

PRACTICUM OF SOCIAL WORK: CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Mirsada Abdurrahmani¹, Erica Mastrocianni²

¹Department of Psychology and Social Work, Faculty of Education Sciences, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkodra, Albania, E mail: mirsada.abdurrahmani@hotmail.com

²Acli provinciali di Trieste, Italy, E mail: erica.mastrociani@cooperativalybra.it

Abstract

The concept of practicum is a graduate level course, often in a specialized field of study, that is designed to give students supervised practical application of a previously or concurrently studied theory, is about using principles, processes and operation for achieving goals. The curricula of social work since its origins have provided a substantial number of hours devoted to professional training. At one time this could indicate a weakness of the social service discipline, today is instead an original element and a point of strength. Most students consider their practicum fieldwork to be the most valuable and significant part of their social work education. The need to weave the theoretical with the experiential training, to improve learning on both sides, is in line with the new character imprinted professionalizing the three-year degrees from recent university reform. During the practicum students face the real challenges and opportunities of professional responsibility and ethical practice. The methodology used is focused on two main lines; primarily in the study of literature, analysis of previous studies, policy documents related to the topic, related statistical data provided from international Universities, second line of research is application of focus groups with students to elaborate the issue of practicum, assess their perceptions and opportunities, but even the identification of interest areas, where they identify more important. The time is right for our Universities in Albania to put an emphasis on such initiatives, as an alternative instrument for supporting students for the best policies and procedures of the social work program. In this study are analyzed in detail the concrete ways for an effective practicum, in order to facilitate learning perspective of aid, to help students identify the activities to experience in the field and to support them in assessing the competence acquired. Ample space is reserved for the discussion of supervision, which is the essential tool to facilitate learning. The paper aims to explore the concept of practicum, its organization and dynamics. It draws an overview of our past and the future in Albania through case study analysis.

Keywords: *practice, social work, curricula, supervision, challenges*