

ANNA ALUFFI PENTINI, FABIO OLIVIERI
(EDITED BY)

THE PEDAGOGUE IN EUROPE

27 COLLANA
PEDAGOGIA INTERCULTURALE
E SOCIALE



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Collana

Pedagogia interculturale e sociale

La collana si propone come uno spazio per approfondire teorie ed esperienze nel vasto campo della pedagogia interculturale e sociale. Vengono dunque proposti volumi che danno conto di riflessioni teoriche e ricerche sul campo in due ambiti principali.

Un primo settore riguarda il campo della 'pedagogia interculturale', con contributi sugli approcci intenzionali di promozione del dialogo e del confronto culturale, indirizzati a riflettere sulle diversità (culturali, di genere, di classe sociale, biografiche, ecc.) come punto di vista privilegiato dei processi educativi. Il secondo ambito concerne il campo della 'pedagogia sociale', con particolare riferimento alle valenze e responsabilità educative sia delle agenzie non formali (la famiglia, l'associazionismo, gli spazi della partecipazione sociale e politica, i servizi socio-educativi sul territorio, ecc.), sia dei contesti informali (il territorio, i contesti di vita, i mezzi di comunicazione di massa, ecc.).

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Preface 1

Gabriella Agrusti¹

Considering education from a European perspective can seem either too ambitious or too trivial. This, according to Aldo Visalberghi, is in an essay entitled “For a European Education”, written on the occasion of a seminar held at the Italian Institute in Hamburg in 1955. This reflection remains true even today, seventy years later, as public debate is still polarized between nationalist approaches and approaches based on solidarity and inclusiveness. What is certainly different in our times is the replacement of the opposition between different nationalities by feelings of widespread hatred toward ‘the other’ and ‘the different’, a mixture of xenophobia and aporophobia, i.e., a barely concealed repugnance toward poverty.

Professional socio-pedagogical educators and Pedagogues, in their various roles, are essential not only in the care chain for those with greater vulnerability but also as the cornerstone of formal, informal, and non-formal educational settings: nurseries and childcare services, schools, social cooperatives, family associations, volunteers, and third-sector organizations, services for people with disabilities, minors, migrants and asylum seekers, people experiencing social exclusion and mental health issues, and the elderly.

The variety outlined in this short list, by no means exhaustive, gives a good idea, even to lay people, of the breadth of knowledge and skills that should constitute the standard equipment of these professionals, albeit with the necessary distinctions established in their respective fields of application. And yet, the complexity does not stop there, as it also encompasses all the other related second-level professions, such as educational consultants, supervisors, trainers, and trainers-of-trainers, among others. And we know well how second-level figures can play an even more significant role in those areas where the need for intervention is greatest.

The Pedagogue is then recognized as a top-level figure by Italian law, implying his/her scientific autonomy and significant responsibilities. This raises the question on what solid foundation can professional autonomy and the associated responsibilities rest, if not on qualifying training, which can effectively guarantee a generation of thoughtful professionals capable of making a difference in the contexts in which they operate.

The crux of the matter, however, lies elsewhere, as this is a two-way street.

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Through degree programmes for educators and Pedagogues, pedagogy can concretely express its great potential and, at the same time, ‘regenerate’ itself by gathering information and producing data, documenting experiences, and initiating reflections based on fieldwork that allow it to innovate its theories, epistemologies, or produce changes in methodological approaches. This follows the prestigious interdisciplinary tradition (Dewey, Schön, Wenger, and so on) focused on the continuous and recursive exchange between theory, practice, reflection, and evaluation.

Evaluation underpins the epistemological choices of much research (like it or not) that addresses the quality of education. It would therefore be appropriate to ask if and to what extent research paradigms, nowadays predominant in educational research—social constructivist on the one hand and realist or critical realist on the other—can be meaningfully applied in the specific field of impact evaluation in the training of future educators and Pedagogues, and what goals such research should primarily pursue. The evaluation can focus on the relevance of the training programme to the problems posed by the training recipients, on the processes activated, and on the relationship between resources used and benefits achieved, considering its effectiveness, i.e., its relevance to the objectives initially considered.

All the choices behind the design and the implementation of a course are hardly neutral, nor are they without significant consequences. And contrary to what one might think, evaluation is dramatically practical and very little academic. Schön’s confusion in the preface to his foundational *The Reflective Practitioner* regarding the role of academia in supporting the professional development does not arise with evaluation: evaluation presents us with incredibly concrete choices even when they seemingly transform into bureaucratic obstinacy for quality assurance. Sometimes evaluation coincides with research; other times it is simply theory-building, as Wenger argues, which is achieved by sharing a lexicon that gives names to things. Thus, we conclude that evaluating the quality of training courses for future educators means researching these same courses.

If more research is what we need to cast light on the process of becoming social educators and Pedagogues, this book by Anna Aluffi Pentini and Fabio Olivieri on social educators, Pedagogues, and social work represents an important milestone in reflecting systematically and in different socio-economic contexts across Europe in which these crucial figures emerge and operate, intertwining a cultural and political perspective on issues that shape our realities in ways that are not always evident and with roles that are not always recognised as they would deserve.

Far from trying to find a unique and standardized “European” response to conceiving these differences, the essays hereafter presented offer documented and foundational reflections on the impact of social educators and Pedagogues in different countries, starting from the variety of titles of the professionals, considering relationships with school education and with the concept of ‘com-

munity' in various cultural and scientific traditions in social pedagogy, to better understand our societies and make a difference.

Preface 2

Pascal Perillo¹

This publication concerning pedagogical professions in Europe and reflecting the promotional role offered by CoNCLEP is very welcome and will hopefully help the scientific and political debate in Italy. CoNCLEP for several years now has been concerned to promote the dignity and merits of their formation at the university level in preparation for the various socio-educational contexts in which they have to advance the wellbeing of children, youth and seniors and find adequate responses to their various needs. The responsibilities of these professionals include intellectual and design tasks, as well as pedagogical coordination, consultancy, and supervision. They plan, manage, evaluate, and monitor educational and training interventions addressing individuals, couples, families, social groups, and the broader community. These interventions rely on specific theoretical and methodological tools that serve purposes such as prevention, pedagogical observation, assessment, and educational action, along with scientific and technical consultancy, coordination, and supervision of services and initiatives of educational and pedagogical relevance.

Given that in Italy these professional studies are located exclusively within the university system, this system guarantees the development of scientifically solid knowledge and competencies, with clear leading to recognizable professional profiles in terms of roles, tasks, functions and characteristic professional acts, relative to the diverse fields of intervention. Degree courses are grounded in the epistemological and methodological foundations of knowledge that constitute the backbone of training for education and training professionals. The courses maintain a focus on local educational needs while connecting to the demands of the educational labour market. This approach addresses professional development and supports continuous updating of curricula and study pathways.

The curricula of the 51 Master's Degree programmes affiliated with CoNCLEP, which train pedagogical professionals in Italy, are designed in accordance with Ministerial Decree no. 1649 of 19 December 2023. Their curricula serve as flexible standard models. Each Study Course (Corso di Studi, CdS) adapts its objectives, content, and competencies to reflect both the official degree descriptors and the specific educational needs of the local territory.

Consequently, a defining feature of these Master's programmes is the regular revision of their objectives, content, and competencies, guided in particular by ongoing dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

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One of the formal contexts where this type of dialogue is regularly established is, for example, the Steering Committee (Comitato di Indirizzo, CI). Benefiting from university autonomy, this Committee, which operates within each Study Course (SC), facilitates the connection between the training provision developed by universities and the labour market demands across various professional and territorial contexts. This is reflected in the involvement of representatives from the labour market, particularly during the design phase of the SC. Within the CIs, representatives from both the academic and professional sectors convene at regular intervals, during the design of courses and throughout their monitoring and updating phase. The ultimate aim of this connection is to enhance graduate employability.

This mechanism ensures the strengthening of relationships between the CdS and interested parties and coordination between the CdS and the cultural and socio-economic fabric of the territory. It improves communication of the training offer outside the university, manages feedback from graduates and employers, fosters connections with structures hosting student internships, monitors post-graduation career trajectories, and facilitates the activation of partnerships for research projects that serve the territory. The CI's responsibilities include: formulating opinions and proposals regarding training needs and potential developments in professional and institutional worlds connected to the CdS training offer; the adequacy of the CdS curriculum in relation to the needs of the relevant professional fields; possible curricular and extracurricular activities (such as meetings, seminars, and professional development courses); and the identification of institutions and organisations available to support internship activities.

Dialogue and collaboration with work representatives ultimately contribute to maintaining a strong professional orientation of the Study Course (CdS). This is ensured through the inclusion of laboratory-based learning activities and compulsory internships. While training pathways must necessarily be adapted to respond to local educational demands, the design, management, monitoring, and updating of the CdS are guided by the principles of continuity, coherence, and balance across theoretical instruction, practical workshops, and internship components. Master's degree programmes ensure an appropriate equilibrium between general, predominantly theoretical knowledge; practical knowledge, developed through critical engagement with its own foundations and contextual applications; and the experiential learning provided through laboratories and internships.

Classes, which offer both foundational and specialised epistemological, methodological, and cultural frameworks relevant to the core knowledge of educational practice, also serve to cultivate a reflective *forma mentis*—a mindset capable of organising and assessing ongoing training processes, responding to them critically, and refining, adjusting, and tailoring tools, techniques, methods, approaches, and strategies to suit specific contexts. In this regard, non-curricular activities such as seminars, workshops, round tables, and cul-

tural initiatives related to the field of professional education also play a crucial role. These occasions allow students to internalise a reflective perspective by engaging with the interplay between disciplinary knowledge and real-world challenges arising from professional educational practice. Laboratories are configured as environments in which students undertake critical-hermeneutic inquiry into knowledge, learn to think through practice, and experience forms of reflective and transformative professional apprenticeship in line with the professional competencies envisaged by the CdS.

CoNCLEP is dedicated to high professional and academic standards looking also beyond the national borders and can only underline the importance of the European dimension that this text edited by Anna Aluffi Pentini and Fabio Olivieri promotes.

Preface 3

Samuel Spiga¹

In a time marked by profound and complex transformations, education is once again a public, political, and civic matter. Global challenges—environmental crises, growing inequalities, migration, social fragility, and educational disorientation—demand more than technical responses; they call for a pedagogical vision capable of guiding change. In this context, the figure of the Pedagogue assumes a strategic and universal significance.

This dossier arises from the urgency to build a European space for pedagogy, where the role of the Pedagogue is recognized, valued, and made interoperable among countries. It is not only a matter of harmonizing academic titles or training paths, but of affirming the need for a highly competent professional presence within educational and social processes—someone capable of combining planning, research, care, and transformation. A critical presence within systems and communities.

Italy has taken an important step in this direction. With the approval of Law 55/2024, the country has established the Order of Pedagogical and Educational Professions, formally recognizing the Pedagogue as a regulated intellectual professional, endowed with responsibility, autonomy, and professional ethics. This is a historic milestone that values pedagogical knowledge as a scientific, project-oriented, and ethical discipline in service of the common good.

Today, Pedagogues in Italy are active in multiple contexts: early childhood services, schools, educational and social-health communities, local interventions, adult education, pedagogical counseling, project design, and evaluation of educational policies. Their work contributes to the quality of educational systems and strengthens social cohesion, placing the person at the center of every process.

But this experience must not remain confined: it should be circulated, shared, and discussed. The dossier thus becomes a political and cultural tool—not merely a collection of best practices, but an act of collective presence and a declaration of intent: Europe needs Pedagogues.

It needs professionals capable of reading educational needs in connection with inequalities, life contexts, and life stages. It needs those who can envision and foster alliances between knowledge, institutions, and generations. It needs a pedagogical culture that is rooted and future-oriented.

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Chapter 1

Social educators, social Pedagogues and social work in Europe¹

Anna Aluffi Pentini, Walter Lorenz²

1.1 Introduction

While in most European countries the professional caring and educating attention given to children and young people has a long tradition, the professionalism this work requires has often not been recognised or only when particular disciplinary perspectives were developed. This resulted in a wide variety of disciplines offering specialised training courses and professional titles for this field which now is widely termed 'social pedagogy', however with titles which do not always find equivalents when translated into other languages. The situation is further complicated by the parallel development of the professional sector of social work which in most countries, perhaps with the exception of Germany, has quite a different profile of statutory responsibilities (Cannan, Berry and Lyons, 1992; Marynowicz-Hetka, 2016). To give therefore an overview of the current state of this broad field requires not so much the search for a common definition or other terminological clarifications but an investigation of the various intellectual, cultural and political strands that combine in specific national circumstances to shape the respective professional profile. Keeping this in mind, the national portraits of this volume will perhaps appear less bewildering on account of the great diversity of concepts and practice realities they present. Instead, they can provide a source of stimulation for how this vital field of social and educational commitment can be further developed in specific national contexts.

To this aim the following perspectives will be applied to identify these shaping influences. There is first of all the cultural perspective which attributes different values to the notion of childhood and to dependency on others more generally at other life stages. Some cultures regard those life phases of increased vulnerability and dependency more as negatively connoted so that a deficit has to be compensated, while others value positively the distinct competences people in various precarious life situations bring to bear on them. Quite generally, being a member of a family or a social unit can be regarded as something that is valuable and enriching or it can be seen as conditional on not becoming a

¹ This contribution is the result of the authors' collaboration. Regarding paragraph attribution, paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5.2 and 6 are to be attributed to Walter Lorenz and paragraphs 2, 5.1, 7, 8, 9 to Anna Aluffi Pentini.

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burden. These cultural differences can affect the value and orientation of pedagogy. This relates immediately to a political perspective and the ideological key positions that developed in Europe with the advent of modernity and democracy. These differ in the way the relationship of individuals to the whole political and social community is framed with either more emphasis given to personal liberty or to universal equality and solidarity. A third perspective concerns the intellectual and academic responses to those historical developments with the arrival of modern academic disciplines like psychology, sociology and pedagogy. Each of these not only was limited to offering explanations of how individuals and society as a whole work but aimed also at making a contribution to bringing about improvements, sometimes in line with prevailing political priorities, other times in opposition to them.

Social education, like pedagogy in general, is a product of the weaving together of these strands and in turn engages with the guiding principles of each to take an at times critical position to them in order to move public attitudes towards a better understanding of the nature and needs of children and adults as they move through the life cycle in specific societal contexts (Schugurensky & Silver, 2013).

Social pedagogy analyses critically the existing institutions and practices for different age groups, whether in normal situations or in responding to crises and distress (Hamburger 2001). Its guiding logic is in all these circumstances the promotion of well-being, be that through prevention or recovery, adjusting its presence and mode of intervention to the demands of those situations, including, where necessary, exercising control in the lives of individuals (Aluffi Pentini 2025).

1.2 Variety of titles

These multiple influences are immediately recognisable in the plethora of titles under which this professional group is identified in different European countries. The Latin-based and mainly Mediterranean countries tend to use references to 'educator' in the title, qualified as 'social' or 'of young people' (*Éducateur de Jeunes, educatore della prima infanzia*). In Italy the title '*educatore*' refers to a lower academic grade (3 years) with '*pedagogista*' ranking higher with 5 year studies while in Spain '*Educador*' almost parallels '*Pedagogo*' (Úcar 1992). The latter term is also now prevalent in Nordic countries with versions of '*Socialpedagog*' (Sweden) or '*Sosiaalipedagogi*' (Finland) with obvious reference to the term *Sozialpädagogik* in Germany where it has a particularly long and strong tradition which gave impulses to those countries now using the term increasingly. An attempt at introducing it to the United Kingdom is still underway for some time now (Petrie 2020). Using the term pedagogy there aims at marking the sharp contrast to the associations which the term education has in the English language with its immediate reference to school contexts

and notions of (top-down) instructions (Coussée et al, 2010). Equivalents to what is meant by other European profiles of social Pedagogues can be found in the UK more under titles like nursery nurse, care worker or youth worker, the significance of which will be highlighted below. But other countries also have a much richer tradition of titles like *Jugendarbeiter*, *Kindergärtnerin oder Pfleger* in German, *Jeugdwerker* in Dutch, *Barnevernspedagog* in Norwegian or *Varhaiskasvatuksen koulutettu* (Early Childhood Education Specialist) in Finnish. Since the work of pedagogy, despite its implied reference to the Greek '*pais*' (meaning child), is not confined to working with children some titles emphasise the difference in addressees with titles like 'community educator', for instance in Scotland (Smyth & Whyte, 2009). In the Dutch context, for a period the discipline of pedagogy was transformed to 'agogics' to mark the universal orientation (Elias, 2002), but this did not find international reception. Similarly, starting in France in the 1960s the professional branch of 'animateur social' appeared as a kind of low threshold, community oriented preventive programme with the aim of stimulating creativity among marginalised populations (Langlacé, 2004; Segrestan, 2011). It spread to Spain (Úcar, 1992) but was later mainly confined there to stimulating entertainment in holiday resorts, and to Italy where it maintained its social function (Pollo, 1991) and where a journal with the title '*Animazione Sociale*' still exists.

With the differentiation of a number of counseling, care and therapeutic vocational groups and their move towards full professionalisation the overlap of this range of titles with social pedagogy is also widening. Boundaries are often blurring in the fields of play or occupational therapy, for instance in the area of disability, or in relation to career advisors in schools, drama and dance coaches, especially when they work with disadvantaged populations (Lorenz, 2006).

Apart from these differentiations, there are two broad professional fields which border that of social Pedagogues, and these are the field of school education where the role of Pedagogue is mainly represented by the title of teacher, and that of social work as its main 'rival' in the field of social services.

To address the relationship with school education, the two areas are relatively easy to distinguish from an institutional perspective. Education takes place predominantly in institutions according to curricular plans and regulations while social education represents an open approach reaching beyond institutional confines and oriented towards lifeworld contexts (Grunwald & Thiersch, 2009). The distinction becomes difficult to draw when social pedagogy describes specifically counseling tasks within schools, as some of the country descriptions report, in which case designated, and sometimes specially trained teachers can de facto carry out the responsibilities that otherwise school social Pedagogues or even school social workers would perform. The affinity is further underlined by the training arrangements in most countries which place the courses in social pedagogy within faculties of educational sciences. It will be analysed below how this relationship formed in particular national contexts,

especially that of Germany (Ehrenspeck, 1998), with repercussions in both directions.

The relationship with social work is equally hard to summarise and can range from totally contrasting competences to quasi-merger of the professional differences, as is the case in Germany where many universities have come to award combined degrees of social work/social pedagogy (Kraimer & Altmeyer, 2016). Where the contrast is emphasised, like in the UK, this is partly for political reasons because social educators in the form of care workers are much less paid than social workers, and partly arises from a rejection of an approach represented by social work that focuses on crises and material or psychological deficits instead of recognising the developmental, and hence pedagogical potential of people in crisis situations that then allows a broader combination of intervention and prevention approaches as the hallmark of social pedagogy.

1.3 The cultural perspective

One of the characteristics of modernity, inherited from humanism, is the acceptance and spread of education being a universal right instead of the privilege of an elite. The reproduction of cultural standards and contents becomes a national enterprise in the interest of creating national unity and uniformity, given that the modern nation state had to be created out of a variety of regional and linguistic traditions, but also in the interest of industrial capitalism that requires a disciplined work force equipped with basic literacy and arithmetic skills (Lorenz, 2006). The primary focus of this project is the period of childhood and with this comes the creation of a distinct and ever more expanding life phase of childhood and youth which had to be 'formed'. In general, it can be observed that this education project took two opposing forms: the top-down approach emphasised discipline and conformity in preparation for the requirements of the army and the factory, reaching, according to Foucault (1972), into ever more personal and intimate zones of life where governmentality ruled with a mix of ideology and science derived from a modern understanding of rationality. This caused schools to assume an often frightening appearance of rules and punishment and the notion of education an air of violence and subjection to regimes of discipline (Miller 1980). By contrast, the bottom-up approach sought to realise the ideals of the Enlightenment in the form of education as an emancipatory path towards self-realisation. The first phase of industrialisation therefore produced a proliferation of self-help and self-representation movements ranging from workers' education initiatives to the first wave of feminism and civil rights claims, all of which driven by an educational ideal of 'learning by doing' (Dewey, 1997) that put the learner in charge of educational contents and processes. For the pioneers of these movements, taking education into their own hands had great political significance and formed an intricate part of political activism. This was illustrated by the

international appeal of the workers' education movement which spread in waves from the early industrialising nations of Britain and Europe to the USA and later particularly to Latin America (Merrill & Schurman, 2016; Kane, 2001). It expressed a commitment to the practice of democracy which made sense only when it represented an educated citizenry. Above all, the feminist movement spurred a whole series of educational initiatives, not least as a means for women to become professionalised as teacher, nurses or social workers, linked to the demand for women's suffrage (Weiler, 1989).

Cultural (and political) considerations of creating a shared identity and bond among people who through their oppression were denied this right to self-expression were a motivating factor of the social movements of the 1960s and 70s. They frequently took inspiration from grass-roots initiatives in Latin America whose pedagogical significance was then publicised worldwide through the 1968 work of Paolo Freire and his 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (Freire, 2000). Parallel to that, the concept of animation found expression in the equally globally spreading community theatre projects of Augusto Boal (1979; 1992) which represent an important creative dimension of social pedagogy that endures.

Not all these initiatives relied on spontaneous bottom-up dynamics - on occasion these were triggered or at least aided by middle-class representatives. The tradition of 'folk education' (*Volkshochschule* in Germany, *Folkhögskola* in Sweden and Norway, *Kansanopisto* in Finland) were modelled on the Danish *Folkehøjskole*, founded by pastor Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig in 1844 (Moller & Watson, 1944). In the Anglo-Saxon context, the settlement movements express a similar community education approach, on whose experience John Dewey (2007) based his notion of 'democratic education' which he had seen operating at the famous Hull House settlement in Chicago. For many, it embodied a sharp alternative to early versions of social work in the form of individualised casework that developed out of systematised, scientifically oriented charity work that was a response to problems of poverty or delinquency (Königter, 2021).

This brief historical overview demonstrates that the notion of pedagogy is intricately linked to different versions of 'culture' as a community-constituting and hence social factor that can, however, be seen as representing either an enforced collective identity or a self-generated process that fosters individual identities from the point of view of shared interests. Social pedagogy, in all its versions, therefore carries a democratic potential but is at the same time also vulnerable to being manipulated for political and hence often nationalist authoritarian purposes.

1.4 The political perspective

The previous section already hinted that pedagogy as mass and compulsory education has become a crucial political instrument in modernity. The ambiguity of recognising in education a process from above or from below intersects with

the 'classical' political agendas that emerged during the development of the parliamentary structures of democracies. The ambiguity is most apparent where politics have a liberal tradition, as in the UK. Compulsory school was generally introduced to contain the masses of displaced and disoriented working-class children, making them fit for factory work and preventing them from seeking a career in delinquent activities. Equally, in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, Kerschensteiner's version of social pedagogy was based on the promotion of a 'pedagogy of work' (*Arbeitspädagogik*) that regarded 'vocational' education as a fundamental aspect of the life-preparation of citizens, and this in some contrast to the traditional German notion of *Bildung* (Kerschensteiner, 2022, orig. 1901).

But also under liberalism many self-directed community activities flourished like the liberal school experiment of Summerhill in England (Neill, 1977), or in the form of settlements as mentioned and of community education in Scotland (Smith, 2012) but also in that of a strong youth movement. There has been a reluctance to professionalise youth work for instance in the UK, as was often the case in the rest of Europe, because youth work should be the terrain of volunteers who would ideally have come through the youth movement themselves. Equally, pre-school provisions there were largely in the hands of non-governmental organisations so that parents could choose one that corresponded to their personal views of the needs of their child which made for instance a strong Montessori movement flourish there. Hence social pedagogy did exist in the UK as a practice but not as a recognised professional activity. In recent decades, however, there have been moves to offer care workers the opportunity to obtain a professional qualification, which the majority did not possess, by attempts at copying and introducing the German model of social pedagogy. At the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the London Institute of Education, Pat Petrie and Claire Cameron took a leading role through a comparative research project in 2006-2008 on the nature of social pedagogy in Germany and Denmark (Cameron Moss, & Petrie, 2021). German-educated academics then developed systematic training programmes in social pedagogy which were taken on by selected universities like University College London, University of Central Lancashire, and Salford University that offered qualifications first in the area of child care which later expanded to other age groups. They set up a social enterprise organisation 'Them Pra' ('Theory meets Practice') in 2007 that provides consultancy and courses and was instrumental in the establishment of the UK Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA) in 2017 (Cameron, 2016). However, the progress of professionalisation through social pedagogy training in England is still hampered by a lack of political commitment.

Nordic countries with their predominantly social democratic political tradition had no such reservations and relied instead on the general professionalisation of social services, including pre-school pedagogy and various forms of community work and education. The reservations against allowing thereby state manipulation were assuaged by the distinct 'Nordic' view of the state as a servant of the citizens which prevailed at least until the advent even there of neoliberalism

(Eriksson, 2014). Denmark has the most distinct social pedagogy training programme at University Colleges (*Professionshøjskoler*) and recognises the title *Pædagog* (Rosendal Jensen, 2009). Norway differentiates between a Bachelor in Child Welfare (*Barnevernspedagog*), and a Bachelor in Social Education (*Vernepleier*) at the same academic level while the other Nordic countries tend to incorporate social pedagogy elements into social work training (Hämäläinen, 2003). The 'Nordic model' of welfare had aimed at providing good universal public services which run well-established pre-school and residential services staffed by qualified professionals, although recently privatisation and with that the diversification of service providers and of standards have also reached these countries.

In terms of social policies, Germany has a distinct tradition of shaping the relationship between citizens and the state according to the principle of subsidiarity ever since Bismarck launched a series of the world's first public insurance legislation in the 1880s. Subsidiarity means that the state must give priority to initiatives arising from civil society organisations like charities and foundations but in turn must strive to support the 'smaller social units' of neighbourhoods and ultimately the family in their self-help efforts (Lorenz, 2006). This context facilitates the exchanges between top-down and bottom-up efforts and therefore requires processes of adjustment in which educational principles are at play. Schools and other institutions do indeed provide the bulk of education in terms of knowledge and attitudes, especially in the Prussian military tradition, but there is scope for self-generated life-long pedagogical processes in which the whole society can be involved in various organisational forms. These opportunities were seized by workers' and women's activists but also by students and youth that gave rise to a significant youth movement for which Germany became symbolic for instance through the '*Wandervogel*' movement (Herrmann, 2010). Their motto was that the encounter with nature had a formative influence in contrast to the constraining industrial context of cities and this spurred ideas and ideals which still resound in contemporary ecological and alternative movements. Against this background, the concept of social pedagogy could immediately find acceptance not so much as a specialisation parallel with school pedagogy but as a means of giving expression to the social aspects of all educational opportunities, be that in the form of the Kindergarten, of youth work, self-improvement or neighbourhood projects – pedagogy under a social perspective arises from and leads to a strengthened sense of community.

1.5 Intellectual concepts of social pedagogy

1.5.1 German traditions

The trajectory towards a coherent and comprehensive conceptualisation of social pedagogy traverses the cultural and political spheres of influence pre-

sented above and this accounts for its apparent diversity also in this regard. However, in the course of a theory-based position-taking towards those influences some core principles of this professional field became apparent which justify its recognition as an academic discipline. Central to this development was always the realisation that educational processes invariably contain social aspects in as much as both the learning contents of knowledge and competences as well as the application of what has been learned relate to a social context and require therefore reflections on the social implications of educational situations.

As mentioned above, the Enlightenment played a key role in the development of modern ideals of education as a pathway to personal autonomy, but also to mutual respect and ethical responsibility. Kant stated categorically, «*Der Mensch kann nur Mensch werden durch Erziehung. Er ist nichts, als was die Erziehung aus ihm macht*»³ (Kant, 1803, p.11). However, he formulated his ideas on education in a rather abstract manner while Hegel's dialectical philosophy focused more on the interplay between individual and society which he sees as a continuous process of becoming and hence of formation, which the German term of *Bildung* embodies (Hegel, 1977). Individual consciousness develops through critical engagement with others and thereby constitutes the intersubjective reality of society, whereby *Bildung* becomes ultimately a political project (Lilge, 1974). Learning for him is a continuous experiential struggle to comprehend and hence the «difficult struggle to make these experiences our own education, our own spiritual self-development» (Tubbs, 2015, p. 4). These fundamental thoughts on education inspired the German creation of a bourgeoisie civil society that also promoted German unification as a cultural project during the 19th century. Intellectuals like the economists and social scientists Gustav Schmoller, Adolph Wagner and Lujo Brentano, known as '*Kathedersozialisten*', in 1872 founded the German '*Verein für Socialpolitik* (sic)'. They recognised that unification could only be realised if education was enlisted in efforts to address the 'social question' (Grimmer-Solem, 2003). By that was meant not only the threat of civil unrest on account of growing poverty in the wake of Germany's industrialisation, but also the disaffection and 'spiritual homelessness' that the loss of traditional bonds was causing among large sections of the population.

In this specific historical climate of Germany, the term '*Sozialpädagogik*' gradually formed a conceptual nucleus around which educational, socio-political, cultural and economic contributions to 'the social question' could be assembled into a comprehensive programme of measures that could influence but also supplement the social, i.e. solidarity-creating role of the education system (Dollinger, 2006). The term was first coined by a school administrator, Karl Mager, in 1844 to denote the synthesis of '*Individualpädagogik*' and

³ «Humans can only become human through education. They are nothing but what education makes of them».

‘*Collektivpädagogik*’ which had, respectively, either only conceptualised the individual acquisition of knowledge or the regulated instruction through fixed curricula (Schugurensky & Silveer, 2013). He advocated critical thinking and social engagement as key pedagogical tasks that involved not only schools but also informal social units like the family, associations and communities (Thiersch & Grunwald, 2002). The orientation towards community became more apparent in the term’s practical elaboration through Friedrich Adolph Wilhelm Diesterweg who called on teachers to extend their educational field beyond the classroom to deal with the social living conditions of students and to become engaged in social reform to promote democratic participation by marginalised groups (Konrad, 2009). The full expansion into a theoretical, praxis-oriented concept was achieved by Paul Natorp, a Neo-Kantian philosopher who claimed that all pedagogy should be regarded as social pedagogy since learning could only fulfil its purpose when community is the ground, the context and the aim of pedagogy⁴. In his key text ‘*Sozialpädagogik*’ (Natorp 1974) of 1899 he explicitly goes back to educational concepts in Plato and Kant but devotes the major part to Pestalozzi who since then has become recognised as the actual modern pioneer of social pedagogy, and with that also of ‘reform pedagogy’. Based on his educational experiences in forming a pedagogical model school for poor and orphaned children in Switzerland, Pestalozzi had famously summed up the educational process as having to involve the whole person of the learner, through ‘head, heart and hand’, a holistic concept which inspired alternative educational projects to the present. Natorp expanded it into a pedagogical theory that demands the integration of intellectual, moral and aesthetic elements in all educational methods (Oelkers, 2005). The emphasis on community in turn was for Natorp no romantic ideal but implied a political commitment to social democracy in line with that of the ‘*Kathedersozialisten*’. It contains therefore a strong ethical commitment to equality and overcoming class divisions. This orientation spells the clearest distinction from social work methods that, with the exemption of political or radical strands of methodology or some community work concepts, tend to focus on improving the situation of individuals or families and this mainly in situations where deficits have already become apparent, while social pedagogy offers learning opportunities across the spectrum of living situations and favours prevention (Kraimer & Altmeyer, 2016; Marynowicz-Hetka, 2016).

1.5.2 Anglo-Saxon contributions

In this regard, Natorp’s principles of pedagogy come very close to those of John Dewey and his notion of democratic education (see above). However, Dewey (2007) represents a far more pragmatic approach in that he emphasises

⁴ «Die Erziehung des Menschen findet statt in der Gemeinschaft, durch die Gemeinschaft, für die Gemeinschaft» (Natorp, 1974, p.67).

the concrete experience of learning democratic interactions in educational settings, though not exclusively with children, which become thereby ‘embryonic communities’. Education for him is inseparable from a social commitment to overcoming barriers and creating learning spaces in which democratic exchanges can become a reality. His pedagogical concept is therefore, without using the term, closely allied to that of social pedagogy. In the context of the prevailing liberalism in the USA (as in the UK) Dewey and the activists of the settlement movement saw the necessity of starting with social and thereby educational movements in the concrete situation of deprived individuals and neighbourhoods. Liberalism in the USA, as in England, was strongly influenced by thinkers like John Stewart Mill who counts as a key advocate of utilitarianism. His advocacy of universal education was entirely focused on thereby augmenting personal liberty, albeit as a necessary precondition for the establishment of democracy. Common interests, and hence a sense of community, for him arises automatically from the collective having the same self-interests of increasing happiness and hence the actual form of communal life, and in that sense the contents of what constitutes the social in society, is not to be planned or defined as this would lead to authoritarian impositions (Cynamon, 2024). In the liberal tradition, education is a key instrument to avoid dependency, which explains the reluctance of this political tradition to embrace social pedagogy. This is also reflected in the greater spread of private, fee-paying education institutions for all ages in countries like Great Britain.

This is why Dewey and the settlement activists like Jane Addams were unable to take recourse to a political system that already prioritised community life instead of emphasising individualism and had to proceed pragmatically (Schneiderhan, 2011). The comparison between both conceptual approaches, Dewey’s democratic education and Natorp’s social pedagogy, who had not hesitated to speak of a ‘socialism of education’ (*Sozialismus der Bildung*) (Natorp, p. 36), demonstrates clearly the difference which the overall political context makes to the strategic realisation of educational concepts and that it can therefore never be a matter of simply ‘transplanting’ a method wholesale into another national context (Biesta & Miedema, 2000).

1.6 The ambiguity of ‘community’

The developments of social pedagogy in Germany during the Weimar Republic period after the First World War in turn demonstrate that the emphasis on community as a constitutive element of social pedagogy in turn is not without its dangers. During that period another philosopher, Hermann Nohl, decisively advanced social pedagogy as a theoretical concept (Nohl, 1982). As a practice model in the nascent social democratic welfare system of the time his version of social pedagogy, over which he collaborated with the advocate for women’s rights, Gertrud Bäumer, gave the Weimar social legislation a social-

pedagogical orientation. Inspired by Wilhelm Dilthey's decisive rejection of positivism as a foundation for pedagogical approaches this project aimed at using a collective pedagogical drive, which Nohl termed *Völkserziehung*, for the renewal of a sense of purpose and cohesion of a defeated and demoralised post-war Germany (Klafki, 2002). Valuing the dynamism and above all the self-educational purpose of social movements of the time, he gave expression to the notion of a 'spiritual community' (*geistige Gemeinschaft*) (Oelkers, 2005). Among these were the women's movement, which had given considerable impetus to the development of social work through pioneers like Alice Salomon and Ilse Arlt, but particularly the youth movement. As mentioned above, this had taken strong roots in Germany at the time in the form of numerous autonomous groups rejecting the alienating aspects of industrialisation and urbanisation and seeking to find a sense of community and identity without the aid and interference of adults. This movement advocated «that adolescence was not only a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, but an independent life phase worthy of protection» (Stambolis, 2022, p. 588). After the devastation of the First World War these ideas contributed to special emphasis being given in Weimar legislation to the education and protection of children and young people, with the *Reichsgesetz für Jugendwohlfahrt* (Youth Welfare Law) of 1922 explicitly stating in article 148 the universal '*Recht auf Bildung*' (Harvey, 1993). This renewed the specifically German understanding of education as *Bildung* which is not confined to school and other institutional educational contexts. When expressed as a right, *Bildung* encompasses support to families, residential care, youth work facilities and recreation as pedagogical opportunities to be made available to youth without them having to be selected (and potentially stigmatised) as 'social problems' (Stambolis, 2022). German youth welfare legislation today continues to emphasise this universal understanding of *Bildung* as a means of avoiding discrimination and stigma (Lorenz, 1991). Nohl saw in those comprehensive pedagogical measures the best means of stabilising and renewing the cultural self-confidence of the German folk-community and influenced the drafting and implementation of the youth welfare legislation greatly. The practice of social pedagogy in the professionalising social services was aided by the socialisation that many of those new professionals had received as former members of the youth movement themselves and this in turn underlined the ideal of self-help and self-realisation at the core of social pedagogy practice.

Intellectually, Nohl's major contribution was to elevate the notion of community to the level of a pedagogical ideal that could be transferred from the goal of specific educational settings to society overall. This paved the way for an understanding of a national folk community being formed through strengthening the social aspects of pedagogical activities in and out of school. Nohl's own statements in this regard were highly ambiguous as to whether they actually supported the ideological (mis-)use the Nazis immediately on coming to power made of the community ideal by forcing not only school

curricula but all youth work activities into the ideological mould of fascist nationalism. At any rate, he did not consider the fundamental difference between historical and political conditions that constituted community in pre-modern and the complex contractual and democratic processes that now characterise society and which must acknowledge cultural diversity, a failure that characterises also Heidegger's existentialism. The Hitler regime spelled the end of autonomous youth and social movements as well as a of a critical academic discourse on social pedagogy in Germany, thereby eliminating any public reflection on diverse approaches to forming learning communities, on diversity in general and with that on democratic educational practice (Sünker & Otto, 1997).

1.7 Main recent German trends in social pedagogy

This central element of social pedagogy had to be re-constructed in the gradual re-building of critical discourses in the post-war Western German Republic (Füssenhäuser, 2005). While social work education there was re-started with an orientation towards the 'standard model' of casework, group work and community work, substantially with the aid of UN and US-led programmes, the work of Klaus Mollenhauer gave the impetus for reflecting on the 'indigenous' German social pedagogy tradition (Mollenhauer, 1959). Adopting the perspective of critical theory, he saw social pedagogy's objective as both addressing society's integration demands and fostering autonomous individuals through communicative processes and hence through a critical, life-long pedagogical process that engages with the contradictions of a capitalist society. His emphasis on '*Selbsttätigkeit*' (best translated as 'agency') in conjunction with '*Bildsamkeit*' ('formability') acknowledges the responsibility of educators to base pedagogical processes on individual capacities. However, it should direct them towards changing adverse societal conditions rather than letting these dominate personal development (Weiss, 2018). The concept imposes ethical obligations on educators to create conditions that expand rather than restrict developmental possibilities in people and this phenomenological orientation became constitutive for the further development of German social pedagogy theories (Biesta, 2014). It commits social Pedagogues to recognising the competences individuals develop themselves in coping with daily challenges whereas a 'deficit perspective', often prevailing in social work, would focus on their negative consequences.

Hans Thiersch elaborated this approach in the form of the fundamental 'lifeworld orientation' necessary for social pedagogy (and of social work) (Thiersch, 1992; Thiersch & Grundwald, 2009) as a distinct methodology, meaning that social professionals have to develop an understanding of the agency inherent in service users and build the search for additional competences on collaborative approaches. Thiersch's social pedagogy model had a strong impact

on the German Child and Youth Welfare Act of 1990/91 which re-affirmed the de-stigmatising orientation of the Weimar legislation. Lothar Böhnisch formulated similarly the principle of '*Lebensbewältigung*' (coping with life challenges) which also focuses on positive aspects of personal agency. It recognises that all individuals need agency in the sense of self-efficacy (*Handlungsfähigkeit*), social recognition, and self-worth or meaning and always strive to maintain a balance between ways of satisfying these needs, which may however not always be acceptable to society (Böhnisch & Schröer, 2016). Social Pedagogues must address these three needs by striving jointly with addressees to establish the required means and skills.

