

Valentina Georgieva Peteva

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria

Models of Social and Educational Work with Children with Deviant Behaviour and the Risk of Dropping out of School in the Field of Social Services

Abstract: This paper considered approaches and alternative childcare activities with different groups of families and children with deviant behavior found at risk of dropping out of school in the social services. Outlined are the leading causes and factors involved in deviant behavior, and the two main forms of work - group and individual. Identified are the individual specifics in case work, the applications of the individual approach, the importance of the team in correctional and educational youth work.

Keywords: children with deviant behaviour, psychical work, social work

The year 1991 is considered as a **start of the reform of social policy** in Bulgaria in terms of child care, when the country ratified a key document, namely the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations. However, the reform relevant to the overall well-being of children in Bulgaria is realized ten years later, in 2000. At this period, there are already over 30 000 children in state care. With the creation of the Law on Child Protection, the Department for Child Protection Directorates for Social Assistance and the adoption of the definitions of a *child at risk* and *child in an institution* they decreased to about 15, 000. However, in practice this is already the target group of children with potentially deviant behaviour and risk of dropping out of school. Because life in an institution and the lack of individualized and family care suggest delays in all aspects of personal development and perspective.

The project “Reform of the welfare of children in Bulgaria” - a joint initiative of the World Bank, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the local communities set a new understanding of child care in Bulgaria and implemented in response to the needs of children at risk. A system of child protection, including structures at national level as State Agency for Child Protection, Social Assistance Agency, and local Departments for Child Protection called Directorates for Social Assistance. Between 2005 and 2006 the first Centre for social services for children and families were created, a continuation of the Departments for Child Protection, originally nine in number across the country. They represent alternative forms of social services for children and families. Their purpose is the prevention of deviant behaviour and school dropout (problem fairly sharp in children in institutions), also the service resource support for children with special educational needs (again, most children in institution have a similar problem), and prevention of abandonment and institutionalization of children. Special support programs and counselling for children with problem risk of dropping out of school are available - for them and for their families. There is support to school activities by the clubs of interest. In addition to the individual work clubs are formed which children are visiting on a schedule. The aim is to use the interest or talent in a particular area. For example to develop their social skills, team work, overcoming differences, disagreements and conflicts, planning and implementation of ideas, influence, through positive role models, improving their self-esteem, also their sense of belonging. The expected results are oriented to improve the school performance and to reduce antisocial behaviour. In some places rooms for quiet games, relaxation and informal communication are created.

For the period 2005–2014 in Bulgaria there are many Centers of community support, working with street children, rehabilitation and social integration, crisis centers. These are different possibilities for providing social services implemented with the active participation of NGOs and municipalities. It's an opportunity for development, reducing of institutionalization and change in the overall thinking about the child's personality and protection measures. Thus are implemented the two main functions of non-governmental organizations working with children and families, namely compensation and social equalization, associated with providing a range of services geared towards supporting poor families and the developing of educational activities. In other words, supporting in many educational, cultural, health and other programs which purpose is to meet the needs of

children and families that are beyond the capabilities of state-organized childcare field¹.

Following current trends in Bulgaria at present alternative services for children at risk can be divided into two main groups: social services-oriented family support (for example prevention of abandonment (placing children in institutions), reintegration (return children to their biological parents) and those that replace in whole family in bringing up of the child care in an attempt to provide a safe and a stable family environment. The first group includes the Centres of community support, Unit "Mother and Baby", Day Care Centres for Social Services, Centres for Social Rehabilitation and Integration, overall socio-consulting sector. All are secured with state funding according to the capacity. Relatively new services are Centers of family-type accommodation which capacity is between 8 to 12 children in conditions close to family. In recent years, some NGOs working with children again began to talk and make efforts to create family children's homes². The second group are the services related to accommodation outside the family environment as adoption, foster care, including placement with relatives, Centers a family-type, children's villages. The delay of deinstitutionalization in our country come precisely from the lack of development of this type of services. It's clear that the services of the first type are used more by new a target group, but does not affect to the desired degree problem for the abandonment of children in institutions or the need for removal of children from the family. The use of social services is usually widely and accessible Suggestive can be social, educational and health institutions or families themselves³.

Main risk groups include children from disadvantaged families, children with deviant behavior (deviant and delinquent) children, victims of violence, street children, and children in institutions. The main forms of deviations are juvenile delinquency, drug abuse (addictions), prostitution, conflict behavior, aggression, running away from home and from school, early sexual intercourse, social alienation.

