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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGUE IN LITHUANIA: REALITY AND VISION

Lithuania marked the 20th anniversary of Independence recovery on March 11, 2011. Social work and social pedagogy as study programmes at higher education institutions as well as the institutions of social pedagogues at comprehensive schools children foster homes have functioned for 20 years too. In 1991, referring to the resolution of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the first three positions of social pedagogues as experiment were established in the Kaunas Palemonas secondary school and secondary schools of Dotnuva Academy (Kedainiai region) in Lithuania.

According to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, social pedagogues work at every school or children foster home. At present, almost 1000 social pedagogues work in Lithuania. Social, economical, demographic, cultural changes in the country greatly influenced the development of social pedagogue's professional identity through the last ten years: increasing unemployment, mass migration of population to the West, diminishing number of school age children, increasing number of risk group people living below the poverty level, violence cases, increasing number of crimes, spread of dependence diseases among young people as well as children.

In 2010 the annual report of the Institution of the Ombudsman for Children Rights of the Republic of Lithuania states that among educational institutions mainly comprehensive schools violate children rights. The problems of not rendered educational assistance (social-pedagogical, psychological, special pedagogical) still are of great importance. In comprehensive schools it is possible to identify other violations of child's right to education, safe environment: inappropriate guarantee of teaching process, school non-attendance, too long lasting – almost 20 years – school reform and reconstruction of school network, problems of class formation, non-formal education of children, and organization of their occupation.

The hard financial – economical state, which was deepened by world economical – financial crisis, made great harm for the security of children within a family as social layer of the society. The data of Statistics Lithuania show that 24222 children lived in social-risk families in 2009. According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, 15925 of school age up to 16 years old did not attend schools in Lithuania in 2009 – 2010. Among them even 8796 children have not been found – nobody knows where they live or learn.

Though UN Convention on the Rights of the Child speaks against any manifestation of discrimination, in 2009 the research performed by researchers of social pedagogy and social work representing several Lithuanian universities on discrimination manifestations at comprehensive schools (2064 pupils from the fifth-the twelfth forms participated in the research) showed that almost half of the respondents (48 %) are degraded by their teachers, a bit fewer respondents (45 %) are degraded by pupils.

The programmes of violence and sneering prevention have not been as effective as it has been anticipated.

The research disclosed that the sneering was directed against the children from families growing many children, of lower social status, and with different health troubles.

The parents, who leave their small children alone without official care of adults because they go abroad to work, especially roughly violate children rights.

Thus these and similar political, social – economical problems, which launched a strong blow upon positive socialization of children, have essentially changed the schedule of Lithuanian social pedagogues' activity and have greatly influenced their professional identity.

The **aim** of this paper – is to disclose the change of social pedagogues' professional identity and the reasons conditioned by it with reference to the researches on competence expression, professionalism, managerial activity of social pedagogues performed at Kaunas University of Technology during last ten years as well as to foresee the vision of further activity development in Lithuania influenced by globalisation changes.

In order to achieve the aim the following objectives are raised:

To reveal conceptual attitudes of social pedagogue's mission and Professional activity identity formulated in 1990.

To disclose how the identity of social pedagogues' professional activity has changed in respect of social, economical turning-points in fast changing Lithuania.

To identify what lack of and need for new competences the professional identity of social pedagogues has experienced.

To determine what mission of professional identity of a social pedagogue should be under the changed social – economical conditions of society life.

The method of secondary analysis of the researches performed at Kaunas University of Technology was applied when preparing the paper.

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