Other contemporary German elaborations of social pedagogy emphasise even more strongly the political dimension of social pedagogical practice. For instance, through historical analyses, Franz Hamburger addresses the fundamental tensions in the concept. Pedagogy can be used as a means of control or of emancipation so that practice cannot be defined through simplistic prescriptions but only through critical engagement with the political and cultural contexts that give rise to those tensions (Hamburger, 2001; 2003). For him, this is particularly evident in the field of intercultural pedagogy where the political dimensions of conflicts are often obscured by a naïve celebration of cultural differences, instead of using pedagogical approaches to expose and change the power aspects that turn cultural differences into instruments of discrimination.

Hans-Uwe Otto and the whole Bielefeld School also highlighted the various political aspects of social pedagogy and developed their critical perspective partly with reference to the capability approach by Sen and Nussbaum (Andresen, Otto & Ziegler, 2008). This gives their version of social pedagogy a comprehensive social justice orientation while simultaneously including aspects of resource and power distribution in the methodology.

These latter frameworks demonstrate that social pedagogy is probably most widely discussed and elaborated as a concept in Germany. There it has a close affinity with social work which the pedagogical dimension helps to steer more in the direction of collaborative approaches that empowers users of social services to play an active part not only in solving their difficulties but also in raising their voice in political contexts.

1.8 Impact of German social pedagogy concepts on other countries

It is therefore not surprising that where a distinct strand of professional social pedagogy emerged in other European countries this frequently relates back to German authors or to the same sources that inspired the pedagogical concepts there, like Pestalozzi and Kant. A good example of this is Spain where the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset exercised considerable influence on the development of pedagogical concepts generally in the 1920s. He had spent

some time at Marburg in Germany and encountered there social pedagogy as framed by Paul Natorp. Ortega advocated a 'pedagogy of contamination' (*pedagogía de la contaminación*, Tate, 2024) that stimulated the curiosity and creativity of learners throughout society as a transformative, political programme (Aluffi Pentini, 2025). Combining German notions of social pedagogy with the community education ideas of the English Fabian society that promoted social reforms, he wanted particularly primary school teachers to contribute to the development of a democratic society through creating a sense of community that allows individual autonomy to flourish instead of subjugating citizens under Fascist authoritarianism (Ortega y Gasset, 1985). Exactly such fascist politics prevented in following decades the development of professional social work and social pedagogy in Spain under Franco until they could flourish again freely and through international contacts after the death of the dictator in 1975. Today, despite strenuous efforts by committed scholars like Xavier Úcar to give social pedagogy a coherent profile through international links (Janer & Úcar, 2017; Úcar, 2021), the professional field remains scattered and conceptually unfocused in Spain.

A similar break in the continuity of academic developments in social pedagogy occurred in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with the imposition of Communism there when it was denounced as a bourgeoisie approach to social issues. Original initiatives in Bulgaria were also inspired by pioneer German scholars like Diesterweg and Natorp (Rönkkö, 2021) and adopted in the 1920s as measures supplementary to school pedagogy in support of consolidating an industrialising and hence socially divided society. The linguistic and geographical vicinity to Russia had allowed the early Bulgarian pioneers to also incorporate pedagogical principles by Russian promoters of a social approach to and role of pedagogy like Lovich and Gorodetski, which testifies to the rich stream of reform pedagogical ideas emanating from that direction of Europe at the time (Hapenciuc, 2019). The absorption of such pedagogical models emphasising the importance of community into Communist schooling policies parallels the switch from Nohl's '*Volkserziehung*' to Nazi collectivism in Germany a decade later.

The Polish tradition of social pedagogy centres on the pioneering scholarship of Helena Radlinska who started teaching social pedagogy in 1925 at the Polish Free University of Warsaw, also with direct reference to the ideas of Paul Natorp (Lepalczyk & Marynowicz-Hetka, 2003). For her, social pedagogy played an important role in constituting a more integrated Polish society after reaching political independence in 1919, but in the inter-war years she extended this project internationally for the promotion of peace through her work in the New Education League and the conferences of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, while at the same time practising community education in rural settings at home. In 1945 she established Poland's first Department of Social Pedagogy at the University of Łódź until the Communist regime prohibited her teaching in 1950 (*ibid*). The Department was

re-established in 1957 and for instance Aleksander Kaminski, a colleague of Radlinska, published a textbook on social pedagogy in 1972 which attempts to reconcile social pedagogical principles with the prevailing socialist party ideology (Kamiński, 2022). After 1989 the Department's staff, led by Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, resumed strong international contacts and the promotion of ideology-free social pedagogy concepts.

A similar picture emerges from Nordic countries even though the practice of social pedagogy has been established there for longer and more continuously. One trend is that the focus of social pedagogy on working with children is widening to other arenas leading therefore to much more overlap with social work in terms of areas of responsibility (Eriksson, 2014). However, where praxis becomes detached from theoretical discourses of *Bildung*, social pedagogy can easily be used instrumentally to make people adapt to imposed societal conditions. Where however mobilisation is the objective, social pedagogy adopts the practice principles of community work or community education (van der Veen, 2003). The two divergent orientations of social pedagogy, towards adaptation or mobilisation (Hämäläinen, 2012) appear to be widely present in Nordic countries and this demonstrates how easily political priorities can determine the direction theoretical concepts are used (Cedersund et al, 2021). A study in Iceland shows how the introduction of legislation on inclusive education has activated social pedagogy services in schools as one of the main fields of that profession, and this with a strong human rights orientation (Jóhannsdóttir & Ingólfssdóttir, 2018).

1.9 Conclusion

As can be seen, the distinction between social pedagogy and social work, as well as that between different versions of social pedagogy, is articulated in Europe along a line distinguishing historical traditions, intervention practices, and practitioner training. This requires a country-specific analysis of the historical and political conditions underpinning each country's socio-educational institutions.

Ideally, it could be said that interventions in social pedagogy could be an important link between the instructive function and the broader formative and social function of schools, incorporating those dimensions that characterise social work more specifically. Social work is more oriented towards the application of social policies in everyday contexts but, in its more critical form, also towards the shaping of those policies (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2014). Social workers make structural welfare support provisions effective in the lives of children and families, at school and outside school. They have an increasing role in schools where they promote territorial links and enhance the social quality of school and neighbourhood life (Huxtable, 2022).

Social pedagogy from a European perspective appears as a highly creative

field of social engagement with a rich and diverse history. It has found applications in many contexts where social relations have to be attended to in a preventative, curative and above all pedagogical sense that stimulates participation and social competences across the entire life span.

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Chapter 2 The Pedagogue in Italy

Fabio Olivieri¹

The pedagogical profession in Italy has undergone profound transformations over the past eight years. The regulatory framework that accompanies and defines the areas of intervention, competencies and basic requirements for the practice of the profession, has been the subject of a series of legislative interventions that, in a progressive and incremental measure, have defined the pedagogue's profile, characteristics of practice and areas of employment. To better understand the evolution of this profession, it is necessary to retrace, albeit briefly, the main legislative steps passed in Italy following a chronological trajectory.

The first legislative intervention in educational professions concerned the figure of the educator with the 1984 Degan Decree, which was later declared illegitimate². The aim was to legitimize some atypical professions that operated in social and health contexts. It is worth pointing out that in Italy the figures of the socio-pedagogical professional educator and the Pedagogue take on distinctive traits that are significantly different from international standards. Without dwelling further on the profile of the social educator, which is not the specific subject of this contribution, it is necessary to clarify that the qualification of social educator, as of today, can only be awarded in Italy by obtaining a three-year degree in Education and Training Sciences (degree class L-19) or by means of the transitional provisions referred to by Law 205/2017, which will be discussed below.

Historically, the figure of the Pedagogue has undergone a more complex evolution, influenced by historical, cultural and institutional factors. From ancient Greece to contemporary Italy, the pedagogical function has gradually evolved according to social changes and the growing demand for education, including in out-of-school settings. Over the past three decades, the progressive institutionalization of the figure of the Pedagogue has encountered critical issues related to the fragmentation of the professional profile and the lack of clear regulatory recognition. Furthermore, in terms of professional associations to represent this field it has not been possible to collaborate in a unified way

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² Article 117 of the Constitution establishes that the state and regions have concurrent legislative powers over certain matters, including professions. In the case of the Degan Decree, the measure concerned professional figures that had not been regulated at a national level, meaning that their identification was the responsibility of the regions and not the state.

for the enhancement of the profession (Calaprice, 2020). Proposals for legislation made since the 1990s have demonstrated the desire to distinguish the educational professions by training specialists and educational professionals for socio-pedagogical and training interventions. Before then, it had been possible to register pedagogical area personnel with the minimum accreditation requirements for social and health care facilities following the enactment of Presidential Decree January 14, 1997.

At the regional level, however, several councils have enacted measures for the inclusion of the Pedagogue in education and care services, as documented in the following table. These measures, while not uniform across the country, have represented significant steps toward giving full recognition to the contribution that this profession can make to society. Some of the regulatory interventions still in force are shown in the table below.

Table 1 – Regional norms that provide for the figure of the pedagogue³

Region/a Autonomous Province	Normative Reference	Sector	Role/Functions of the Pedagogue
Aosta Valley	D.G.R. 11/03/2016 no.328	Social/Health	Included among professionals in the social and health care area
Lombardy	G.R.D. 01/07/2014 no.X/2022	Social/Health	Pedagogue included in the Highly Integrated Family Centers
Lombardy	R.L. 6/08/2021 no.16	Educational	Pedagogue part of the school psycho-pedagogical service
Abruzzo	R.L. 21/07/1993 no.28	Health	Pedagogue among the mandatory staff of SERTs
Calabria	R.L. 18/02/1994 no.6	Health	Figure of sociologist-Pedagogue in drug addiction services
Sicily	D.A. 01/02/2007 n.12349	Health	Pedagogue included in the staff of ASPs

³ The table highlights the lack of uniformity in regional regulations. In some regions, the educationalists are mentioned among the professionals in the social and healthcare team, while in others they are not. For a more in-depth examination of the critical issues facing this professional in the social and healthcare field, please refer to the bibliography at the end of the chapter.

Sicily	D.A. 10/01/2011 no.11811	Health	Included in the team for specialized autism centres
Latium	R.L. August 5, 2020 no.7	Educational	Pedagogical coordinator in educational services for children

The goal of introducing a unified, nationwide regulation for the Pedagogue is pursued with Bill No. 2656, which, however, after initial approval by the Chamber of Deputies, fails to complete its parliamentary process in the Senate in 2017. Despite this obstacle, during the approval of the Budget Law, some key paragraphs are equally introduced (Calaprice, 2022). The text contained in L. No. 205/2017 Art. 1 cc. 594-601 represents an excerpt of the original proposal that, while having the merit of mentioning and recognizing the Pedagogue as a real profession (together with that of the socio-pedagogical professional educator), fails to fill some regulatory gaps that will make further corrections necessary, especially with regard to the profile of the socio-pedagogical professional educator in health and socio-health care facilities⁴. There is also confusion due to the fact that what is reported in c. 594 of Law No. 205/2017 does not meet the need to clearly distinguish the figure of the Pedagogue from that of the socio-pedagogical professional educator. In fact, it merely refers generically to the EQF⁵ levels to discriminate between the two professional profiles, depending on the knowledge and skills ascribed to the three-year and master's degree graduate. It will take another seven years before the approval of Law No. 55/2024, which will complete the regulatory framework for the Pedagogue⁶.

Article 1 of the new Law on the Provisions on the Ordering of Pedagogical and Educational Professions opens with the definition of Pedagogue by re-proposing in Paragraph 2 some excerpts from Law 205/2017⁷, but expanding its scope. With reference to the Pedagogue, it is specified that a pedagogue

«(...) is the specialist in educational processes who, working with scientific autonomy and deontological responsibility, exercises

⁴ Reference is made to the following normative sources: Law No. 145/2018 Art. 1 c. 517, DL No. 104/2020 Art. 33 bis, Inter-Ministerial Decree Messa-Speranza of October 27, 2021.

⁵ Acronym for European Qualifications Framework. An official document facilitates comparison between different professional and academic qualifications obtained in European countries.

⁶ Law No. 55/2024 establishes the Professional Association of Pedagogical and Educational Professions, so the socio-pedagogical professional educator is also affected by the legislation currently in force. In this text, the Pedagogue will be discussed individually, but the two state laws include both profiles.

⁷ Law 205/2017 remains in force for all references that do not directly conflict with the provisions of Law 55/2017. The latter should therefore be read in combination with the former because it has not been repealed explicitly or tacitly.

functions of coordination, consulting and pedagogical supervision for the design, management, verification and evaluation of interventions in the pedagogical, educational and training field aimed at the person, the couple, the family, the group, social bodies and the community in general» (Art. 1 c. 1 L. n. 55/2024).

The Pedagogue is finally recognized as a specialist in educational processes. This passage defines an area of activity that can be named as typical, in relation to the different functions exercised by such professionals. Typical here must mean the performance of a particular type of service that, given its technical nature, is subject to a verification and/or certification procedure, as indicated by Presidential Decree No. 137/2012. The requirements for working as a Pedagogue in Italy, are listed in Article 2 of the same law and concern both the possession of a degree at the master's level⁸, and the verification of curricular knowledge and skills acquired during the internship in the services. This verification will be carried out by a member nominated by the professional body on the same day as the dissertation discussion. The degree thus also becomes the qualification for the profession by virtue of the amendment to L. no. 163/2021 (c. 4 art. 2 L. no. 55/2024). The pedagogue, as a regulated profession, is also granted the protection of professional secrecy under Art. 622 of the Penal Code (Art. 5 c. 4 L. 55/2024). Given the delicacy that characterizes pedagogical and educational interventions in the social and social-health field, this provision is necessary and functional to ensure a professional educational alliance with service users.

The ability to practice as a Pedagogue in Italy is subject to two prerequisites:

1. To have earned a master's degree in one of the following classes:

(a) bachelor's or master's degree in educational services planning and management, classes 56/S and LM-50;

(b) bachelor's or master's degree in adult and continuing education sciences, classes 65/S and LM-57;

(c) bachelor's or master's degree in pedagogical sciences, Classes 87/S and LM-85;

(d) bachelor's or master's degree in theories and methodologies of e-learning and media education, classes 87/S and LM-93;

(e) a bachelor's degree in education or pedagogy, awarded under the regulations prior to the date of entry into force of the regulations set forth in Decree No. 509 of the Minister of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research of November 3, 1999.

⁸ The master's degree classes mentioned are: Planning and Management of Educational Services, Classes 56/S and LM-50; Adult and Ongoing Education Sciences, Classes 65/S and LM-57; Pedagogical Sciences, Classes 87/S and LM-85; Theories and Methodologies of E-Learning and Media Education, Classes 87/S and LM-93; Bachelor's Degree in Educational Sciences or Pedagogy, awarded under the regulations prior to the effective date of the regulation referred to in the Decree of the Minister of University and Scientific and Technological Research No. 509 of November 3, 1999.

Be registered with the Professional Association of pedagogical and educational professions in the special register reserved for Pedagogues.

As far as the profile of competences is concerned, it is appropriate to turn to the annual degree course outlines which provide for these professionals an interdisciplinary preparation that, to date, is the hallmark of Pedagogues in Italy. Some of these knowledge areas and skills are shown in the table.

Table 2 – Unified Summary Framework: Knowledge, Skills and Disciplines (LM-50, LM-57, LM-85, LM-93)

Dublin Descriptor	Disciplinary knowledge	Professional skills	Basic and characterizing disciplines
Knowledge and comprehension skills	- General, social and intercultural pedagogy - General and special education - Developmental, educational and adult psychology - Sociology of education and organizations - Cultural anthropology - Philosophy of education and professional ethics - Educational legislation and labor/minority law - Economics and management of educational services - History of educational institutions - Methodology of educational research - Media education and learning technologies	- Critically analyze complex educational phenomena - Understand pedagogical and psychological theoretical models - Know the structure of educational/training services - Understand the socio-cultural implications of educational processes	- General and social pedagogy - Psychology of education - Sociology of education - Cultural anthropology - Philosophy of education - School and service legislation - Economics of educational services - History of education and educational institutions

Applied knowledge and comprehension skills	- Pedagogical models for children, adolescents and adults - Theories of e-learning and instructional design - Educational and training policies (national and international) - Principles of educational design and evaluation - Fundamentals of service management and organization - Learning psychology and group dynamics - Elements of educational project management	- Design and evaluate educational interventions in school, social and training settings - Manage and coordinate educational and training services - Design and manage digital learning environments - Conduct guidance, counseling and educational mediation activities - Develop e-learning and multimedia educational content	- Educational design - Special education and assessment - Educational research methodology - Organization and management of educational services - Educational technology and media education - Adult learning and continuing education - E-learning and instructional design - Digital media and educational communication
Autonomy of judgment	- Epistemology of pedagogy - Methodologies for the analysis of educational needs - Ethics and deontology of the pedagogue - Quality assessment of educational interventions and services - Critical reading of educational and social contexts - Legislation on privacy and inclusion	- Evaluate the effectiveness of educational practices and services - Make ethical and informed decisions - Integrate multidisciplinary approaches to the analysis of educational cases - Manage complex situations in professional autonomy	- Methods for training needs analysis - Educational and training policies - Legislation on inclusion and the right to education - Professional ethics and ethics - Design and evaluation in complex educational contexts

Communication skills	- Educational, intercultural and inclusive communication strategies - Professional writing: projects, reports, opinions - Digital storytelling and educational public speaking - Use of media for educational communication - Facilitation of groups and training of trainers	- Communicating effectively in educational and multidisciplinary contexts - Facilitate in-presence and distance learning processes - Train professionals and citizens in the critical use of media - Mediate between professionals and between different services	- Educational communication techniques - Media languages and visual communication - Professional writing in education - Training of trainers and public speaking - Interpersonal and intercultural communication workshops
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Far from considering the framework of knowledge, skills and competencies attributed to the Pedagogue to be definitive, it is good to make explicit from the outset that postgraduate training plays a fundamental role in integrating methodologies and intervention tools that are indispensable for the pedagogical professional. As Giovanazzi reminds us, «standardized procedures, techniques and models of action are not useful for dealing with the educational situation that arises, but the acquisition of new skills is necessary, which are expressed in participation, individual commitment and responsibility for a sustainable and inclusive human community» (Giovanazzi, 2022, p. 145). The endowment with a solid interdisciplinary scientific background is a prerequisite for ensuring the successful outcome of professional interventions in the exercise of that autonomy of judgment emphasized by the same Article 2 of L. 55/2024. The expansion of academic research will have to take up the challenge of strengthening an epistemology of professional practice capable of «placing at the beginning of the process the centrality of the action of learning which means not disregarding a technical and at the same time personal parameter» (Malavasi, 2023, p.30), the latter from the perspective of a professional capable of resorting to his or her own biographical history, regarding it as an educational tool to be integrated with the learned disciplinary body of knowledge.

From an employment point of view in Italy, the Pedagogue has not yet become part of a system of positions and his or her presence in the organic plan within social-educational, social-assistance and social-health services is not yet provided for. The only exception is the Lazio Region, which in 2020 passed a law reorganizing the integrated educational system for 0–6-year-olds (see Table Regional Norms) making the figure of the Pedagogical Coordinator fit with that of the pedagogue. Compared to the socio-pedagogical professional educator (holding a three-year degree class L-19), the master's degree graduate finds it more difficult to be recognized in Italy. There are different reasons for

this and it is not possible here to give a detailed account of all of them. However, some of those that distinguish the current Italian picture concern:

1. Lack of a basic pedagogical culture. Institutions do not value the pedagogue's framework of skills and knowledge within school systems and community-based educational and training agencies. In schools, as well as in the various agencies operating in the area of formal, nonformal and informal learning, the design and planning of educational pathways is not currently entrusted to the pedagogue. Instead, there are professionals with different profiles and titles that are not always suitable to reconcile the mission of the services with the concrete objectives that these entities aim to achieve. Unlike in Brazil, the school manager, for example, is not required to have any pedagogical competence. The same happens in the penitentiary environment, where access to the role of legal-pedagogical officer is also open to graduates in Letters, Law or Political Science.
2. University third mission. The set of activities of scientific, technological and cultural transfer and productive transformation of pedagogical knowledge fails to have a decisive impact on contemporary society. Put differently, the educational research undertaken in this area by universities does not significantly affect the cultural changes taking place. This is partly due to the prevalence of qualitative studies characterized by a small participant size and the absence of longitudinal research on issues concerning education.
3. Professional associations. Until the enactment of Law No. 55/2024, the role and work of professional associations suffered from excessive fragmentation and litigation. The lack of unified representation and synergistic collaboration among the different associations has not favoured the promotion of the pedagogue's work within the services.
4. Proliferation of non-specialist profiles. Over the years, some of the functions attributed to the Pedagogue have been attributed to other professional profiles (psychologist, counselor, social worker, etc.) making it increasingly difficult to delineate specialized areas of relevance for graduates in pedagogy.
5. Government policies of the past two decades have favoured predominantly the health dimension of care (*cure*) in lieu of education for self-care (*care*) and community care. Investment in and promotion of the area of pedagogical care, which were prevalent at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s and had fostered the enactment of regulatory measures such as L. 285/97 on the promotion of rights and opportunities for children and adolescents, are on the decrease and funding was over time reduced to 15 priority cities. Preventive logic has given way to an etiological representation of the human and existential development of young people, turning existential questions into pathological frameworks to be diagnosed and treated.

In the face of these difficulties listed, the Pedagogue is a professional licensed to work in multiple contexts, including:

Table 3 – Fields of employment for Pedagogues

Scope	Services
Social-educational services for families	Parenting support; Couples and family life coaching; counseling in the areas of divorce, separation, foster care and adoption; Affective education and gender identity; management discipline; Promoting parenting styles; Supportive family training; Attachment pattern analysis; Social capital development; Family projects; Media education.
Social-educational services for minors	Integration of minors in families (SISMIF); Reception of unaccompanied foreign minors; Coordination of family homes and mother-child nuclei; Professional supervision of operators; Coordination of playrooms and youth centres; Homework support; Home-visiting; Social and territorial animation.
In schools of all grades (1)	Pedagogical coordination of childcare facilities; Pedagogical desks; Study methods counseling; Dynamic-functional assessment of disabilities; DSA and BES didactic and educational support; Pedagogical mediation teachers; Instrumental functions; Territorial networks and educational contracts; Class group management; Citizenship education; Educational co-responsibility.
In schools of all grades (2)	Countering bullying, cyberbullying, gender-based violence; Planning European/national funds; Analysis of school training needs; Teacher training; Pedagogical supervision of school personnel; School-family communication models; Student entrance/exit orientation.
Companies and job placement services	Skills assessment; Job selection/intermediation; Navigator; Corporate training design; Apprenticeship training; Job orientation; CPIA ⁸ manager; NGO and non-profit collaborations in international educational projects; Manager of voluntary associations and social cooperatives.
Forensic contexts	Court and party technical consultant; Juvenile court honorary judge; Humanistic mediation in the field of criminal justice; Magistrate training; Legal-pedagogical officer in correctional institutions.
Cultural contexts	Designing educational-museum routes; Art, aesthetics, history education; Setting up play and recreational spaces.
Sports and motor field	Technical sports staff training; Parent-technical educational mediation; Personal, social, affective development of children; Facilitation of group processes and cooperative learning; Social sports for reintegration (deviance, disability, ex-convicts).

The pedagogue's functions within the services refer to all the formal, non-formal and informal learning environments made explicit by Legislative Decree No. 13/2013, revised by L. No. 205/2017 Art. 1 c. 594. Going into more detail, the role of the Pedagogue is substantiated in promoting social, civic and occupational skills already specified by the European Council Recommendation of May 22, 2018. Therefore, the professional graduate will acquire mastery of skills, knowledge and abilities aimed at promoting interventions in relation to the entire life cycle of the subject with particular regard to lifelong learning. The following table represents a systematic list of the pedagogue's technical and scientific background and areas of intervention according to his or her academic preparation (Olivieri, 2023).

Table 4 – The pedagogue's knowledge, skills and functions in the workplace

Name	Knowledge, skills and functions of the Pedagogue in the workplace
Personal and social	Knowledge of attentional processes; Ability to handle complexity; Fostering the use of critical-reflective thinking; Recognize and facilitate decision-making processes; Social-relational skills; Analysis of group dynamics; Autonomy of learning processes (development of study/training plan; identification of objectives, stages, monitoring and final evaluation tools); Mapping of personal and network needs and resources; Promoting the ability to ask for help and support; Know how to effectively and independently manage training development; Resilience-building skills; Skills for effective and assertive communication; Mediation and negotiation skills in group work; Cross-cultural competencies; Ability to recognize and increase empathy and trust in oneself and others; Foster the adoption of positive attitudes toward lifelong learning and personal, social and physical well-being; Promoting inclusive skills; Ability to recognize and act on stereotypes and prejudices; Democratic problem solving.

Civics/Citizen-ship	Collective needs analysis; Ability to generate social sustainability; Facilitate community development and participation of its members; Knowledge and skills in systemic (micro-meso-macro) and processual reading of social reality; Knowledge of the main media and their purpose; Media education and e-learning skills; Knowledge of human rights and democratic processes; Ability to foster the development of moral thinking; Knowledge of social values and education in the development of democratic principles; Strengthening inclusive environments and systems; Knowledge and promotion of healthy lifestyles; Skills for promoting a nonviolent culture; Knowledge and skills for gender and equal opportunity education; Skills for education for ecosystem consciousness.
Occupational/entrepreneurial	Ability to develop divergent thinking; Promoting prospective and predictive thinking; Knowledge and skills for the enhancement of design, innovative and creative skills; Skills to encourage teamwork; Mapping of resources, tangible and intangible, individual and network; Basic and social economics skills; Know-how to handle uncertainty, risk and ambiguity in decision-making processes; Promoting initiative and active coping styles; Promote self-discipline and perseverance aimed at achieving project goals; Knowledge and ability to motivate and enhance ideas; Ability to promote care for self, other and community; Skills for developing ethical approaches to life.

The interdisciplinary nature of the preparation of Pedagogues, as mentioned above, makes them professionals capable of connecting the different agents of influence that exist in educational, social and cultural processes, rereading them in a truly systemic and global perspective. Nevertheless, as noted above, it still requires efforts to have them legitimized by the same institutional authorities in Italy that prefer less defined profiles or, in some cases, give preference to professionals from health or socio-healthcare backgrounds⁹.

⁹ The reference here is to certain profiles that have arisen within regional norms such as that of OEPAC (Operatore educativo per l'autonomia e la comunicazione, an educational worker for autonomy and communication, which is at a level 4 of the EQFs instead of the level 7 attributed to the pedagogue). As for the social and health professionals sought by schools and territorial services, preferences fall on psychologists, speech therapists, neurorehabilitation therapists, etc.

From a salary point of view, the Pedagogue suffers from a lack of homogeneity in salary parameters. The differentials between different national collective bargaining agreements allow employers to frame a figure with the same levels of responsibility for a remuneration that can vary from 10 to 30 percent depending on the type of contract applied¹⁰. The current situation, therefore, does not allow for the identification of a universal remuneration scheme. It is possible, however, to infer salary parameters from data recorded by ALMALAUREA¹¹, an inter-university consortium responsible for collecting and recording data on graduates and the world of work in Italy. Again, however, the multiplication of existing degree designations and classes, also indicated in Article 2 of Law 55/2024, makes it difficult to make comparisons regarding an exit profile that remains unique. According to the database of pedagogue-specific master's degree programmes differences relate to time of finding employment after graduation, the usefulness of knowledge learned during studies, and the average salaries reported by graduates interviewed. Going into detail, the aggregate data recorded at the national level¹² show that:

1. The overall satisfaction is 89 percent and concerns graduates who would choose to choose again the same degree programme upon completion;
2. 85.6 percent say they make extensive use of the skills they acquired in their degree program;
3. There is a gender imbalance. Graduates are predominantly women (90.7 percent) and the remainder are men;
4. Job search time averages 4.5 months after graduation;
5. The average salary is 1,392€.

The same Almalaurea data point to a minimal gap between the socio-pedagogical professional educator with a three-year degree (EQF level 6) and the pedagogue, a master's degree (EQF level 7), with a pay gap in favour of the latter, amounting to 225€ per month. This peculiarity reflects a cultural problem in Italy where the figure of the Pedagogue has often been relegated, in the social imaginary, to the early childhood sectors, struggling to find different employment fields, a situation that, however, is gradually changing in recent years. Two concrete examples concern the recruitment of former Navigators and Legal-Pedagogical Officials, where public competition mentioned master's degrees in one of the classes indicated above¹³ among the requirements for access to the position, albeit not exclusively.

¹⁰ In Italy, it is possible to choose to apply the national collective bargaining agreement (CCNL) that you consider most appropriate when hiring, as long as it meets the minimum and sufficient wage benchmark set by the Constitution. In the case of Pedagogues, the CCNLs of reference are: Local Authorities, Public and Private Health, School, Social Cooperatives, ANISEI.

¹¹ Source: www.almalaurea.it

¹² Elaborations carried out on graduates of calendar years 2018, 2017 and 2016 surveyed in 2023, 2022 and 2021 five years after graduation.

¹³ The two roles should not be understood to be exclusive to Pedagogues. For access to the competition for Navigator, a figure specializing in the outplacement of the unemployed to work, and for Legal-Pedagogical Officer, who works within correctional institutions (prisons), different degrees from those provided for Pedagogue continue to be valid.

A further step forward to be mentioned in this regard concerns the inclusion of the Pedagogue in the multidisciplinary teams of the P.I.P.P.I. schemes of LEPS¹⁴. In fact, the various territorial ambits in these services will be able to hire such professionals in Italy to work with families in vulnerable situations, a context that until now the institutions had without legal basis reserved for psychologists and social workers.

For the future development of the profession, therefore, it will be indispensable for the new Association of Pedagogical and Educational Professions to be able to initiate an intense dialogue with different existing entities, the academic field, that of service managers and the trade union world. In reference to the latter, there are still no specialized organisations aimed at representing the demands of Pedagogues as employees. Further open issues have been addressed elsewhere (Olivieri, 2018) these represent a map from which to move in order to respond to the educational and training needs of contemporary society. Some of them represent a *sine qua non* for promoting the work of the pedagogue. In Italy there are still no reliable statistical numbers, and the estimated population of such professionals is around 200,000. There is also a lack of definition of a specific ATECO¹⁵ code for pedagogical activities carried out on a freelance basis, and only thanks to the work of CUNSF¹⁶ and these authors, the offices in charge have recently released a new version of the codes for Economic Activities¹⁷ that concern the respective figures in the non-residential social work sector (code 88.99.04 - Other non-residential social work activities provided by Pedagogues). This is a belated measure that the current legislation has already remedied by providing for mandatory registration in the new Professional Association, which will make it possible for the first time to have an account of the number of pedagogical professionals in Italy. There are new challenges waiting to be resolved, for instance a survey of training and educational needs at the local and national level as well as a reliable overview of the demand for such figures in the public and private Third Sector.

¹⁴ The term LEPS means the Essential Levels of Social Benefits that every citizen can access through the social services network. P.I.P.P.I., whose acronym stands for Programme of Intervention For the Prevention of the Institutionalization of the Child, pursues the purpose of innovating and standardizing the intervention practices activated towards families in a vulnerable situation, in order to prevent the risk of maltreatment and the consequent removal of children from the family unit. The LEPS P.I.P.P.I. was funded with NRP funds in Mission 5, Inclusion and Cohesion, M 5C2: Social Infrastructure, Families, Communities and the Third Sector, Investment 1.1. Support for Vulnerable Persons and Prevention of Institutionalization of the Non-Self-Sufficient Elderly is divided into 4 categories of interventions to be implemented by municipalities, individually or in association. More information can be found at: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/infanzia-e-adolescenza/focus-on/sostegno-alla-genitorialita/pagine/leps>.

¹⁵ Classification of economics activities in Italy.

¹⁶ National University Conference on Education Sciences.

¹⁷ The ATECO (Economic Activities) code is required of freelancers in Italy when opening a VAT number at the offices of the Internal Revenue Service.

2.1 Case study: the pedagogical journey with Alessandro, his family, and the network of support¹⁸

Alessandro (fictitious name and henceforth A.) is a 14-year-old boy enrolled in the first year of a Milan high school. The parents approached the private service PLAS (Periplo Strategic Learning Workshop) in December 2023, following reports from the school of consistent difficulties in managing regular school attendance. The boy has a clinical diagnosis which requires medication monitored by a public Neuropsychiatry service and he has been undergoing psychotherapy with a private practitioner for four years. His parents have been separated for five years, and A. and his younger brother spend one week with their father and one week with their mother.

The process at the centre begins with a parent-only interview¹⁹ conducted by the author, a pedagogue, and the other founding partner of the service, a counselor working on parenting skills. This dual perspective has over the years proved to be a strength in terms of the quantity and quality of information gathered during the first interview and very useful in building a shared project together with the family unit.

Although the separation of the parents was rather stormy and frictions still remain today, both participate in the interview in a cooperative spirit and present a shared picture of A.'s strengths and weaknesses: they describe him as a very sensitive boy who is attentive to the feelings of others and who has always suffered from learning and socialization difficulties related both to his health condition and to the not always inclusive environments he has encountered in his school career. They recognize him as having a great capacity for comprehension, memory and oral and written exposition, especially in the humanities, and deep passions, albeit sectoral and difficult to share with peers. On the other hand, they report his consistent difficulties in keeping commitments, planning and organizing schoolwork, and frequent episodes of psychosomatic discomfort that prevent him from going to school or result in his withdrawal during the morning. In addition, especially when he has a particularly strenuous day ahead and/or tests for which he does not feel ready, he refuses to get out of bed, triggering the anger of his parents, who react in different ways that are not always stable or consistent with each other. The interview ends with the sharing of a further difficulty: A., when hearing of this initial contact by his parents with the centre, expressed his complete opposition to embarking

¹⁸ This paragraph was written by Silvia C. Negri. Mail: silvia.negri@periplo.org.

¹⁹ It is a semi-structured interview that addresses: the description of the child, previous school history, the onset of difficulties, the learning progress of instrumental skills in the first 2-3 years of elementary school, preferences and aversions with respect to tasks and disciplines, the relationship with peers and teachers, the representations that parents have of/about teachers, homework management, how technology is used, sports and leisure activities, and the child's interests and passions. P. Milani, A. Pegoraro, *The interview in socio-educational contexts: a practical guide*, Carocci, Roma, 2011.

on any kind of cooperation. The decision of the author and the counselor was to ask the parents to propose to A. a single meeting, so that his voice and version of events could be heard, at the end of which he would be free to make his own choice. It was also proposed to the parents, whatever A.'s decision was, to undertake a series of meetings on parenting skills, especially to find greater agreement with respect to the approach to be adopted in the face of his resistance to going to school or dealing with related demands. As is often the case, in the early stages of contact, parents' attention is focused on what is not working in their child and expectations on whether the professional can 'fix it' by working only on the individual.

A. accepted the interview proposal and came forward with a great desire to tell his side of the story, accusing his parents of exaggeration and with their excessive pressure, of being responsible for his resistance. After accepting his version, the interview shifted to the exploration of several specific areas²⁰, such as the times when A. was able to confirm his strengths, but also his frailties (both basically corresponding to those exposed by his parents). He was able to express himself on possible improvements that he could achieve (the order of dealing with different school subjects, more effective planning and distribution of energy devoted to study). At the end of the interview, he agrees to try to start a cycle of five meetings, with the understanding that he could discontinue at any time.

The first five meetings were certainly important in building a trusting relationship with A., who initially used to be late and not bringing the school material as a sign of his resistance to the idea of embarking on the treatment path, but who was also very responsive to achievable challenges and rewards in the form of information feedback²¹. Observation during the first meetings allowed for a deepening of what emerged during the first interview. We were able to note A.'s ability to recall information learned in class and from other sources (mother, grandfather), especially on historical and literary topics, and to illustrate them with a good level of elaboration using a rich and appropriate vocabulary. The initial disorientation in the approach to studying was confirmed, partly due to a lack of systematic exploration of the material to be learned.

It was then possible to share with A. the objectives of the project work, which, after the first cycle, continued for another 15 meetings until the end of the school year:

- Learning to curb impulsiveness and the rush to finish tasks;
- Learning to use planning tools starting with a diary and electronic logbook;

²⁰ Again, there is an interview outline similar to that used for the parent interview, which facilitates later comparisons. With the boy/girl, the areas of the relationship with school in all dimensions (learning, preferred and opposed disciplines and motivations, homework management, relationships with adults and peers) are also explored in great depth with him/her in order to design SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) goals with him/her.

²¹ CAST Center for Applied Special Technologies, *Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines version 2.0*. Wakefield, MA, 2011; *Universal Design for Learning (PUA)* version 2.0 Translated into Italian by Giovanni Savia and Paolina Mulè, 2015.

– Learning how to manage time more effectively, alternating between busy times and controlled breaks with time measurement tools;

– Learning how to effectively use some compensatory tools crucial to him, such as verb tables in Latin or logical analysis complements in Italian grammar.

The intervention focused on planning and organizing skills, through continuously and regularly proposing the same ways of approaching school tasks, so that A. became increasingly more autonomous and was able to reproduce them even when studying alone.

The working methods consisted of:

1. removing distractors (cell phone) and evaluating the materials brought (book and stationery), analysing the reasons for any shortcomings and strategies for improvement in the next meeting;
2. the effective consultation of sources in which to find assignments and autonomous access to the electronic diary;
3. the construction of a 'to do list' to choose which tasks to tackle first and which to tackle later and for what reasons, assessing the degree of a particular difficulty and estimating the time needed to do them;
4. consulting the book index to find information needed to do the tasks;
5. the construction of routines (commitment-play break with hourglass timer commitment) useful for activity scanning and energy recovery;
6. learning increasingly systematic and effective ways of using the necessary compensatory tools.

After completing the programme, A. gained more confidence with respect to his learning abilities and gradually internalized some planning and organization strategies that enabled him to be more autonomous and tap his potential, especially in terms of episodic memory, text comprehension and lexical richness in essay writing²².

In the written self-assessment²³ that was asked of him at the last meeting A. was very timely and realistic in his presentation, with recognition of the steps he had taken, coupled with awareness of those yet to be taken.

Parallel to the work with A., and precisely in order not to fall back into the 'failure to fix' paradigm and to try to transform some environmental factors²⁴, a relational network of growing trust was created first of all with the school, through correspondence and conversations with the class coordinator and the support teacher and participation in the GLO²⁵ at the end of the school year.

²² These improvements have been documented in the boy's personal diary, which the counselor elaborates during and after each meeting, taking notes in descriptive form on the strategies used and/or reporting sentences said by the boy spontaneously or in response to metacognitive questions (Nigris, 2009), accompanied by comments and additions after the meeting.

²³ He was proposed a 4-column table with some hints-guidelines.

²⁴ WHO, ICF International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health <https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disability-and-health> accessed on 12/01/2025.

This was not an easy path, because the teachers struggled to recognise the real but minimal progress that A. was making during the months. They constantly expected a more rapid adjustment to a standard that was not sustainable for the boy. Therefore, it proved necessary to intervene on several occasions to mediate the relationship between the school and the family, who expressed all their frustration at receiving constant reminders of inadequacies of their son from the teachers. Another systemic intervention included key persons of A.'s support network, through interviews with the psychotherapist, with the secondary school support teacher, a very caring figure who remained a point of reference for A. and his parents even after the transition to the new school, and with the maths tutor. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interact with the NPI²⁶, due to issues of that professional's fully 'locked' schedule.