There are three main risk groups of children in terms of school dropouts: those that are never recorded in the education system or are in it purely formal, systematic absences (excused with a large number, but also with unexcused absences)

¹ B. Kriviradeva, *Organization and operation of the social educational institutions for children*, Sofia 2009.

² *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, www.sapibg.org/publications (access: 22.05.2014).

³ *Ibidem*.

and those who leave at a certain age (usually around 13–15 years of age). So they lose the opportunity for socialization, professional development (they are potential unemployed) being excluded from an active social life in all its forms and manifestations⁴. When following the results of the socio-pedagogical surveys for the period 2003–2014 clearly dominates the ethnic component⁵. The Roma ethnic group – 40.5% does not have even primary education. Around two thirds of Roma live in cities, but at the same time they are cities with the poorest educational structure – are illiterate about 10% (12.7% according to other studies) of them, but they are also the most prolific ethnic group in the country. In comparative terms, the Roma community is the lowest educated in Bulgaria. Alarming is the fact that after tracking data from the census of 1992-2001 showed a reduction in the level of education of Roma by 4–5%⁶. The concept of social work means “activities whose primary purpose is to promote the inclusion of individuals to the society, to support the process of its formation, self-assertion in the micro and macro environment. In its essence social work is deeply human. Essential characteristics of social work are helping the people who hardly solve his own problems, hard and difficult to adapt the place in the society. This circumstance determines the main functions, socializing and resocialization⁷.”

Social work with children, including the difficult children, children at risk, children of socially disadvantaged, children with deviations in behavior to find themselves in the micro and macro environment is aimed at helping all children to integrate in it. The analysis of the objectives and the specific dimensions of social work with children shows that it covers everything that is not only directly related to the specific learning process. In other words it is present and must always be present in the institutions that deal with children and their problems without necessarily include specific learning activities which the child is doing as a student. There are already similar detailed practical cases of Centers for social and psychological support for children and families described in various

⁴ V. Milenkova, *Dropping out of school*, Sofia 2004.

⁵ I. Iliev, *Social diagnosis of early school leaving and possible management decisions: Main results of a survey in the municipality of Varna*, Varna 2008.

⁶ I. Strakova, *Dropping out of school as a social-pedagogical problem*, Faculty of Sofia 2009, p. 7.

⁷ *Prevention of deviant behavior of children*, Em. Rangelova V. Gurova, N. Vitanova (compilers of an anthology), Sofia 2003, p. 298.

Handbooks for those working in social services for children and families (2004-2012): “Samaritans” foundation⁸ and “Child and space” foundation⁹.

Along with this is achieved the other main function – re-socialization of the child, which for various reasons is detached from the society and child deviations. The major aim is to help the child to bring back to the local environment after a temporary shutdown of it for different reasons. This circumstance requires a precise diagnosis of the nature and type of deviation; to reveal the reasons for this deviation and to develop individual, differentiated program to communicate with each child¹⁰. The implementation of the two main functions – socializing and social rehabilitation is associated with protection of the personality, prevention of the occurrence of relevant deviations. It requires taking into account a number of pedagogical measures of social activity with the children. These socio-pedagogical measures, we can outline the following way: social work with children and teaching suggests focus and personal skills to communicate with the child by an adult. The realizations of social work with children using basic pedagogical concepts – education and educational activity, but at the same time on this basis are constructed and central concepts such as social education and socio-pedagogical activity. So are observed two separate together science and two scientific fields – pedagogy and social work and what unites them is the organization of social work with children¹¹.

Children with deviant behavior have different attitudes to learning, and different success in school – some of them do not attend school consistently, others have difficulty to deal with learning or have problems with teachers and are at risk of dropping out of school, but there are kids who are good students with ambition and desire to continue to learn and do more in their lives through education. Sometimes the use of social services by visiting daycare Centers and shelters completely replaces the lessons in school – this option is preferred by parents, probably because of the higher control over their children. Children in the target group recognize the importance of obtaining education and profession to have a better life in the future. They would like to get them but the question is, is it possible only with making efforts and whether the environment will allow this.

⁸ D. Dimova, R. Popova-Ivanova (ed.), *Handbook of social work with children and young people on the street*, St. H., 2004.

⁹ A. Ancheva (ed.), *Handbook for working in the field of child mental health and services for children*, Sofia 2012.

¹⁰ *Prevention of deviant behavior of children...*, op. cit., p. 299.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 299–300.

Under the different interviews they share as a barrier to future learning their psychological problems¹².

