YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK; SOCIAL POLICIES AND SERVICES AND THEIR IMPACT

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Abstract

The prolonged transition in our society is accompanied with substantial changes, which have caused effects on young people lives, particularly those that are not covered anymore from social care system in Albania. This category shares very difficult experiences, they suffer discrimination and disadvantage. Many of them have low education and remain unemployed for a long period of time, most of them are homeless and at risk to be involved in criminal activity or involved in criminal activities, while a considerable percentage of them manifest emotional, behavioral and mental health problems. These consequences associate with lack or inadequacy of appropriate services and lack of their coordination from the responsible structures. The purpose of this study is to analyze the situation of young people at risk, policies and services for this category, their impact as well. For the realization of this study are used methods of secondary data analysis combined with qualitative data provided through semi-structured interviews with key persons in different decision-making level, and focus groups with young people at risk. Key findings are related with the lack of a sufficient legal system to cover the needs of young people in care; lack of effective support services after being not eligible for the social care system; programs have been implemented for the rehabilitation of young people who are drug users, but they still remain at a minimal level and are very limited in terms of territorial coverage; young people with social care stories suffer stigma and discrimination from society. Research findings conclude with the need for improved social care legislation and creating of suitable legal act, which emphasizes the role of stakeholders in supporting young people; building institutional capacities for tracking and monitoring of young people out of the system and undertake advocacy initiatives to increase social service funding, etc.

Keywords: *young at risk, needs, social services, social care, social policies*

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