Our main objective was to identify facilitators and environmental barriers and to create a shared project to strengthen the former and reduce or eliminate the latter (Von Prondzinski, 2019). Although it was not always possible to practice an ongoing evaluation of the process with the participation of all network actors, it was essential to give a descriptive account that referred to the shared objectives of the project delivered to the family after the first five meetings, the progress made and the goals not yet achieved. The methodology adopted was mainly the interview supported by documentation (the diary, the tasks carried out by A., his self-assessment, etc.). This focused on descriptive information of both processes and outcomes, as both allow to 'anchor' at some strategic points the multiple visions and versions of facts of the network subjects.

This constitutes a complex process that will resume in the present school year, albeit with substantial changes in the timing and manner of the intervention that were shared with A., his parents and the rest of the network.

²⁵ Meeting of the Operational Working Group for Inclusion (for the latest changes to its composition and functions, see Interministerial Decree No. 182 of December 29, 2020).

²⁶ Child Neuropsychiatry Service.

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Chapter 3

The Pedagogue in Albania

Heliona Miço, Jonida Cungu¹

3.1 Introduction

The teaching profession stands as an indispensable pillar within the fabric of society, serving as the conduit through which knowledge, skills, and values are transmitted from one generation to the next. Beyond the confines of classrooms, its influence permeates every aspect of societal development, shaping the future by nurturing the mind and character of individuals (Hargreaves, 2009).

At its core, the teaching profession holds a multifaceted significance that extends far beyond the dissemination of academic content. Educators serve as catalysts for intellectual growth, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills essential for navigating an increasingly complex world. Moreover, they play a pivotal role in setting the moral compass of society, instilling values of empathy, respect, and social responsibility in their students (Postholm, 2018). Furthermore, teachers serve as advocates for equity and inclusivity, championing the rights of every individual to access quality education regardless of socioeconomic background, race, or ability. By creating inclusive learning environments that celebrate diversity and promote cultural understanding, educators contribute to the cultivation of harmonious and cohesive societies (Florian, 2021).

The late 20th and early 21st centuries witnessed rapid developments, particularly in technology and information, marking this era as the 'golden age of knowledge' or, as Denning terms it, 'a golden age of innovation' (2021). In this pivotal period, society demands individuals who can adeptly navigate these changes, making knowledge acquisition and application paramount for adaptation and integration. The teaching profession, in particular, plays a crucial role in fostering high-level adaptability by imparting not just knowledge, but also the skills necessary for success in this dynamic era.

The symbiotic relationship between the teaching profession and society is evident in various aspects of communal life. Educators not only impart knowledge but also serve as mentors and role models, shaping the inspirations and aspirations of future generations (Gardinier, 2012). Similarly, the role of the teacher in Albania is seen as an agent of change, influence, and continuity, throughout historical, political, and social changes, as well as a facilitator in forming individuals with values and competencies (Miço, 2019).

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Moreover, the impact of the teaching profession extends beyond the walls of educational institutions, influencing broader societal dynamics. Educators play a vital role in shaping public discourse and policy agendas, advocating for educational reforms that reflect the evolving needs of society. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning and civic engagement, teachers contribute to the development of informed and participatory citizens who are equipped to address contemporary challenges (ETUCE [European Trade Union Committee For Education], 2008; Simões et al, 2018).

This chapter will explore the recent reforms in the teaching profession, under a legislative and policy lens with a focus on initiatives within the Bologna process and the essential curricular competencies required for obtaining a qualification. Additionally, it will examine the challenges faced by teachers in Albania, particularly in meeting the evolving demands of the job market. It will emphasize the broader role of teachers beyond traditional teaching responsibilities, including providing support and facilitating social integration for students, both within the classroom and in wider society. This multifaceted role of teachers is exemplified across various contexts, including working with minors in conflict with the law, children of returned migrants, and asylum-seeking children.

3.2 Historical background of the teaching profession and the most prominent reforms

The evolution of the teaching profession in Albania since its declaration of independence in 1912 has been marked by significant changes influenced by political, economic, and social factors. In the aftermath of the First World War, the education system faced considerable challenges. A dearth of school infrastructure and resources, a shortage of adequately trained teachers, and a lack of uniformity in curricula hindered the widespread accessibility of education (Ministry of Education and Science, 2003). This scarcity of essential educational elements transformed the right to education into a privilege rather than a universally accessible right (Miço, 2016).

During this period, educational efforts primarily centred on imparting basic literacy and numeracy skills, with limited access to education for the general population (Musaj, 2014; Boseta, 2014). However, legislative measures were introduced to establish certain educational standards in an attempt to improve the quality of education. These efforts included modern pedagogical methods through provisions for primary education teachers to periodically attend contemporary primary institutes for professional development every five years (*Dekret- ligja organike e Arsimit* [Organic decree law on education], Law of 1934, Pub. L. No. 54/1934).

The role of teachers was regarded as crucial in shaping society. Teachers were expected to fulfil their educational mission through effective teaching

practices, setting a positive example, and maintaining discipline among students. Additionally, teachers were required to maintain high standards of performance throughout their careers, not only in terms of teaching but also through engagement in scientific activities, participation in conferences, and enrolment in courses and specialized educational programmes tailored to their professional needs (Rama, 2005).

With the rise of communism after World War II, Albania underwent significant social and educational reforms (Mullahi & Dhimitri, 2014). The eradication of illiteracy became one of the primary goals of the Albanian government (Arapí & Lasserre, 2019; Miço, 2019; Kloop & Tarifa, 1994). To combat illiteracy, legislation was enacted mandating citizens to attain literacy skills (*Mbi detyrimin e shtetasve për të mësuar shkrim-këndim* [On the obligation of citizens to learn to read and write] Law of 1950. Pub. L. No. 760/1950). The law compelled all individuals aged 12 to 40 within the People's Republic of Albania who lacked reading and writing abilities to attend literacy courses (*Mbi detyrimin e shtetasve për të mësuar shkrim-këndim* [On the obligation of citizens to learn to read and write] Law of 1949. Pub. L. No. 732/1949).

The communist regime implemented compulsory education for all children, rapidly expanding the education system. However, the ambitious plans of the communist leadership did not correspond with the number of teachers in the country. The existing educational framework was inadequate to address the evolving educational needs of the country. These needs encompassed not only the professional development of teachers but also their indoctrination in the ideology of the state party. The government prioritized the rapid expansion of the teaching workforce, often at the expense of quality. As noted by Kambo (2005), the emphasis was on quantity rather than ensuring that future teachers were adequately trained for their roles. Teachers were expected to actively promote communist ideology and adhere strictly to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The government exerted tight control over the curriculum and teaching materials, ensuring alignment with the state's ideological agenda (Sota, 2012).

Albania was the final country in Eastern Europe to transit from a totalitarian system to a democratic regime in 1991 (Kovaci, 2014). Prior to the onset of the political and economic transition in 1991, the Albanian education system mirrored those of other former communist nations, characterized by centralized planning aimed at providing universal access to basic education (Palomba & Vodopivec, 2001). Following the collapse of communism in 1991, Albania transitioned to a democratic system and began implementing reforms in various sectors, including education. The teaching profession faced significant challenges during this period due to economic instability, lack of resources, and outdated teaching methods inherited from the communist era (Leach & Lita, 1998; Arapí & Lasserre, 2019). Nevertheless, the most significant alterations during this period were focused on removing remnants of communist ideology from the system, described as the 'purification' of communist influences (Whitehead, 2000).

In the early 2000s, Albania embarked on a series of education reforms aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of education. The construction of the legal framework that would administer the new education system initiated the second phase of reforms. These reforms included curriculum revisions, teacher training initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and efforts to decentralize the education system. The teaching profession gradually became more professionalized, with increased emphasis on continuous professional development and teacher evaluation. Efforts were made to align Albania's education system with European standards and practices, including participation in international education initiatives and programmes. Following the endorsement of the Bologna Declaration, which sought to reform Albanian higher education and establish the European Higher Education Area, the Albanian higher education system underwent significant legislative changes with the approval of the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Albania in 2007. This legislation aimed to modernize the system by structuring study programmes into cycles and assessing them through credits, thereby overhauling the entire higher education framework (Papadhopulli & Miço, 2016). Specifically, programmes designed to train future educators were modified and structured into two cycles, bachelor and master.

The third phase aimed to democratize the education system by incorporating principles of equal opportunity and respect for diversity, with the goal of ensuring quality education for all. A key objective was to reform the governance of education through decentralization, recognizing that Albania's system remained highly centralized compared to European standards (Albanian Council of Ministers, 2009). Additionally, efforts were directed towards enhancing the overall quality of the teaching process, with priorities including curriculum modernization, professional development for teachers, improvement of school textbooks, and refinement of student evaluation methods.

Efforts were made to modernize the education system, improve teacher training programmes, and introduce new teaching methodologies. According to Janaqi (2014), the adoption of a competence-based approach in the pre-university education system necessitates a transition from a 'teacher-centred' to a 'student-centred' philosophy in the teaching process. In this context, the revised role of teachers emerges as a crucial element essential for the effective execution of a competence-based curriculum reform (Miço & Cungu, 2022). Yet, the primary motivation driving ongoing educational reforms is to guarantee that every student acquires the requisite knowledge and abilities to advance sustainable development through education. This encompasses various aspects such as fostering a sustainable lifestyle, upholding human rights, achieving gender equality, cultivating a culture of peace and non-violence, promoting global citizenship, valuing cultural diversity, and acknowledging the role of culture in sustainable development (Albanian Council of Ministers, 2021).

3.3 Methods

The chapter will examine the teaching profession in Albania in the light of the adaptation of international instruments, approved by the United Nations, UNESCO, and European organizations, and European policies, strategies, and directives in the domestic legal framework. This examination aims to demonstrate the development of the teaching profession not only to fulfil the needs of a developing society but also to develop as a profession in the framework of numerous technological developments. It examines the function of documents as a data source in qualitative research and discusses document analysis in the context of identifying different issues that challenge the teaching profession in Albania to respond to market demands for this occupation (Bowen, 2009). The document analysis will identify the teacher's involvement beyond the teaching framework, addressing the children's needs for support and social integration within the classroom and broader society. The literature review will highlight the multifaceted role of the teacher in various contexts, including minors in conflict with the law, children of returned migrants, and asylum-seeking children. The analyses will address the following research question: What is the evolutionary trajectory of the teaching profession in Albania, particularly concerning legal directives, and how do frequent changes in laws and administrative regulations impact professional growth, qualification, and management of individuals committed to this vocation?

3.4 The figure of the teacher and regulatory frameworks

The teaching profession encompasses a global dimension characterized by diverse governance structures concerning processes, procedures, roles, responsibilities, mechanisms, and the engagement of state bodies, professional associations, and external entities, a variability evident across nations (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). Despite legislative disparities among jurisdictions, the teaching profession is commonly conceptualized as comprising two fundamental dimensions: firstly, a corpus of knowledge and competencies acquired through formal education, training, and continuous professional development, and secondly, a framework of norms and values dictating the delineation of responsibilities and procedures between governmental authorities and professional entities (Nóvoa et al, 2000).

The essential role of teachers in educational advancement and the importance of their contribution to the development of humans and modern society is recognized by the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997). Securing the status of the teacher is considered an obligation of the state to ensure the right to quality education for all in fulfilment of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Monteiro, 2015).

The status and role of the Albanian teacher have changed during various educational reforms. The basic principles for the teaching profession are delineated in the Albanian legal framework on pre-university and higher education. A teacher is defined as an individual possessing the requisite qualifications for practicing the teaching profession within pre-university educational settings (On Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania Law of 2012, Pub. L. No. 69/2012). The Albanian legal framework specifies the educational qualifications necessary for teachers across different educational tiers, ranging from pre-school to secondary education. Notably, pre-school educators are exempt from the regulatory provisions governing professions, requiring solely a university-level education obtained through a bachelor's degree programme. Conversely, teachers in other educational categories are mandated to possess a second-cycle degree in education. Moreover, professional internships and state examinations that teachers must successfully complete to qualify for practicing the profession, are part of teacher training (On Regulated Professions in the Republic of Albania Law of 2009, Pub. L. No. 10171/2009). To qualify for professional licensure, candidates must fulfil prescribed criteria, including completion of professional practice, passing state examinations, and registration with the relevant Professional Chamber. Upon successful completion of this examination, candidates are awarded the corresponding professional title (Lauwers et al, 2019; Miço, 2019). Initial training education for teachers in Albania follows the consecutive model by beginning with the academic study of their subject before specializing as teachers at the Master's level (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

The extant legal framework governing the educational domain distinctly mandates the preparation of educators, delineating the primary criteria of this vocation to encompass both the requisite scholarly knowledge within the subject matter to be taught and comprehensive pedagogical-psychological training. Conversely, the profession of teaching is unequivocally demarcated from other vocations, such as social work or psychology, which are governed by their respective professional bodies and are oriented towards distinct domains of practice apart from that of education (Dhembo et al, 2019; On the Professional Order of Social Worker in the Republic of Albania Law of 2014, Pub. L. No. 163/2014; On the Professional Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania Law of 2026, Pub. L. No. 40/2016).

The initial training of teachers significantly influences their role in educating generations. Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of elements, including scientific knowledge, behaviour, integrity, rights, duties, and job description. In essence, the boundaries of the teacher's profession encompass various aspects of these responsibilities. Tate (2006) highlights that the responsibilities of teaching are often discussed concerning the intertwined nature of academic quality and teaching quality. Additionally, researchers like Phuntsog (1999) define teachers' responsibilities across four main cultural dimensions: establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and fostering competencies.

It is crucial to view the teacher's responsibilities beyond institutional and individual aspects, recognizing their broader impact in the educational field. Teachers not only impart knowledge within educational institutions but also engage with vulnerable groups such as youth in conflict with the law, asylum seekers, refugees, and children of returned migrants, extending their influence beyond traditional classroom settings. The responsibilities of teachers are linked to the autonomy of the teaching profession. The legal framework in Albania regarding education underscores the professional autonomy of teachers in implementing and enhancing the curriculum. This emphasis on professional autonomy is particularly crucial in situations where teachers work with vulnerable groups and operate beyond the traditional school setting (Ertürk, 2023; Keddie et al, 2023).

However, despite the tendency to respond to global and local pressures in constructing the teaching profession through successive reforms, such as in curriculum aspects, the attention given to students, teacher training, and ongoing professional development, research shows that it is not easy to assess the impact of these reforms (Arapı & Lasserre, 2019; Abdurrahmani, 2013; Gjedia & Gardinier, 2018).

3.5 The modernization of the teaching profession through European standards on competencies

Since 2012, the legislative and regulatory framework in pre-university education has embraced competencies within the education system, presenting them in the curriculum, teacher standards, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by students (On Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania Law of 2012, Pub. L. No. 69/2012; Ministry of Education and Sport [MES], 2014; Miço & Cungu, 2022). The new curricular package in the pre-university education system, based on a competency-oriented approach, requires a shift in the teaching process from a 'teacher-centred' philosophy to one that is 'student-centred' (Janaqi, 2014). In this context, the new role of teachers is one of the most important factors to be considered for the successful implementation of the competence-oriented curriculum reform.

The professional competencies of teachers undergo continuous development, evolving with each endeavour to enhance their professional growth. Crick (2008) defines competence as an intricate blend of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes, and motivation that drive effective human action within a specific domain. Competence implies a sense of agency, action, and value. In the teaching profession, intellectual activity translates into professional responsibilities aimed at facilitating a work process that directly influences students. Teaching competencies thus encompass multifaceted combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, and attitudes that enable effective action in various situations. Given that teaching extends be-

yond mere tasks and encompasses values and assumptions about education, learning, and society, the concept of teacher competencies may vary across different national contexts (European Commission, 2013; Crick, 2008).

Albania has made some progress in promoting a knowledge-based society and this progress is reflected in the introduction of ICT and entrepreneurship in teacher education and training (Miço & Cungu, 2022; Miço & Cungu, 2023). The document outlining the skills and standards expected of teachers in Albanian pre-university education underwent revisions in 2020, resulting in the establishment of new standards known as 'Teacher's Professional Standards'. These standards aim to provide teachers with a clear vision for teaching, guiding them to prioritize meeting the interests and needs of students for knowledge (ASCAP [*Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar*] [Pre-University Education Quality Assurance Agency], 2020).

However, it is important to note that the competencies and standards outlined for teachers in Albanian legislation primarily pertain to teaching in mainstream pre-university educational institutions within the pre-university education system. In consideration of the roles of educators within educational institutions catering for minors in conflict with the law, returned migrant children, and asylum-seeking children, an examination of the adequacy of existing standards for teachers is needed. Additionally, it is pertinent to evaluate the legal provisions within the Albanian context governing the education of such individuals. This specialized form of education focuses on fundamental skills such as literacy, vocational training, and psychological support for minors. It is essential to enhance the pedagogical aspect of teaching in these institutions, giving it equal importance alongside psychological support. Therefore, there is a need for a tailored framework outlining the competencies and standards for educators and teachers working in institutions for juvenile offenders. However, the Albanian legal framework currently lacks specific guidelines regarding the competencies and standards for teachers in such institutions.

3.6 The multifaceted role of the teacher

The National Education Strategy 2021-2026 highlights the importance of fostering inclusivity within the educational system, emphasizing the imperative of cultivating environments conducive to the participation of all children, irrespective of their abilities or other distinguishing characteristics, while addressing their individual needs. The policy document «On the Profile of the Inclusive Teacher» presented an expanded dimension of the teacher's role which encompasses not only classroom instruction but also the engagement with vulnerable groups beyond the confines of the traditional classroom setting. This evolution of a policy framework establishes the requisite legal foundation enabling teachers to engage in the education of children in conflict with the law (Albanian Council of Ministers, 2021).

The law on pre-university education has enshrined the principle of inclusivity for students in educational institutions, alongside the rights to quality education and equal opportunities for every student. A notable innovation in this regard is the legal recognition of education provided in non-school institutions for individuals of school age who are in conflict with the law and are detained in institutions serving sentences, as well as those in social care institutions.

In instances where this legal framework is effectively implemented within institutions catering to minors in conflict with the law, it becomes imperative to not only afford them professional training but also to ensure their acquisition of fundamental academic competencies.

A personalized rehabilitation and reintegration programme is meticulously crafted for each juvenile detainee, taking into account a myriad of factors including their educational history, psychological evaluation, emotional health, individual aspirations, and the prevailing opportunities. This programme is designed with the overarching objective of affording access to both general and vocational education, preferably in settings beyond the confines of custodial environments, supplemented by tailored professional training that resonates with their interests and inclinations. The primary aim of such a programme is to endow these individuals with a comprehensive set of skills that will enhance their prospects for gainful employment following their release from institutionalized settings. (On the rights and treatment of prisoners and detainees Law of 2020, Pub. L. No. 81/2020).

The assertion made by the Albanian People's Advocate (2016) underscores the detrimental effects of incarceration on the educational and vocational advancement of juvenile detainees. It is observed that a significant proportion of these individuals possess a limited educational background and exhibit disinterest in pursuing further education upon the conclusion of their sentences. The dearth of educational resources and opportunities in custodial settings contributes to exacerbating this issue, with far-reaching repercussions on the successful reintegration of juvenile offenders into society post their conviction. In the realm of juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives, there exists a clear necessity for meticulously crafted training programmes designed specifically for educators engaged in personalized pedagogical approaches. Regrettably, the present landscape is marked by an absence of such programmes within both tertiary education institutions and the ongoing professional development frameworks for educators. Such observations provoke a critical examination of whether the measures implemented within the legal framework concerning minors in conflict with the law have been guided by a pedagogical ethos.

Henkes (2000) posits that the fundamental objective of education for juveniles should be their emergence from the educational process with enhanced capabilities, increased responsibility, improved knowledge and awareness, heightened self-reliance, and augmented self-understanding. Although this

principle is theoretically meant to govern the specialized education offered to young offenders in Albania, the actual implementation of educational programmes for this group evidences significant shortcomings, largely due to the systemic neglect of children's rights.

Within juvenile correctional institutions, specialized treatment programmes are administered by multidisciplinary teams, with psychologists assuming a pivotal role (Beqo & Doçi, 2015). Notably, the educational component of these rehabilitation initiatives is primarily confined to literacy courses for those juveniles who are illiterate. Despite the potential benefits derived from these specialized programmes within correctional facilities, the educational aspect, involving structured learning from texts or curricula akin to their non-delinquent peers, appears unattainable. Consequently, the educational attainment of this demographic group remains at a rudimentary level, perpetuating a cycle of knowledge deficiency. Focusing these programmes on acquiring essential competencies and delivering instruction by teachers proficient in inclusive education or learning within educational environments alongside their peers could indeed enhance the rehabilitation prospects for these children (Schleicher, 2012).

3.7 The role of the teacher as a Pedagogue

The provision of the educational process following state education standards necessitates measures by the state to ensure this right is upheld within the relevant legal framework. It is anticipated that the educational process in institutions executing court decisions will be regulated by a joint order issued by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education. Additionally, the inclusion of the right to education for minors in conflict with the law within criminal legislation underscores the significance of this right for the intellectual and individual development of children, aligning it with international standards established in relevant international instruments.

Furthermore, the Juvenile Justice System Reform Strategy (Albanian Council of Ministers, 2018) emphasizes the importance of education in prisons as both an educational tool and a preventive measure against future criminality. However, it also highlights the lack of multidisciplinary approaches involving cooperation between social services, education, law enforcement, probation services, prosecution, etc., to effectively implement this right. Moreover, the opportunity for teachers to organize special individualized programmes is only recognized for the education of disabled children, creating a discrepancy to the way the pedagogical needs of children who are in institutions serving punishment are addressed.

According to UNESCO (2022), 'education' implies a lifelong process that takes place in all parts of society, in various forms and settings, and using different means, through which individuals and social groups learn to develop con-

sciously the whole of their personal capacities, talents and abilities, attitudes, and knowledge within and for the benefit of the local, national, regional and global communities. This educational journey transcends specific levels of education, activities, or practices.

Another perspective is outlined in the Code of Criminal Justice for Juveniles (2017), which envisions that the educational and rehabilitation process for juvenile delinquents should occur outside of detention and imprisonment, facilitating access to general and/or professional education. Regarding juvenile convicts with learning difficulties or those who have not attended school, there are provisions for organizing special individualized programmes tailored to the needs of these children. According to Costelloe (2014) how we define prison education has a fundamental impact on how we develop and deliver prison education.

In this context, the role of the teacher as a Pedagogue is paramount. Teachers have the ability to cultivate a supportive and nurturing environment wherein children can acquire crucial life skills. These skills include communication, empathy, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation. Such skills are indispensable for their successful reintegration into society and for fostering positive relationships.

In Albania, significant developments in the teaching profession were initiated in 2011 when it was officially recognized as a regulated profession (On regulated professions in the Republic of Albania Law of 2009, Pub. L. No. 10171/2009). This entailed the establishment of stringent standards to ensure that only qualified individuals could practice teaching. These standards aimed to elevate the quality of education by ensuring that only competent professionals entered the field.

Subsequently, in 2012, Albania introduced a new law governing the pre-university education system, marking a pivotal moment in the evolution of teacher preparation. For the first time, clear guidelines were established regarding the educational requirements for different categories of teachers spanning from preschool to secondary education levels (On Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania Law of 2012, Pub. L. No. 69/2012).

The educational qualifications required for aspiring teachers varied depending on the level of education they intended to teach. Preschool teachers were only required to possess a Bachelor's degree from the first cycle of university studies. Conversely, primary education teachers, lower secondary education teachers, and gymnasium teachers were mandated to hold diplomas from both the Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

However, it is essential to note that not all second-cycle study programmes were deemed suitable for teacher preparation. The legal framework specifically designated certain second-cycle study programmes within the education field for this purpose. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the psycho-pedagogical aspect of teacher training, with Master's degree programmes in teaching mandated to allocate at least 25 percent of credits toward general psycho-pedagog-

ical training. This underscored the importance of equipping teachers with a strong foundation in educational psychology and pedagogical principles to effectively meet the diverse needs of students (On higher education and scientific research in institutions of higher education in the Republic of Albania, Law of 2015, Pub. L. No. 80/2015).

Furthermore, the current context of teacher training in Albania does not consistently address the diverse needs of vulnerable children. The role of the teacher is predominantly perceived as that of an instructor responsible for delivering curriculum content, without adequate consideration for the varied circumstances of the students. Even in the case of children in detention institutions or serving sentences, teachers are selected based primarily on their motivation and general teaching abilities, rather than their specific training or expertise in working with individuals in such environments (Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports & Ministry of Justice, 2014; Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports, 2014).

3.8 Conclusion

The historical background elucidates the evolution of the teaching profession in Albania, highlighting significant changes influenced by political, economic, and social factors. This evolution underscores the dynamic nature of education and the challenges teachers have faced over time. The reforms undertaken in the teaching profession, in Albania, emphasize efforts to modernize the education system, align with European standards, and address challenges such as economic instability, outdated methodologies, and the legacy of communist ideology. The current Albanian legal framework outlines specific educational qualifications necessary for teachers across different educational tiers. Teachers in Albania have a wide range of responsibilities, including scientific knowledge, behaviour, integrity, rights, duties, and job description. The pre-university education in Albania has shifted towards embracing competencies within the education system. Moreover, the role of teachers has transitioned from a 'teacher-centred' philosophy to a 'student-centred' one. This shift is essential for the successful implementation of the competence-based curriculum reform. The legal framework expands the dimension of the teacher's role to encompass engagement with vulnerable groups beyond the traditional classroom setting, including children in conflict with the law. However, despite efforts to provide education for minors in conflict with the law, challenges remain. The educational component of rehabilitation initiatives within juvenile correctional institutions is primarily confined to literacy courses, leading to a rudimentary level of educational attainment. There is a need to enhance the pedagogical aspect of teaching in these institutions and tailor frameworks according to the competencies and standards that educators and teachers need who work with vulnerable groups. The evolving political dynamics and societal

developments necessitate teachers who are adaptable to various teaching methodologies and capable of addressing the educational needs of diverse vulnerable groups.

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Chapter 4

The Danish case – past and present

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4.1 Title of Pedagogue

A Pedagogue is defined as neither a mother nor a teacher. The origins of the profession have shown a continued dispute related to that problematic. This is a strong statement, not taken out of the blue. It is research-based and makes a point related to kindergartens and the kindergarten profession (Kristensen and Bayer 2015a, 2015b).

This strong statement is explained in the following sections, which are based on Kristensen and Bayer (ibid).

4.2 The background: institution contra family

As the first institutions for children opened in 1820 when philanthropic and Christian organizations aimed at solving what they supposed was becoming an increasing social challenge: children not being looked after as an outcome of single working class mothers needing to go to work. These organizations required women with high moral standards and capable of taking care of infants. The women did not have an education in the field. They were not called Pedagogues but ‘asylum mothers’. *Nevertheless*, they did whatever possible to avoid being seen as mothers. Due to their occupation in public measures of caring, nursing and upbringing of children they differed from the private and familiar form related to toddler care and upbringing. Whereas the family format was seen as the primary and ‘natural’ form of care for toddlers aged 0-6 years (until schooling began), public measures provided an important and alternative parallel to the family.

The relationship between institution and family seemed to be full of tensions. The notion of the family as the primary site for care and upbringing in early years was strengthened and made a common standard by means of a specified form and norm, the modern ‘bourgeois’ nuclear family, from about the 19th century. It was asserted that this family type represented the moral norm and model for family and upbringing – even outside the bourgeoisie’s own ranks. It prescribed among other things a close mother-child relationship and made motherly love in the family’s internal space the ‘natural’ medium for up-

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bringing (Shorter, 1975; Badinter, 1981). The viewpoint on family and upbringing arose from the changed understanding of the child, its nature and natural development rooting in Rousseau and the new medical attention on small children's upbringing and health as well as psychological concern with respect to small children's impressionability and long-term impacts of their early experiences and impressions (Cunningham, 1995). In short, the bourgeoisie shaped it and made it common as if it was nature, inclusive of the notion of motherly love laid down by God (Lützen, 1998: 363f.).

Public measures like the asylums emerged because this norm of motherly love could not be complied with by poor families and single mothers. Therefore, the relationship between public institutions and new private family norms was full of tensions. Public measures as well as mothers' work outside the home were in opposition to bourgeoisie family norms as being 'unnatural' or 'artificial'. Right from the beginning the public measures were seen as a poor compensation for 'home', 'child' and 'motherly love'. Though the 'natural' ideal became counterfactual, public institutions and their co-workers had to fight for their legitimacy and justify their independent pedagogical values and *raison d'être* besides and in relation to the 'natural form' being given precedence in the upbringing of children. This tension still exists today.

4.3 The relation to schooling

The tension family-institution has overshadowed the relation to school. While school was established as a state measure regulated by legislation, purpose clauses and publicly financed, the coming kindergartens arose on private initiative and financed by philanthropic organizations and societies under the supervision of the state.

Putting this aside, it seemed obvious to view the early kindergartens as the preparation to and lowest level of the state school system as in countries like France, England, and Belgium. The discussion among the founders of asylums and kindergartens dealt with the question: are our institutions preschools, or are they emergency measures supporting families? The new public measures concerning children placed themselves between family and school and had to position themselves in relation to both sides. It is, however, important to be aware of the fact, that Danish kindergartens and kindergarten teachers viewed the kindergarten as a preparation for school and tried to gain eligibility and social status by being nearer to the school system and the teaching profession. This relationship has often been misrecognized in historical research probably due to the myth of a special 'Nordic tradition of kindergarten'. According to its protagonists, the tradition emphasizes a specific pedagogy aiming at reforming family life and child rearing and at the same time protecting itself against school and education by means of an association of care and pedagogy imitating the home as the model for kindergarten pedagogy. This is well known as

features of domesticity, love and care which have been decisive themes in research and professional discourse ever since.

4.4 Institution and profession

Continuing the narrative and description, the relationship between institution and profession becomes crucial. Though the label kindergarten teacher or Pedagogue was not common in 1820 or later, it is still disputable what kind of professional the modern Pedagogue represents. The continuous dispute and disagreements deal with the reference to either the mother or the teacher: Is the Pedagogue a professionalized representative of the mother and of motherly love unlike the schoolteacher who is professionalized as a representative of the state and the school law? Alternatively, Pedagogues might be born as kindergarten teachers and as such a profession who has fought for achieving a status at the level of the schoolteachers.

4.5 State, institution and profession

According to Kristensen and Bayer (2015a: 13-22), the relationship between state, institution and profession should also be considered. The state did not establish public measures related to child rearing in the 18th century, except for the public school. Therefore, many efforts of importance for the state, like birth rate and infant mortality, were mediated by means of the public school or by means of welfare for the poor and first and foremost by means of the family or the household as the unit that, seen historically, took care of procreation, maintenance and early upbringing.

Though the state depended on these 'services', it did not intervene, as basic child rearing became a problem for poor waged worker families from the beginning of the 19th Century. The institutions such as asylums and later kindergartens were established by philanthropic societies and charity associations and shaped by religious, moral, social and/or pedagogical motives. The state operated through these associations, before social policy saw the light of the day. Unlike in the case of public schools, legislation did not include asylums and kindergartens. From about 1920 on, the state's legislative and financial commitment increased without the state interfering in the educational purposes or the educational content in the institutions and the state-authorized education for Pedagogues.

Since the 1960s kindergartens have become part of welfare benefits and transformed into a welfare right in the shape of a childcare guarantee, which expanded to become a development guarantee by the 1990s.

4.6 Education of Pedagogues

The Pedagogue's profession and training has been a recurrent controversy under polarized themes such as vocation or knowledge, person or profession, profession or case. From early on, the idea of it being a calling grated with the necessity of giving a education to women who were supposed to be naturally equipped with 'a maternal instinct', for even a calling or a 'natural' instinct for kindergarten work assumed knowledge. A consistent feature of the debate concerned the relationship between the personal (personal motives, attitude, involvement, empathy, etc.) and the professional (knowledge, the controlled, the competent, etc.). This relationship points towards a difficult debate around the end of the 1990s. The ambiguities became visible due to internal and external challenges with respect to issues of professional status and professionalism. The reason was a strong national and international focus on the quality of welfare services in general, among other things kindergartens and day care offers, too. This included questions of competency. In Danish policy, this meant an augmented emphasis on external criteria such as user and service orientation, parents' influence by means of expectations of documentable visible, measurable, and targeted activities. In turn, quality development required more professionalism, which was translated into educational reforms with stronger emphasis on competence development and research as basis for the education of Pedagogues. In 2001, the education was upgraded to the status of a professional bachelor, related to a general education policy stressing the increased importance of day care (Kristensen and Bayer, 2015a: Chapter 4).

4.7 Three historical epochs

Looking back, three epochs of education can be distinguished. An initial 'pioneer-phase' from around 1890 to 1960, a second phase of 'expansion and consolidation' from the 1960s, and a phase of 'market and profession' from the early 1990s on (Andersen, 2005; Pedersen, 2005; Olesen, 2005). This linear description fits with Ove Kaj Pedersen's concept of the turn towards a competitive state: from a nation state until 1958, over a welfare state until 1983 to a globalized competitive state (Pedersen, 2011). Already in the early years of marketization, parent-managed boards of educational institutions were statutory. Likewise, systems of auditing and accountability came to play an important role in reshaping the profession. To a certain extent, this complied with the strategy of the national trade union representing around 70.000 Pedagogues.

A significant feature of the education of Pedagogues is its expansion, referring to the length of the education, the increasing number of students and its propagation by means of unifying several study programmes. In 1918 the one-year education was augmented by an optional extension to two-years. 1969 the education was extended to 3 years, and in 1992 to 3,5 years. The number

of Pedagogue colleges grew, at their zenith reaching 34 colleges that educated Pedagogues. While 261 students graduated in 1956 and 311 in 1960, the number peaked at 1500 around 1990. Dropping out of that education showed an upward trend from 9% in 1996 to 23% in 2008, which might be caused by the form of recruitment. The number of applicants fell in general and in first-priority applicants in particular from 1996 to 2008. Without going into detail, it is interesting to notice changes in their social composition. Around 1900, nearly all students (women only) had a middle-class background. 1948, 5% were men and both men and women came from the upper middle-class. 1972 70% of the applicants were from the middle and lower middle-class. Around 2000, half of the students came from working class families and white-collar worker families plus 20% from small traders. A 2010 surveys shows that the students were more heterogeneous compared to the past as well as to similar education courses (teachers, nurses), the age of application has risen (20% were 30+), females made still a major part of the students (75%), and a majority (92%) of all students were by and large persons of 'Danish origin' (Kristensen and Bayer 2015a: 253-265).

4.8 Educational purpose and content

When inquiring into the purpose and content of the education programmes, we can observe four stable features. First: vocational exchange training consisting of teaching hours at the college and institutional internship which converge with the official purpose to offer the necessary knowledge and the practical skills. The proportion between the two parts has changed. Today, the institutional internship amounts to 33% of the whole education. Second: course contents have consisted overall of two groups of subjects: on the one hand 'theoretical subjects' like pedagogy, psychology, social science (sociology and law), health (social medicine), and on the other hand 'culture and activity' like music, drama, Danish language, rhythm/gymnastics/sports and nature. This format remained for many years but changed in 2006. The Act of 2006 introduced a major (pedagogy) and two subject areas (Danish, culture and communication & individual, institution and society) plus line subjects (workshop subjects like ceramics, nature, technique; expression, music, drama; health, body, movement). Third: the purpose has become related to a national idea of societal and cultural values, pointing to an explicit task of the Pedagogue with respect to conveying culture, norms and values. Fourth: an emphasis on the instrumental skills of the Pedagogue, e.g. that she/he should learn to understand and be based on the needs of the child combined with the society and the surroundings in which the child grows up. The Act of 2006 defines it as being capable of entering into professional relations with children, youth, and adult users and cooperate with, supervise and support their parents and next of kin (Kristensen and Bayer 2015a: 265-269).

4.9 Education and profession

As we have argued, education and profession are inseparable. Despite conflicts about the content of the education programs, we can state a common feature: the identity of a Pedagogue moves from a double housewife/kindergarten worker/kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator via the personal welfare professional and community building Pedagogue to the competence professional. The government's goal and as such the goal of the education programs had to do with shaping 'the professional pedagogue'. An interpretation of this goal points to the promotion of a sort of professional identity and 'professionalism', to a lesser extent centered on close relations (love for children), values and attitudes and to a higher extent a distanced professionalism based on analytic, documentary and, if possible, research- and evidence-based knowledge (Plum 2011; Laursen 2016). This kind of professionalism matches the political endeavors to make Pedagogues agents and tools of implementation for national policy goals.

4.10 Border drawing

As education became the most significant factor of access to the profession, expansion of kindergartens and day care became more visible to parents. The overall goal shared by Pedagogues, parents and politicians was 'kindergartens for all'. Thereby, the Trade Union – The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) – did participate actively in expanding the pedagogical territory: first, by registering 6000 leisure and youth educators as members and by registering new groups like kindergarten class teachers and other leisure educators at primary schools. While expansion was one side of the coin, border drawing seemed to be the other one. The Trade Union and the profession as such drew borders in several regards: a border towards family (from emergency solutions to supplement to the home; towards the non-qualified educational assistants making education a *sine qua non* for getting entrance to the Union; towards non-qualified day care mothers – they were originally an emergency solution due to long waiting lists for kindergartens, later a supplement to kindergartens for small children who needed more protection, and at the end also a competitive alternative to kindergartens because day care in a private home did not cost as much as a child in a kindergarten; towards the teaching profession by organizing kindergarten class teachers as a section of BUPL. Though kindergartens are losing ground, they maintained a symbolic border towards school and schoolteachers, and in the middle of that conflict the kindergarten class teacher emerged as a special category between Pedagogue and school. Nonetheless, inner tensions of the profession are significant. Kindergarten workers were known as being politically active on the left, not least influenced by the Communist Party. However,

around the middle of the 1980s, the Union changed strategy from getting recognition by means of political struggle to recognition by means of positive information on the importance of kindergarten work and the societal recognition of that importance. A congress decided to follow the new strategy. Another tension emerged by the distinction between leaders of kindergartens and employees. The leader should be visible, play a decisive role with respect to quality development. The Union decided to position the leaders more strongly as a response to the neoliberal transformation of the public sector which led to organizational changes of the structure of kindergartens. At the end of the day, leaders stood out as a special group with special interests and a special professionalism and identity. This established a symbolic and institutional distinction between the Union members who should stand together under a common banner.

The overall picture is that Pedagogues produce and maintain symbolic and social borders, in which the most important marker is the projection of the educator as the genuine representative of the child. The Pedagogues or educators produce an identity as carriers of an education-guaranteed professionalism, that looks at the whole child.

Summing up, this chapter emphasized the relationship to the family in a transformation from storage via passing to upbringing. Moreover, it has pointed to a relationship between school and kindergarten, particularly with respect to kindergartens either as institutions in their own right or as mere school preparation. The relationship between 'the female' and 'the male' is not dealt with in depth. Kindergartens recruited primary women as mentioned earlier in this text. (Kristensen and Bayer 2015a269-285).

