

Working with Children and Young People as a much Neglected Area of Education within the Social Studies Curriculum in Poland

Authors : Marta Czechowska-Bieluga

Abstract : Social work education in Poland focuses mostly on developing competencies that address the needs of individuals and families affected by a variety of life's problems. As a result of the ageing of the Polish population, much attention is equally devoted to adults, including the elderly. However, social work with children and young people is the area of education which should be given more consideration. Social work students are mostly trained to cater to the needs of families and the competencies aimed to respond to the needs of children and young people do not receive enough attention and are only offered as elective classes. This paper strives to review the social work programmes offered by the selected higher education institutions in Poland in terms of social work training aimed at helping children and young people to address their life problems. The analysis conducted in this study indicates that university education for social work focuses on training professionals who will provide assistance only to adults. Due to changes in the social and political situation, including, in particular, changes in social policy implemented for the needy, it is necessary to extend this area of education to include the specificity of the support for children and young people; especially, in the light of the appearance of new support professions within the area of social work. For example, family assistants, whose task is to support parents in performing their roles as guardians and educators, also assist children. Therefore, it becomes necessary to equip social work professionals with competencies which include issues related to the quality of life of underage people living in families. Social work curricula should be extended to include the issues of child and young person development and the patterns governing this phase of life.

Keywords : social work education, social work programmes, social worker, university

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