School dropout is abnormal socialization but also a process of acute loss of opportunities related to professional development. In this sense, the phenomenon of dropping out of school as a concept fits into the larger concept of deviant behavior and it means “difficulties in the implementation of adaptation and socialization of the individual in the society. The etymology of the term deviation is related to the clarification of the Latin deviation, which means deviation. The concept is used in various scientific fields. In biology, is understood as ‘bias’ in the individual development of a body of a living organism, due to the change of its development. From philosophical, sociological, pedagogical and psychological terms deviation has been associated with abnormalities of the human personality of the constructed in a community moral standards of living. Deviant behavior is contrary to social norms and subject to moral and legal sanctions¹³. The problem of school dropouts has a complex nature and the causes that it is depended on have family, social, psychological, pedagogical and personal component. Could be summarized generally two leading factors – family and school. To analyze the causes and the assistance of planning of preventive and intervention, corrective work, we first need to analyze the family and social environment of the child’s activities, relationships and other, problems and needs. According to data from analytical report on the project “Reform for Child Welfare in Bulgaria” almost all children in the study target group grow in an unfavorable family environment. In most cases the family has a criminal record, which ultimately affects the behavior of children. Among interviewees there are cases of children of alcoholics. In many cases, parents do not take good care of their children, sometimes because they have another family and have abandoned them. In almost all cases, children grow up in incomplete families - mostly without a father, sometimes without a mother or without both parents. Makes an impression that many of the children in the target group were in the care of an elderly grandmother or grandparents. They cannot provide proper care because of his age and lack the respect for the children. The main reason for the deviant behavior of the studied children and their parents are problems at school and negative relationships in the family. In summary of the observed cases may be given the following reasons for deviant

¹² Analytical report of data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation of the study “Assessment of users’ project” Reform for Child Welfare in Bulgaria“, in: www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/projects/children/.../dokladBA.doc (access: 22.05. 2014).

¹³ *Prevention of deviant behavior of children...*, op. cit.

behavior: criminality in the family or the environment in which they live. So they observe and perceived deviant behavior since childhood; incomplete families – children are brought up by a single mother and grandparents who are experiencing significant different (social, financial, psychological) family problems; lack of parental control about what makes the child with, whom is seen, what it interested in; bad attitudes of parents, relatives or friends, reaching in some cases to systematic abuse, which leads to escape from the family, school, antisocial behavior; negative influence of friends whose environment has entered the child; consumption of alcohol and drugs, respectively, other antisocial behavior; problems at school or children's home, failure to cope with the training program, poor relations with teachers and educators. In some cases, the reasons are very complex several factors accumulate and lead to antisocial behavior of children. Children with deviant behavior have highlighted serious difficulties in keeping the rules and borders and they are characterized by low patience, impulsivity, and according to some surveys, have retardation and deficits in intellectual development.

Models of educational and Social Work in the field of social services

In the field of socio-pedagogical work with children with behavioural problems within the social services in Bulgaria has established itself approach to individualized assistance and intervention. A typical example is the case work that functions as the basic unit of social work with children as well as in the NGO sector and the activities of the public sector, such as the Departments for Child Protection. Application of an individual form of work, does not mean that the two concepts are identical. At the first case is the approach in how that interprets and analyzes the problems of the child and family, and the second means the form in which will apply socio-pedagogical effect for example specialized programs for group work and training and individual practices¹⁴. Methodical recommendations and practices of case work in social work with children with deviant behavior require reporting and compliance with numerous laws and principles of organizational, pedagogical and psychological aspects. It is necessary to consider temperamental characteristics, the situation in the family and school environment, the frequency and the nature of the events. The question is whether spontaneous, impulsive or deliberate, pre-planned, age and individual characteristics

¹⁴ N. Stoykova, *Individualization of social and educational work with street children*, in: "Samaritans", *Handbook of social work with children and young people on the street*, D. Dimova, R. Popova-Ivanova (ed. of collection), St. H., 2004.

of the child. As significant factor is family relationships. This means that in case work that reflects on the choice of forms, methods and activities for assessing the family environment and the interaction with parents. The methodology of case work in social work with children with deviant behavior need greater compliance with correctional and socializing potential of the social environment and the choice of methods of Social Work, education and psychosocial interaction with the child and family¹⁵.