4.11 Four characteristic features

The so-called Danish or Nordic kindergarten tradition is widely praised – by OECD and EU first and foremost as a social pedagogical model. Therefore, we finish this part of the chapter by pointing to four characteristic features:

1. An early and since the 1960s relatively strong engagement in the field in terms of financial support and a rather reluctant engagement in terms of educational purposes and content (until 1997).
2. Universalism as general educational institutions taking care of children and addressed to all children regardless of social background and parental income – equal treatment of all children. The label might be 'institutional universalism' with access for all and guarantee to similar types of institutions and institutional standards marked by an ambition of integrating children within the same type of institution.
3. Emphasis on the 'social pedagogical' purpose of the kindergarten – partly understood as shaping socially competent individuals and promoting social attitudes and patterns employing togetherness between peers (reform

pedagogy) and partly in the sense of solidarity as integration and inclusion across social classes and social borders. For both agendas: to develop children's social understanding (dialogue, regard, and respect for other children) rather than preparing them for school.

4. Gender equality – to treat girls and boys equally, so that they participate in the same groups and same activities.

The four characteristic features originate from the use of *the home* as a role model for the practical interior design of kindergartens. The kindergarten should be 'the representative of the home' and as such organized as a domestic environment. The emphasis on domesticity is a recurring trend in Danish pedagogy. Moreover, kindergartens develop a relatively high distance to and independence of school and the educational system. Children's play remained the most important expression of their time in kindergartens without explicit school preparation activities and knowledge tests. Eventually, the political and pedagogical ambition to create equality concerning access for all groups of children regardless of social background dominated the profession. This ambition included creating a common system of kindergartens and thereby avoiding different types of institutions for different parents or families. Institutional equality without segregation but emphasizing integration and inclusion has been a motive of Danish welfare policy. Social pedagogy transformed to become primarily a matter of social inclusion (Kristensen and Bayer 2015a300-303).

4.12 Current features

The current trends emerged in 1995 as a mixture of internal and external factors. The factors represented ruptures compared to earlier views on children, education of Pedagogues and their knowledge base. Among the internal factors concepts like 'the competent child', 'self-management' and 'recognition' originated in the new sociology of childhood (Qvortrup, 1987; Jenks & Prout, 1997; James et al, 1998; Warming, 2019) aiming at understanding the (post)modern life of children. Externally, the political focus increased due to financial and structural challenges that were characterized by neo-liberalism, cuts in the public sector and an economic crisis. Moreover, the scientific focus placed increased emphasis on evidence and best practice, in which kindergartens had the purpose of preparing children for school.

The views of children, thus, shifted. While kindergartens formerly drew on the ideas and insights of Fröbel and Montessori plus their Danish translation into a strong reform pedagogical framework, these traditions changed into clues of learning, competence development, prevention and inclusion. Basically, the knowledge horizon moved from the original theoretical sources and pedagogical attitudes related to asylums and kindergartens, characterized by Fröbel and Montessori, and was substituted with a new view on children. By

1997, children were recognized as juridical and equal subjects. The abolition of parents' right to reprimand their children was adopted by Parliament 1997, and simultaneously more international conventions were ratified: the UN Convention on the Right of the Child 1991, the UN standard rules on equality of disabled people 1993, the ratification of the Salamanca Declaration 1994 which underlines the educational rights of children with disabilities. New legislation and changed educational practices were the outcome. Concurrently, political expectations towards kindergartens (or day care), as well as the provision of new knowledge within pedagogy and psychology, took shape. Though a broad consensus existed with respect to children's rights and the ways in which staff in kindergartens should meet those demands, it became clear that the waters are divided when it comes to implementing the new guidelines of an up-to-date pedagogy. The demands related to inclusion and thus new pedagogical professionalism, as the former special institutions soon downsized and most of them closed. Within the limits of this chapter, this cannot be dealt with in any detail (see Kristensen and Bayer, 2015b: 165-209).

What might be more important is the current trend to reduce pedagogy to methods.

4.13 An overview of methods in use

As we have seen, the historical expansion of pedagogical institutions means that a diversity of pedagogical techniques and methodological prescriptions exists. New political and pedagogical movements do not suddenly replace the established methods overnight. Rather, they become part of continuous ruptures characterized by institutional inertia, practical circumstances, generational differences, etc. (Jensen, 2019; Vitus, 2017, 2018). With this caveat, we can point to four essential and co-existing methodological logics that, so to speak, flank more cross-cutting techniques, such as pedagogical conversation, personal help and care, and joint activity.

First of all, it seems that the ideology of treatment, which was founded with the institutionalization of psychology and psychiatry in the early 20th century, not only continues but is also expanded and reinforced by the ongoing medicalization and increasing tendency to give a psychiatric 'diagnosis' to the population as a whole and marginalized groups and even children in particular (Bryderup, 2011; Langager, 2014).

Secondly, it also seems that different empowerment ideologies and methodologies are gaining ground in the form of such diverse practices as citizen involvement, resource targeting, activation, and motivational work. In the field of mental health, we can thus observe a continuing dispute between hospital psychiatry (with a focus on patients, diagnosis and disease treatment) and socially-oriented mental health services (with a focus on citizens' disease management in a social context). One can thus say that the idea of citizens'

empowerment over their own lives is strengthened by the organization of user- and patient groups, while being weakened by the social-pedagogical ‘technification’, in the form of a treatment technique or of competence-oriented self-help, as when neighbourhood-based social outreach should contribute to ‘uplifting’ the local population (Andersen, Bilfeldt & Jørgensen, 2012; Kamali & Jönsson, 2018:253–54; Vitus, 2018; see also Cruikshank, 1999).

Thirdly, while both the treatment and empowerment ideologies and methodologies have a longer history, the emergence of evidence-based methods and treatment programmes is characteristic of the past 20 years of pedagogy, not least since a 2004 op-ed in the Danish business magazine *Mandag (Morgen)* entitled «Does Welfare Work?» («Virker Velfærden?») (Frørup, 2011; Laursen, 2016; Pedersen, 2016). Although the meaning of ‘evidence’ is ambiguous and unclear as to how methods that claim to be ‘evidence-based’ are carried out in practice, the rise of this particular political and treatment-oriented ideology has partly led to an increased importing of concepts based on manuals, promoted especially by the Danish Authority for Social Services and Housing (*Socialstyrelsen*) and associated actors (such as companies and suppliers). It created a new social pedagogical vocabulary dominated by formulations such as ‘what-ever works’ and ‘documented effect’, and thus also new opportunities for and connections between external commercialization and internal competition in the market for ‘good deeds’.

Finally, it is essential to be aware of the punitive element of social pedagogy. The everyday distinction between punishment and pedagogy (depicted as fundamentally opposed since C.C. Møller’s criticism of family care in the 1800s and reiterated by the chairperson of the Danish Union of Social Pedagogues [SL] in connection with the use of physical force in the 2010s) seems to have overlooked the fact that punishment has been and remains an integral part of a large number of pedagogical approaches. Similarly, the historical reduction especially of physical punishment and not least the socio-cultural devaluation of physical violence as an educational norm and everyday practice must not lead us to overlook the fact that a significant part of social pedagogical practice consists of the exercise of state-mandated power (Hansen, 2005; Jensen and Kragh, 2020). Conversely, this historical awareness must not lead us to neglect the genuinely specific aspects of the past 20 years’ political, legal and institutional increase and legitimization of punishment as a social pedagogical method and the accompanying ideology that breach norms so that deviant subjects should be confronted with firm consequences and sanctions (Caswell & Høybye-Mortensen, 2015; Diop-Christensen, 2018). In brief, Denmark’s *raison d’état* (the state’s organizational capacity and its ideological power) has been increasingly influenced by neo-liberalism. In effect, we are faced with a society in which the middle classes are ideologically predominant under the hegemony of big capital. As the ‘uneasy’ consensus between government, parliament and Pedagogues collapsed, education professionals were not immune. The identified shifts, among other things from citizens to users, have been

much debated. From the mid-1980s, educationists expressed increasing concern that kindergartens (or daycare services) were being transformed into consumer-oriented corporations. Keywords like marketization, commercialization and commodification of day care became common. New modes of knowledge production emerged in which university research and pedagogical colleges were embedded in the contexts and shaped by the priorities of political 'stakeholders' and commercial 'end-users' (for a parallel, see Gibbons et al, 1994; Green et al, 2001). This implied that citizens became mere inhabitants, and that the inhabitants were reduced to users, restricted to demanding the efficient operation of public services. In other words, state planners, developers from state and NGOs, and technology seemed to promote a bureaucratic society of controlled consumption (Lefebvre, 1971). Furthermore, the Danish National Union of Pedagogues (BUPL) got caught up in state strategies and tactics. First, representatives of the Union were included to serve on committees, participate in writing policy documents on the municipal level and assume administrative responsibilities. Inclusion was combined with a second tactic, decentralization, meaning that localized decision-making was preferable. The strategy of moving from political confrontation to information on the societal role of pedagogical work fit in well with the neo-liberal ideology that had inspired political power since the mid-1980s, an ideology required to neutralize different aspirations – for example, the idea of decentralization and municipal self-management related to the public sector.

4.14 Case study

In the following section, we present a case related to kindergarten work in exposed housing areas. That kind of work resembles what is going on in every kindergarten, except for a stronger focus on vulnerable children and their families (Jensen et al, 2012).

It is, however, necessary to distinguish between types of kindergartens or daycare to understand the kernel of that type of social and pedagogical work. In short, we can talk about daycare and daycare in the sense that institutions in wealthier areas are not inhabited by vulnerable children, while mixed areas would take care of some vulnerable children. In high-risk neighbourhoods (now and then labelled 'ghettos' by politicians), the majority of children are categorized as vulnerable children. First, this refers to 'social heritage', e.g. children of parents who survive despite poverty, low-paid jobs, tenants in neighbourhoods characterized by a concentration of poverty, unemployment and other characteristics related to social problems. Social pedagogy has from its very beginning been linked to the emergence of the social question that arises in connection with industrial capitalism. The social question manifested itself as a pedagogical issue during the 19th and 20th centuries (De Spiegeleer, 2019). Second, the idea of solving the social question by means of educational inter-

ventions is rooted in Danish kindergartens. A proper term to catch this would then be ‘pedagogisation’, meaning that education has become increasingly pivotal in managing social problems, and that ‘an educational gaze’ expanded from formal to informal settings, from school to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to nearly every educational space, including playgrounds, house visits, and so on. Third, marginalisation is of importance, as about half of the population in vulnerable neighbourhoods are migrants, meaning that pedagogical work in such neighbourhoods also encompasses a diversity of cultures, habits, family forms and different parenting styles.

We conducted a research project in vulnerable neighbourhoods with respect to how Pedagogues coped under these conditions. In our interviews, staff members frequently emphasized what they called special tasks and functions aimed at supporting and helping vulnerable families in their everyday lives. These tasks distinguish social pedagogical work from traditional general educational efforts in other kindergartens. It became obvious that they succeeded because they undertook these special efforts.

Among other things, the staff members referred to difficult but solidarity-forming conversations with parents, and as we interviewed parents as well, this impression was confirmed. Such conversations addressed challenges like health issues, parenting styles, and children’s needs with respect to their bedtime and food habits, their play opportunities at home (such as Danish Pedagogues interpreted them and discussed them with the migrant and Danish parents). They mentioned the importance of special care for vulnerable children and comprehensive family work. Furthermore, other social efforts were described, e.g. helping vulnerable families through activities in the evening for mothers and children, home visits and help with respect to practical issues – contact with doctors, case managers in social services, etc. in case parents did not have the capacity to do so on their own. The ‘educational gaze’ includes language support, reading fairy tales and stories for children, teaching them the alphabet, providing extra clothing suitable for the season, etc. The basic assumptions of social pedagogy were used, like building mutual and equal relationships and emphasizing potential instead of defects.

An interesting observation showed up: while the Pedagogues identified the families by means of ‘the educational gaze’, underscoring exposure, vulnerability, ‘ghetto’ and ethnicity, the migrant parents did not report experiencing particular vulnerability. They lived like ordinary families, who handle their everyday life with children, work and everyday routines. Though it is obvious that families in vulnerable neighbourhoods with a different ethnical background meet barriers when they try to access better housing conditions, better schooling for their children, better education and better jobs, they are sharing the same conditions and challenges as known by Danish working class parents and their children (Hansen 2003, 2005). The term ‘odds of chance’ might be useful, as it emphasizes the intersection of inequality and exposure related to language, access to good schools, active leisure time, education and decent jobs.

Against this backdrop, our empirical findings point to the continuous development of social and educational work in vulnerable neighbourhoods. In other words, there is still a long road ahead.

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Chapter 5

General education in Estonia: the combination of pedagogy, social pedagogy and special education

Mare Leino¹

5.1 Introduction

The history of Estonian schools starts in the 13th century and the first published books arrived in 1470 (<https://vaimuvara.ee/kooliharidus-eestis-labi-aegade/>). Education has always been important here because it is a kind of lifebelt for a small nation. Historically the school has had several functions in addition to sharing knowledge. After child labour was forbidden in many countries in the 19th century, parents had to work harder to compensate for the income they lost, because their children had stopped working. They were working longer hours, which meant that children were unsupervised for longer hours. Establishing a network of schools helped to solve the unwanted by-product of the industrial revolution: the possible criminal activity of the under-age rootless youth. The effect of school education in those times was manifold: the newly educated generation with academic knowledge also proved to be better factory workers than the one without education. The development of society in the 19th century brought new social problems. Those were carried into the school and teaching field. And even until now, the duties of Pedagogues compensate for the incomplete activities of the government and families. In states where the salary of educators is rather low, teachers' demonstrations/protests sometimes take place (like in Estonia). This is a strong signal both for the government and to the public that Pedagogues are dissatisfied because of the many social tasks (among other things) they have to fulfil (Leino, 2012).

In Estonian society, the level of poverty rises and the social aspect of pedagogy is significant (Laan, 2022). Pedagogues who want to teach their subjects are confused because before they can teach effectively social problems must be solved. It was the focus of my doctoral thesis in 2002 (Leino, 2002): the first strike by Pedagogues in Estonia was in 1997 because of low salaries in relation to so many additional social tasks. After 27 years, the situation is not much better: Pedagogues may feel like representatives of social service because of the multiplicity of problems. For example, sometimes parents who did not like the mark given to their children by a teacher send a lawyer to the school to

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‘solve the discrepancy’. Parents have less time and higher expectations than before, and Pedagogues must compensate for the lacking education in the home (Ladva, 2023a). The readiness to strike in Estonia is still acute (Varusk, 2023) because of the low salary of teachers compared to their huge societal responsibility. On 10. November 2023, there was a warning strike in Estonia all over the country. As the government did not react as expected, the official strike started in January 2024. Compared to the excellent PISA-results, the concept of a strike is an interesting combination. One reason for this strike was the aspect that the specific tasks of Pedagogues are not defined clearly enough. Teachers are responsible for study results, but their price is not the problem of parents or of society in general. Support systems of schools cover only partly this working load - at least in schools, where support systems exist.

In this chapter, the focus is on social pedagogy – describing this field helps to define pedagogy, too, because social pedagogy is everything that is missing in pedagogy generally.

5.2 Background information

To evaluate the role of pedagogy in a particular culture and language, it is useful to analyse the essence of specific words. Usually, important words have a history – so has pedagogy. When the power of the church decreased in the 19th century in many countries, the school had to take over the task of socializing the new generation. In some languages (for example in Estonian), the same word (teacher) is in use for the school teacher and for the vicar: pedagogy was as important as God. This was a sign of high expectations of society for both professions – especially in the context of discipline, safekeeping and socialization. A Pedagogue in Estonia is somebody who educates and helps students to get knowledge and/or skills for life in society. Teaching is a profession covered by professional standards. Till the first decades of the 20th century, the synonym of a teacher was a schoolmaster, now s/he is called ‘teacher’ or ‘pedagogue’. The Pedagogue has to build up values and establish connections. S/he supports the development of every student (<https://vana.hm.ee/et/tegevused/opetaja>). The number of Pedagogues in Estonia (in general education) is 16 942; in 2023 there were about 164 000 students in general education (<https://www.stat.ee/et/avasta-statistikat/valdkonnad/haridus/uldharidus>). As background information, it should be mentioned, that in 2023 there were altogether 1 365 884 inhabitants in Estonia.

The main law for general education in Estonia is the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act: (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikoгу/act/515092023002/consolide>). In the context of the current chapter, the aspect of values of pedagogy is important:

«§ 3. Fundamental values of general education schools:

(1) General education schools support the mental, physical, ethical, social and emotional development of students. Conditions for the balanced development of the abilities and self-realisation of students and for the materialisation of their research-based worldview are created.

(2) The values arising from the ethical principles specified in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the fundamental documents of the European Union are considered important.

(3) The socialisation of the new generation is based on the traditions of Estonian culture, common European values, and the recognition of the main achievements of world culture and research. People who have acquired general education are able to integrate into society and contribute to the sustainable social, cultural, economic and ecologic development of Estonian society» (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/515092023002/consolide>)

In short: the social aspect of education is significant – Pedagogues help citizens to cope in society. Children spend a significant part of their day at school, which puts an enormous responsibility on teachers. School is both an academic and social institution for socialization. The word ‘social’ is derived from ‘*Societas*’, which means connection and society. This Latin expression in turn derives from ‘*socius*’ (companion, kinsman/relative). It is also possible to add the concepts of value and ethics, which support shared profit. ‘*Social*’ as being able to cope (for example through education), or as the introduction of norms, or as the promotion of co-operation is important for pedagogy. (Leino, 2012). Pedagogy is a specific activity for socialization – it supports coping in this particular society.

Kindergarten in Estonia is not obligatory, but most families use this service, despite the fact that it is not for free. The professionals there are called teachers/Pedagogues, too – their activity is regulated by the same law, and the university degree of pre-school teacher is needed. Teacher and Pedagogue are synonyms in Estonia.

Educators in Estonia are united in many ways: for example, there are subject-based organisations that deal with the content of the curricula of every subject. There also is an Estonian Educators Union, with about 6000 members (Voltri, 2017). According to the law, general education in Estonia is inclusive: individual academic and social needs/possibilities of every student are important. The additional help must be offered, if needed, to meet the expectations of the curriculum. (<https://rajaeidja.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Juhendmaterjal-%C3%B5pilase-toetamiseks-koolides-07.02.2020.pdf>). In case of difficulties, a student gets help at first inside the school – there is a professional, called the ‘co-ordinator of educational special needs’. S/he evaluates the situation, and if additional support is needed, the expert can be found inside or outside the school (depends on a level/essence of the problem). For the child/family this help is for free. It is possible to be supported by special educators, speech therapists, social

Pedagogues and/or psychologists. (<https://sisu.ut.ee/eviddiferents/teenused-erivajadustega-lastele-koolieas>). The only problem is time: if the expert is outside the school, the help/intervention is not always operative.

All of those experts mentioned have specific university qualifications. Their activities are covered by different professional standards. The idea/aim is to solve problems, which hinder education, as soon as possible, by highly educated experts.

In Estonian schools, there can be up to 24 students in one class, but often this number is bigger - till 33 (Pärli, 2020). In reality, it raises additional problems which influence everyday life at school. Generally speaking: Pedagogues are tired. And the strike-readiness, mentioned before, is proof of that.

5.3 Training path and areas of intervention

For successful education, effective Pedagogues are needed. To get the right to teach, a Master's degree and a professional license are needed (<https://pedagogicum.ut.ee/et/opetajakoolitus>). It means in most cases 3 years for the bachelor-degree, and 2 years for master-degree. As the professional license is obligatory (Undo, 2016), it takes some extra time/energy. There is a debate in Estonia whether the bureaucracy for this license is too strict: according to Pedagogues, the professional exam is rather difficult – it takes a lot of time to complete the portfolio (Säinast, 2021). In real life there may be some exceptions in the context of a qualification, but only for persons who do not get a permanent job contract, only a temporary contract for one study-year.

The content of the curriculum for Pedagogues is a combination of subject-based didactic, the essence of pedagogy, knowledge of research, IT, and field practices at school. At Tallinn University, there is field practice of pedagogy in every semester during the first two study years. In the curriculum, there are also subjects in psychology and special education (<https://www.tlu.ee/opetajakoolitus-uliopilasele>), because Pedagogues are the first who recognize the problems of students in class, and prevention is cheaper than correction. Obviously, this curriculum does not cover the social aspects of teaching – which is the reason why social pedagogy is needed.

Persons with the Diploma of pedagogy usually work in general education. It is possible to work somewhere else, of course, too. For example, English teachers may prefer to work as translators in some firms, because of a higher salary. Many young Pedagogues in Estonia left school already after their first salary (Arula, 2023). After three years of working at schools, 30% of young Pedagogues left the profession (, 2022) – because of too many non-academic tasks compared to a small salary. The result is that the average age of Pedagogues is high: according to statistics, in most schools, the average age of educators is over 50 years. In nine schools in Estonia, at least 50% of Pedagogues are over 60 years (Ladva, 2023b). According to Vaher and Selliov (2019), dur-

ing the last decade the number of Pedagogues who decided not to work at schools any longer is about 13% a year. And in 13% of schools, the number of leavers is even 24%. This aspect influences study results directly: lack of stability cannot support the quality of education (Vaher and Sellio, 2019).

In 2023, the minimum salary of a Pedagogue was €1749 per month (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/117122022020>), but in the countryside it is still lower: €1526. This amount does not compensate for the huge responsibility and multi-social aspects of pedagogy (Arula, 2023). The statistic, presented here, has a message: in theory, education is important in society, but in reality, it does not count much. Teachers study hard (the master's degree is needed). They work hard (classes are big, and results are excellent – according to the PISA study), but for some parents, Pedagogues are still like customer service representatives. Often students do not respect teachers either. The strike is a clear sign of unhappiness of Pedagogues. The numbers, described here, explain the need for social pedagogy; as a class teacher cannot cope successfully with both the academic field and social problems additional help is obligatory.

The Ministry of Education and Sciences admits the low popularity of pedagogy in Estonia. To improve the situation, there is a possibility to get a scholarship from the state (€400 per month) for full-time students who will be Pedagogues, social Pedagogues or special educators (<https://www.tlu.ee/opetajakoolituse-ja-tugispetsialistide-koolituse-stipendium>). As the scholarship is meant both for Pedagogues and support systems, it helps to define the field of pedagogy in Estonia.

Besides the 'ordinary' teachers, an educational support team in general education consists of:

- coordinator of educational special needs: <https://rajaleidja.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Juhendmaterjal-%C3%B5pilase-toetamiseks-koolides-07.02.2020.pdf>,
- special educator: <https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/et/Standardid/vaata/10683307>,
- speech therapist: <https://koneravi.ee/logopeed/>,
- social pedagogue: <https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/et/Standardid/vaata/10685786>,
- school psychologist: <https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/et/Standardid/vaata/10562892>.

Shortly, social pedagogy is needed because something important is missing in pedagogy. Through the curriculum of social pedagogy, it is possible to describe what the 'ordinary' pedagogy is not.

5.4 Curricular competences

In many countries besides the term 'pedagogy', there also is 'social pedagogy' in use. Effective education has social implications and socialization is (mostly)

pedagogical. According to Hämäläinen, pedagogical activities for preventing social exclusion and promoting active citizenship are closely linked (Hämäläinen, 2012). The social Pedagogue deals with the social aspect of problems – connected to home, relations, norm-differences etc. According to Eriksson and Winman (2010), if social is understood as something widely diffused, also including culture, and pedagogy as learning, then social pedagogy is about supporting people in their development towards becoming independent participants in a democratic society. Social pedagogy is a tool for understanding societal changes in the evaluation of individuals in order to offer them the opportunities/education needed to change their current situation (Eriksson and Winman, 2010). According to Kornbeck (2009), the ‘social professions’ may be seen as a broad conceptual sphere covering professional education, professional practice and related research, and a wide range of helping activities. Yet while it is true that the exact definition of the professional groups that make up the ‘social professions’ varies considerably from one country to another, as do the limitations and articulations between them, the presence of some type of social pedagogy is a reality in many European countries (Kornbeck, 2009). At Tallinn University, this field has been covered since 2002 (Leino, 2012). The curriculum of social pedagogy for the bachelor level is strongly connected to the professional standard of social Pedagogues. Table 1. presents the essence of the professional standards and subjects of the curriculum.

Table 1 – Social pedagogy: curriculum elements

Professional standard & subjects	BA-curriculum of social pedagogy at Tallin University (6 ECTS modules).
Social pedagogical prevention and networking.	• The foundations of social pedagogy. • Socialization and pro-social skills. • Interdisciplinary casework and networking. • Prevention science and health promotion. • Multicultural and –language learning environment. • General and social psychology.
Social pedagogical evaluation.	• Psychosocial work and counseling. • Study and development. • Youth and youth groups. • Social background of school problems. • Student with study and/or behaviour problems at ordinary school. • Introduction to research in a sustainable society. • Research seminar.

Social pedagogical action plan and arrangement.	• Theory and methods of social pedagogy. • The foundations of action research. • Child and trauma. • Learning in Interdisciplinary focused Environment. (Project-based course). • Creative Approaches in Social Pedagogy. • Field Practice I. • Field Practice II.
The safety of the working environment.	• Legislation of social work & child protection. • Coping with crises in a community and organisations. • Social work with families and child protection. • Society and Justice.
Professional growth and supervision.	• Social and professional rehabilitation. • Self-help and Coping Strategies. • English for the social field. • State, politics and government. • Entrepreneurship and economy.

The subjects of this curriculum cover different fields because in the ideal world social pedagogy covers the whole lifetime: from kindergarten to homes for the elderly – in practice and in theory. According to Petrie (2011), the term social pedagogy relates to three distinct but connected fields: social policy, professional practice, and theory. The adjective ‘social’ is significant for all three. Eichsteller and Holthoff (2011) stress: «within the social pedagogic tradition, education has two aspects, person-centred and socio-political: it provides opportunities for personal development towards independence, but also has a socialising function in reinforcing social solidarity and inter-dependence» (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2011, 33). Finnish experts (Nivala and Ryytäinen, 2019) add that there are connections between social pedagogy and philosophy, sociology, social psychology, andragogy, social sciences, youth work, empowerment, social work, preschool education, special education, teachers’ education and educational sciences in general. In our Estonian curriculum, the main idea is to prepare social experts who have a wide horizon. There are so many different crises and problems in the world – graduates cope better if they know more about the various disciplines.

A growing demand for social Pedagogues can be noticed in society. In Estonia, there is not enough support staff in schools - the help is (sometimes) not as operative as needed (Jefimov, 2020). In 2021, only 40% of schools in Estonia had psychologists, 60% had social Pedagogues; and 10% of schools had all the support experts mentioned above (Labi and Kütt, 2021). Lack of support systems means that Pedagogues must cover all extra-curricular problems, but they are not prepared for that.

As social Pedagogues are wanted in the labour market, our curriculum at Tallinn

university is quite popular: at least 3 applicants per one study place is usual. The university even provides 5 more places and since 2024 the size of the study group is 25 students. The problem is that not all graduates end up working in schools because salaries are so low. The average salary of a social Pedagogue is €1891 per month (<https://mysalary.ee/tootasu/palgauuriija?job-id=2635004700016#/>). At least the number of social pedagogically educated persons rises in the society year by year. This is useful from many points of view. As the following case study demonstrates, social pedagogy is needed not only inside the school but outside, too.

5.5 Summary

In Estonia, the pedagogical reality can be considered as a mix of educators: besides 'ordinary' teachers there are social Pedagogues, special educators, speech therapists, and school psychologists. For all of them, there are curricula at the university level and professional standards. In every school, the list of tasks differs, depending on the specificity of the area and/or how many other support persons are working at this institution. The special educators focus on medical reasons for educational problems, to find additional methods to cope with the curriculum of general education. The speech therapists and school psychologists usually are located outside the school, offering their services to many schools because there is a lack of specialists. The coordinator of educational special needs has a logistic function and finds optimal solutions for all school problems. Here the metaphor of a bridge can be used again: the coordinator knows a network and helps students to find the proper expert. The aim is to support effective socialization. There must be a slight overlap of different professions because similar information is needed to notice/diagnose problematic behaviour and to support the students. Besides the academic tasks, educators must observe social aspects in class. This process needs both knowledge, time and energy – as a result, our teachers are tired.

In 2024 a teacher wrote in a state newspaper of Estonia, that being «a pedagogy does not mean a classroom with 30 students and a teacher standing in the front of a class anymore. Even if the salary of teachers rises in the future, it does not solve all problems, because the essence of pedagogy has changed: both salary and content of the work contract should take account of the new social reality» (Maurer, 2024).

There were two scandals in the autumn of 2023 in the context of education in Estonia. The warning strike of teachers was not successful – the government did not find additional money, and the strike continued into January 2024. Actually, this was not successful too, as the salary of teachers rose only 4,1% (Mändveer, 2024). The position of pedagogy in society is not much valued, and the strike did not improve the situation. Discussions about the salary continued in autumn of 2024. In September the Minister of Education and Research said that there will be no rise in the salaries of teachers for 2025 either (Ladva, 2024).

Also, the story of this small village school continued (see case study below). In the spring, it seemed like the school will lose this fight (Peege, 2024), but starting from the study year 2024/25, the official status of this small brave institution is already that of a private school. The state will support it financially from January 2025, till then it exists with the help of donations. And instead of € 1000 per month for the rent, the local government asks €500. The number of students in this school is already 34 (last study year was 21); the whole staff is completed; everything is fine. In September, when the new study year started in Estonia, this school was in almost every news on TV, radio and newspapers, as a kind of success story.

Some final words about the PISA study. One politician wrote that our PISA results in 2022 were good compared to other countries, but not good compared to our own results in 2018 (Pakosta, 2023). For example – one problem is that the social background of students influences study results more than before. And the quality of relations between students and Pedagogues in Estonia is rather bad (Kitsing, 2023). Everything has a price: if the social aspects of education are underestimated, the academic results suffer. The academic and social fields are mixed in pedagogy, and it is unclear what dominates. The intense need for social pedagogy is a sign of many social problems both in society and at school.

But back to the beginning: according to the fresh PISA results, the Estonian school works very well. Experts discuss this phenomenon: how can unhappy, poor teachers get super results? One answer can be found in the concept of responsibility. In Estonia, education seems to be a synonym for hard-working commitment and a sense of responsibility. Parents value education, because it helps their children to enter universities - to prepare for well-paid jobs, at least in theory. Most students study hard because they know that without education they cannot cope in the labour market, and they cannot cope at all as the unemployment money is not enough as yet in Estonia. In short, teaching is strongly connected with the social field, pedagogy helps to cope in society. Education is the main part of socialization, and social pedagogy helps to cover the missing parts of it.

5.6 Case study: A social aspect of education

- a) First the story of a small school gets attention, and then
- b) the teachers' strike will be analysed.

The joint theme for both stories is the social aspect of education.

5.6.1 The short narrative

In spring 2023, a scandal about a small village school in Estonia got attention: the local government wanted to close it, despite suggestions by the Min-

istry of Education and Research. Parents and teachers wanted to keep the school alive - so, the school year 2023/24 started unofficially.

5.6.2 The Research method

The research method was the content analysis of published materials (mostly newspapers, but also information from TV and radio). I was interested in the social role of education in the community, because schools are much more than only institutions for academic education.

5.6.3 The Problem

The problem was that the local government wanted to close a basic school which had existed in this village for 170 years. The quality of this institution has been excellent; in 2023, for example, it won the Estonian title: 'School of the Year'. As the competition for this title is really intensive, the result is proof of its special quality. Some families even moved to this village only because of the school (Orav, 2023). Now the local political power wants to close this school, despite the promise they gave before the elections. Starting from the study year 2023/24, this school continued to work unofficially (Sikk, 2023).

5.6.4 The role of community

Local inhabitants, and many people from the whole of Estonia paid voluntarily the salary for teachers and also the money for the court case. Till November 2023, about 500 people gave altogether about € 9000. On 8.03.2024. there was a public charity concert to get more money for the school - to help the school cope till the end of the school year (Auväart and Luik, 2024). This concert was a huge success, and the school had the possibility to go on.

5.6.5 Conflict with local government

The school building is small and home-like, in good shape and quite cheap to run. In 2023, there were 21 children on the school register and 13 more were admitted in 2024. The Ministry of Education and Research is ready to support the school, but local government decided not to. Officially, the decision to close is connected to the financial crisis (Vapper, 2023), but according to the opinion of a finance expert, closing this school does not bring any significant rise of wealth in this area. The style of this process is strange: when the principal of the school wanted to explain the situation in a meeting of local government, she was given no possibility to talk (Ronk, 2023). Shortly: this is the biggest citizens-protest in Estonian society during last years (Karnau, 2023a).

5.6.6 The ‘school-war’ is not a local secret anymore

The next step of this ‘school war’ happened in November 2023 when the local government put all students of this school on the list of another school, despite the fact that pupils still visited this (closed) school every day and studied hard. For the local government it was not official enough (Ilves, 2023). But according to the law, in Estonia parents must apply the study place for children themselves: nobody else can put students on any lists. On 10.11.2023, a public (painful) letter from parents of this village was published in a state newspaper: <https://arvamus.postimees.ee/7894672/avalik-kiri-metskula-lap-sevanemad-miks-me-ei-veritse-piisavalt-viisakalt>, where the whole situation was described as the biggest school-bullying in Estonia ever. «*Please, help us!*», – they wrote. This is an interesting choice of words, as a school-bullying usually happens inside the school.

5.6.7 The President enters the picture

On 13.11.2023, the President of Estonia visited this school. It was probably the first time in the world that a president visited an institution that officially does not exist (Laan, 2023). On 14.11.2023, our President invited the leaders of this local government to his residency to discuss the future. The President also suggested a solution: to continue at first as a home-school until some better version will be found. The next step could be a private school, for example – but this is up to the local community already, he said. The President stressed that communication between all involved groups is obligatory. On 16.11.2023, the President met the Minister of Education and Research. His message was that decisions about the optimal school system in Estonia should be case-based – which means, that exceptions could be possible; and the students’ point of view should be included. According to the President, this particular case could be a positive example of good cooperation between the local government and a school, where children interests are given first place. (<https://eesti.ee/goodnews.ee/president-karis-koolivorgu-eduka-korrastamise-uks-eeldus-on-omavalitsuse-ja-kogukonna-koostoo/>). The school is ready to continue, but politicians make it really hard, as from April 2024 the school has to pay the rent to the local government, €12000 per year (Ilves, 2024).

5.6.8 Lessons: What can we learn from this case?

- Education matters: families are ready to move near a particular school.
- Environment matters: there are people who want to live outside the cities.
- There is a deficit of empathy in politics.
- The human factor is significant, as the conflict seems to be person-based – at least this kind of impression comes from newspapers.
- The power of the local community is significant – people are ready to invest time, energy and money for education.

- The power of public relations is significant – the parents managed to invite the President.
- The power of the press is significant – this case is well-known in Estonia, and it is not possible to close the file silently anymore. Until the end of the 2023/24 study year, this school worked as a *guerrilla*-school (Karnau, 2023b), as the Ministry of Education and Research has not cancelled the licence of teaching yet.
- Social pedagogy in society is important as local people in this village are well-empowered.
- Never lose hope/optimism.
- Education is kind of human right.

5.6.9 Teachers in Estonia are not happy

During the autumn of 2023 one more educational issue in Estonia filled newspapers: the strike-readiness of teachers all over the country. There was a warning strike in November 2023 which did not bring the expected results. Then the real strike in January 2024 started: the official reason was the low salary.

5.6.10 What connects both stories – the village-school and the strike-readiness?

It is the concept of trust, which is a central issue in (social) pedagogy, too. Parents trusted the local government's promises about the future of this local school. They even moved to this area. In the context of a strike, the trust is again actual: before the elections in Spring 2023, the parties promised to raise the salary of teachers more than they did in reality. Obviously, trust can be considered important social capital. It is even possible that the secret of good PISA-results of Estonia can be connected with the concept of trust, too: both teaching and learning need a safe study environment and good emotions. One must believe in the other side's teaching/learning abilities. Despite a small salary, teachers in Estonia work hard because they don't want to cheat students. The learners work hard because education is a safety belt for the future – especially in a small country. Teachers and students do what is expected of them. The state should do the same in return. But obviously, this is not the case yet. According to the Pedagogue Andres Kraas: «the government does not keep promises, and the school system can be described as stagnant. The Estonian school works only because of teachers' altruism» (Kraas, 2023).

5.6.11 The current situation in 2025

In January 2025 the situation is peaceful, but not happy. Teachers hoped to get higher salaries and a better future, but this is not the case yet. Teacher

Martin Saar (2025) described this situation as ‘the work-piece of Schrödinger’: in 1935 Erwin Schrödinger offered the idea of a cat who is equally alive and dead. He wrote that the working environment of teachers is not optimistic at all, and he uses even the concept of a ‘powder keg’ (Saar, 2025).

The Ministry of Science and Education wants to direct the responsibility (in the context of salaries) to the local governments, but the result is that local governments don’t trust the Ministry anymore. There is a new document called *The contract of Education*, but – according to experts – it is without any significant content (Saksing, 2024).

The small school in the village has 34 students already. Officially it is a private school now. But in October they got a decision from the court that the school should still be closed. In November 2024 parents decided to fight in the next level of the court once again (Oja 2024). The school still has to pay the rent to the local government, despite the general practice in the country that non-governmental organisations usually use facilities for free.

5.6.12 Concluding statement

Social aspects dominate inside and outside of academic institutions. There is no such concept as ‘simple pedagogy’.

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Chapter 6

The Figure of the Pedagogue in the German Context

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6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the figure of the Pedagogue in the German context. While the figure itself remains abstract and lacks a legally defined occupational title, the concept encompasses a wide range of professions. This chapter focuses on the professions that make direct reference to the figure in their occupational titles: social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues. First, we will define the figure of the Pedagogue by examining the historical development of social pedagogy and childhood pedagogy. Second, we will outline the training paths and curricular competences of the two professions. Third, we will sketch the areas of intervention. The chapter concludes with a case study of a Football Fan Project.

6.2 Definition of the figure of the Pedagogue and regulatory framework

Defining the figure of the Pedagogue in the German context is not an easy task because the ‘pedagogue’ is not a legally defined occupational title. Historically, it was associated with the occupation of elementary school teachers (*Volksschullehrer*) (Maydell, 2002: 7). However, today the ‘pedagogue’ can be regarded as an abstract title that relates to multiple professions whose central trait and task is to act pedagogically. These professions are involved in the education of and care for most often children and youth in many different settings. Teachers, educators (*Erzieher*innen*²), social assistants (*Sozialassistent*innen*), childhood Pedagogues (*Kindheitspädagog*innen*) and social Pedagogues (*Sozialpädagog*innen*) are professions that are at the heart of this figure. Social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues, though, are the only professions that make a direct etymological link to this figure by describing themselves as Pedagogues. In the following, we will focus on these two professions, limiting our perspective to mainly non-formal educational settings and academic professions. We hope that in this way, we will not overstrain the international readership and at the same time provide in-depth knowledge on the figure of the Pedagogue in Germany.

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The societal conditions paving the way for Pedagogues in non-formal education can be found in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. During that time, industrialisation, population growth, urbanisation, the foundation of the German Empire and pauperisation express a rapid transformation of society. These structural changes in society are accompanied by relevant changes in dealing with poverty (Münchmeier, 1997: 274). Poverty, especially in larger cities, is very visible at that time and perceived as having a new quality. The urban middle classes relate more strongly to poverty and the perception of human poverty is more differentiated than before (Hering/Münchmeier, 2007: 61). In this way, poverty becomes a social issue that leads to the so-called rise of the 'social question' (*Soziale Frage*) in the German context. Questions demand answers (Wendt, 2020: 11ff.) leading to an expansion of social policy, social services and (academic) debates.

