideration that in this process the child's interest is the first and most important thing (Budai, 1996).

The professionals at school cannot be blamed for these negative experiences because there are more and more people in hopeless situations. This hopelessness is felt all special fields and affects the whole society as well.

If you do not want to face a new hopeless system, it is worth considering how many experts are required to deal with the problems in the educational institutions so that a quantitative approach could be replaced by a qualitative approach on the field of school social work. What can a single specialist do? It is in vain for educational institutions to employ social workers, if the number of the problems is growing day by day and a single expert can not deal with them. Should we wait for a wizard to help? I think, the number of the students in educational institutions should be examined and professionals should be applied in proportion to this data base (Budai, 1996).

In addition, it is needed to speak about the tasks as well. Several studies have discussed that in what area the school social workers have to intervene and when they can work effectively. In my opinion, it is very easy to identify the responsibilities at the first sight, but if you want to draw the boundaries specifically, you should think about that what ceases belong to the school social worker's duty and when it is some other professionals' responsibility to help. Let us mention only the cases of school failures and tutoring. Behind the degradation of school performance you can find problems showing beyond the walls of schools and to find solution is no longer the teacher's role as it is almost impossible to be solved with teacher tools. There can be home factors, housing and lifestyle problems, and many others, but the tutoring is not necessarily classified as the school social worker's task. That is why professionals should cooperate with each other.

I am confident a well-integrated system will be born on the basis of needs and forming this system the experts put great emphasis on the examination of the issues outlined above, as an essential prerequisite for a sustainable service.

In my opinion, efficient preparations must come before the introduction of a new system and emphasis should be placed on the exploration of the

needs. Last but not least, practitioners also must be asked about their experiences and results as it is very difficult to create lasting and sustainable system working in an office and doing only paper work.

Talking with school social workers and child and youth protection officers it can be said the widespread introduction of the system is necessary because they to have face a lot of different problems which they did not have before or if they had, there were not many. One of them is the community network on the Internet. Primary schools have serious problems because the schoolchildren do not use the network in an appropriate way and it causes several conflicts.

Unfortunately, there are some unsolved problems which make schools difficulties in carrying their duties on the basic educational performance. It is needless to say how important it is to make changes according to different criteria

It seems that introduction of a system of school social work has an idealistic picture, but it is worth thinking about the details since we must establish a system, which functions effectively as it is the question of the next generation's future

Several successfully launched initiatives make me hope that a well-integrated system will be introduced in the future and more and more professionals and school social workers will work for the next generation's future.

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