In the socio-pedagogical activity with problem children in the individual case work, are observed conditionally divided, three approaches: descriptive, explanatory and predictive. The first is related to the evaluation and assessment of the situation of the child and family needs and strengths (resources), levels of risk, opportunities for change and results. This is the first, preparatory phase, which is related to strategies to work on the case, hypotheses, predictions, identifying goals, objectives and concrete steps to achieve positive results. The second part is realized in the process of socio-pedagogical intervention, by agreement of both parties - children with problem behavior, respectively, family and team of professionals who work with them. The third phase is characterized by the application of specific methods and forms of intervention and support to correct the behavior in individual and group form. A typical example of this type of childcare activities are workshops "School Support". They operate, both within the school and in the community support centers as part of the provision of social services in the community, as well as extracurricular (extracurricular) forms for children with deviant behavior. As alternative forms of extracurricular work with children and prevention of deviant behavior has developed various programs: workshops, group work, interest clubs, training in debating, educational opportunities classes, workshops for educators in institutions (with an emphasis on teamwork). Practice groups for children and parents with a similar problem can be: therapeutic, training, groups formed on a topical issue for school counseling groups. The valuable thing in them is planning, taking roles, the feedback from the group, the content of the subjects by applying a systematic group discussions, educational discussions¹⁶.

School or kindergarten as group are life experience for the child, where he/she can make new connections. By itself this is a subjective experience that can not

¹⁵ G. Mehandzhiyska, *Methods of case management in social work with children with deviant behavior*, in: *Prevention of deviant behavior of children...*, op. cit., p. 301.

¹⁶ V. Gyurova, V. Bozhilova, B. Kriviradeva, *Forms of extra-curricular/ extracurricular/ activities for children with deviant behavior*, in: *Prevention of deviant behavior of children...*, op. cit.

be expressed and which can not do not worry him/her. Class or small group with symbolic links, which they validated have the function of a new life stage for him, organized around the personality of an adult. At this stage his real body and the image that it gives or receives will occupy a special place. It is also a place where it will become the symbolic experience of language and the function of his speech as a means of communication. The place of the teacher and the educator or adult who works with a group of children is critical because it is the role of a third, who shall be the subject mediator between “two worlds” adult in a position of the third to all children around him. Children turn to him in the name of his ability, to try to understand what value they have for it, but this way, it also takes the place of authority. In the family the child has intrinsic value because he is a child; he experienced the love of their parents without earned, even if he has to tolerate their anger. At school and with peers in kindergarten his value is determined by what he does or says there that he has no value except that which deserved. This creates a tension of rivalry, jealousy and envy¹⁷. In our country, the methodology of case work has developed primarily as part of the methodology of education or in other words in the field of pedagogy. In this context individual work is usually understood individual approach. Individual work as a method of social work has the case work for basic unit. We are not just talking about reporting on individual characteristics but a specific process of helping the individual, considered as a case work. This suggests a few basic things: opportunities for prolonged contact time; perception of the individual as a separate, unique; identifying interventions to the specific needs of the individual, but not limited to an individual approach helps to achieve the objectives of the educator, but also actions arising from the purpose of the child and his family and supporting their achievement. Main approaches in the work with the case are: prescriptions (medical) model and the contractual model. Most often contract model comprises the following steps:

- Preliminary stage (establishing contact, achieving trust).
- Initial coordination of expectations, objectives and content of work.
- Phase of study and professional judgment.
- Planning and implementation of the aid plan.

¹⁷ V. Banova, *How to talk, listen and play with the child, a collection of materials for work with children and parents*, Sofia 2011, p. 15–16.

Completion and evaluation of results¹⁸

Important place in the socio-educational work with problem children is paid to the evaluation and assessment of immediate risk to life and health of the child, the situation of the family's needs and strengths, trends for change and performance. Within social services for each user individually is form an appropriate set of measures of intervention: individual program with correctional, therapeutic, consultative or socially oriented. It is usually prepared on the team discussion of different specialists – psychologist, social worker, and educator. According to the user's needs in the individual program (plan) may include activities aimed at children (individual and group work: correctional, educational, therapeutic) and activities aimed at parents (individual counselling workshop for parents, family counselling and therapy).

An atelier is a space that adults organized to enable children to “work”, to invent their solutions, expanding its capabilities to dress sense and meaning in their experiences and feelings. The creation of an atelier and work in it are discussed in an interdisciplinary team.

Atelier is planned including an interdisciplinary team meeting and the children who will participate in it are identified. It usually lasts throughout the school year. Leading or leadings (if they age two) take notes on the progress of the study and the work of the children in it. They regularly talk about work in a specific atelier, for example once every three months, at a meeting of the interdisciplinary team. If the team decides the atelier may be closed, converted or renovated.