In this process, debates conceptualise education as an effective tool for handling social problems, and therefore one of the answers to the social question. First theories of social pedagogy are developed and new fields of intervention as for instance youth welfare services are established. The development of a social pedagogical perspective made it possible to diagnose which problems of economic, social and moral disintegration of individuals in a society went hand in hand with social change. Therefore, it can be stated that social pedagogy «addresses the question how and in what form community can come about under the conditions of modernity and, in recognition of the necessity of new, 'organic' forms of solidarity» (Lorenz 2008a, p. 12). In comparison to other European countries, it becomes clear that the principle of subsidiarity, a corporatist, conservative welfare model and the connection of individual education (*Bildung*) and societal developments fostered the development of social pedagogy (Lorenz, 2008b).

Social pedagogy and therefore one profession that is today strongly connected to the figure of the Pedagogue has its roots in the 19th century. By the end of the 1920s, social pedagogy was established as a perspective in educational sciences. During the phase of academic formation, essential foundations were laid that are still important for social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues today. Central scholars in this phase were Paul Natorp and representatives of the so-called pedagogy in the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*) like Hermann Nohl, Gertrud Bäumer, Eduard Spranger and others. The work of Paul Natorp (1854-1924) and especially his book «*Sozialpädagogik. Theorie der Willenserziehung auf der Grundlage der Gemeinschaft* (Social pedagogy. Theory of education of the will on the basis of the community)» (Natorp, 1899) is the first comprehensive theorization of social pedagogy and marks a first significant step towards the institutionalization of social pedagogy in the academic debate (Thole, 2012: 34). Natorp, with reference to the work of Pestalozzi (Henseler, 2015: 275; Dollinger, 2008: 105), took up Kant's thesis that man only becomes a man through education, but modified it by declaring the idea of community to be the universalistic principle of individual and cul-

tural development. In this way, he saw community as the place, goal and means of every education.

However, this theorization of social pedagogy was contested by the representatives of the pedagogy in the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*). They theorized social pedagogy as the scientific branch of an expanding pedagogical practice outside schools. Interestingly, the two clearly opposing theoretical conceptualisations developed while referring to a largely identical set of philosophical 'classics'. The main difference of the two approaches is that Natorp's approach was concerned with reflecting the social side of pedagogy in an encompassing way, while from a pedagogy in the humanities perspective the theory and practice of social pedagogy were two parts of the same 'educational reality' (*Erziehungswirklichkeit*) (Nohl 1935). The new 'educational reality' to be theorized was child and youth welfare (*Kinder- und Jugendfürsorge*/today *Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*) that was forming during that time. Most authors declared that educational caring (*Erziehungsfürsorge*) would be the main task in this field and therefore essentially a pedagogical/educational practice. In this sense, they conceptualised social pedagogy as the embodiment of extracurricular social and state educational welfare (Bäumer 1929: 3).

Important paths and conceptualizations were established by the end of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933): Social pedagogy became a (sub-) discipline of educational science (Tenorth, 1976: 499f.). At the same time, social pedagogy conceptualized itself as a relational perspective that stresses the interdependency of education and the social, connecting it to an evolving working context of child and youth welfare services which includes today Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the German context. To this day, child and youth welfare remains the most important working context for social Pedagogues.

Despite the relatively early establishment of an academic discourse on social pedagogy at German universities by international comparison, it took until the 1970s for larger numbers of social Pedagogues to be trained in higher education. In light of the educational reforms in the late 60s and early 70s, study programmes in educational science (*Erziehungswissenschaft*) were developed, within which social pedagogy was a specialization or subject of study that could be chosen. Additionally, study programmes of social work were established during that time at the level of universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) where social pedagogy was a subject of teacher training departments. Connected to the establishment of these study programmes was the growth in academic staff and, therefore, a significant increase of research and theory development.

Many of these theories can be considered comprehensive theories that provide normative and analytical guidance at the same time (Sandermann/Neumann, 2018). The large number of theories exemplifies the heterogeneity and complexity of social pedagogy and, consequently, the figure of the Pedagogue in Germany. However, beginning in the 1970s, a convergence between social work and social pedagogy has become evident. Today, there is almost no clear

differentiation between the two, with the term Social Work (*Soziale Arbeit*) frequently used to encompass both social pedagogy (*Sozialpädagogik*) and social work (*Sozialarbeit*), highlighting their commonalities.

This can also be observed in the description of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) that uses one definition for social Pedagogues and social workers:

«Social workers or social Pedagogues provide educational and counselling services, for example in rehabilitation centres, correctional facilities, or youth and family assistance. As caregivers, they accompany individuals in their daily lives, intervene in crisis situations, and encourage self-initiative. They help clients develop strategies for living an independent life, offering counselling to those struggling with addiction, debt, asylum seekers, and migrants, and they may also lead anti-violence training programs. In day-care centres, after-school programs, and schools, social workers and social Pedagogues take on educational responsibilities. As case managers and planners, they assess the need for material, personal, and financial assistance and connect clients with relevant resources. Social workers and social Pedagogues also engage in tasks involving conceptual development, planning, organization, management, and coordination» (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2024 a; own translation).

Compared to social pedagogy, the academic profession of childhood educators ('*Kindheitspädagog*in*') has a relatively short history. It developed over the past two decades (Hocke & Dilk, 2022), and establishing a professional identity has not been an easy process (Schneider, 2016). The emergence of childhood pedagogy was influenced by the critical OECD report 'Starting Strong' and the alarming results for Germany of the first PISA study. In this context, the academization (understood as the scientific formalization) and professionalization of early childhood education in Germany have garnered increasing attention from the public, educational researchers, and policymakers. The quality of training for early childhood educators is regarded as essential for achieving successful educational outcomes.

As a result of the growing educational and political interest, the first childhood education degree programmes (*Kindheitspädagogik*) were introduced at universities of applied sciences in 2004. Over recent years, the expansion of childcare facilities, the legal entitlement to childcare starting at the age of one, and the increased availability of all-day care in preschools, primary schools, and other educational settings have further driven the demand for qualified professionals.

In 2015, the Educational Science Faculty Conference (*Erziehungswissenschaftlicher Fakultätentag/EWFT*) developed a professional profile for childhood educators. According to this profile, the profession focuses on supporting both family and public education, care, and upbringing during childhood. Key responsibilities include researching, designing, and implementing educational concepts, as well as providing organizational and community-based support for children and families. The role also entails critically reflecting on

societal perceptions of childhood and family, and actively contributing to the social, political, and cultural framework that fosters a positive environment for children's development (EWFT, 2015, p. 2). However, no agreed job classification is used by all stakeholders (Oberhuemer/Schreyer, 2024, p. 36). Regardless of this broad definition, childhood Pedagogues are closely linked to the field of Early Childhood Education and Care. This becomes also evident in the definition of the Federal Employment Agency:

«Childhood educators develop and design educational activities for children, for example, in day-care centres and after-school programs. They lead and supervise groups consisting of children at different developmental stages and from diverse social and family backgrounds. In doing so, they address individual needs, analyse progress or challenges, and seek solutions. At the same time, they foster social interaction and promote the inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental disorders. They collaborate closely with educators, therapeutic or medical professionals, and guardians. When taking on leadership roles in early childhood or social institutions, they contribute to shaping the overall educational concept, handle administrative and economic tasks, plan staff deployment, and represent the institution to the public. In academia and research, they engage with topics such as educational research, author publications, and conduct teaching activities» (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2024b).

Summarizing the differences and commonalities between the two professions, it can be stated that while social workers/social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues share similarities in pedagogical work and leadership potential, they differ significantly in their areas of specialization. Social workers and social Pedagogues focus on addressing broader societal challenges and supporting individuals with diverse needs, whereas childhood educators concentrate rather on the development and education of young children.

6.3 Training path and curricular competences

As stated at the beginning, there are multiple professions related to the figure of the pedagogue, including teachers, educators (*Erzieherinnen**), social assistants (*Sozialassistentinnen**), childhood Pedagogues (*Kindheitspädagoginnen**), and social Pedagogues (*Sozialpädagoginnen**). Therefore, various training paths and curricula are relevant. The education ranges from a two-year programme at vocational schools for social assistants (*Sozialassistentinnen**) to a bachelor's degree (three years) or even a master's degree (two additional years after the bachelor) in pedagogy or social work at universities and universities of applied sciences.

The training of social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues in Germany takes place at universities and universities of applied sciences. The curricular focus and educational traditions in these institutions vary, shaping the competences of graduates in distinct ways. Overall, it is challenging to generalize

the content of curricula due to the wide variety of programmes and specializations offered across institutions. Additionally, over the past decade, there has been a notable increase in the number of private universities of applied sciences offering programmes related to social pedagogy and childhood pedagogy. Programmes offered by these institutions heavily depend on the number of students enrolled and adjust quickly, resulting in a certain fluidity regarding the number and content of study programmes.

Social pedagogy programmes at universities tend to align closely with the traditions of educational sciences. As a result, the curriculum often places emphasis on theoretical approaches to education, pedagogy, and research methodologies. In contrast, programmes at universities of applied sciences reflect the traditions of social work. This is evident in their curricular emphasis on legal studies, administrative competencies, and practical applications of social work principles. Broadly speaking, universities focus more on pedagogical theories and conceptual frameworks, while universities of applied sciences rather prepare students for the practical and administrative tasks. The majority of childhood pedagogy programmes are offered at universities of applied sciences. These programmes are characterized by a strong focus on early childhood and early childhood education, focusing on the developmental needs of young children and the pedagogical approaches suited to this stage.

The training paths and curricular competences for social and childhood Pedagogues in Germany reflect the diversity and evolving nature of these professions. While certain patterns can be observed—such as the focus on educational sciences in universities and practical applications in universities of applied sciences—the proliferation of specialized programmes across public and private institutions highlights the dynamic and multifaceted nature of education in pedagogy.

6.4 Areas of intervention

Pedagogues do not have a fixed area of intervention but can be found in a broad range of often multiprofessional working contexts. Using the example of social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues, the majority of professionals work in child and youth welfare services regulated by the Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII), which includes ECEC in the German context.

The main field of action for childhood Pedagogues is ECEC. However, due to the limited number of study programmes and their relatively recent professional establishment, childhood Pedagogues make up only about 1.5 percent of the workforce in ECEC and approximately 5.7 percent of leadership staff in ECEC (Oberhuemer et al, 2024, p. 11). Other areas of work also include after-school care, all-day schools, family education and counselling, child protection, and emerging fields such as family centres and municipal networking structures. Additionally, early childhood educators may work in early inter-

vention, vacation programmes, and recreational activities for children (EWFT, 2015, p. 2). The median monthly gross full-time salary for childhood Pedagogues is €4,371 (Agentur für Arbeit 2023a).

The traditional field of intervention for social Pedagogues is child and youth welfare, which includes youth work, youth social work, family counselling, ECEC, parenting social-pedagogical family support (*Sozialpädagogische Familienhilfe*), residential care, integration assistance for children and young people with mental disabilities, support for young adults, participation in family court proceedings, youth court assistance, and school social work. However, due to the overlap with social work, many other fields of intervention—beyond children and youth—are also accessible. These include social assistance for individuals in special life situations (e.g., support for the homeless or addiction support), assistance for people with disabilities, and health-related support (e.g., counselling). The median monthly gross full-time salary for social Pedagogues/social workers is €3,625 (Agentur für Arbeit, 2023b).

In recent years, there has been a significant shortage of skilled workers in this field, resulting in a low unemployment rate of about two percent in the social services sector. Overall, job opportunities are very good; however, many of the positions are temporary, and a significant proportion of employees work part-time (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2024c). Furthermore, more than 70 percent of workers report that their gross salary in their current position is not fair (Bünger et al, 2023, p. 9).

The figure of the Pedagogue in Germany represents a dynamic, multifaceted, and somewhat abstract construct that bridges historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of education and social work. It encompasses multiple professions whose central task is to act pedagogically, connecting diverse fields of practice. Social Pedagogues and childhood Pedagogues exemplify two key academic professions contributing to this figure, each reflecting distinct yet interconnected dimensions of pedagogical work.

Despite their distinct areas of specialization, both professions share a commitment to education as a means of fostering individual and societal well-being, operating within overlapping frameworks and often in multiprofessional environments. These professions illustrate how the figure of the Pedagogue embodies a dynamic interplay between individual development, education, and social responsibility. The ability to connect and address both individual and societal levels make Pedagogues highly adaptable and relevant to a wide range of working contexts. While the traditional focus is on children and youth, the close relationship between social pedagogy and social work highlights that this perspective extends beyond specific life stages, encompassing various societal needs across the lifespan. Nevertheless, the enduring importance of education as a tool for societal inclusion ensures that Pedagogues remain integral to addressing contemporary social and educational challenges. In the following case study, we chose an example that can show in a radical way what tensions are connected to social pedagogical practice that under-

stands itself as a relational practice built on trust and professional relationships.

6.5 Case study: The Role of Social Work in a Football Fan Project of a first Division (Bundesliga) Club – A Case Study on the Tension Between Legal Requirements and Ethical-Professional Conduct

6.5.1 Introduction

Social pedagogy in the context of football fans, particularly within the setting of the so-called ‘fan projects’, represents a significant yet often underestimated working field of social work. It involves the challenge of supporting young fans in their social integration while simultaneously taking a preventive stance against violence, racism, and other social issues within fan culture. This work plays a central role in a social environment increasingly overshadowed by commercialization and violence. This case study examines the tension between social pedagogical responsibility and legal requirements, focusing particularly on the right to refuse testimony (ZVR) and the ethical principles that guide the work of professionals in the fan project of the German First Division clubs. The case investigates how the social workers’ decision to refuse to testify has both legal and social implications, and explores the consequences for the fan project’s work and the trust between professionals and fans.

The objective of social work in fan projects is to support fans in their identity formation and social integration while simultaneously acting as mediators between fans and other actors, such as the police, stadium management, and the club. In the case discussed in this study, the social workers refused to testify in the context of an investigation involving fans who had set off fireworks in the stadium. This decision questions the absence of a clear legal right to refuse testimony for social workers in Germany and raises fundamental issues regarding the legal protection of social work. The study highlights the challenges that arise in a professional and ethical context when social workers are faced with a choice between legal obligation and maintaining the trust relationship with their clients.

6.5.2 The Development and Structure of Social Work in German Football

Social pedagogy within football fan projects in Germany has a long history, beginning in the 1980s when the phenomenon of hooliganism dominated the country’s stadiums. In response to the increasing violence in the stands and its negative impact on the public perception of football, social work initiated the first preventive measures. Unlike other European countries, which pursued restrictive policies through the police and stadium renovations, Germany opted for the integration of social work into fan culture as a means of promoting vi-

olence prevention while simultaneously fostering inclusion. These integrative programs, which were expanded in the 1990s, aim to foster dialogue between fans and institutions and support fans in their social development (Fritz, 2020).

Over the years, the social pedagogical work within fan projects has evolved from a purely preventive measure to a comprehensive support system, focusing not only on resolving conflicts between fans and the police but also on promoting tolerance, non-violence, and positive fan culture. Today, fan projects exist not only in Bundesliga stadiums but also in lower leagues, reaching fans across Germany. For many fans, these projects provide an important social refuge, serving not only as a conflict resolution platform but also as a source of support during personal crises.

A key aspect of the work in these projects is building trust between the professionals and their clients—the fans. Only on this foundation of trust is it possible to convince fans of a non-violent, respectful, and inclusive fan culture. In this context, the right to refuse testimony is of vital importance, as the disclosure of information in legal proceedings could undermine the trust between clients and professionals, thereby jeopardizing the work of the fan project (Fritz, 2020).

6.5.3 Football Fans as Social Actors in a Subcultural Context

The fans with whom social workers engage in fan projects often belong to a particularly heterogeneous group. They range from adolescents from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to young adults who seek a strong sense of identity within their fan culture. Many of these fans come from milieus shaped by social disadvantage, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, and family instability. For these young people, the fan culture provides not only a social home but also a platform through which they find belonging and identity.

The fan project adopts an integrative approach, viewing fans not only as supporters of a club but as part of a broader social system that requires support and development. In many cases, fans experience challenges in their social integration, leading to conflicts both within fan culture and with external actors such as the police. Particularly younger fans, who often identify with the ultra scene, face the challenge of reconciling their role as active participants in fan culture with societal norms.

The specific case in this study involves a group of fans who were caught setting off fireworks in the stadium. Pyrotechnics represent a risky behaviour in many stadiums and are legally prohibited in most countries, including Germany. For the fans, who strongly identify with their group and the stadium experience, setting off fireworks is also a symbolic act of belonging and passion for their club. The social workers are tasked not only with supporting these fans in dealing with the legal and social consequences but also with fostering their social integration and personal development within a broader context.

6.5.4 The Tension Between Social Pedagogical Responsibility and Legal Requirements

The central issue in this case concerns the absence of a clear right to refuse testimony for social workers in German law. Unlike other professions such as doctors or lawyers, who are legally entitled to refuse testimony if it would jeopardize their relationship with clients, social workers do not have such a right explicitly enshrined in law. This legal uncertainty constitutes one of the most significant ethical challenges faced by social workers in areas such as working with football fans.

Refusal to testify is a legal option theoretically available to social workers within the context of an investigation. However, this right is not always sufficiently protected or legally guaranteed. In practice, this means that social workers often have to weigh their professional ethical responsibility to maintain confidentiality against their legal duty to testify. Confidentiality, as enshrined in Section 203 of the German Criminal Code (StGB), obliges professionals to treat information obtained during their work confidentially. It protects the client and ensures that they can open up without fear of disclosure. The right to refuse testimony (ZVR), which exists for certain professions such as doctors and lawyers, ensures that information is only disclosed when there is no risk to the trust relationship. Social workers, however, are not afforded explicit legal protection in this regard. The absence of such a right leads to legal uncertainty, placing social workers in a difficult position where they must decide whether to risk their client's trust or comply with legal obligations. A legally enshrined right to refuse testimony for social workers would safeguard professional ethical integrity and protect client relationships as well as ensuring the long-term security of social work in the football sector.

In the specific case, the social workers of the fan project refused to testify as witnesses in a case involving the fans concerned. Their decision was based on the belief that providing testimony within the context of the investigation would destroy the trust in their social pedagogical work. The trust between social workers and fans is crucial, as fans often live in precarious social conditions and rely heavily on the support of social workers. A requirement to testify would have irreparably damaged this trust and led to fans withdrawing from social support.

At the same time, the social workers' decision contradicts their legal obligation, which states that witnesses are generally required to testify when subpoenaed. This legal duty could have significant consequences for the effectiveness and reputation of social work, particularly within the fan project. If fans were to perceive their social workers not only as trusted figures but also as potential witnesses against them, it would undermine the foundation of social work in fan projects.

6.5.5 The Preventive Approach to Conflict Management

The social workers in the fan project adopt an integrative approach, which, in addition to immediate conflict resolution, includes preventive measures aimed at promoting tolerance, non-violence, and social integration in the long term. A central component of this approach is relationship-building. To reach fans and build a trusting relationship, it is necessary to understand their life realities and engage in open dialogue.

Moreover, pedagogical methods such as conflict resolution strategies, group work, and workshop formats are used to raise awareness about issues such as violence prevention, respectful behaviour, and the consequences of legal violations. To be able to implement these methods professionally, fan projects rely on the close collaboration and a multi-professional approach of social workers, educators, psychologists, and other pedagogical professions to provide comprehensive support for young people in the context of football fandom. Social workers engage in outreach and build trusting relationships, educators design workshops that promote democratic values, and psychologists offer targeted assistance for addressing psychological challenges. This multi-professional approach enables flexible and tailored interventions, combining preventative measures with social integration and the fostering of democratic principles. Furthermore, social workers also work closely with other institutions, including the police, club management, and stadium authorities, to initiate and support mediation processes. These efforts are not limited to conflict resolution in the stadium but also focus on supporting fans in overcoming personal and social challenges.

The decision to refuse to testify represents an act of ethical responsibility, prioritizing the protection of the trust relationship. This stance serves as a strong example of the need for social work in complex environments, such as football culture, to be grounded on a firm ethical foundation.

6.5.6 Impact on the Fan Project and Fans

The decision of the social workers to refuse to testify had both positive and negative effects on the fan project. Fans receiving support from the social workers responded to this decision with satisfaction and trust. They view the social workers as loyal and supportive, which strengthens their commitment to the fan project and enhances the long-term social work efforts. On the other hand, the decision might lead to the fan project being perceived as uncooperative by law enforcement authorities. This could complicate future cooperation between fan projects and the police, hindering access to relevant resources.

The tension outlined here addresses key ethical and pragmatic questions within the field of social work, especially in contexts involving specific target groups. It highlights the complex decisions social workers face when operating in a legally and socially sensitive environment, one that involves both the needs

of their clients and external demands from institutions like the police. This tension becomes even more apparent when considering the professional mandate of social work. Social workers are obliged to protect the rights of their clients, while also taking into account societal demands. Thus, they are constantly balancing the need to safeguard their clients' rights with the necessity of maintaining functional relationships with institutional actors. Another concern is the potential risk that social work could become alienated from certain societal norms or state institutions, which could undermine its independence and autonomy. The decision made by the social workers to refuse to testify raises questions that go beyond the practical consequences. It touches on fundamental ethical and professional dilemmas within social work, such as the importance of loyalty to clients, the tension between individual and public responsibility, and the question of how social work can preserve its role and agency within an increasingly complex, legally regulated environment. In this respect, the decision could be interpreted both as a necessary step in safeguarding clients' rights, and a potential risk factor for future practice and collaboration within the broader network of social and state actors.

6.5.7 The Need for Legal Reforms

The present case study vividly illustrates the significance of trust and confidentiality in social pedagogical work, particularly within contexts such as fan projects. In this instance, the decision of the social worker to refuse to testify was situated within the tension between social pedagogical responsibility and the legal demands of the German legal system. This conflict between the duty to testify as a witness and the need to protect the trust-based relationship with clients—specifically, the football fans—highlights the profound challenges social workers can face when working with marginalized and socially disadvantaged groups.

The social worker's refusal to provide testimony in the course of an investigation against fans can be understood as a clear attempt to preserve the trust of the clients and to uphold the ethical foundations of social work. This action not only protects the integrity of the social pedagogical relationship but also prevents the potential stigmatization of the clients. The trust-based relationship between social workers and the fans is rooted in a deep understanding of the clients' social realities, many of whom come from precarious backgrounds and rely on the support of social workers during difficult life situations. In such a context, any action that jeopardizes the trust these clients place in professionals or institutions would be counterproductive and could undermine the entire work of the fan project.

The social worker's decision to refuse testimony also underscores the need for a legal right of refusal to testify for social workers. Such a right is already legally established for other professional groups, such as doctors or lawyers. However, social workers remain excluded from this provision. This means that,

in situations like this, they are forced to weigh their legal obligations against their professional ethical responsibility. In the present case, this legal uncertainty led to a situation that was problematic for both the professionals involved and the fans. The professionals were under pressure to maintain their professional stance while simultaneously adhering to the state's legal requirements.

The case clearly demonstrates that the legal framework surrounding social work needs urgent revision. A right of refusal to testify for social workers would not only support the professionals in their work but also safeguard the ethical principles of social work and protect client relationships. A legal framework should therefore be established that grants social workers a clear right to refuse to testify when necessary to preserve the integrity of social pedagogical practice. This legal protection would enable professionals to act responsibly and competently in challenging situations, such as those encountered in fan projects.

In the long term, the introduction of a right to refuse testimony for social workers would mark a significant step toward greater recognition of social work as an autonomous profession, treated equally in legal and ethical matters as other professional groups in the social sector. It should also strengthen the legal protection of professionals and ensure their independence in the execution of their duties.

In addition to this legal perspective, structural changes are also necessary to strengthen social pedagogical work with football fans in the long run. These include increasing resources for fan projects, promoting further education opportunities for social workers, and fostering intensive collaboration between the institutions involved - such as the police, football clubs, social workers, and fans - in the development of sustainable and non-violent fan cultures. Such collaboration could also take the form of regular dialogue formats and mediation processes to minimize tensions between various stakeholders and to identify and resolve conflicts at an early stage.

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Chapter 7

Conceptualizing the role of Pedagogue in the Greek educational context

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7.1 Introduction

This paper explores the role of Pedagogues in the Greek educational context. It is argued that Pedagogues are mainly associated with the teaching profession, especially in early childhood and primary education. To this extent, we first define the figure of Pedagogue in Greece and its relation to the teaching profession. Following this, the training path for becoming a Pedagogue is presented and the knowledge and competences expected to be acquired during studies. Furthermore, working conditions and prospects for Pedagogues are also explored. Finally, an example of a case of socio-pedagogical intervention carried out in Roma communities in the region of Thessaly in Greece is presented.

7.2 Definition of the figure of Pedagogue in Greece

This section explores how the figure of the Pedagogue is defined in Greece. The professional figure of social Pedagogue is not institutionalized in Greece, there is no such undergraduate degree, and hence socio-pedagogical work is conducted by teachers and other professionals who study social pedagogy as part of their undergraduate studies (Mylonakou-Keke et al, 2022). This chapter argues that the role of Pedagogues in Greece cannot be distinguished from the role of teachers especially in early childhood and primary education. In secondary education, even though teachers have similar duties to their colleagues in the primary sector, they are not recognized as Pedagogues but as secondary school teachers with a specialization (i.e. Maths teacher, Science teacher, etc).

The term ‘pedagogue’ is generally used interchangeably with that of a ‘teacher’. However, it is not precise to assume that the term ‘pedagogy’ simply refers to the science of teaching and the ‘social pedagogue’ is always equivalent to a ‘teacher’ (Moss & Petrie, 2019). The role of the teacher in the Greek context satisfies all the criteria for being considered as a social pedagogue. To demonstrate this, this chapter uses the model of social pedagogy in schools de-

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veloped by Kyriacou (2009). In the discussion that follows, each aspect of the theoretical model is linked to teachers' duties and responsibilities according to the legislation which specifies the role of teachers in schools. Then, some research conducted in Greece is presented which explicitly refers to social pedagogy. The key role of teachers in these interventions is apparent.

Furthermore, as socio-pedagogical work usually takes place in schools, this could explain why these responsibilities are part of teachers' daily practice. When school education is perceived as having a social purpose and adopting a holistic learning approach (Moss & Petrie, 2019), then social pedagogy in schools aims at the inclusion of all students, socialization, conflict management and citizenship education for a democratic society both for individual students and groups of students (Anderberg, 2020). Indeed, the role of the teacher in schools in Greece is not restricted to teaching and learning. Kyriacou (2009) introduced a model with five dimensions to discuss social pedagogy in schools which are care and welfare, inclusion, socialization, academic support and social education.

All these dimensions are apparent in the official duties and responsibilities of the teaching staff and are specified in the respective legislation (Government Gazette 1340, 2002). More specifically, the teaching staff in early, primary, and secondary education have specific responsibilities and duties presented as a list of 27 points. The introduction of the Ministerial Decision explicitly states that the role of teachers is not restricted to teaching and learning. The Decision emphasizes that teachers have a role with high social responsibility involving teaching and pupils' education. Thus, it distinguishes teaching from education suggesting that education refers to the holistic development of pupils. Progress, the economy and society are dependent on the contribution by teachers and therefore their duties align with these aspects. In the points that follow, all the aspects included in the social pedagogy model of Kyriacou (2009) are apparent. The duties and responsibilities of teachers go beyond that. However, all the aspects are covered in the relevant legislation for the teaching staff.

The aspect of care and welfare refers to students' physical and mental health needs and their safe environment. Point 10 explicitly states that teachers should take care of health and safety conditions in the school environment. Point 18 also states that teachers should supervise students during breaks, they are responsible for protecting them in school and for ensuring a clean school environment. At this point, it is also mentioned in a rather vague way that teachers are responsible for anything else related to students' hygiene and safety. A teacher's role also involves aspects such as always remaining with students in class. It can be argued that it indirectly refers to ensuring that teachers take care of their students and keep them safe. Inclusion aspects are mentioned in points 4 and 9. The Decision states that teachers collaborate with students and respect their personality, being the role model for them. They are also responsible for the school climate and for ensuring good communication with parents. In point 15, the Decision also states that teachers should ensure that they develop a culture of solidarity (Government Gazette 1340, 2002).

According to Kyriacou (2009), socialization involves developing attitudes, values and behaviour according to society's norms. These aspects are covered by points 13 and 16 which state that teachers must be interested in a pupils' living conditions and their social environment. Teachers should take into consideration factors that may influence students' progress and behaviour and adopt appropriate pedagogical actions to deal with related issues. Furthermore, they should respect their pupils' personality and rights, and they should collaborate with the school leadership, the school advisors and pupil's parents in order to confront potential behavioural issues (Government Gazette 1340, 2002).

Regarding academic support, there are several points (points 1, 2, 3, 22 and 26) in teachers' duties that explicitly refer to the teaching of subjects, lesson planning, using innovative teaching and assessment methods and using Information and Communication Technologies (Government Gazette 1340, 2002).

Social education according to Kyriacou (2009, p.105) refers to «the pastoral curriculum [which] is concerned with the child's personal and social development and well-being, and covers such aspects as how to behave towards others, moral education, sex education, citizenship, career planning and health education». Moral education, citizenship education and democratic decision-making are explicitly stated in the legislation (Government Gazette 1340, 2002, points 4 and 15). Furthermore, sex education, well-being and career paths are currently included in the Skills Lab of the compulsory education curriculum in the country (Eurydice, 2022).

Therefore, it is apparent that all five aspects of the model of social pedagogy are included in the official role of teachers in Greece as it is presented in the current legislation. Even the role of the school life counselor in secondary education, which has a clear socio-pedagogical orientation, is exclusively held by teachers and not by other school personnel, such as social workers (Mylonakou-Keke et al, 2022). Similarly, the research on social pedagogy is mainly focused on interventions and actions by teachers. In what follows, a few examples of recent research explicitly linked to social pedagogy are presented to demonstrate that the main actors of the interventions of social pedagogy in Greece are teachers. Kalagiakos's (2015) research about the socio-pedagogical actions in a multicultural secondary school of Athens, using the Participatory Transformative Pedagogy model, aimed to support students' skills, promote respect and collaboration among students who were all young refugees with diverse backgrounds, and support their participation in democratic decision-making through a school-based intervention programme.

On a similar note, Chaniotakis and Thoidis (2015) discussed the all-day primary school model in Greece as an opportunity for teachers to play both an educational and a social role. As the research suggests, all-day schools can offer educational and social opportunities for all children. It should be noted that the all-day school is also available for early years.

In another research, Alevizos et al. (2015) present the outcomes of a survey on bullying coordinated by the Smile of the Child voluntary organisation

(<https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/>) with their educational tool for preventing bullying. The study highlights the important contribution of non-governmental organizations in supporting children. The Smile of the Child organisation is one of them and has a strong presence regarding its socio-pedagogical actions. It becomes apparent that this tool is intended to be used also by secondary school teachers. In other words, the user and the main actor is the schoolteacher, who plays also the role of social Pedagogue in this case.

Another point to note is the relation of social pedagogy with social work, which has taken different routes depending on the characteristics of the social and educational context of each country (Kraus & Hoferková, 2016). In Greece, departments of Social Work have been established in the University of West Attica, in the Democritus University of Thrace and in the Hellenic Mediterranean University. It is also noted that at the Department of Education and Social Work of the University of Patras students can graduate as social workers by choosing the major of social work. Social workers are entitled to work in a wide range of services in the public and private sector or in non-profit organizations (Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, 2024).

Regarding the field of education, social workers are expected to support the school communities in dealing with increasing socio-pedagogical problems, but they are not considered to be Pedagogues. In particular, they are defined as 'special educational personnel' and they can work at all school levels according to the legislation in force at any given time. According to the current institutional provisions, (Government Gazette 5262, 2023), social workers are not assigned duties related to teaching or non-teaching tasks and they provide socio-pedagogical work in schools, as follows (indicatively):

- Provide psychosocial support, information and guidance to empower the school community.
- Promote collaboration among students, teachers and parents/guardians of the school community.
- Inform and raise awareness within the school community about acquiring valuable knowledge and experience through interaction, collaboration, exchange and adoption of effective practices.
- Design and redefine key and critical priorities, supporting all members of the school community at individual, group and intergroup level.
- Inform, advise, and support families regarding the effective management of critical and unforeseen situations and relationships.
- Design, organize and implement programmes promoting physical and emotional well-being and student protection.
- Map the existing structures of psychosocial support within the community with the aim of establishing local support networks for school units.
- Design interdisciplinary and experiential activities utilizing existing knowledge and experience.

To conclude, the role of Pedagogues in Greece can be considered equivalent

to the role of teachers, especially in the primary sector of education. This chapter so far has argued that it is not possible to distinguish the role of teachers from that of Pedagogues. Furthermore, the role of teachers as defined by legislation and key research in the area involved all aspects of social pedagogy. Next, the chapter discusses the associations and Unions of teachers and the types of training that teachers receive to be able to play this role, which is not restricted to teaching and learning.

7.2.1 Teachers' Unions

The teaching profession in Greece is supported by the Greek Primary Teachers' Federation (DOE), established in 1921 (DOE, 2024) and the Greek Federation of Secondary Education State Teachers (OLME, 2024), established in 1924 (OLME, 2024). The latter includes all local Secondary Education State Teachers' Unions (ELME). Members in both federations are the teachers' unions in public early childhood, primary and secondary education in Greece.

Both federations promote cooperation and solidarity among public servants and employees in general and support the rights of the syndicates, protect democracy, the free movement of ideas and safeguard political rights and peace, thereby contributing to the progress of the education of all people of Greece. DOE focuses furthermore on the improvement of primary education, whereas OLME targets the moral, scientific and material equalization of students. Therefore, both Federations incorporate principles and axes of social pedagogy and connect it to the figure of a teacher.

7.3 Training path and curricular competences for becoming as a pedagogue

As has been already presented, the concept of Pedagogue in the Greek context is closely related to the teaching profession. Therefore, the training path for becoming a Pedagogue is related to initial teacher education (ITE), which is a starting point for professional development and plays a crucial role in determining the quantity and quality of teachers (Eurydice, 2021). ITE programmes can be divided into two models: a) The concurrent programmes which are dedicated to ITE from their start, with general academic subjects provided alongside professional subjects and, b) The consecutive programmes in which students who hold a university degree in particular fields move on to professional teacher training in a separate successive phase (i.e. for teaching in vocational secondary education) (Eurydice, 2021).

In Greece, initial training for primary and secondary education teachers falls under the university sector. All teachers in primary education - including pre-school and primary school education, as well as teachers in secondary education, hold at least a first cycle degree (Eurydice, 2023a). Thus, the main route into teaching in primary education is to take a 4-year degree in a peda-

gogy department. In secondary education, most teachers follow a 4-year subject-based degree at a teacher education faculty, i.e. university departments whose graduates are directly appointed to secondary education schools and in primary education in some cases (Eurydice, 2023b). Graduates of non-teacher education faculties can also acquire pedagogical and teaching proficiency through different routes, for example by possessing a Master's or doctoral degree in educational sciences or a certificate of pedagogical competence of the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE) (Eurydice, 2023c).

Of particular interest in this chapter is teacher training in pre-school and in primary school education, as the teaching profession in primary education presents the closest proximity to the concept of pedagogue. As noted in OECD reports (2018), the share of teacher education devoted to pedagogical and practical training is generally higher for primary teachers than for lower secondary ones. In contrast, the time allocated to academic subjects is typically higher for lower-secondary teachers. This partly explains why fewer lower secondary teachers across OECD countries feel less prepared in the pedagogy of the subjects being taught compared to the percentage of the teachers that feel prepared about the content of the subjects being taught. According to OECD, these outcomes mean that countries need to focus more on the quality of professional development activities on pedagogical and classroom practices for lower secondary teachers and on subject matter for primary teachers.

The initial training of pre-school teachers and primary education teachers is provided by the Departments of Pre-school Education and of Primary Education respectively of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University of Ioannina, the Democritus University of Thrace, the University of Crete, the University of the Aegean, the University of Thessaly and the University of Western Macedonia. As has been noted, a new joint course is offered by the University of Patras at the Department of Education and Social Work which, however, does not allow graduates to be listed as social Pedagogues. Graduates can work either as primary school teachers or social workers. The Department of Special Education of the University of Thessaly provides initial training for special education teachers in pre-school and primary education (Eurydice, 2023a). The Department of Educational and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia in the Major course 'Education of People with Special Needs' also provides initial training for special education teachers (Department of Educational & Social Policy, UoM, 2024). The establishment in 2019 of the Pedagogical Department of Secondary Education in the University of Athens (2023) has also to be noted.

The initial training provided for prospective pre-school and primary education teachers falls into the concurrent programmes. ITE, which includes, among others, teaching-oriented courses, teaching in the classroom (practicum) and the study of various teaching methods has an integrated for-

mat, that is, pedagogical in addition to theoretical training (Eurydice, 2023a). The curricula of the universities attended by candidate teachers of primary education (and secondary as well) are drawn up by the universities themselves. The curriculum includes compulsory and optional modules. Each semester corresponds to a specific number of courses designed to ensure that they are sequenced and interdependent in terms of subject matter. The curriculum also describes the theoretical and/or laboratory part of each course, its purpose and the learning outcomes, i.e. the knowledge, skills and competences that the student is expected to acquire from each course and from the whole curriculum. Apart from being subject-related to primary school courses, pedagogical departments' curricula also include pedagogical and psychology courses. A combination of instructional strategies is used for pre-service teachers' education, such as face-to-face teaching, practical exercises/tasks, written assignments and/or workshops (Eurydice, 2023a). It is also noted that social pedagogy as an autonomous compulsory course is delivered in the pedagogical departments of the Universities of Athens, Thessaly, Democritus and Western Macedonia, while relevant subjects are delivered in the other pedagogical departments as well (Mylonakou-Keke, 2021).

As each pedagogical department is free to design its own programme of studies, there is no universal pattern concerning the knowledge and the skills that graduates are expected to acquire. There are, however, many commonalities across the pedagogical departments. Drawing on the example of the Department of Primary Education of the University of Thessaly, future Pedagogues are expected to develop their critical, analytical and synthetic skills; to know how to plan, organize implement and evaluate teaching; to understand children's learning needs in each curriculum subject; to analyse and critically understand the pedagogical challenges of current social developments, such as the need to include socially vulnerable groups like Roma or refugee children, and to know how to establish, enrich and redesign learning environments that effectively promote individual and group learning (Pedagogical Department of Primary Education, UTh, 2023).

7.4 Areas of intervention

As the work of Pedagogues is closely related to the teaching profession, most seek employment in public and private schools and nurseries. In the public sector, permanent teachers are considered to be public servants. Both permanent teachers' appointment and provisional substitute teachers' employment are planned and carried out at central level. The appointment of permanent teachers and the employment of provisional substitutes is based on the current teaching needs. These needs arise from organic position vacancies due to teachers' retirement or resignation and from operational position vacancies due to long-term absences because of childbirth, pregnancy, maternity, sickness or

educational leaves. Teachers' salaries are calculated on the basis of a pay scale. Indicatively, a teacher being in service from 0 to 2 years (Pay Scale 1) earns a gross income of €1,092, while a teacher serving for 36-38 years (Pay Scale 19, which is the final one), earns a gross income of €2,154. Holders of a postgraduate degree advance in two pay scales while the doctorate gives a precedence of six pay scales (Eurydice, 2023c).

