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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE SOCIALIZATION OF YOUTH WITH DEVIANT BEHAVIOR IN AZERBAIJAN

Summary: This article emphasizes the vital role of social work in the socialization process of youth performing deviant behavior in Azerbaijan. This paper relies on youth policy documents, juvenile justice reform analyses, global protection guidelines for children, exploration of socialization among vulnerable youth, evaluation of current governmental and non-governmental responses to the challenges, and proposed social work intervention strategies. The paper discusses that the government of Azerbaijan has taken necessary legal steps and applied programs in juvenile justice and youth policy. However, gaps in community and social services, early interventions, and reaching the professionalism of social work must be addressed to diminish isolation, labeling, stigmatization, and social exclusion.

Key words: deviant behaviour, socialization, juvenile justice, youth policy, social exclusion, rehabilitation

Through the process of socialization, individuals are able to get the social norms, skills, behaviors, and values that are vital for social participation. It has a vital role for the youth and adolescents to achieve successful personal improvement and social cohesion. However, some youth may face disruption and undergo negative social influence which triggers them to perform deviant behavior which is considered a type of behavior that violates social norms and values and crosses legal boundaries, such as criminology, substance abuse or violence. Taking care of deviant behavior demands a well-structured, evidence-based social work plan that supports recovery, prevention of exclusion, and promotion of inclusion, along with legal enforcement.

This article analyzes role of the social work in Azerbaijan and how it addresses deviant behavior among young people, focusing on its capacity and

strength, interventions that are focused on improvement of conditions of youth exhibiting deviant behavior, and political frameworks that suggest practice.

Deviant behavior in youth is caused by many reasons. Sociologists think that an individual's social structure and relationships with the environment plays a great role. For example, according to strain theory people can perform deviant behavior when they can't achieve goals. Another reason is anomie — when the social norms and values are unclear to the individual, negative peer influence, and stigmatization. In contrast to sociologists, psychologists focus on the inner and emotional state of an individual, such as mental difficulties they face, including stress, trauma, and depression.

From the perspective of a social worker, deviant behavior must be addressed using a systematic and strength-based approach. This means looking at youth in their social environment while being their families, friends, schools and communities, not while being isolated. Social workers focus on eliminating problems before they emerge, avoid facing risks, and support recovery for youth who demonstrate deviant behavior.

The national youth policy of Azerbaijan emphasizes the vitality of youth health, education, personal development and social protection (Azerbaijan Ministry of Youths and Sports, 2020, p. 12). The Law on Youth Policy and the Ministry of Youth and Sports guide the government and youth organizations on how to engage with young people. With the support of the international partnership on reforming juvenile justice systems, it is aimed to make the system fairer for youth who engages with legal conflicts and offers alternatives to detention such as recovery and probation, to help youth to integrate into society.

These changes have created better opportunities for the intervention of social work; however, there are still issues. In particular not having enough amount of community services and specialized social workers in all regions of Azerbaijan reduces the success rate of these programs.

The of socialization problems among Azerbaijani youth with deviant behavior:

Family conflicts, child neglecting, poverty and unemployment limit support for development of youth and creates the risk that youth engaging with peers performing negative behavior (State Committee for the Family, Women and Children Affairs, 2019, p. 3). The difference between rural and urban areas means that services like youth programs, school, activities and counseling are not fairly distributed, which creates socialization problems for some people.

Dropouts from schools, bullying, and limited psychological and social support in education make youth development more fragile. Even though the Ministry of Education offered many services and programs for youth at risk, they need assessment and better coordination of those services.

Labelling and stigmatization are detrimental for the youth and their future. Youth labelled as “delinquent” face with exclusion which lowers the education, employment opportunities and reintegration into to the society. Ongoing exposure to media, especially social media may encourage youth to risky behavior and make traditional socialization process more complex. Apart from education, community's structure and family, cultures can also affect how young individuals adopt behavior, shape personal identity. In many countries, protection of family bonds, respect for elders and so on are considered to discourage deviant behavior. But in some cases these cultural expectations can create stress in youth when the generational bonds are weak and youth are being pressured to follow the roles that don't match their personal identity. The modern day's digital world and overexposure can cause difficulties in the socialization process. Social media platforms can introduce diversity in the world, subcultures and sometimes negative content such as misinformation, cyberbullying and risky challenges. Weak supervision can lead to the breaking of social control, and youth may engage in risky behaviors that are promoted by peers. There are several state organizations aimed at providing protection and support for youth development, which include the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the State Committee for Family, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Women and Children Affairs, and various agencies and law enforcement. Global organizations such as UNICEF, OSCE and NGOs have shown their support in reforming the juvenile justice system, family work services, and de-institutionalization (UNICEF, 2018, p. 8). These organizations have developed the legal actions and conducted rehabilitation programs; an example can be UNICEF's work which was promoting alternatives to imprisonment.

Despite the improvements, there are still gaps left in social work in Azerbaijan that limit reaching the full success.

1. The small amount of trained social workers in communities and institutions hinders the progress of the casework.
2. The weak coordination among NGOs, governmental organizations and ministries disrupts the delivery of services to vulnerable youth and makes it challenging to follow-up.

3. The alternatives to detention are not available in some regions. Although non-custodial measures and rehabilitation programs are being established they are unevenly distributed.