Each Atelier has its own spatial and temporal framework, but the essence of its functioning and efficiency of the children is determined by whether the leading share and discuss their work with the team through the possibilities of Intervention or supervision¹⁹. The procedure for dealing with a child with a problem in the socio-educational area within the social service includes the following sequence: introduction to the documentation of the child, an initial interview cognitive conversation with parents and child separately, presenting the steps in the program again to the main subjects – child parents and anticipated positive behavioural changes.

¹⁸ N. Dimitrova-Petrova, *Exploration for and Evaluation in working with street children*, in: “Samaritans”, *Handbook of social work with children and young people on the street...*, op. cit., p. 96–97.

¹⁹ V. Banova, *How to talk, listen and play with the child, a collection of materials for work with children and parents...*, op. cit., p. 24.

Diagnosing is (socio-educational assessment, psychological assessment and needs assessment). At this stage the results are specified in an assessment of the resources and deficits, needs, difficulties of the child and family; violated rights and privacy. The formulation of the case answers the question, how participation in social service will enhance the quality of life and social integration of the child in the home and/or community. Leading indicators for improvement were: the quality of life of the child, reducing the number of crises in social terms – relations with other peers and adults; enhance the ability to cope independently with problems and living; more effective control of aggression, anxiety, and vulnerability; expanding opportunities for social participation and inclusion in personal level – depressive and anxious tendencies. The next stage is the maintenance of social case. Now is the time at which, based on the formulation of the case work are recognize the important people in a child's life. The responsibilities and tasks of each of them are identified by (formed multidisciplinary team). The case manager who makes connections to the team and registers the changes in the individual card is determined. Individual card is structured information with a dynamic character that expect the child's name and period of work includes five main points: needs assessment, correctional tasks, psycho-corrective work, activities and results.

Besides individual card may be applied as a technique and work card in order to structure the daily life of the child, building daily rhythm and the rights and responsibilities in terms of social commitments, going to school, self schoolwork, sports, extracurricular activities interest. The next step involved in drawing up individual educational plan-correction to improve the quality of life of the child for a certain period of time with a clear allocation of responsibilities. It includes: case formulation, psycho-correction goals and objectives, responsible, criteria for evaluation of the results (both quantitative and qualitative measures), deadlines for reporting.

Conclusion

Providing social services for children and families at risk or in difficulty occupies an important place in the socio-pedagogical theory and practice with children with deviant behavior found in the risk dropping out of school. This is' because the use of *individual approach* in working with them gives the opportunity to "see the light" many problems which otherwise would remain encapsulated in individual and family, especially in the trend that behavioural problems of these

individuals suggests namely social isolation and exclusion. Conversation, communication, personal attention, objective attitude devoid of criticism and criticism of children allow parents to create a working relationship based on trust and understanding, useful for both parties – the team and the family. They are therefore an important factor in the construction of appropriate and realistic assessment case work.

As a pioneering work for the entire period of social reform stand free opportunity to use social services, a team of specialists working on specific problems of the child and family, individual approach as a way of understanding and analyzing their problems.

Bibliography:

- Analytical report of data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation of the study "Assessment of users' project" Reform for Child Welfare in Bulgaria*, www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/projects/children/.../dokladBA.doc (access: 22.05. 2014).
- Association "Child and space" *Manual workers in the field of children's mental health and services for children*, 2012, (ed. of a collection): Banova V., *How to talk, listen and play with the child, a collection of materials for work with children and parents*, Sofia 2011.
- Development of alternative services, including foster care reform in the context of child protection in Bulgaria*, www.sapibg.org/publications.
- "Samaritans", *Handbook of social work with children and young people on the street*, Dimova D., Popova-Ivanova R. I., (compiler of an anthology), St. H., 2004.
- Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, www.sapibg.org/publications (access: 22.05. 2014).
- Iliev I., *Social diagnosis of early school leaving and possible management decisions: Main results of a survey in the municipality of Varna*, Varna 2008.
- Kriviradeva B., *Organization and operation of the social educational institutions for children*, Sofia 2009.
- Lessons for adults and children*, edited by Simeonova V., Simeonov G.. collection of training materials, Sofia 2007
- Milenkova V., *Dropping out of school*, Sofia 2004.
- Prevention of deviant behavior of children*, Rangelova Em., Gyurova V., Vitanova N., (compiler of an anthology), Sofia, 2003.
- Rangelova M., *Methodology of educational activity*, Sofia 2009.
- Strakova L., *Dropping out of school as a social – pedagogical problem years University*, vol. Social activities, Sofia 2009.