The employment opportunities for Pedagogues vary depending on their specialization. In general, teachers of primary education have better employment opportunities compared to teachers of secondary education. Special education teachers present the best employment opportunities. In 2022, more than 95% of the graduates of the Department of Special Education of the University of Thessaly and of the Department of Educational and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia in the major study programme of Education of People with Special Needs were hired in the first year after their graduation as substitute teachers in public schools (Trigka, 2022). Regarding permanent appointments, 28,500 appointments of teachers in public schools have been completed since 2019, after a decade of no hirings in public education. The aim was to address staff shortages in schools and decrease the extensive use of substitute teachers in recent years (European Commission, 2023).

Special education teachers can be appointed to primary schools of Special Education and Training, in integrative classes and in programmes of simultaneous support or provision of home schooling. They can also work in the broader state and private sector as specialized personnel in special education, making evaluations of children/ people with special educational needs and impairments and organizing and implementing relevant educational programmes (Department Educational & Social Policy, UoM, 2024). The graduates of the Department of Special Education of the University of Thessaly can also work in pre-school education.

Apart from pursuing a school career, teachers of preschool and primary education can also apply for a job in other areas as well, such as in children's centres, youth centres, childcare centres, cultural organizations, children's camps, children's libraries, museums and companies producing educational material (Pedagogical Department of Primary Education, UTh, 2023).

7.5 Case study: an intervention programme for supporting social and educational inclusion of Roma children in the Region of Thessaly, Greece

From March 2020 to December 2023, the programme 'Supportive interventions in Roma communities: Supporting access and reducing school dropout of children and adolescents' was run in the region of Thessaly and more specifically in the cities of Larisa, Volos and Sofades (University of Thessaly, Research Laboratory of Education and Communication in Multicultural Environments, 2024).

The objectives of this intervention were to promote social and educational inclusion of Roma children and adolescents in the region of Thessaly. The total number of children and adolescents in the communities of the intervention was approximately 2500. The enhancement of access for Roma children and adolescents, the reduction of school dropout and the encouragement of young adults Roma, who had not completed the compulsory education, to be involved in educational activities were attempted via socio-pedagogical, teaching, psychosocial and empowering activities. All interventions were designed and implemented on the basis of the principles of intercultural pedagogy (Gana, Stathopoulou & Govaris, 2020).

Briefly, the main action objectives of the aforementioned programme were:

- a. Raising awareness and offering support to Roma parents and guardians in relation to schooling, communication with the schools and adult literacy.
- b. Supporting children via educational interventions and programmes of empowerment.
- c. Promoting collaboration with schools, teachers, education leaders and social services who are involved in the social and educational inclusion of the Roma population.

Various professionals, such as kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers, teachers of Greek language, maths teachers, Roma mediators, adult educators, social workers and psychologists, worked in the intervention areas under the guidance of the members of the research team.

Regardless of the intervention type, either remedial teaching or parent empowerment actions, there was a common underlying principle across the activities, i.e. to establish relationships of interaction and trust between the school, the Roma families and the local community. All professionals received initial training regarding the special characteristics of the target group, emphasizing the experience of racism and discrimination that Roma people have faced across time. After the initiation of the interventions, partners in the programme participated in monthly reflective meetings in order to redesign the interventions when necessary. All professionals worked collaboratively as a group, having as a starting point that only a holistic socio-pedagogical approach can be effective. They jointly organized actions and visited the Roma communities to obtain a comprehensive and constantly updated picture of the challenges in the field of school-family-student relationships and face them collaboratively.

In this chapter, the interventions regarding the support of Roma families during the school year 2022-2023, as well as in the first months of the school year 2023-2024, are briefly presented.

7.5.1 Supporting Roma parents and guardians with schooling

The main target group for this intervention were Roma parents and guardians of children who were not registered in schools during these years or

had dropped out and as a result, would have been removed because of exceeding the upper school age limit in primary education (16 years old) or they had irregular attendance. Most Roma people in Greece live in more or less segregated settings, ranging from encampments with living conditions characterized by severe deprivation (77 such encampments were recorded), to mixed neighbourhoods with predominantly Roma populations (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights-FRA, 2023). At national level, only 16% of Roma people aged 20-24 had completed at least upper secondary education in 2021 (the respective percentage in 2016 was 8%) compared to 95% of the general population and 29% of Roma people in EU countries (FRA, 2022). Furthermore, the percentage of Roma girls who do not complete any level of education is much higher in Greece compared to other European countries (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights-FRA, 2019).

The main assumption of this work was that the identification and multidimensional support of Roma families whose children face challenges with their school attendance may reverse this situation and support their social and educational inclusion.

The scientific team of the project initially explored the needs of Roma families by collecting data via interviews for the following questions:

- a. What challenges do Roma families face and how do they evaluate the way that these challenges influence their children's education and attendance?
- b. What resources and support would they find helpful as part of the specific intervention?
- c. What information would they need for their children's school education?
- d. What challenges do they face in relation to communication with the school?
- e. Which ways of communication with the school would they consider to be the most effective?
- f. What issues that relate to their children's schooling, concern them most?

7.5.2 Designing interventions in Roma communities

To identify the needs of Roma families and to implement interventions, there was a combination of actions by the scientific team of the programme. The method of street work was used as a guiding principle, meaning the need to engage with vulnerable or hard-to-reach populations inside their communities to promote social and educational inclusion (Laredo & Hill, 2018).

More specifically, the following actions were designed and implemented:

- a. Development of a form for compiling the needs of the Roma population and investigation of the family background.
- b. Registering needs and requests of young adults for their participation on literacy programmes organized as part of the project.
- c. Visits by the team to the communities of intervention and regular com-

munication with the families in order to establish a relationship of trust and rapport.

- d. One-to-one meetings and offering counselling based on the specific needs of each family to empower parents and support them to cope with difficulties which they face in relation to their children's schooling. There was also parental training on strategies for problem solving so that they can resolve issues concerning both their children's and their own active social participation. Furthermore, actions were taken to increase parents' motivation with the aim of parents better supervising their children's regular school attendance.
- e. Communication with social services and other specialists to offer support with issues related to mental health and learning difficulties.
- f. Ongoing updates for the educational actions of the programme and registering students who would like to be involved in actions which supported their learning and empowerment.
- g. Regular communication with the school staff so that Roma families with children who did not regularly attend school or had dropped out the previous years would be identified in order to contribute to their participation in the educational and empowering actions of the programme. Furthermore, there was mediation between schools and Roma families, so that difficulties affecting the school inclusion of Roma children can be identified and addressed in time.
- h. Contact Roma parents and guardians to enrol their children to schools and to encourage them to ensure their children's regular school attendance. Specifically, during the time of school enrolment for children of early years, members of the scientific team visited Roma families with children who were five years old. Some families considered that their child's attendance in the kindergarten is not compulsory (even though this is compulsory according to the Greek education system). In this case, the team raised awareness and offered counselling to the parents so that they could realise the potential benefits for their children to attend kindergarten. Emphasis was placed on mobilizing Roma women to take an active role in their children's education.

7.5.3 Ongoing monitoring

During every visit of the project team to the beneficiary communities, parents' and students' needs and concerns in relation to schooling were explored. When it was necessary, additional actions were designed and socio-pedagogical support and counselling was offered.

7.5.4 Results

The daily contact with Roma families helped establish a relationship of trust

and acceptance of programme practices. For this reason, there were no major difficulties and obstacles in implementing the planned actions. From the first visits, it became apparent that many Roma parents face challenges in understanding their parental role linked to their children's schooling and the need to set rules and boundaries for their children. Since many parents had not experienced schooling themselves, they did not realize what it meant for their children to be at school and what the student role involves. After regular visits and psychosocial support, communication became more constructive, and the parents started to ask questions about their children's behaviour at school and in the family.

Home visits and approaching the families in their communities via the method of street work led to important results. The regular and substantial communication with Roma families led to their empowerment since it satisfied the important need of recognition of the members of these communities. The direct contact in the community resulted in the parents' readiness to play a more active role. It also helped them realize the importance of their children's participation in the intervention programme which led to immediate positive results through the increase of regular school attendance.

The establishment of trust between the project team and the Roma families contributed to the openness of communication and enabled the discussion of topics that concerned them and were directly or indirectly related to schooling. The presence of Pedagogues, psychologists, and social workers during the summer months was evaluated as positive by the participating Roma communities. Parents' teams which were created under the guidance of the project partners, enabled them to exchange ideas, share difficulties that they were facing and good practices that each family followed. Furthermore, the communities were enthusiastic about summer celebrations, excursions and other social events outside their communities, which contributed to the social inclusion of Roma children and the enrichment of their life experiences.

7.5.5 Evaluation of the programme

At the end of the school year 2022-2023, initiatives were taken with parents and students to review the school year. In the discussion, both parents and students evaluated their participation in the programme activities positively. They were also given the opportunity to express the difficulties and issues they had to face and to suggest improvements for future projects.

7.6 Conclusions

As it has been argued, the role of Pedagogue in the Greek context remains rather vague because of institutional provisions. It is expected that all teachers in early, primary or secondary education should think, act and behave as Ped-

agogues, but only a part of them receive pedagogical training in a systematic way throughout their studies, i.e. the graduates of pedagogical departments. It is also the institutional framework that 'traps' the role of Pedagogue in the teaching figure, as the profession of social Pedagogue is not institutionalized in Greece. Consequently, socio-pedagogical interventions at the family or community level, or the broader level of social welfare structures are carried out by other professionals, mainly social workers. Under these conditions, the only way forward seems to be the institutionalization of the profession of Pedagogue with the specification of his/her responsibilities in order to act as a mediator between various institutions and the people, especially those coming from socially vulnerable groups.

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Chapter 8

Social pedagogues in Lithuania

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8.1 Definition of an pedagogue and regulatory system

Like schools in other European countries, the Lithuanian school aims to provide every child with an education appropriate to his or her nature, and to ensure the provision of high quality and comprehensive social pedagogical support.

Who is a social pedagogue in Lithuania? The main goal of a social Pedagogue in a Lithuanian school is to help children to realise their right to learn, to strengthen the child's and pupil's social and emotional competences, and to foster a safe learning environment that meets the child's and pupil's learning capacities and needs². The social Pedagogue is identified as the essential and main organiser of a child's education (Alifanovienė and Kepalaitė, 2007; Ivanauskienė, 2009; Hamalainen, 2014; Cameron and Moss, 2011), who represents the child's best interests and strives for the child's well-being. Researchers (Kvieskienė, 2003; Alifanovienė and Kepalaitė, 2007; Misiukevičienė and Putauskienė, 2009; Ivanauskienė, 2009) distinguish the following roles of a social pedagogue: administrator, planner, service provider, educator, defender of the child's best interests – an advocate, counsellor, behaviour modifier, mediator, evaluator, expert, advisor, friend, manager, mediator, supporter.

The following areas of social pedagogical support for children and pupils are outlined in the Description of the Procedures for the Provision of Social Pedagogical Support to Children and Pupils (2016, the new wording 2023)³: 1) helping children and pupils to adapt to school and child care institutions and educational learning environments; 2) developing children's and pupils' life skills in cooperation with the child's and pupil's parents (guardians, carers), pedagogical staff, social workers and social partners, in order to ensure the child's and pupil's safety and right to education; (3) mediating and assisting in addressing the reasons why children and pupils are prevented from participating in compulsory education, from attending school or from avoiding it;

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² Socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo vaikams ir mokiniams tvarkos aprašas", TAR, 2016 m. lapkričio 2 d. Nr. V-950, naujas redakcija 2023-10-03.

³ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2016 m. lapkričio 2 d. įsakymas Nr. V-950 „Dėl socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo vaikui ir mokiniui tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo“, TAR, 2016-11-03, Nr. 26187., nauja redakcija 2023-10-03.

(4) supporting the return to school of children and pupils who are absent from school or who are not participating in the educational process, in cooperation with their parents/guardians and the responsible authorities.

The Description of the Procedures for the Provision of Social Pedagogical Assistance to Children and Pupils in Lithuania (2016, the new wording 2023)⁴ distinguishes four types of assistance:

1. counselling, carried out to help resolve social pedagogical problems of children and pupils through various forms and methods of counselling;
2. research, carried out to understand and assess the impact of the environment on the child and pupil, as well as the educational and learning difficulties, in order to ensure effective strategies for assistance;
3. preventive activities, to ensure a safe learning environment for the child and pupil and the development of personal, social and other general competences through targeted means and methods;
4. mediation, to assist in finding the most appropriate solution to the problem, in the exercise of the child's rights and legitimate interests;
5. support networking, to ensure the provision of comprehensive support to the child and pupil.

In summary, social pedagogical work in Lithuanian schools is still mainly oriented towards personal support, where the main task of the social Pedagogue is to help individual pupils to manage difficult or risky situations at school in order to help them to learn and avoid exclusion. This usually involves an analysis of the pupil's current needs, based on observations and interviews with others, followed by individualised solutions, which may include academic, emotional and social support. In Lithuania, social Pedagogues usually address students' problems through a range of interventions. These often consist of counselling, supportive and motivational conversations about specific problem situations. With the help of social Pedagogues, pupils also develop their social skills by participating in various group activities and then gradually take more personal responsibility for their learning at school.

Social Pedagogues usually work with individuals in their whole context, which includes the pupils' home environment, leisure environment, etc. Those activities may include providing advice, guidance and support to parents, guardians and other key people involved in the pupils' lives.

In Lithuania, the role of the school social Pedagogue in the provision of social pedagogical support to children and pupils is also emphasised (Description of Procedures for the Provision of Social Pedagogical Support to Children and Pupils, 2023), including the role of the social Pedagogue as a mediator, working in collaboration with other support professionals, and the education and involvement of the school community in the provision of support.

⁴ Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No V-950 of 2 November 2016 «On Approval of the Description of the Procedure for Provision of Social Pedagogical Assistance to a Child and a Pupil», TAR, 03-11-2016, No 26187., new version 03-10-2023.

The development of the professionalisation of social Pedagogues in Lithuania covers more than 20 years. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania by Resolution No 471 of 24 April 2001, approved the Programme for the Establishment of Social Educators in Educational Institutions 2001-2005⁵ (hereinafter referred to as 'the Programme for the Establishment of Social Educators'), which has been recognised as one of the components of the programme of the reform of education in the Republic of Lithuania and as a means of implementing the Programme for the Creation of Conditions for the Social and Educational Education of Children⁶, the National Programme for Prevention of Child and Adolescent Delinquency⁷, and the Programme for National Prevention of Drug Addiction and Control of Drugs for the period 1999-2003⁸. The Programme for the Establishment of Social Educators (2001) aims to "intensify social and preventive work in schools, <...> to organise work with children at risk, parents, <...> to create better social and educational conditions for all schoolchildren and young people"⁹. In parallel, the Qualification Requirements and Duty Instructions for Social Educators (Order No 1667 of 14 December 2001)¹⁰, which regulated the activities of social educators in educational institutions, were approved in 2001.

The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania identifies student support (informational, psychological, social pedagogical, special pedagogical and special) as one of the components of the education system¹¹. On this basis, the General Regulations on Social Pedagogical Assistance¹² were approved by Order No ISAK-941 of the Minister of Education and Science of 15 June 2004, which set out the aims, objectives, principles, forms, types, recipients, providers and organization of social pedagogical assistance to pupils.

⁵ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2001 m. balandžio 24 d. nutarimas Nr. 471 „Dėl socialinių pedagogų etatų steigimo švietimo įstaigose 2001–2005 metų programos patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 2001-04-27, Nr. 36-1220.

⁶ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 1999 m. birželio 9 d. nutarimas Nr. 764 „Dėl socialinių ir pedagoginių vaikų mokymosi sąlygų sudarymo programos ir bendrojo ugdymo modernizavimo programos patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 1999-06-16, Nr. 52-1696.

⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 1997 m. kovo 6 d. nutarimas Nr. 197 „Dėl vaikų ir paauglių nusikalstamumo prevencijos nacionalinės programos“, *Valstybės žinios*, 1997-03-12, Nr. 21-510.

⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 1999 m. rugsėjo 6 d. nutarimas Nr. 970 „Dėl nacionalinės narkotikų kontrolės ir narkomanijos prevencijos 1999–2003 metų programos patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 1999-09-10, Nr. 76-2291.

⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 1999 m. birželio 9 d. nutarimas Nr. 764 „Dėl socialinių ir pedagoginių vaikų mokymosi sąlygų sudarymo programos ir bendrojo ugdymo modernizavimo programos patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 1999-06-16, Nr. 52-1696.

¹⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2001 m. gruodžio 14 d. įsakymas Nr. 1667 „Dėl socialinio pedagogo kvalifikacinių reikalavimų ir pareiginių instrukcijų patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 2002-03-06, Nr. 24-896.

¹¹ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas, *Valstybės žinios*, 1991, Nr. 23-593.

¹² Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2004 m. birželio 15 d. įsakymas Nr. ISAK-941 „Dėl bendrųjų socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo nuostatų patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 2004-06-29, Nr. 100-3729.

The meaningful work of social Pedagogues and targeted research¹³ after more than a decade of development of a legal framework for social Pedagogues have highlighted new, contextual educational challenges that have prompted a reassessment of the existing legal environment. This has led, first of all, to the amendment of the General Regulations on Social Pedagogical Assistance²¹ approved by Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. ISAK-941 of 15 June 2004 (Order No. V-950) on 2 November 2016, and to the adoption of a new wording of the 'Description of the Procedures for the Provision of Social Pedagogical Assistance to the Child and the Pupil¹⁴'), which is a guiding document for social Pedagogues¹⁵.

Currently, the activities of the Social Educator are regulated by the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (2023)¹⁶, which defines the purpose of social pedagogical assistance, and by the provisions of the Law on Minimum and Average Care of Children¹⁷ (2023), which deals with solution of issues related to the child's well-being in the case of the need for complex assistance.

The purpose of social pedagogical assistance, the ways of providing assistance, and the functions of the social Pedagogue are specified in the description of the procedure for the provision of social pedagogical assistance to children and pupils (2016, the new wording 2023)¹⁸.

The Lithuanian Association of Social Educators and the Lithuanian Association of Educational Assistance are active in Lithuania, and Lithuanian social educators are involved in their activities.

8.2 Training and competences of social Pedagogues

The training of social Pedagogues in Lithuania is carried out in accordance

¹³ Rita Ilgūnė-Martinėlienė ir Žana Rympo, „Bendrojo ugdymo mokyklos socialinio pedagogo galimybės taikyti mediaciją savo darbe“, *Socialinis ugdymas* 41, 2 (2015): 111–a23; Sigita Burvytė, „Socialinės pedagoginės (kompleksinės) pagalbos poreikis“, *Socialinis ugdymas* 41, 2 (2015): 144–162; Valdonė Indrašienė ir Romas Prakapas, „Vaikų elgsenos stebėsenos kaip socialinio pedagogo darbo priemonės taikymo galimybės“, *Pedagogika* 124, 4 (2016): 105–116; Milda Ratkevičienė, „Narrative Perspective of School Social Pedagogue's Assistance of Social Risk Children: One Child's Story 'One out of Five'“, *Tiltai* 79, 2 (2018): 125–139 ir pan.

¹⁴ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2004 m. birželio 15 d. įsakymas Nr. ISAK-941 „Dėl bendrųjų socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo nuostatų patvirtinimo“, *Valstybės žinios*, 2004-06-29, Nr. 100-3729.

¹⁵ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2016 m. lapkričio 2 d. įsakymas Nr. V-950 „Dėl socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo vaikui ir mokiniui tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo“, TAR, 2016-11-03, Nr. 26187., nauja redakcija 2023-10-03

¹⁶ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas (1991), *Valstybės žinios*, Nr. 23-593; nauja įstaatymo redakcija nuo 2011-07-01, *Valstybės žinios* Nr. 38-1804

¹⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas, Žin. 2007, Nr. 80-3214, nauja redakcija 2023

¹⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2016 m. lapkričio 2 d. įsakymas Nr. V-950 „Dėl socialinės pedagoginės pagalbos teikimo vaikui ir mokiniui tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo“, TAR, 2016-11-03, Nr. 26187., nauja redakcija 2023-10-03

with the Regulation for the Training of Teachers (2010, 2020, 2023)¹⁹, the Description of the Competence Framework for Teachers and Pupil Support Specialists (2023)²⁰ and the Description of Education and Development Study Group (2015)²¹. Social Pedagogues are trained through first-level university study programmes. Currently, these professionals are trained at two higher education institutions: Mykolas Romeris University and Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University. Social Pedagogue training programmes are classified as social sciences in the field of pedagogy, and must comply with the requirements for the type and level of university studies (the first level being bachelor's degree) as regulated by the Law on Science and Higher Education. The Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy and the qualification of a teacher are awarded upon completion of these studies. The typical duration of study programmes is 3.5 years (7 semesters) for full-time studies and 4 years (8 semesters) for part-time studies. The structure of programmes for the training of social Pedagogues consists of general university subjects, subjects in the field of study and subjects in pedagogical studies. A strong emphasis is placed on practice-based learning.

According to the Teacher Education Regulations (2010, 2020, 2023)²², the Description of Competence Framework for Teachers and Student Support Professionals (2023)²³, the competences required for the qualification of a teacher are in the areas of professional behaviour, cognitive, collaborative and emotional-motivational (see Figure 1).

The emphasis of the social pedagogy study programmes is the orientation of the subjects taught towards the holistic educational competences of a social pedagogue, which help to successfully combine the solution of social and educational problems, the development of positive socialisation and the creation of a harmonious environment for the child, and the search for alternatives and innovation. Social Pedagogues in training should be able to holistically address a wide range of socio-educational problems, and their training is based on relevant socio-educational activities: representation of the child's interests, management of socio-educational support at individual, group, institutional and community levels, creation of a positive environment for the socialisation of the child, research of the environment, and a flexible response to change.

¹⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministro 2010 m. sausio 8 d. įsakymas Nr. V-54 „Dėl pedagogų rengimo reglamento patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios 2010-01-23, Nr. 9-425.

²⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministro 2023 m. lapkričio 27 d. įsakymas Nr. V-1499 „Dėl mokytojų ir pagalbos mokiniui specialistų kompetencijų aprašo patvirtinimo“. TAR, 2023-11-27, Nr. 22836.

²¹ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2015 m. gruodžio 10 d. įsakymas Nr. V-1264 „Dėl švietimo ir ugdymo studijų krypčių grupės aprašo patvirtinimo“. TAR, 2015-12-11, Nr. 19677.

²² Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministro 2010 m. sausio 8 d. įsakymas Nr. V-54 „Dėl pedagogų rengimo reglamento patvirtinimo“. Valstybės žinios 2010-01-23, Nr. 9-425.

²³ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministro 2023 m. lapkričio 27 d. įsakymas Nr. V-1499 „Dėl mokytojų ir pagalbos mokiniui specialistų kompetencijų aprašo patvirtinimo“. TAR, 2023-11-27, Nr. 22836.

8.3 Areas of activities

Graduates of the Social Pedagogy programme can work in regional and municipal departments, educational and other social institutions (all types of general education schools, vocational schools, pre-schools, etc.). Social Pedagogues may work in district and city education departments, pedagogical-psychological institutions, institutions for the protection of children's rights, family support, rehabilitation and specialised centres, hospitals, prisons and other educational and social institutions.

There is a continuing need for these professionals. Both researchers and practitioners point out that the provision of educational assistance to educational participants is a prerequisite for ensuring effective education and development, overcoming barriers to learning and reducing exclusion (Expert evaluation of the Lithuanian model of pedagogical psychological assistance, 2021). Helping every pupil, avoiding the stigma of being a weak person, but empowering every pupil to act within his/her own limits, is a particularly relevant issue in Lithuanian schools. According to the study «Expert evaluation of the Lithuanian pedagogical psychological support model», carried out in 2021, it was found that not all pupils in Lithuania are provided with the necessary support. Students with low academic achievement (poor or satisfactory performance) are in a situation of vulnerability because they do not receive or receive less help from teachers and peers, are more likely to experience bullying and discrimination, and have a more negative perception of the culture of help and the effectiveness of help.

In today's society, the problems of children and young people are becoming more and more complex, and every educational institution is looking for means and ways to mobilise the energies and potential capacities of its members in order to achieve the ultimate goal of providing a teaching and learning environment that enables the acquisition of competences and skills in problem-solving and decision making (Šapelytė et al, 2021). This means that the socialisation of children must involve all educators, parents, and institutions that can help to ensure the provision of quality social pedagogical and support services. Timely provision of social pedagogical support to pupils can help to prevent poverty and social exclusion in the future and help society to alleviate socio-economic problems such as unemployment, crime, and morbidity resulting from harmful habits.

8.4 Case study

The cases are presented by a social Pedagogue at a gymnasium in a major Lithuanian city. The case was conducted in the school year 2023/2024.

8.4.1 Case 1

In her presentation of the case, the social educator noted that the most challenging pupils are the ninth graders (students in the first level of gymna-

sium), as they are entering a new school and are monitored for the first month. In this urban school, there is a tradition that all the educational support professionals go to selected ninth grade classes to get to know the newly arrived pupils and their work during the lessons. Children who are absent or are irregular attenders are then observed, and a conversation is held with the class teacher to discuss what difficulties he or she sees. The class teacher is often the first to spot a child who has attendance or other problems and starts working with the parents and the student independently.

In the case of Rokas (14 years old boy, name changed), we noticed that he was periodically absent from school, and we spoke to his teacher, who said that she had already noticed the problem and was talking to him, but there was no reaction. The school has involved the mother in the support process (the parents are divorced, the father lives abroad and is not involved in the child's life) and meetings have been organised. During the meeting with the class teacher, the educational support specialist, the pupil and the mother, it became clear that the problem has been present for 2 years, which means that the pupil has come to year 9 without a year 7 and 8 course, as he was almost completely absent from the online classes for one year (during the Covid-19 quarantine) and practically absent from the school during the second year.

An individual support plan was drawn up for Rokas. A child's individual support plan is drawn up when there is no change after the interviews. The plan is drawn up by the professional who is advising the child or by the one who is in charge of the whole case, in this case the social pedagogue. Very often, the class teacher is involved, as he or she is the one who sees the situation best, and the parents and the child are involved. The child's strengths are identified first, even his or her moods, if the child is coming for the first time. Atypical behaviour of the child is discussed with the parents, what they notice. All the additional information about the child is gathered - hobbies, extra-curriculum activities, what they like to do - and then a maximum of 2 or 3 achievement expectations are set (for the social Pedagogue and the child), because it is not possible to achieve more than that at the same time. The plan defines the objectives, the milestones: time, teacher, classroom, etc. The specialist can undertake to accompany the pupil to all the planned appointments so that he/she comes and there is no misunderstanding with the teacher.

Rokas' class has a teacher's assistant. Although Rokas is not assigned a teaching assistant by law, it is possible to ask for help for a while, as there are gaps in his learning over the last month and a half, and a teacher's assistant could help him to be as successful as possible. Although it was agreed that the teacher's assistant would help – Rokas' attendance has not improved despite the efforts of the school and his mother. Rokas would not come to school.

As the joint efforts of professionals, teachers and the mother were not successful, it was decided to convene a meeting of the school's Child Welfare Committee. At the meeting of the school's Child Welfare Committee, Rokas was recommended to receive psychological counselling (psychological coun-

selling can only be recommended and is not obligatory), and was obliged to attend counselling with a social pedagogue. After the actions taken, an improvement in the child's attendance was recorded, which lasted for 2 days, after which the child was absent from school again. The mother said that Rokas was at home, but she simply cannot force her son to go to school, as she said *«I will not push him out and I will not pull him out»*. The school's Child Welfare Committee was then convened again, which unfortunately again did not lead to any result.

At the institutional level, if the assistance provided by the social Pedagogue is insufficient or ineffective, a referral is made to the school's Child Welfare Committee, whose purpose is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the child that is focused on personal success, well-being, maturity, educational achievement and progress in accordance with the individual child's potential, and to carry out other functions relating to the child's welfare. The Child Welfare Commission shall address child welfare issues by analysing aspects of personal growth, self-expression, participation in school life, the learning environment, the learning community and other aspects, by seeking new opportunities and solutions to problems and by mobilising the necessary human and material resources.

According to the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, a child is not obliged to attend a meeting of the Child Welfare Commission if he/she has certain fears. His/her opinion must be heard in his/her absence. In the present case, Rokas participated in the proceedings together with his mother. The Child Welfare Commission is normally composed of the Deputy Director for Education, who is also the Chairperson of the Child Welfare Commission, the Secretary, who is an independent person, all the educational support specialists working in the school (social pedagogue, special pedagogue, public health specialist) and a psychologist, and 2 teachers from different centres: from the ninth grade centre and from the tenth grade centre. The members of the Commission are not necessarily the teachers of the pupil in question, which is good because they see the child from a 'new angle' and do not have a preconceived opinion of the child. During the meeting, everyone discusses the case from different perspectives: whether the pupil may have special needs, whether he/she may have school fears, etc. (The school psychologist conducts a study on pupils' school fears every September. This is a fairly comprehensive survey in which all ninth graders participate. If a child is found to be struggling, the survey is repeated in the second half of September to analyse how he or she is coping with school fears). After the meeting, the child is usually given a period of very intensive observation and it is agreed when the case discussion meeting will take place again.

In Rokas' case, a period of 2 weeks was set. Unfortunately, there was no change either after the first meeting of the school's Child Welfare Committee or after the second. The Child Welfare Committee failed to make an impact, even though there was constant contact with his mother during that time.

Rokas spent all his time at home on the computer, did not pick up the phone, did not log into the school register. The only information about what was going on at home came from his mother, who cooperated in good faith, and for whom it has been a problem for three years.

As the Child Welfare Committee had no effect, it was decided to organise an interview between Rokas and the school's Board of Directors. The whole school administration is involved in these meetings. Only the mother came to the meeting and said that she «*could not drag the child out of the house*». During the meeting, the mother was also given information about other educational institutions, and it was suggested that maybe the gymnasium was not the right school for Rokas, because the curriculum was too difficult, and that maybe a good solution would be to transfer Rokas to a vocational school - in Lithuania, vocational schools have the ninth grade. Another option could be a craft centre, where only apprenticeships are taught, without a compulsory secondary education programme.

It is important to mention that the mother initially refused to have the child examined by the city's Educational Psychological Service for learning disorders, on the assumption that information might have been missed that the child had a learning disability and that he did not want to go to school because he found it too difficult. After several meetings, the mother gave her consent and the documents have now been submitted for assessment.

After the Board of Directors, as no changes took place, Rokas' case file was sent to the city's Social Welfare Department. The Social Welfare Department of the municipality organised an initial interdepartmental meeting with representatives of the municipality, school representatives and the case manager. During this meeting, the views of the child and the mother were heard and the way forward was discussed. Rokas was present at the meeting, he came to the Municipality and listened to everything. He did not come to school the next day.

Since the inter-departmental conversation at the municipality had no effect on Rokas, a meeting of the city's Child Welfare Committee was called. The City's Child Welfare Committee is made up of a wide variety of professionals, such as a representative of the educational psychological service, a representative of the youth department, a representative of the education department, a representative of the addiction centre, a representative of the educational establishment, a representative of the police, etc. The meeting was long (normally 30 to 40 minutes per case study). This time the meeting lasted about one and a half hours. Rokas made it clear that he did not want to learn: «*I don't want to*». The reasons he gave were «*I am lazy*», «*I am fine at home*». In Lithuania, schooling is compulsory by law until the age of 16 and he is only 14.

The alternative of home schooling for Rokas was considered. A psychiatrist was consulted for this purpose, but the psychiatrist did not see any reason to apply home-schooling on Rokas, arguing that the child needed to be socialised. He did not diagnose him with any serious diagnosis. Thus, at a meeting of the

city's Child Welfare Committee, decisions were taken and Rokas was obliged to attend counselling sessions with a psychologist, counselling sessions with the school's educational support specialists, an examination at the Pedagogical Psychological Service and to take part in extra-curricular activities (clubs).

After this City meeting, Rokas came to school one day and said *«well, after this meeting, nobody will ever see me at school»*. And we don't have him in school today, even though we have child rights specialists, a case manager working on the case, and the Educational Psychological Service doing an assessment. There is no coercion. There is no way to 'force' the child to attend school. Rokas continues to spend all his days on the computer.

This case is still being addressed. As the child is only 14 years old and education is compulsory for him, there are attempts to organise home schooling or to transfer him to a school that organises remote learning (there is one in the city). Solutions are still being sought.

8.4.2 Case 2

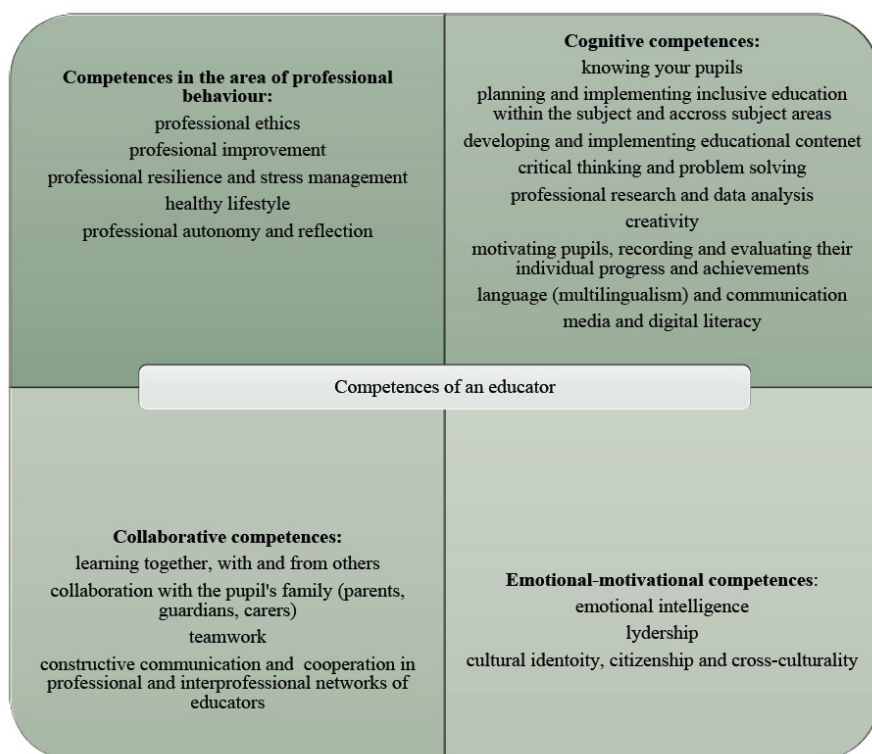
A ninth-grade girl, Greta (name changed), has been out of school. She came to our school from another school where she was practically absent. She has special educational needs (general educational needs). Her friends attend a youth school. When her mother goes out to work (her mother is a single parent and her father lives abroad), these friends come to her place.

As she was practically out of school, three interviews were organised with her mother by the school's education support specialists to discuss Greta's special needs. It was agreed that she should receive counselling from a special educator, a psychologist and a social educator. The girl only agreed to see a special educator, but she never came to the appointment.

Greta is assigned a teacher's assistant, which she initially shied away from and avoided because *«she doesn't need it, she understands, she will do everything»*. After three conversations with her mother, nothing had changed, and we organised a meeting of the school's Child Welfare Committee, during which Greta was once again obliged to attend specialist counselling. For this child, a clear individual plan, a clear structure is appropriate: when to come, what to do, etc. We would meet once a week and discussed what we had managed to do and what we were planning for the following week. During the Child Welfare Committee meeting, Greta made a commitment that she would do everything and there was no change. And something else happened: her mother sternly asked her to wash the dishes at home and took her by the hand and led her to the sink. The girl called the Child Rights Protection Service on her own, which started investigating the case for domestic violence. When I tried to reason with her that I had to write Greta's profile for the Children's Rights Protection Service, only I couldn't write a good one if Greta didn't go to school, she agreed to everything. But she still didn't go to school, she was absent about 50% school time. Then we called the mother and her child to

the headmaster, who explained that we had no other option but to go to the municipality. This affected Greta. She missed only 6 lessons in 3 weeks. Yesterday we had two meetings and saw improvement in Greta's situation. She spoke during the meeting, she committed to attending counselling with a social pedagogue. We do not know how long this will last, but we are very happy with her attendance for 3 weeks. So, we may not get to the City Child Welfare Committee. So far, Greta lacks motivation to learn, but there is a teacher's assistant and the tasks are being adapted. If she puts in some effort, she should be able to do it. This case is successful, at least at this stage.

Figure 1 – Pedagogue Competence Structure
(Description Of The Competences For Teachers And Pupil Support Professionals, 2023)



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Chapter 9

Being a Pedagogue at a Polish School

Małgorzata Przybysz-Zaremba, Izabela Bienkowska, Krzysztof Polok¹

9.1 Introduction

The notion of a Pedagogue is understood very broadly in Poland. Generally, s/he is a professional employed in a school/or other educational institution and his/her principal function is to deal with the upbringing and education of children, adolescents, and adults. The school Pedagogue plays a key role in the educational process, helping students in various aspects of their development. However, in Poland, a Pedagogue is also a teacher employed at a school or other educational institution. Thus, being a teacher and being a Pedagogue – these are two different professions. This is why being a teacher and/or a school Pedagogue are the two different professions that are often confused with each other. A teacher is a person who conducts teaching classes, while a school Pedagogue is responsible for caring for students, supporting them in the educational process and helping them solve problems. Both teachers and Pedagogues are specialists employed at schools and both have appropriate qualifications, often different ones, but the common factor is that each must have completed pedagogical education (so-called pedagogical preparation). In accordance with the current legislative provisions, schools and institutions also employ a special pedagogue, whose tasks include, but are not limited to: /1/ cooperation with teachers, group Pedagogues or other specialists, parents and students; /2/ supporting teachers, group tutors and/or some other specialists; /3/ providing psychological and pedagogical assistance to students, students' parents and teachers; /4/ cooperation, depending on needs, with other entities; or /5/ presenting to the teaching council proposals for professional development of teachers at a school or institution aimed at improving the quality of inclusive education. A special Pedagogue cooperates with a school pedagogue, but each has a different scope of tasks to be performed.

In addition, other specialist Pedagogues are also employed in Polish schools and institutions; these are, among others: co-organizing Pedagogues (their main tasks include helping and supporting students with a certificate of special education needs); *oligophrenoPedagogues*², pedagogical therapists³, sensory in-

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² A school-employed *oligophrenoPedagogue* is classified as a specialist whose main responsibilities include: educating people with (intellectual) disabilities in order to restore their maximum intellectual abilities; conducting rehabilitation and therapeutic classes; targeting the revalidation process de-

tegration therapists⁴ - their task is to help, support and improve the impaired areas of the student's functioning. The detailed scope of their tasks and qualification requirements are specified in separate legislative provisions.

9.2 The profile of a school Pedagogue and the regulatory framework

A school Pedagogue is a specialist who has appropriate qualifications, and the scope of his/her tasks focuses on enriching, refining and improving the teaching, educational and care processes (Krajewska, 2010, p. 20). The priority of his/her work is multidimensional assistance in solving various problems and difficulties of students, their parents and teachers (Frąckowiak, Krasnopolska & Wołoszyn, 2008, pp. 14-17). In Poland, this profession appeared in the 1970s. The role of the school Pedagogue then focused on helping and providing educational care for the child at school and improving the pedagogical culture of parents. The first legal regulations regarding this profession appeared in Poland only in 1975. At that time, the Ministry of Education and Upbringing defined guidelines for the employment of people functioning as school Pedagogues. At that time, the duties of a school Pedagogue included:

pending on the degree of mental disability; determining rehabilitation options and methods and forms of work for a given student; preparing teaching aids for students; planning educational activities in such a way that they allow for the maximum comprehensive development of students; developing tools for measuring student achievement; preparing students for independent individual and social functioning, close cooperation with the child's family; keeping records of the child/children with whom s/he works; constantly expanding his/her work skills and improving his/her qualifications.