4. Inadequate family support programs and early intervention strategies, make it challenging to identify the behavioral problems before they emerge as risks which later become serious forms of deviance.

There are some recommended interventions and practices that have been useful in other countries and can be applied in to the Azerbaijani setting. The realistic goals match to the current day's policy reforms. It is required to expand community services such as qualified social workers those work in local agencies and change in probation system (Justice Reform Policy Brief, 2021, p. 7). In order to increase the employment and education opportunities it is important to services like counseling, family therapy, case management and etc. For youth the alternatives of imprisonment must be applied which includes rehabilitation along with vocational training, education, psychological support. These are aimed at decrease the rate of reoffending. Lately, the social reforms in our country prove that community-based services are better than institutional responses. The specialists in pedagogical services and schools such as counsellors and pedagogues are able to detect students who face great challenges such as bullying and deviant behavior and guide parents to support services (Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, 2022, p.14). The efficiency of family support services must be improved through family therapy, educating the parents and targeting the aid to the vulnerable families. Such steps are aimed to prevent youth challenges before they get serious. The Ministry of Education's act on bringing social pedagogues in education institutes is a great foundation for progress. Youth centers in Azerbaijan offers safe place for reintegration, prevention of problems, education, mentoring, recreation and life skills. With the help of these activities, youth can instill positive behavior and build positive relationships and reduce the influence of deviant subcultures. The Ministry of Youth and Sports ensures that youth in danger are included in support programs. Preventing stigma is vital while helping youth to reintegrate into society. Sharing public awareness about restorative justice can change how communities view the rehabilitation of youth. Social workers can work with employers to create volunteer or job opportunities for youth which will help them to show recovery and responsibility. Their guidance will lead youth to integrate into society. To test the effectiveness of interventions, an organized and well-planned implementation process is vital. To make it more

comprehensive, pilot programs are launched in different regions with various social and economic settings such as rural and urban areas. The pilot programs are made to test how the approaches to probation, family, and school services function in practice. The positive results from the tests help the government to improve them and apply in the whole country. Financing plays a vital role in success. The governmental bodies, especially the of labor, youth and social protection, can cover the costs of the projects. Additionally, Global organizations and NGOs can cover the expenses too. The detailed plan of expenses will help benefit financially and encourage the donors to commit to the projects.

Legal frameworks and policies in Azerbaijan have been evolving throughout the years, and the government has been focusing youth growth and reforms in the juvenile justice system. These steps became a base foundation for the programs that focus on prevention of deviant behavior and providing rehabilitation services. However, to ensure the effects of these programs last longer, the government should invest in community services, training of professional social workers, early intervention programs, and cooperation among government agencies. If social work is professional, well-structured and focused on youth problems, it can help young people to adopt positive behavior, eliminate social exclusion, and support social development of youth.

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Вусал Ильясов Вугарович

Роль социальной работы в социализации молодежи с девиантным поведением в Азербайджане

Резюме: В данной статье подчёркивается важная роль социальной работы в процессе социализации молодёжи, проявляющей девиантное

поведение в Азербайджане. В основе статьи лежат документы молодёжной политики, анализ реформ ювенальной юстиции, глобальные руководящие принципы защиты детей, исследование социализации уязвимой молодёжи, оценка текущих государственных и неправительственных мер реагирования на эти проблемы, а также предлагаются стратегии вмешательства социальной работы. В статье отмечается, что правительство Азербайджана предприняло необходимые правовые шаги и внедрило программы в области ювенальной юстиции и молодёжной политики. Однако необходимо устранить пробелы в общественных и социальных услугах, раннем вмешательстве и повышении профессионализма социальных работников для снижения уровня изоляции, стигматизации и социальной изоляции.

Ключевые слова: девиантное поведение, социализация, ювенальная юстиция, молодежная политика, социальная изоляция, реабилитация

Vüsal İlyasov Vüqaroviç

Azərbaycanda deviant davranışlı gənclərin sosiallaşmasında sosial işin rolu

Xülasə: Bu məqalədə Azərbaycanada deviant davranışlar göstərən gənclərin sosiallaşması prosesində sosial işin mühüm rolu vurğulanır. Bu sənəd gənclər siyasəti sənədlərinə, yetkinlik yaşına çatmayanlara dair ədliyyə islahatlarının təhlilinə, uşaqların qlobal müdafiəsi qaydalarına, həssas gənclər arasında sosiallaşmanın tədqiqinə, çağırışlara cari hökumət və qeyri-hökumət reaksiyalarının qiymətləndirilməsinə əsaslanır və sosial işə müdaxilə strategiyalarını təklif edir. Məqalədə Azərbaycan hökumətinin yetkinlik yaşına çatmayanların ədalət mühakiməsi və gənclər siyasəti ilə bağlı lazımi hüquqi addımlar atmasından və proqramlar tətbiqindən bəhs edilir. Bununla belə, icma və sosial xidmətlərdəki boşluqlar, erkən müdaxilələr və sosial işin peşəkarlığına nail olmaq təcrid, etiketlənmə, damğalanma və sosial təcrid hallarını azaltmaq üçün həll edilməlidir.

Açar sözlər: deviant davranış, sosiallaşma, yetkinlik yaşına çatmayanlara qarşı ədalət, gənclər siyasəti, sosial təcrid, reabilitasiya

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