³ The tasks of a pedagogical therapist at school are specified in § 27 of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1280). According to its wording, the therapist's tasks include, among others: conducting diagnostic tests for students with developmental disorders and deviations or specific learning difficulties in order to recognize difficulties and monitor the effects of therapeutic interactions; identifying reasons that make it difficult for students to actively and fully participate in the life of a kindergarten, school and/or facility; conducting corrective and/or compensatory classes, and other therapeutic activities; taking preventive actions to prevent students' educational failures, in cooperation with students' parents; supporting teachers, group tutors and other specialists in: recognizing individual developmental and educational needs and psychophysical capabilities of students in order to determine students' strengths, predispositions, interests and talents as well as the causes of educational failures or difficulties in students' functioning, including barriers and limitations that make functioning difficult student and his or her participation in the life of the kindergarten, school and institution, providing psychological and pedagogical assistance.

⁴ A sensory integration therapist employed at a school or other institution conducts classes in sensory integration therapy for students who have had an assessment of having experienced sensory integration processes (including the need for SI therapy); s/he also monitors the effects of therapeutic interventions enabling the selection of tasks to suit the child's current needs and capabilities, conducts consultations for parents, supports teachers, educators and other specialists in identifying individual developmental and educational needs and/or psychophysical capabilities of students in order to determine the causes of educational failures or difficulties in their daily functioning; s/he also provides general psychological and pedagogical assistance, when needed.

- a. conducting educational prevention, which included: examining the causes of students' learning difficulties; diagnosing the family environment; discovering how students spend their free time; enabling students to participate in extracurricular activities; and helping teachers working with students who cause difficulties;
- b. implementation of general educational tasks, which included: diagnosis of the school's educational situation; preparation of the school's educational plans; ensuring that students fulfill compulsory schooling; career counseling; school maturity examination; and different forms of advice for parents;
- c. organizing corrective and compensatory work - offering students various forms of support (e.g. additional specialized classes, therapeutic classes, compensatory classes, etc.);
- d. individual care for students - providing help in the event of learning problems and/or conflicts with peers and parents; and responding to situations of demoralization of children and youth;
- e. financial assistance, which was provided primarily to students from poor families, children with disability or sickness, people from families with alcohol problems, and large families (the main form of assistance was providing food for children, finding a place for them in a community centre, a boarding school, and in some cases – referring students' cases to court or care and educational institutions) (Jundziłł, 1980; Wasilewska - Ostrowska, 2017, p. 66)⁵. Currently, the work of a school Pedagogue is governed by many regulations, but the most up-to-date is the Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions of July 25, 2023 (Journal of Laws, item 1798). § 24 of this Regulation specifies the tasks that are performed by schoolteachers in cooperation with a psychologist in public institutions. Their key activities can be summarized in eight main points, which correspond to detailed and diverse tasks - they are presented in Table 1.

⁵ One of the latest is the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 159.

Table 1 – Tasks of a school Pedagogue resulting from current legislative provisions

General task areas	Specific tasks
1. Conducting research and diagnostic activities for students, diagnosing individual developmental and educational needs and psychophysical capabilities of students in order to determine the causes of educational failures and support students' strengths included.	• providing teachers with assistance in selecting research tools, in designing these studies, in their implementation, and in the analysis of the results obtained (school maturity tests, dyslexia risk tests, other diagnostic tests); • active participation in the analysis of teaching results; • individual conversations with teachers, students, their parents, specialists working with children (therapists, speech therapists); • helping teachers recognize the intellectual properties of students, pointing out the characteristic features of particular age groups; • providing assistance to teachers in the interpretation of psychological and pedagogical decisions and opinions and in the analysis of other documentation regarding the student; • consulting individual cases regarding diagnosis with external specialists, including: psychological and pedagogical clinics, other specialist clinics, practitioners employed in special education, and doctors; • postulating that students with serious learning difficulties should be referred to psychological and pedagogical counseling centers or other specialized counseling centers (e.g. preparation of an opinion regarding the student, etc.); • conducting or organizing workshops and training for teachers related to diagnosing students' individual needs;
2. Diagnosing educational situations in a kindergarten, school, or institution in order to solve educational problems that constitute a barrier and limit the student's active and full participation in the life of the kindergarten, school and institution.	• conducting observations, conversations, interviews, including community interviews (family home, Social Welfare Centers, sports clubs, etc.) mainly in the field of environmental neglect related to the financial situation of students and their families, how they spend their free time, community contacts, crisis or traumatic situations; • recognizing (diagnosing) risk factors that constitute the behaviour of social maladjustment of students (sociometric examination, survey using an original diagnostic tool can be used here); • conducting surveys among teachers regarding the behaviour and functioning of students at school and in the class group;

3. Providing students with psychological and pedagogical assistance in forms appropriate to the identified needs.	• conducting conversations with students in order to get to know them better and understand their attitudes, beliefs, values and needs; • helping students eliminate psychological tensions as the basis for educational (school) failures experienced; • providing psychological and pedagogical assistance, taking into account the identified needs of students; • assistance in organizing adaptation and integration classes; self-help teams; • cooperation with specialists from psychological and pedagogical counseling centres and others in order to consult the diagnosis of individual cases;
4. Taking actions to prevent addictions and other problems of children and adolescents.	• implementing activities in the field of prevention of addictions⁶ and other problems of children and youth (e.g. organizing classes in the area of universal prevention⁷); • promoting a healthy lifestyle, teaching ways to cope with difficult situations, showing alternatives to risky and problematic behaviours; • including students in local preventive and educational programmes and coordinating their activities; • joining the activities of interdisciplinary support teams (e.g. teams for counteracting domestic violence); • giving opinions on cases of students affected by domestic violence and preparing applications to family and juvenile courts, including initiating the so-called Blue Card procedure; • calling for legal protection for students growing up in hazardous environments; • giving opinions on cases of students affected by social maladjustment and preparing applications to family and juvenile courts;

⁶ Each state school is obliged to prepare and implement a school educational and preventive programme. The preventive content included in the programme is addressed to students and tailored to their needs; they are reflected in the core curricula of general, special and vocational education subjects. Preventive activities are addressed to students in parallel with their education, during classes in various subjects (e.g. nature, biology, physical education, social studies and others). Act of December 14, 2016 Education Law. Journal of Laws of January 11, 2017, item 59; Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 14, 2017 on the Core Curriculum. Journal of Laws of 2017, item 356.

⁷ Universal prevention is implemented in schools regardless of the level of risk of disorders and problem behaviours, and covers widespread threats, e.g. addictions or violence. Activities carried out at this level of prevention consist in disseminating knowledge based on scientific research and epidemiological data about risk factors and their effects. Preventive activities focus on creating a friendly climate at school, which has a positive impact on students' well-being, motivation and self-esteem (Ostaszewski, 2005, pp. 149–150)

5. Minimizing the effects of developmental disorders, preventing behavioral disorders and initiating various forms of assistance in the kindergarten, school and out-of-school environments of students.	• conducting specialized classes (e.g. social therapeutic, didactic and compensatory, corrective and compensatory, speech therapy and others⁸); • conducting individual conversations with students exhibiting behavioural difficulties and designing and monitoring intervention activities undertaken in relation to these students (e.g. implementation of specific behavioural programmes, concluding a contract, etc.);
6. Initiating and conducting mediation and intervention activities in crisis situations.	• providing advice, taking specific actions to resolve conflict situations in classes (cooperation with the class teacher is recommended here); • help and support for students in situations of peer conflicts, conflicts with teachers and conflicts (difficulties) resulting from family problems; • compliance with the provisions and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; • cooperation with parents and supporting them in the event of educational difficulties and mental health problems of students; • educational counseling aimed at modifying the behaviour of parents and their educational attitudes towards children; • providing parents with information about specialist institutions and organizations that can provide them with help and support, e.g. in crisis and other situations
7. Helping parents and teachers in recognizing and developing students' individual predispositions, capabilities, and talents.	• organizing (conducting) training and workshops on topics related to prevention, care, upbringing and teaching; • helping teachers develop educational work programmes; • substantive and methodological support for teachers in their functions; • cooperation with the team in creating an individual educational and therapeutic programme (IPT) for a student with a certificate of need for special education; • providing advice on preparing classes for the Pedagogue (e.g. preparing a database of lesson plans); • providing advice to teachers on the interpretation of student behaviour; • taking action to provide organized care and financial assistance to students in difficult life situations (e.g. assistance in obtaining benefits, scholarships, etc.); • cooperation with non-school organizations and institutions providing material support (e.g. Municipal Social Welfare Center, Caritas, local government institutions, foundations, etc.);

⁸ Provided that the school Pedagogue has appropriate qualifications to conduct this type of classes. These qualifications are defined in separate legislative provisions.

8. Supporting teachers, group tutors and other specialists in: • identifying individual developmental and educational needs and psychophysical abilities of students in order to determine students' strengths, predispositions, interests and talents as well as the causes of educational failures or difficulties in students' functioning; • providing psychological and pedagogical assistance.	• participation in determining students' abilities and predispositions (observation, tests, surveys); • conducting classes that develop students' predispositions and talents (e.g. developing multiple intelligences, creative thinking, etc.); • inviting specialists to the school to conduct classes, talks, lectures, readings, workshops on topics related to problems manifested by students and how to eliminate them, as well as the possibilities of help and support for teachers, Pedagogues and other specialists employed at the school.
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Source: own elaboration after: The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of July 25, 2023 on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions (Journal of Laws, item 1798); Szewczuk, 2012, pp. 15-35; Szczurkowska & Mazur, 2013.

The areas and tasks of the Pedagogue presented in Table 1 are carried out together with a psychologist employed at the school⁹ and in cooperation with teachers, as well as other specialists employed at the school (in specific areas, specialists supporting the implementation of the pedagogue's tasks include: speech therapist¹⁰, *oligophrenopedagogue*, special pedagogue¹¹, educational ther-

⁹ The employment of a *psychologist* at school is regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1280). Pursuant on § 24 of the above-mentioned regulation, the main tasks of a psychologist include: conducting examinations and diagnostic activities of students; diagnosing educational situations in a kindergarten, school or institution in order to solve educational problems that constitute a barrier and limit the student's active and full participation in the life of the kindergarten, school and institution; providing students with psychological and pedagogical assistance in forms appropriate to the identified needs; taking actions to prevent addictions and other problems of children and adolescents; minimizing the effects of developmental disorders, preventing behavioural disorders and initiating various forms of assistance in the kindergarten, school and out-of-school environments of students; initiating and conducting mediation and intervention activities in crisis situations; helping parents and teachers recognize and develop students' individual capabilities, predispositions and talents; supporting teachers and educators in recognizing the individual needs of students (including disorders, talents, interests, etc.) and providing psychological and pedagogical assistance.

¹⁰ The tasks of a *speech therapist* at school are specified in § 25 of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the Principles of Organizing and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1280). Pursuant on the above-mentioned § 25, the tasks of a speech therapist in a kinder-

apist, sensory integration therapist, etc.). Despite these, the scope of a school pedagogue's tasks is very wide and diverse, encompassing the areas of educational, caring, preventive and social work. Many researchers point out that a Pedagogue who implements his/her opinions at school must take on a couple of roles, i.e. be a diagnostician, a guardian-therapist, a career advisor¹², a mediator, an advocate for children's rights, a preventive specialist, a coordinator of educational activities, an organizer of school and extracurricular life, and a specialist in financial and material skills at school (Kaldon, 2008); an intervener, a substitute teacher (in situations when a teacher is absent from school, then a Pedagogue is often appointed as a substitute), an organizer of trips and performances at school, a participant in meetings with parents (and sometimes the organizer and coordinator of these meetings - in the absence of a teacher of a given class) (Wasilewska-Ostrowska, 2017, p. 69), as well as a participant in meetings of teams for psychological and pedagogical assistance¹³. It appears then that the scope of activities and tasks that a school Pedagogue is expected to undertake and carry out is very wide; what is required is not only proper education, but also appropriate skills, predispositions and life experience.

The school Pedagogue also performs tasks in the area of social work, because in Poland there are no legal regulations that would yet specify the employment of school social workers¹⁴. Although there is no such profession yet, there has been discussion for several years about creating such a profession and proposing

garten, school and facility include in particular: speech therapy diagnoses, including conducting screening tests to determine the speech condition and level of language development of students; conducting speech therapy classes for students and providing advice and consultations for parents and teachers on stimulating students' speech development and eliminating speech disorders; taking preventive measures to prevent language communication disorders in cooperation with students' parents; supporting teachers, group tutors and other specialists in: /a/ identifying individual developmental and educational needs and psychophysical capabilities of students in order to determine students' strengths, predispositions, interests and talents as well as the causes of educational failures or difficulties in students' functioning, including barriers and limitations hindering the student's functioning and participation in the life of the kindergarten, school and institution; and /b/ providing psychological and pedagogical assistance.

¹¹ The tasks of a special Pedagogue at school have already been written above in the text.

¹² The role of a school Pedagogue as a *career advisor* is to guide the student along the path of searching for a suitable profession. To help the student make the right choice, the educator analyzes his or her skills, abilities and interests. He talks to the student about his passions, dreams and plans for the future. He asks questions that help the student get to know himself better and understand what type of work could bring him satisfaction. He does not impose ready-made solutions, but tries to make the student reflect on his own predispositions and life goals. It introduces him to various educational and career options so that the student can make an informed decision on his own.

¹³ Such teams are appointed by the school principal. Their aim is to develop an Individual Therapeutic Programme (ITP) and a Multi-Specialized Assessment of the Student's Level of Functioning (MSASLF) – they involve the tutor, the teacher – a specialist in psychological and pedagogical assistance, parents, a pedagogical therapist, the student's parents, and other teachers with whom the student has classes. and in a situation where a student has behavioural problems in which intervention is visible, the team also includes a school pedagogue.

¹⁴ The school social worker is regulated by law, among others, in countries such as the United States and selected Western European countries.

a new sub-discipline - social pedagogy: «It is basically a proposal to return to the traditional Polish connections between social pedagogy and social work or to expand the European and the American model of social work with activities related to education» (Wasilewska-Ostrowska, 2017, p. 71). The lack of social workers in schools obliges school Pedagogues to carry out (selected) tasks resulting from social work. At school, the Pedagogue is obliged to cooperate closely with social work specialists employed in social welfare units, such as the Municipal Social Welfare Center (MSWC) or the Communal Social Welfare Center (CSWS). Therefore, it requires the activity of both parties and teamwork to improve the family and social situation of children and young people. The tasks of a school Pedagogue in the field of social assistance include: diagnosing the family environment; conducting social prevention; working with children from dysfunctional families (e.g. organizing additional classes, places in community centers and other out-of-school work facilities); providing material assistance; organizing social campaigns at school; cooperation with parents, school pedagogue, psychologist, other school employees, as well as with specialists employed in family and child support institutions and social welfare institutions; intervention in families in the event of child abuse (referring cases to court, prosecutor's office, removing a child from the family); «and/or work with dysfunctional families (providing advice, education, setting up Blue Cards, social contracts)» (Wasilewska-Ostrowska, 2017, p. 72).

In terms of solving various problems that most often concern children and young people at school, the school Pedagogue should have high authority among students, their parents, the school principal and teachers with whom s/he is obliged to cooperate, as well as representatives of various institutions with which the school maintains contact. S/he should be characterized by high intellectual and moral values, have appropriate qualifications and competences, which include his/her knowledge, skills and personal characteristics (Urbaniaś-Zjąg, 2016, pp. 71-73). Research conducted among Polish Pedagogues shows that the skills of learning and improving his/her own work, communication skills, ethical sensitivity, empathy, openness, reflectivity, pro-social attitudes and a sense of responsibility and effectiveness are important for the work of a school Pedagogue (Jundziłł, 1984; Bobik, 2018; Bobik, 2018a; Lewandowska-Kidoń & Kalinowska-Witek, 2016; Matyjas, 2002; Bańka, 2005).

Summing up, it can be said that the scope of tasks and activities performed by a school Pedagogue goes significantly beyond the areas of tasks specified in current legislative provisions. The work of a school Pedagogue involves undertaking many, often diversified and integrated, activities (depending on the situation or problem), which often require cooperation with other entities (institutions), including: Probation Officers, Family and Juvenile Court, Police, District Labor Office, Church and church organizations, community nurses, doctors, city and commune authorities, psychological and pedagogical counseling centers, Commission for Solving Alcohol Problems, Municipal Police,

various social welfare institutions (including MSWC, CSWS), etc. (Kowalczyk-Gnyp, 2003). This shows that the school Pedagogue is heavily overloaded with work, which can certainly lead not only to various manifestations of mental disorders, but also even to burnout (Hreciński, 2016; Syper-Jędrzejak, 2022; Morska et al, 2022). Therefore, it seems necessary to introduce a full-time social worker into schools, which would relieve the workload of school Pedagogues. Research shows that a school social worker would perform such tasks as: organizing material and material assistance for students and their families; identifying the environment; organizing social therapeutic community centers; working with the family; intervening in crisis situations; providing care and educational assistance; helping disabled students; organizing meals, trips, free time etc.; organizing seasonal work, and/or charity collections; and legal advice for parents. The school Pedagogues could then focus on solving individual and group educational problems; initiating and organizing preventive and therapeutic activities at school and in dysfunctional families. It would then be realistic and appropriate to cooperate with institutions helping dysfunctional families and coordinate activities in this area, as well as creating a social and pedagogical space in which the child occupies an integral place (Kowalczyk-Gnyp, 2003).

In Poland, there are no special associations that would exclusively unite school Pedagogues, but most kindergartens or public schools have trade unions, whose scope of powers is determined by separate regulations¹⁵. The general scope of cooperation between trade unions and the principal of a given institution may refer to the following areas: creating or changing work regulations; creating or changing the regulations for remunerating non-teaching employees; creating or changing the regulations of the company social benefits fund; arranging vacation plans; as well as creating or changing the unit organization sheet.

9.3 Educational path and programme competences of a school pedagogue

Education and necessary qualifications to perform the profession of a school teacher are specified in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 1, 2017 on Detailed Qualifications Required from Teachers (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1289). § 19 of the said regulation states that:

1. Qualifications for holding the position of a teacher Pedagogue in kindergartens, schools and institutions referred to in § 3 section 1 and § 4, has a person who has completed:

I – second-cycle studies or long-cycle master’s studies in the field of pedagogy in the specialty corresponding to the classes conducted, and has pedagogical preparation OR

¹⁵ Act of 23 May 1991 on Trade Unions. JoL of 2019, item 263.

- II – second-cycle studies or long-cycle master’s studies in a field other than those mentioned in point 1, and postgraduate studies in the scope of classes conducted, and has pedagogical preparation.
- 2. A person who has completed:
 - I – first-cycle studies in pedagogy in a specialty corresponding to the classes conducted and who has pedagogical preparation OR
 - II – first-cycle studies in a field other than those mentioned in point 1 above and postgraduate studies in the scope of classes conducted, and who has pedagogical preparation.
- 3. Qualifications to hold the position of a teacher and Pedagogue in schools and institutions referred to in § 15-17 are held by a person who:
 - I – completed studies in pedagogy or special education, in a specialty appropriate to students’ disabilities, at the level required to hold a teaching position in a given type of school, and has pedagogical preparation;
 - II – has the qualifications specified in section 1 or 2 above, and has also completed studies, postgraduate studies, a teacher training institute or a qualification course in the field of special pedagogy appropriate to the students’ disabilities or the type of institution (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1289).

On September 14, 2023, a new Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science on Detailed Qualifications Required from Teachers (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 2102) entered into force, which introduces a specific division into studies conducted in accordance with the new teacher education standard and studies conducted in accordance with regulations in force before August 3, 2019, which are now colloquially called studies conducted in accordance with old standards. The expression “new standard” should be understood as the standard of education preparing for the teaching profession, specified in the regulations issued on the basis of Art. 68 section 3 point 4 of the Act of July 20, 2018, Law on Higher Education and Science, i.e. the Regulation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of July 25, 2019 on the Standards Preparing for the Teaching Profession. At the same time the expression regulations in force before August 3, 2019 should be understood as the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of January 17, 2012 on Standards of Education Preparing for the Teaching Profession (Journal of Laws, item 131), Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of September 7, 2004 on Teacher Education Standards (Journal of Laws, item 2110) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of September 23, 2003 on Teacher Education Standards (Journal of Laws, item 1655). The new regulations do not provide for the deprivation of qualifications to perform the teaching profession of people who obtained them through education in accordance with the regulations in force before August 3, 2019. In the case of employment in kindergartens and primary schools, they are not required to complete second-cycle studies or uniform master’s studies. It should

be emphasized, however, that first-cycle studies will be sufficient if they were studies conducted in accordance with the regulations in force before August 3, 2019. Graduates of studies conducted in accordance with the new standard are in a different situation.

First-cycle studies completed in accordance with the new education standard: specialist teachers¹⁶ who have completed studies conducted in accordance with the new education standard are generally required to complete first- and second-cycle studies or uniform master's studies.

In this case, the principle of a five-year education cycle already applies. This means that a person completing studies conducted in accordance with the new education standard will not be able to hold a teaching position if s/he completes first-cycle studies only.

9.4 Qualifications required of kindergarten and school teachers from October 3, 2023

A teacher in a kindergarten or school can be either a person who has completed integrated master's degree studies, a person who obtained education in the Bologna system, or a person who has completed first-cycle studies only, provided they were studies conducted in accordance with the old standard. A teacher may also be a person who obtained qualifications by completing post-graduate studies during the period in which the previous standard was in force. The exact scope of education of a school Pedagogue taking into account the new standard, i.e. in force from October 3, 2023 and relating to the regulations in force before August 3, 2019, is presented in Table 2.

¹⁶ In accordance with legislative provisions, a school Pedagogue is classified as a specialist teacher.

Table 2 – Scope of education of a school Pedagogue in relation to applicable legislative provisions

	Regulations in force from October 3 rd , 2023.	Regulations in force before August 3 rd , 2019
Kindergartens, schools, facilities	first- and second-cycle studies or uniform master's studies, conducted in accordance with the new education standard: a) in the field of pedagogy, preparing to perform the tasks of a school pedagogue; completed pedagogical preparation; OR b) in the field of special education in the scope corresponding to the classes conducted; completed pedagogical preparation; OR c) in any field and in any scope; completed pedagogical preparation; completed postgraduate studies conducted in accordance with the new education standard in the scope preparing to perform the tasks of a school pedagogue;	second-cycle studies or long-cycle master's studies, conducted in accordance with the regulations in force before August 3, 2019: a) in the field of pedagogy in a specialty corresponding to the classes conducted; completed pedagogical preparation; OR b) any field; completed pedagogical preparation; completed postgraduate studies in the field corresponding to the classes conducted.
Kindergartens	uniform master's studies conducted in accordance with the new standard of education in the field of preschool and early school pedagogy; completed pedagogical preparation	
Kindergartens and primary schools		first-cycle studies conducted in accordance with the regulations in force before August 3, 2019 in the field of: a) pedagogy in a specialty corresponding to the classes conducted; completed pedagogical preparation; OR b) other than that specified in point 1; completed pedagogical preparation; completed postgraduate studies in the field corresponding to the classes conducted

Source: Regulation of September 14, 2023 on Detailed Qualifications Required from Teachers (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 2102); Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 1, 2017 on Detailed Qualifications Required from Teachers (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1289).

Full qualifications to practice as a school Pedagogue can only be awarded by universities that are accredited to offer a field of study specified in the legislative provisions indicated above. Each student who undertakes a course of pedagogy, specializing in school pedagogy, which gives qualifications to perform the profession of a school pedagogue, must complete a set of specific subjects that are included in the appropriate modules. The basic education module contains subjects in the field of pedagogy and psychology (e.g. general pedagogy, pedagogical concepts and systems, general psychology, psychology of human development, etc.). The specialized education module contains subjects related to the field of study, which include, but are not restricted to, among others: social pedagogy, special education, pedagogical diagnosis, special didactics and other theoretical and practical subjects related to the profession. The last one is the elective subjects module - it contains a list of subjects that the student chooses, including: foreign languages and other subjects that expand the knowledge, skills and practical competences of students who will work as school teachers in the future. These may include, for example, subjects such as: working with a student with special educational needs, including diagnostics and methodology, methodology of designing and organizing online education, methodology of a school pedagogue's work with new technologies, etc. Professional internships are an integral part of the study programme. Their purpose, scope and principles of organizing, implementing, supervising and assessing internships, including verification of the learning outcomes achieved, are specified in the Internship Regulations applicable at a given University. The programme content and learning outcomes specified for internships in the field of pedagogy take into account the framework internship programme for the field and detailed programmes for individual stages of internships. There are three stages of professional practice in this field, i.e. observation practice, assistant practice and assistant-pedagogical practice for a total of 750 hours for a given education cycle (for first-cycle studies, so-called bachelor studies). The places where the internships are carried out are facilities and institutions recommended according to the selected specialty module, such as: kindergartens; preschool classes in primary schools; primary schools (public, non-public), psychological and pedagogical counseling centres; community and social therapeutic community centres; care and educational facilities; cultural/educational, intervention; day support centres for children and youth; preventive, therapeutic and resocialization centres; educational development institutions; teacher training centres. After passing all subjects, passing exams and completing professional practice, the student is obliged to prepare a diploma thesis, which is usually of a research nature, and defend it. At some universities, the end of studies ends with the preparation of a project and its defense. This form of completing studies requires teamwork.

In the work of a school pedagogue, substantive preparation, professional practice and the predispositions of a potential candidate are important. It is commonly said that, to quote a popular saying, the work of a school Pedagogue

is for people who feel a calling. Therefore, it is helpful when performing this profession, to have such qualities as: openness and the ability to gain trust, the ability to establish contacts with young people and build lasting relationships based on mutual respect, the ability to solve problems, patience, perseverance, the ability to respect each student, regardless of his/her family, financial situation or origin; stress resistance, endurance, good work organization.

Summing up, the work of a school Pedagogue is difficult; it requires a lot of commitment and the ability to cooperate in various areas and with various people (students, parents, teachers, principal, various specialists employed in schools and various institutions with which a given institution cooperates). This is also complex work - requiring many actions (sometimes performed simultaneously). It is often treated by specialists as unsatisfying, because it is mentally taxing and the pay is low. A school Pedagogue is subject to the Teacher's Charter¹⁷, which specifies the duties, professional promotion and any other allowances due to seniority that teachers (including school Pedagogues) are entitled to – on their basis, the remuneration is calculated, which ranges from PLN 3.260 (€749.08) to PLN 4.780 (€ 1.098,35) gross, the average median being PLN 4.040 (€ 928,25) gross.

9.5 Areas of intervention

In Poland a school Pedagogue plays an important role in the field of education, and his/her interventions may cover various areas aimed at the comprehensive development of students. Among others, the school Pedagogue is involved in:

- educational support:
 - individual classes with students aimed at helping them cope with educational difficulties, e.g. learning reading, writing, mathematics, etc.
 - diagnosis and monitoring of students' educational progress,
 - creating programmes tailored to the individual needs of students,
 - assistance in creating IETPs (Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programmes),
- psychosocial support:
 - help in dealing with students' emotional and social problems,
 - organizing workshops on communication, coping with stress, building positive relationships,
- preventing violence and addiction:
 - conducting preventive activities regarding school violence,
 - education regarding a healthy lifestyle and addiction prevention,
- cooperation with parents:
 - organizing meetings with parents to discuss the child's progress and difficulties,

¹⁷ Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter. Journal of Laws. 1982 No. 3 item 19.

- providing parents with support and advice on educational issues,
 - cooperation with specialists, probation officers, particular employees of the MSWC (Municipal Social Welfare Center):
 - organizing meetings with other specialists,
 - co-creating the student's profile, assessing his/her functioning,
- professional orientation:
 - assistance in choosing an educational and professional path,
 - organizing meetings with representatives of various professions,
- social integration:
 - activities supporting the integration of students in the school environment,
 - counteracting social exclusion and supporting students with various needs,
- conducting social prevention:
 - organization of preventive activities regarding social threats related to addiction, violence or cyber-violence,
- supporting students with special educational needs:
 - individualization of the teaching process for special educational needs (SEN) students,
 - coordination of activities with specialist teams and the team for psychological and pedagogical assistance at the school,
- preventing absenteeism and supporting graduates:
 - monitoring students' attendance and intervening in the event of excessive absenteeism
 - assistance in preparing students for life after their school graduation.

In Poland school Pedagogues have wide employment opportunities, and their area of activity often depends on their specialization and professional interests. A school counselor in Poland plays not only the role of a teacher, but also a mentor, advisor and mediator¹⁸, trying to create favorable conditions for students' development. In turn, the requirements for the professional profile of a Pedagogue may vary depending on the specific place of employment, type of institution or professional specialization.

¹⁸ A school Pedagogue as a mediator helps in resolving various conflicts. School mediation is a process of building an agreement between school entities with the participation of a trustworthy person – a mediator. The parties to the conflict may be: teachers, the principal, other school employees, students, and parents. The school mediator must be an adult person trained in mediation, for example, a school Pedagogue with considerable experience in conflict solving. It is desirable that s/he is a supervisor of peer mediators and has the competences of a mediation educator. Moreover, s/he coordinates the work of peer mediators and supports at every stage of mediation (preparation, conducting, documentation), and, if necessary, also provides support after the mediation. To become a school mediator, one must have completed at least 40 hours of mediation training, confirmed by a certificate. The training covers: basic issues in the field of psychological aspects of conflict formation, escalation and resolution; conflict resolution methods (negotiation, mediation, arbitration, court); legal and organizational aspects of mediation; and, last but not least, exercises (practical training) of mediation skills (see Wolk, 2022).

In Poland, Pedagogues are employed in various places covering various educational and social areas:

- in primary and secondary schools, where they provide educational, psychosocial and vocational support for students;
- in kindergartens, working with the youngest children, as well as providing educational and psychosocial support;
- in care and educational facilities that deal with children and young people who require specialist support;
- in social welfare centers, working with families, children and/or young people in difficult life situations;
- in Adult and/or Continuing Education Centres, where they conduct training, courses and educational activities for adults;
- in psychological and pedagogical clinics, where they offer diagnostic and therapeutic support;
- in care and educational facilities for children and adolescents with various forms of disabilities;
- in non-governmental organizations dealing with education, social support or the development of local communities;
- in companies offering training and developing employee competences;
- in Continuing Education Centers for Teachers;
- in Children's Homes, offering support to children staying outside their family environment, taking care of their educational and psychosocial development.

Nevertheless, there are some general skills and qualifications that are often expected (and appropriately taught in higher education) from Pedagogues in the labour market in Poland:

- education: higher pedagogical education is required, usually a master's degree;
- communication skills, which are important both in contact with children and young people, as well as in relationships with parents, teachers and other employees of the facility;
- empathy and understanding of children and young people and the ability to adapt the work method to the individual characteristics and needs of each student;
- ability to work in a team both inside and outside school (with other specialists, counseling centers, probation officers, etc.);
- additional specializations: depending on the type of facility, additional specializations, e.g. educational therapy, speech therapy, may be important;
- knowledge of modern educational methods, which are increasingly valued in the face of changing educational trends and technological resources;
- ability to recognize and solve problems (Pedagogues should be flexible and effective in recognizing and solving students' educational and social difficulties);

- ability to work with parents;
- awareness of social and educational issues, especially those that affect students.

Apart from that, having additional certificates, professional development courses or experience in a given field may influence competitiveness on the labor market and increase the professional attractiveness of a given pedagogue. The requirements for a pedagogue's profile in the labor market result from various factors, both related to educational and social needs, as well as the specificity of individual educational institutions. The key reasons include those related to:

- the diversity of cases that the Pedagogue encounters (in today's educational institutions, we meet children and young people with diverse needs, skills and learning styles. Pedagogues must be prepared to adapt their work to the individual characteristics of each student);
- increasing social expectations (society places increasingly higher demands on the educational system and its employees. Thus, Pedagogues are expected to be not only teachers, but also mentors, therapists and partners in the development of students);
- technological progress (the dynamic development of technology affects teaching processes and requires teachers to be familiar with modern educational tools and the ability to use them effectively when working with students);
- increasing importance of creativity and innovation at work (modern education places more and more emphasis on developing creativity and innovation in students. This also applies to Pedagogues who should be ready to use a variety of teaching methods that stimulate creative thinking);
- changes in labor market requirements (with changes in the labor market, there are growing expectations regarding graduates' possession of skills that go beyond mere theoretical knowledge, and teachers are responsible for shaping key competences in students and must be specialists in supporting emotional, social and educational.
- development of educational concepts (changing approaches to education, e.g. teaching competences, lifelong education, acquiring practical skills, require Pedagogues to constantly improve and adapt their practice and therapy to new needs);
- cooperation with parents and the local community (cooperation with parents and involvement of the local community are becoming more and more important. Pedagogues must be able to build positive relationships and cooperate with various stakeholder groups).

All these factors mean that Pedagogues must be versatile, flexible and ready for continuous improvement in order to meet the challenges of modern education.

9.6 Case study

Jakub, 10 years old, fourth grade.

The boy, currently in the fourth grade, had learning difficulties and resulting behavioural problems since the first grade. He was referred to a school Pedagogue by his teacher already in the first grade.

The following stages of helping Jakub were adopted in the pedagogical procedure:

- getting to know the information from the teacher,
- preliminary tests,
- consultations with specialists,
- additional tests,
- developing an aid program,
- providing information to interested parties,
- implementation of the aid plan and active assistance to the student,
- monitoring and evaluation,
- conclusions from the evaluation and making decisions regarding possible further assistance.

Two main research problems were posed:

- What problems does the student struggle with?
- How can the student be helped?
- The following hypotheses were adopted for the identified questions:
- The student has problems related to lack of school maturity.

The school pedagogue, in cooperation with teachers, other specialists and parents, will contribute to better adaptation of the student to school, thereby reducing outbursts of aggression and improving contacts with peers by introducing a number of assistance, corrective and group integration activities.

Goals:

- Improving reading and writing skills. Conducting individual educational classes aimed at developing reading and writing skills.
- Reduction in aggressive behavior. Creating a psychosocial support programme to reduce aggressive behavior

The following needs analysis methodology was adopted in the first grade:

1. Observation and analysis of behavior: the school Pedagogue conducted observations, monitoring the student's behaviour in various school situations;

2. Diagnostic tests and assessment of the risk of dyslexia¹⁹: diagnostic tests were used to assess the level of learning difficulties (*Phonematic hearing test* (Szymaszek & Szeląg, 2006); *Lateralization test* (Zazzo, 1974); *Graphomotor skills profile* (Domagała & Mirecka, 2010) and specific difficulties related to the risk of dyslexia were identified. The research was carried out using the Dyslexia Risk Scale (Bogdanowicz, 2003, 2011). The level of understanding

¹⁹ In Poland, in grades 1-3 we talk about the 'risk of dyslexia', while dyslexia is diagnosed from the fourth grade.

of the reading text, mastery of written and printed letters²⁰, and the writing process (copying letters) were also examined.

3. Conversations with teachers and parents. Consultations with teachers and parents made it possible to obtain additional information about the student's educational situation and behavior.

A system for assessing student progress has been introduced:

- Assessing educational progress according to established criteria tailored to the individual needs of the student.
 - Behaviour assessment system, taking into account progress in reducing aggressive behaviour and the ability to cooperate with other students. A diary monitoring the student's behaviour during classes was introduced (the diary is kept by the school pedagogue).
- During the initial pedagogical examination, the student was found to have:
- low active vocabulary, in favor of passive vocabulary,
 - impaired eye-hand coordination, poor pressure of the writing instrument, low smoothness of hand movements,
 - poor association of a phoneme with the corresponding graphic sign,
 - in writing – replacing graphically similar letters.

Additional pedagogical tests revealed lateralization disorders (lack of dominance of the motor activity of the boy's right hand when writing). Because the study also found inadequate sensitivity to some stimuli and difficulties with emotion regulation, studies of sensory integration processes were carried out²¹. The research was carried out using a modified test for sensory integration disorders (Bieńkowska, 2018). Jakub²² was diagnosed with sensory modulation disorders that seek stimuli of the vestibular system and deep sensation (proprioceptive system). This explained why the student was restless, aggressive, often pushing, running, and nudging his friends. Hypersensitivity disorders (surface touch of specific parts of the body) with impaired tactile differentiation were also found, which could explain (apart from impaired lateralization) problems in the boy's grapho-motor skills²³.

Subsequently, the examination of auditory, visual and linguistic functions that was carried out revealed the following:

²⁰ Children learn basic printed letters in kindergarten, which prepares them for school.

²¹ In Poland, teachers and Pedagogues have a wide range of education. Additionally, they constantly improve their qualifications by completing various types of studies or long-term courses that improve their qualifications. In the presented case, the school Pedagogue (in addition to master's studies in the field of pedagogical therapy) completed postgraduate studies in the field of: sensory integration, working with students with autism spectrum disorders and hand therapy).

²² Due to the framework of the work, the description of Jakub's problems related to sensory integration was limited to difficulties related to school learning and behaviour at school.

²³ Muscle tension disproportionate to the activity being performed (too strong pencil pressure), which is related to under-reactivity to deep sensory stimuli and limited proprioceptive feedback reaching the muscles and joints. Over-reactivity of superficial touch may result in poorer manual and grapho-motor skills. Additionally, the lack of dominance of the writing hand may deepen grapho-motor problems.

- low phonological awareness and memory and visual-auditory integration,
- visual differentiation disorders (which involved problems in distinguishing graphically similar letters/numbers, such as, for example, 3 and 9),
- short-term memory disorders,
- under-age phoneme analysis and synthesis,
- average syllable synthesis and low syllable analysis.

Jakub had poor information about the world around him. However, he classified objects according to the indicated features and was able to compose a pictorial story. He established a good relationship with the school pedagogue/teacher, despite the fact that he often strayed from the topic, fidgeted, and had problems concentrating and completing the task. Due to learning difficulties, Jakub showed outbursts of aggression (if he did not understand something or was unable to do/read something); he also cried, run away from the classroom, and was aggressive towards his mates. He often closed himself off from help, succumbing to uncontrolled emotions.

At the teacher's request, the student was examined by a psychologist. The diagnosis was made using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children WISC-V. Jakub's general intellectual ability was average, relative to age norms.

The assistance programme was developed for help at school and home help with the participation of parents:

The school's assistance programme consisted of:

- adapting educational requirements: methods, forms of work, way of checking knowledge to the child's current psychophysical condition (the recommendations had been extended to include a seating position for the learner, which should be as close to the teacher as possible, in order to direct the boy's attention);
- providing the learner with corrective and compensatory classes to ensure the child's optimal development. The classes recommended improving impaired cognitive functions and their integration, as well as improving reading techniques, consolidating the knowledge of letters, and writing correctly and shapely²⁴. The exercises were of polysensory nature;
- providing the learner with didactic and remedial classes in order to master the knowledge and develop skills and abilities that are provided for in the core curriculum, arouse interests and develop proper motivation to learn;
- providing the learner with sensory integration therapy;
- individual meetings with a school pedagogue.

The school Pedagogue conducted a meeting with parents, with the participation of the class teacher. She provided the findings, the help plan, discussed the child's progress and difficulties, and gave advice on parenting issues.

²⁴ Systematic consolidation of learned letters and digraphs, learning to read using the syllable method, phonematic hearing exercises, graphic exercises and manual dexterity exercises took place, among others, using the suggestions proposed by: J. Mickiewicz, *Exercises facilitating learning reading and writing for younger grade students*, Toruń: TNOiK 2008; A. Tanajewska, I. Kiełpińska, R. Naprawa, *Learning to read from A to Z using the syllable method*, Gdańsk: Harmonia 2016; A. Czerkas-Polit, K. Sirak-Stopińska, *I like to write nicely – calligraphy exercises*, Gdańsk: Harmonia 2010.

Indications for parents looked as follows:

- systematic physical activities outside the home, which are a natural form of providing vestibular-proprioceptive sensations;
- grapho-motor and other exercises according to the teacher's instructions;
- constant cooperation with the school (pedagogue, tutor and other specialists);
- monitoring student behaviour and learning progress (together with the school).

The information, along with the assistance plan, was provided to all interested parties: parents, Pedagogues and other specialists. Then, a student assistance plan was implemented, with ongoing monitoring of the student's educational progress, behaviour and social integration.

Results achieved at the end of the third grade:

1. Noticeable improvement in reading and writing skills, confirmed by the results of final tests conducted in the third grade.
2. Reduction in the number of aggressive incidents and better integration with peers.

Jakub's current situation.

At the end of the third grade, the learner was sent to a psychological and pedagogical clinic for a full psychological and pedagogical diagnosis. Previous findings that Jakub is a child with developmental deficits and disharmonies, as well as with sensory processing disorders were confirmed; it was also suggested that the boy required individualized forms and methods of education. Mixed dyslexia had been diagnosed and a requirement of further help from the school was emphasized by the opinion issued by the counseling center. The opinion also stressed the role of the school and the school pedagogue's actions, which significantly contributed to improving the student's situation at school.

In the fourth grade, the following activities were introduced at school:

- continuing to provide the learner with psychological and pedagogical assistance in the form of corrective and compensatory classes, as well as therapeutic classes;
- supporting emotional and social development: enriching social knowledge, expanding knowledge of social norms, teaching strategies for coping with difficult situations, developing emotional regulation;
- further support in establishing new relationships in the group;
- continuing sensory integration therapy (developing gross and fine motor skills);
- including the student in SST (Social Skills Training) classes;
- providing the boy with optimal learning conditions by choosing a place close to the teacher (with as few stimuli as possible), enabling the boy to move during classes (e.g. by distributing teaching aids to students, wiping the blackboard);
- procedures aimed at the boy's motivating, activating, teaching perseverance, attentiveness, systematic involvement in different school tasks.

It is advisable to continue monitoring Jakub's development, which will help the specialists conducting the therapy to assess the effectiveness of the activities. It may appear necessary to modify any of the activities, depending on the boy's progress or other emerging needs.

9.7 Final conclusions

In Poland Pedagogues often not only act as social Pedagogues, but also as school teachers, engaging in various issues related to safety, health, tolerance and/or ecology. They need to be educated comprehensively, which means they not only acquire education at university, but also improve their qualifications through postgraduate studies, courses and workshops that complement their competences. Expectations towards Pedagogues/teachers are very high. They are responsible for many areas of functioning and of educating students, which is why it is so important for the motivation of Pedagogues'/teachers' work that their salaries have been promised to increase by 30% from 2024. Therefore, there is hope that Pedagogues'/teachers' salaries will not be located at the very bottom of people's earnings in the public sector in Poland. Education, care and training of children ought to be generally recognized as crucial and such a profession, with a lot of responsibility, should not be depreciated by embarrassingly low wages.

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Chapter 10 Pedagogue in Portugal

Clara Costa Oliveira¹

10.1 Pedagogue: a controversial concept and profession

Before the Portuguese “carnation revolution” (1974), which established democracy after fifty years of fascism, most current social sciences did not exist in the academic or professional world. Thus, everything related to the training of Pedagogues, as a professional category, was non-existent. Teachers were trained for compulsory 4-year education (in 1974) in Primary Teaching (*Magistério* [from *magister*, master, in latin] *Primário*). These were awarded with a bachelor’s degree, and people with only 4 years of schooling could apply to that profession. They usually did have, however, 9 years of schooling, and it was a predominantly female profession. These teachers constituted one of the local authorities, as they usually lived in the place where they taught, and all the children in the locality knew them, especially in rural areas. If we take into account the etymology of the word *pedagogue*, these professionals were the most similar that existed in Portugal.

The etymology of the word *Pedagogue* derives from the Greek *paidos* (child) and the verb *agein* (to guide). In ancient Greece, the role of the *Pedagogue* was to accompany male children of higher classes at all times of their lives: to school, to public baths, to houses of prostitution, to the *gymnasium*, etc (Jaeger, 2008). Monitoring of children at all times of their lives existed until the moment they were considered adults, usually capable of fighting or carrying out commercial or literate activities. The role of the *Pedagogue* (educated slaves) then consisted of inserting children and young people into community life, providing them with formal, non-formal and informal education (Jaeger, 2008; Serres, 1993).

The community dimension, aiming for autonomy and community integration, will be the focus of this chapter. However, the word pedagogy in Portugal is connoted by some with the formal education of children, taking into account its etymology. Thus, although there are no schools for professional Pedagogues, the equivalent academic degree for Brazilians (largest migrant community in Portugal) holding a Brazilian degree in Pedagogy, is a Portuguese degree in Basic Education (1st cycle - 6-10 year old children) or a Portuguese degree in Infancy Education (3-6 years children), in accordance with legislation from the Portuguese Ministry of Education (Decreto-Lei 66/2018). The recog-

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nition of European Community degrees is regulated by Decreto-Lei 92/2010, de 26 de julho).

Opposite to this conception, we find pedagogy connoted with higher education, particularly in postgraduate courses, whose purpose is to improve university education. What we see here is that pedagogy is associated with teaching methods and techniques, that is, a didactic dimension, intending to develop innovative and less expository learning methods in higher education. We can, in fact, mention that this type of purpose also occurs in the formation of degrees for formal education of children, mentioned above (Vieira et al, 2016).

The oldest university in the country (Coimbra) publishes the «*Revista Portuguesa de Pedagogia*», which aims to:

1. debate the theoretical field of Sciences of Education, connected to social dimensions;
2. present experiences considered as examples in this field.

Checking the papers in this journal in a recent volume, we can verify that its scope focuses mainly on children's school education, and on social issues that have an impact on education (such as contemporary capitalism) (Rangel, 2023; Abreu et al, 2023).

There are also apparently contradictory university curricular units such as Adult Education Pedagogy in the degree in Education (University of Minho), given the name *Paidós*. It has been taught so far in two very different ways: in the first phase, focusing on the development of the knowledge of being (Delors, 1996) of adult students themselves, with the aim of making them as professionals more empathetic to the transformation processes that their future participants would have to face. Currently, the various conceptions of Adult Education are accentuated taking into account the Adult Education Conferences (CONFITEAS) promoted since 1949 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Some current adult education methods and techniques are also emphasised.

The connection between pedagogy and adult education has been contested by several experts, with Malcom Knowles (Knowles et al 2020) being the best-known author, suggesting the replacement of the word pedagogy by andragogy, referring to the term man (*Ἀνδρας* – *andras*), instead of child (*παιδί*) (Knowles, 1984).

We therefore see that in Portugal the theory, as well as the praxis, on pedagogy is diverse and sometimes incoherent. This conceptual non-standardization of the concept also occurs at the level of philosophy of education, throughout the world. For the French philosopher Michel Serres, for example, the Pedagogue is the philosopher.

«[Philosophy] perpetuates the role of the Pedagogue [...] who, by accompanying the child to school, by repeating his lessons, helps him to educate himself; but the most important thing for the child's education is the time he spends with the slave on the way home from school and vice versa. A space full of dangers, experiences and a thousand surprises, all of them experienced

together, hand in hand, explained by the wisdom and humility of the slave to the noble child» (Serres, 1993: 58, translation from Portuguese).

In fact, until the emergence of educational sciences (at the beginning of the 20th century), pedagogy was the area within philosophy that studied education (especially of children) (Dewey, 1929).

10.2 How we (not) learn in schools

Some positive and negative criticisms will be expressed regarding the non-agreement that education is connoted with school, later arguing that its current space in Portugal, is that of non-formal education. It will be based on the thoughts of two authors associated with the New School Education Movement, Célestin Freinet (1975) and John Dewey (1929) and a contemporary author, Mary-Catherine Bateson (1994).

We highlight, first, the importance Freinet and Dewey attributed to the processes, as well as the contents, of everyday learning. For both authors (and despite the differences between their thoughts and didactical practices), the school must be constituted as a space that should emerge from the community experience of children and young people, and not a separate and privileged space for learning. Hence, both advocate active schools where students learn by acting, just as children learned to speak, walk, and live in society. «Thus, in all that concerns the bearing of physical conditions upon the success of school work as in the case of ventilation, temperature, etc., already mentioned physiology and related sciences are sources of scientific content» (Dewey, 1929: 49).

Real, not simulated, work is part of Freinet schools; it is work that makes the student sweat and, if this cannot be done, the children will simulate work-games, that is games that simulate the activity necessary to carry out work such as mowing, climbing, sowing, etc. Freinet believed that physical work constituted a natural necessity (of a biological nature) and the source of any type of human learning.

For this author, abstract intellectual development itself would be better formed and developed through the understanding, construction and improved handling of technological instruments, such as the press. For Freinet it is based on the concrete daily experience of young children in specific communities and cultures that constitute the school organization and curriculum. This does not happen with school education in Portugal remaining confined to enclosed spaces where students rarely have contact with the community outside.

John Dewey lived on another continent, in another time and in a cultural context from that of Freinet. His pedagogical influence was – and is – enormous, being one of the theorists who gave rise to the decentralized and regional school subsystem in the USA. This author established interdisciplinary *curricula*, and learning should result from concrete actions by students in their daily lives.

Mary-Catherine Bateson wrote about learning and education based on her experience as a student, as a teacher, and as a planner and administrative officer at a university educational institution. Her training took place in the USA. All of Mary-Catherine Bateson's activities in the various educational subsystems in which she participated make her a privileged author when it comes to educational matters, and especially when it comes to pedagogy, given that it was in this area in which she was building and developing her educational concepts and practices. Her books intertwine in especially favorable ways her experiences as an 18-year-old Torah student in Israel, her teaching and anthropological activity in the Philippines, and her work as a planner and manager in private North American schools in Iran. From her books we also learn that she was the rector of a prestigious North American university, that she is the mother of a girl, that she is the wife of an Armenian engineer, the daughter of two of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. But the most important contribution of her work is the articulation of all levels and contexts of individual and community learning and the testimony that this situation places us in a meta-level of permanent and community-based learning.

Thus, framed by the thoughts of these three authors (Freinet, Dewey, Mary-Catherine Bateson), we undertook a critique of the relevance of everyday learning in the school world. Some of the most important elements of this criticism are: the school's focus on what the student does not know; the cultural standardization of the school; the school as a privileged place of learning; the widespread belief at schools in evolutionary learning; the devaluation of the potential for error; very generalized CVs; teaching loads incompatible with biological learning rhythms; the devaluation of learning on the spot, etc. (Oliveira, 1999).

In 2015, the United Nations Organisation (UN) identified seventeen objectives to achieve for countries by 2030; each of which has sub-items. They emanate from the last CONFITEA (*International Conference of Adult Education*), at the time (held in Belém do Pará, Brazil). The effectiveness and importance of these objectives can only be understood in an integrated view and interaction between all, in a holistic epistemological perspective (UNESCO, 2015: 4).

In the social domain, however, many are concerned with achieving some of these objectives in isolation, thus failing to achieve the potential that a holistic action would provide, even though it is more difficult to perform. In action-research we clearly understand this complementarity between all these objectives.

If we take into account the Greek and contemporary purpose of pedagogy, in accordance with the above, we can say that Pedagogues in Portugal are those who train and act as professionals who implement, partially or fully the *2030 Agenda* (UNESCO, 2015), with training models suitable for this objective.

The UN has continually warned of the danger of 'Westernizing' these ob-

jectives, highlighting the heterogeneity of cultures and philosophies of life that must be included in them, focusing also on the immanence of human being as part of nature.

We note that for the first time, the short-term objectives announced by the UN assume lifelong learning and education agendas, with implications for literacy. In fact, if in many countries the problem of literacy is still a lamentable problem, in the so-called developed world we are faced with increasing levels of illiteracy. Paradoxically, a huge concern about digitized literacy for the entire population has been that it creates illiteracy of what has already been learned. This creates the need for relearning through manual writing and reading, and critical thinking, immensely hampered by the logic of digital networks and the misinformation they promote ('learning to learn', one of the 4 pillars of education – Delors, 2020, and level 1 of learning according to Gregory Bateson: Oliveira, 2013).

10.3 Higher education professionals

After the April revolution, the first Faculties of Sciences of Education emerged in Portugal, linked to Psychology, as had occurred in much of Europe, such as France. The first was in Lisbon and its model focused on teacher training, an ideology that served as the basis for the colleges that emerged later in the rest of the country. This focus is understandable because the country had an illiteracy rate of around 80%, and we must mention the extremely important role played by popular education (almost exclusively by volunteers, right after the revolution) in the attempt to improve access to education (not just school) in rural and interior areas of the country.

For Freire, popular education is an antidote to oppression. It constitutes an education that defines the well-being and collective happiness of its subjects as the goal of education. Education is not limited to transmitting but, above all, aims to produce knowledge as a constituent element of the practice of liberty. Whilst intending to emancipate, education takes dialogue as its starting point and pedagogical instrument. Equally, education and learning are understood as processes which are an integral part of our whole life span – life-wide and life-deep, hence the pertinence of the concept of lifelong learning and education (Ireland, 2023: 7).

Subsequently, teacher training became autonomous within Sciences of Education as some universities created courses aimed at training professionals specialized in non-formal education. The influence of teaching (educational subsystem) and psychology is visible, however, in several of these courses. The training of these professionals has, in some cases, been the responsibility of academics trained in teaching and psychology.

In the 1980s and onwards, some of those universities invested, however, in directing their academic PhD research in the context of non-formal education,

such as the case of the current author, whose doctoral thesis was especially directed towards the theoretical foundation of life long learning and education (Oliveira, 1999).

Increasingly, non-formal education professionals have been recognised as valuable in actual Portuguese society, and I refer specially to those trained by University of Minho and University of Algarve, since they both have a curriculum completely dedicated to this area of education. The study plan, however, is only formal, so here I will present instead the training provided by UMINHO (University of Minho, Portugal), given that I have worked there for over thirty years.

At UMINHO, after outlining the first study proposal for a degree that would train non-formal educators, we were faced with choosing its name. We opted for a Degree in Education, not Sciences of Education, and it remains so, being the only one in our country, even today, with this title. At the time, degrees in Sciences of Education had a strong component of Basic Education, and at UMINHO we wanted to differentiate ourselves from this situation. In this sense, the majority of students from other universities were basic education teachers who intended to obtain a bachelor's degree. At the University of Coimbra, the Psychology component was so strong that a student with a degree in Sciences of Education obtained the equivalence of the 3rd year of a degree in Psychology (at the time, degrees were for 5 years). At UMINHO such equivalences did not occur.

Currently, the training of higher education professionals (a professional degree that took around 5 years to be recognized in Portugal for our students (Decreto-Lei n.º 115/99; Decreto-Lei n.º 121/2008 from Portuguese government) has two independent cycles: bachelor's degree and master's degree in Education, lasting 3 and 2 years, respectively (according to the Bologna process). Both have undergone changes in 30 years. This degree aims to train professionals capable of designing, implementing and evaluating non-formal or informal education projects in various contexts, namely personal, community, social and even wider geographically (inter-countries, for example).

The Degree in Education, lasting 3 years, trains professionals with the status of Education/Training Professionals capable of intervening in different educational contexts, equipping them with knowledge and skills that allow them to observe and analyse socio-educational contexts, organizations with educational and training capabilities and activities where there are dimensions of education, training and lifelong learning; perform support functions in the identification of educational problems, in the curricular design of courses, in the planning, organization, management and evaluation of programmes and projects, in the training of educators and local development agents, in socio-educational animation, in intervention community and mediation (UMINHO, 2024).

This degree has 3 professional training options in the final year, although all the students are qualified to pursue professionally any of them. I will focus

on the specialty that I consider most relevant to the theme of this chapter: Adult Education and Socio-Community intervention. In this area, students must visit twice a week institutions where they must plan, undertake and evaluate (the users are the ones who evaluate the activities, not the students). The activities must emerge from the anonymous, confidential and consented consultation of the participants, but they must also be theoretically and methodologically based on a problem identified by the participants. The *minimum* number of activities is three. Students are simultaneously taking theoretical and methodological classes in several curricular units.

Thus, from the first year of their degree, students contact professional institutions, for an increasing number of hours each academic year. At the same time, however, they learn to theoretically and methodologically ground their thinking and their growing professional practice. Communication between teachers and students on this course is recognized as very good for achieving this objective. The curricular units are multidisciplinary, sometimes interdisciplinary. In more practical training, they must be of a transdisciplinary nature (Carvalho, 1988) given that the professional activity is intended to be carried out in an action-research methodology. Therefore, it can occur face to face with one person or within a group of people that are not very large, preferably.

Table 1 – Bachelor’s degree on education (UMINHO, Portugal)

BACHELOR DEGREE ON EDUCATION (UMINHO, PORTUGAL)
The 3-year Degree in Education trains senior professionals of Education/Training capable of intervening in various educational settings, by providing the adequate knowledge and skills that would enable them to: observe and analyse socio-educational contexts of organisations with educational and training competencies and of activities where there are educational, training and lifelong learning dimensions; perform support functions in identifying educational problems, in the curriculum design of degrees, in planning, organising, managing and evaluating programmes and projects, in training educators and agents of local development in youth work, in the community intervention and in mediation. This cycle of studies provides graduates in Education with knowledge and skills that enable them to act within and outside the Educational System, particularly in terms of Education, Training, Training Management, Social and Community Intervention and Educational Mediation (UMINHO, 2024).

Source: UMINHOa, 2024.

Given the emergence of the concept of lifelong learning and education (UNESCO, 1976), students are encouraged to include themselves as lifelong learners, and know that they will have to continue learning continuously given the professional variety in which they will be able to carry out professional ac-

tivities. They are also encouraged to realize that each person changes throughout their lifetime and, therefore, learns differently. In this sense, asking the participants with whom they will work in order to know their characteristics, interests and needs is the basis for the work of these graduates and masters.

Concerning the Master's Degree on Education, it will focus on the area of specialisation.

Table 2 – Education (Master's) 2023/24

EDUCATION (MASTER'S) 2023/2024
ECTS:120 Duration: 4 curricular semesters The Master's in Education course is intended for candidates who have a first Degree in Education, Educational Sciences and Degrees in the area of Social and Human Sciences and other related areas who wish to develop and/or deepen knowledge and skills for qualified educational action within the scope of socio-educational and community intervention, training and mediation with young, adult and elderly populations. Main goals: Train professionals capable of investigating, understanding and critically reflecting on the needs, theoretical and praxeological guidelines concerning educational phenomena understood from a lifelong education perspective. Qualify professionals capable of diagnosing, identifying, designing, implementing, managing and evaluating Educational, Training and Mediation Programmes and Projects in organizational and community contexts that enhance emancipation and (trans)formation of conditions and quality of life. Enable the design of educational proposals and/or career/life projects based on the identification, recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal knowledge and learning. Promote the development of advanced research and qualified intervention in the field of education. Provide knowledge for reflection on the ethical and social implications of research and educational intervention processes. Key learning outcomes 1. Understand the fundamental issues underlying the area of specialization and the ability to critically reflect on current political, theoretical and praxeological guidelines. 2. Diagnose and identify educational intervention needs within the area of specialization in different organizational and community contexts. 3. Design, implement, manage and evaluate programmes and projects within the area of expertise. 4. Operate scientific, methodological and technical knowledge to intervene and respond to emerging educational needs and demands, promoting participation, emancipation and individual/collective (trans)formation with a view to improving the living conditions of populations. 5. Design educational or career/life projects based on the identification, recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal knowledge and learning. 6. Investigate themes, processes and practices, as well as carry out qualified interventions in the area of specialization. 7. Reflect on the ethical and social implications of research and educational intervention processes (UMINHOb; 2024).

Source: UMINHOb, 2024.

10.4 Careers

The ideology of Higher Education Professionals is lifelong learning and SGO, as defined by the UN in the mentioned documents. Thus, the scope of work of these professionals covers anyone from birth to death, focusing on the identification and development of non-formal and informal capabilities and needs, even in a school context. They are specially trained to design, develop and evaluate personal/community transformation projects with the participants involved, being continually evaluated and reformulated by everyone.

Currently, the employment of our students of a first degree is usually focused at nursing homes, where our students are known for enhancing the life projects of senior people, abandoning ageist theories and practices². Many of these professionals develop Portuguese society, although, in Training Centres and Companies; Companies; Municipalities; District Social Security Centres; Mediation Offices; Libraries; Culture Houses; Hospitals; Continuing Care Units and Family Health Units; Homes for Children and Youth; Assistance Centres for Children and Young People with SEN; Prison Establishments; Support Institutions for Young, Adult and Elderly People; Schools; Social Neighbourhoods; Civic and Community Centres; NGO; CPCJ; ERPI; IPSS; Museums, libraries, etc (UMINHOb, 2024).

In the master's degree in Adult Education and Community Intervention, the impact on the 17 sustainable development objectives is more evident. The internship period is 9 months and there is one year to prepare the thesis (which includes these 9 months), which reinforces the need for the research methodology to continually oscillate between praxis and theory. Master degree guarantees a high employment rate, with many remaining to work where they studied as their first job, and where monthly salaries improve.

Given the variety of institutions, the salary level varies. At private institutions the average amount is €900 (Bachelor's degree) to €1.400 (Master's degree), excluding the state taxes which are very high in Portugal. Salaries can increase according to the years of work, if it is a public job. These professionals work 35-40h/week.

10.5 Case study

The case study concerns a community vegetable garden project within a Roma community by a Higher Education Professional in Adult Education and Community intervention of UMINHO, in a rural context. The property belongs to a NGO. It was named «Seeding to educate: potentialize the empowerment

² It should be noted that Portugal has a very low birth rate, with an average of 1.3% per fertile women, with a high number of centenarians, and with the fourth age (85-100 years) growing exponentially (Carneiro et al, 2012).

and citizenship with a non-formal adult education project». It took place during the internship of Alexandra Silva (Silva, 2016) under my supervision. Two years later a summary of it was published in Brazil (Silva and Oliveira, 2018), and publicly inserted in the UMINHO official document platform (RepositoriUM). These data, were identified by a semi-structured questionnaire which had a part of identification of interests by the participants directly involved. After accepting the use of the property of the NGO, the research continued by all to identify what to plant/seed and with what purposes. A professional agriculture engineer (paid by NGO) collaborated in some of these activities.

. Analysing the responses, we can see that there were ten participants, mostly domestic workers, or studying at night (adult formal education for illiterate scholars), since 12 years of formal education is mandatory in Portugal. The average age was 29 years, and they were unemployed, some with children of their own. This project provided them with experience and knowledge in one of the areas with the greatest lack of workers in Portugal: agriculture.

Regarding the education level of adults, it is understood that there were no completely illiterates (given that education is mandatory in Portugal), although there were immense difficulties, especially with regard to reading and writing. The majority were completing the 4th year in night school, with the 9th year representing the highest level of education for these people.

The data arise from a semi-structured, pre-tested survey of interests and needs. From processing of the data collected, the following activities were constructed, framed under the following themes: health education, intercultural education; environmental education, and personal development.

The general objectives have been: increase autonomy; promote health education and environmental education; training for integration into the world of work; provide adults with new experiences and learning, developing them personally and socially; promote intergenerationality; promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important aspects of their community/society; provide visibility to the project among local authorities. We have chosen to present some of the main activities occurring during the nine months of the implementation of this project, specifying the objectives of each chosen activity (see Table 3). Each activity has been evaluated by all the participants before proceeding to the next one, and the results obtained in one activity could demand changes in those already planned, always in accordance with the participants. The main information about the participants' evaluation of the activities was obtained through informal conversations and PBL - Problem Based Learning which had to be solved during, or after the activities. The use of this technique is justified by the understanding of how adults act when faced with concrete problematic situations and daily events and trains decision-making ability.

Qualitative methodology was preponderant during all the process, valuing methods and techniques that are especially important when working with participatory action research, such as informal conversations, participant observation and logbooks. In the construction of the activities, several methods were

used, such as teamwork; survey of previous ideas; field notes; peer learning; photovoice.

Teamwork: as Freire repeatedly reminded us, human beings do not educate themselves or learn in isolation, but rather it is in interaction that personal development and community development (SDG) occur. This is why group work was chosen to carry out various activities in this project, which enhances peer-to-peer learning, also mentioned here as a learning method.

Survey of Previous Ideas: with this introspective technique, we seek to raise awareness of preconceptions that a person/community has about a topic; Being at the level of belief, it is not always easy to achieve this recognition without being deliberate. If Romanians are often victims of this type of prejudice, the same happens with them regarding other issues, such as the devaluation of formal knowledge. That's why we used this technique in actions, such as organic waste, using three materials: text, images, videos. In a dialogical stance, all participants identified previous ideas that excluded others, and began to reflexively make them more flexible, to later verify them in a practical context.

Field notes: field notes constitute a valuable action research technique, as they contain doubts, reflections, comments that are apparently irrelevant to an activity plan, for example, but which make it possible to later understand gaps/improvements/strengths that are not addressed or given due importance. In the case of this case study, it was important to understand the importance of activities related to conviviality, such as Tea Time and Picnic.

Peer learning: peer learning occurs mainly at an informal level, and is a type of learning setting based on trust and humility, which represents added value when you want to integrate individuals or minorities into communities or societies. In the activities we mention in this chapter, this type of learning underlies all the activities that were carried out in groups.

Photovoice: with Photovoice, photography is used as the main means that gives participants a chance to communicate nonverbally, expressing their experiences and meanings. This method was used as a way to encourage people to identify and think about facets of their personal, family and community daily events. The use of this method required training that was provided after all participants agreed on the importance of using the method. The adults began by answering five questions, which guided the following eleven sessions, as can be seen in the brief description of the activity.

Critical dialogue was stimulated, as well as knowledge about important aspects of their community, so that in the end they felt prepared to project their own vision of their lives to others, especially to local political agents, namely in an exhibition of their photos.

Table 3 – Activities

	Specific objectives
Training Action 'Family budget'	Promote good financial practices; Predict the positive and negative consequences of different decisions and actions. Prepare a family management plan.
Training Action 'Conserve to save'	Encourage self-consumption of food produced in the garden; Explain the different ways of preserving/cooking food; Contribute to balancing family budgets
Training Action 'Organic compost'	Produce quality organic compost; Contribute to the formation of awareness, actions, attitudes and capabilities that encourage the community to carry out sustainable activities;
Photovoice Training	This activity developed as follows: First 5 sessions – Introduction to Photovoice: Explanation of the technique; brief explanation of how the camera works. Session 6 – Presentation and explanation of the starting question whose answers should be presented in photographic format: Did this project change your life, and in what ways? (on an economic, social, emotional, physical and cognitive level) Session 7 Collecting and choosing photos. Session 8 Presentation of works.
Photo Exhibition	Public photo exhibition, commented by their authors in the municipal library of the municipality where this project took place.
Garden in love Cut out several red hearts of different sizes to place on the garden fences. Poems linked to love and nature were written on these hearts; larger ones were placed in the trees on the fishing trail, which in the late afternoon is also a refuge for many couples who like to exchange vows of love by the local river.	Develop writing and reading Express and communicate affections Enrich the notion of a group (cohesion, sharing, teamwork, trust, sensitivity, interpersonal relationships, initiative, expression and self-control). Stimulate adults' technical-manual skills, creativity and imagination; Make known the work carried out by the participants.

Tea Time - learning to be This activity was divided in two parts: 1- the making of aromatic cookies; 2- the organization of tea time with table composition according to social rules. On each napkin was a poem written by one of the adults. The tea was fresh rosemary from the garden. We also created small souvenirs (jars with cookies) of this activity to offer to all members of the NGO's technical team, who were invited to this activity.	Provide adults with new experiences and learning Promote personal and social development. Stimulate know-how, in different contexts (formal/non-formal); Promote coexistence; Combat social isolation; Identify the main species of aromatic plants; Promote knowledge of the benefits of different plants; Use smell and taste to identify them.
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Source: Silva, 2016; Silva and Oliveira, 2018.

10.6 Results

The project aimed to contribute to the social insertion of adults by making this public aware of such simple things that our society requires, but that not everyone knows, which leads to these adults being socially penalized; A clear example of this is the act of filling out the IRS (annual tax declaration, in Portugal), noting that only 2 members of the target population knew what this practice consisted of.

Any action research project has its ups and downs and must be flexible to adjust to possible changes. 'Seeding to Educate' underwent some changes compared to what was initially planned, so that the activities met everyone's expectations and interests, and successfully achieved their purpose.

The changes that occurred in the large group, since the beginning of the implementation of the 'Seeding to Educate' project, occurred in small details. Those who could not listen to others without interrupting them began to know how to do so; those who did not distinguish between being with colleagues in the garden and being in a meeting or training, already did so at the end of the project; whoever answered their cell phone in the middle of training, in the middle of a conversation, got up to answer their cell phone elsewhere, without disturbing the training; those who sometimes refused to share tools (or even agricultural surpluses) began to do so with their colleagues; those who sometimes argued violently were now able to reflect and discuss without verbal aggression. These are apparently small changes but they make all the difference, showing the importance of the work carried out, in line with the guidelines of the learning-to-be pillars of education.

Adults had a very limited conception of learning and thought that it only

occurred in the classroom and that for this to occur there must be tables, chairs and written exercises. It was necessary to deconstruct this conception of learning. It was a process of dialogue, of sharing, in a horizontal relationship, without hierarchies or authorities, as the participants stopped seeing us as superiors who only wanted to evaluate (their conception of teachers), to be considered as participants, interested in their life lpaths. and who want to get to know them as people, valuing their cultural and personal identity.

The project lasted 9 months, having been suspended for some time. It is currently still active, with the support of the institution that provides the land.

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Chapter 11 The Pedagogue in UK

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11.1 The context of social pedagogy in Scotland

This chapter identifies developments in social pedagogy across the UK more broadly but, reflecting the location and experiences of the authors, is written from a Scottish perspective. Despite a number of initiatives over the past couple of decades, which we come on to outline, there is still not a distinct or formally recognised social pedagogy profession in Scotland or in the UK.

Historically, social pedagogy has had limited purchase in Anglo-American traditions (Hämäläinen, 2003). One of the reasons for this is that most of the foundational literature is in German and largely inaccessible to an Anglophone audience. However, there are also wider cultural reasons for the lack of take-up, linked to a tendency to individualise social problems in an Anglo-American tradition. There is also a limited conception of education within that tradition and a consequent bifurcation of education and care (Smith and Whyte, 2008). Recent years, however, did see an upsurge in interest in social pedagogy across the UK, although this now seems to be waning, as we come to describe.

To understand the similarities but also the differences in social welfare between Scotland and the rest of the UK, it is necessary to understand the existing political settlement. Scotland has a devolved administration, the Scottish Parliament, based in Edinburgh, which has full executive powers over social welfare and education functions. However, key areas of fiscal policy, are reserved to the UK Government and this can restrict the scope of welfare decisions. Moreover, the institutions of the state continue to reflect elements of a common history and the dominance of the UK state ideologies. Smith and Cree (2018) argue that Scotland's positioning geographically and ideologically between individualising Anglo-American models of practice and European social democratic ones can lead to it 'talking' one game (the progressive European nation) while 'walking' another (that of the neoliberal state) (Mooney and Scott, 2016).

The concept of social pedagogy has been argued to resonate with Scottish traditions of social welfare (Smith and Whyte, 2008). Professional social work can be traced back to the Kilbrandon Report (1964), which was commissioned to investigate the problem of juvenile delinquency. The Kilbrandon Committee was aware of and sought to learn from European, and particularly Scandina-

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vian, thinking around social welfare and in many respects, eschewed Anglo-American models of practice. Specifically, it located social welfare within a social education paradigm. Asquith et al (2005, p23) argued that the report's conception of social education was 'based on principles much akin to those of social pedagogy', whereby children's offending behaviour and/or their need for care was attributed to a failure in upbringing, a concept with a clear social pedagogical pedigree (Mollenhauer, 1983, 2014). According to Kilbrandon, the remedy for shortcomings in the upbringing process was to be social education or 'education in its broadest sense' to incorporate all aspects of family and community life. Accordingly, Kilbrandon proposed the development of social education departments within which to locate social welfare functions. In the event, many of his ideas were adopted but incorporated into more generic social work departments following the 1968, Social Work (Scotland) Act.

Whyte (2018) notes that the socio-educational paradigm proposed by Kilbrandon was consistent with and pre-dated major international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its associated guidance, which point to social welfare policies and practices based around a broad conception of legal, social and cultural rights and socio-educational means through which these might be realised. In Anglophone countries, by contrast, rights have come to assume a narrow contractual and legalistic focus with a predominant emphasis on protection (Petrie et al, 2009).

The early years of professional social work in Scotland, following the 1968 Act, aligned with other progressive developments in Scotland, such as the roll-out of comprehensive schools and a vibrant community education presence, which linked education, youth work and community development in an attempt to regenerate and empower communities (Paterson, 2000). In social work, there was not the same separation of functions as in other European countries; social workers in Scotland undertook administrative aspects such as assessment and resource allocation but also took on many direct socio-educational functions such as groupwork and activities, which elsewhere in Europe would have been undertaken by social Pedagogues or social educators. There was also, throughout the 1970s and 80s, a strong community social work strand, operating alongside other established professions such as community education and youth work, which were firmly rooted in social pedagogical principles, all of which focussed on understanding the structural basis of most social problems. So, in many senses, the social work profession that emerged in Scotland after 1968 aligned with and incorporated many social pedagogical principles and practices.

Brodie et al (2008) make the case that the years following the 1968 Act witnessed a commitment in Scotland to high quality universal public services with a strong welfarist ideology, often buttressed by the dominance of the Labour Party in local and national politics. Over time, however, Scottish social work went the same way as the UK as a whole: witnessing a short spurt of growth and optimism over the 1970s followed by a prolonged and continuing

period of restricted funding, professional self-doubt and organisational turmoil (Clark and Smith, 2012). Community education and youth work suffered the same fate.

Many of these shifts can be associated with the neoliberal political and economic regime of the Thatcher era from the 1980s, which saw individualism replace the kind of collective ideas that had characterised previous decades (Daniel and Scott, 2018). Neoliberal ideologies became reified in the managerial cultures, which came to dominate social work and other public services. Lorenz (2008, p640) identifies managerialism as being the 'diametrical opposite to humanist pedagogy' subverting key socio-pedagogical and indeed social work concepts of enhancing individual and family empowerment and civil society initiative.

Conceptually, while there is an obvious affinity between the two disciplines. Lorenz argues that the key characteristic distinguishing social pedagogy from the kind of social work that emerged over the 1980s and 90s, is that it is not primarily 'deficit-oriented'. For much of the 1970s, social work in Scotland and perhaps across the UK, was not particularly deficit oriented. However, as the neoliberal reforms from the 1980s onwards reduced the profession to increasingly narrow considerations of risk and protection, it became increasingly so, but without the parallel presence of a distinct social pedagogical profession to offer a counterbalance, as is the case across most of Europe.

While there remain social welfare roles that are analogous to those of the social Pedagogue or social educator, these are likely to be found in other (regulated) professions such as social work, community education, perhaps places like mental health nursing or within the broad field of social care. Social care has never become established as a profession, remaining fragmented, low status and without any discernible professional identity. While some practitioners in such fields of practice might express an affinity to and might practise in broadly social pedagogical ways, there is no widely accepted or practised body of knowledge and, as a result, no professional qualification in social pedagogy and no professional infrastructure.

Some of the problems that were a feature of the dominant risk and protection focus in social work were, over time, recognised and principles central to social pedagogy practice were increasingly incorporated at policy level into various sectors, including social care and education. Some key policy initiatives appeared to signal a broader shift towards holistic, relational approaches include the *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) policy (Scottish Executive, 2008) *National Care Standards* (Scottish Executive, 2002) and the *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Government, 2004), each of which stress the importance of relationships, holistic wellbeing, and experiential learning. This coincided (or perhaps reflected) a growing interest in ideas of social pedagogy and the emergence of a number of initiatives to support this (outlined in the following section).

However, in recent years any momentum has been lost and overshadowed

by a turn towards more individually psychologising (and arguably pathologizing) forms of practice, exemplified in the dominance of policy based around policies that had their origins in America, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) studies (Fellitti et al, 1998), closely linked with ideas of trauma informed practice (Scottish Government, 2021).

While probably not directly or consciously linked, a further layer to this turn to American ideas was added as a result of the 2016 Brexit vote to leave the European Union (although a substantial majority of Scots voted to remain in Europe). This reinforced an attitude that the UK had little to learn from our continental neighbours. The traction that had been building around social pedagogy has been halted, replaced by the deficit-based nature of developments around ACEs and trauma. In Scotland, this development proceeded oblivious to the dissonance between this and the Scottish Government's 'progressive' and 'therapeutic' rhetoric.

Such a therapeutic ethos, with its emphasis on the self, came to align quite naturally with the neoliberal ideas of the New Right (Foster, 2016). Fraser (2017) suggests that economic neoliberalism has been successful due to its capacity to be cloaked in progressive credentials. In practice contexts, a consequence of a social lens through which to understand personal and collective experience has been the further marginalisation of professions such as social work and community education (Smith et al, 2021).

A final observation around the wider cultural climate that provides the backdrop to our reflections on the place and prospects of social pedagogy in Scotland and the UK is an epistemological one. The more one turns to positivist models such as ACEs or to trauma, with their origins in a clinical paradigm, the less one considers what kind of knowledge base is required to practise from a social pedagogical orientation. Ucar (2023) makes the case that this needs to be rooted in the everyday, reflecting what Smith (2020) identifies as a practical rather than a technical or scientific rationality. Psychological models, by contrast, reinforce a positivist and ostensibly scientific rationality.

11.2 Social pedagogy: training and qualifications

As noted in the previous section, there was, over the course of the noughties, growing interest in and activity around social pedagogy in the UK, mostly in the field of residential child care. This was picked up in policy circles, prompted by the realisation that the quality of life and outcomes for children in care across parts of Europe was better than in the UK. The UK government at the time funded research to investigate this disparity. Academics at the Thomas Coram Research Unit at University College London were commissioned to undertake comparative studies (Petrie et al, 2006) to explore the theory and practice of social pedagogy. This led to the establishment of an international network of academics across Europe, the Centre for Understanding Social Ped-

agogy (CUSP). At a practice level, political interest led to pilot projects that explored whether, and how, social pedagogy might be introduced in the UK (Cameron et al, 2011). Alongside this, the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care in England advocated for social pedagogy as the default practice orientation for residential childcare. This led to a project involving German and Danish social Pedagogues seeking to introduce social pedagogical ways of working in several residential settings (Bengtsson et al, 2008).

On the back of these developments, a training company, ThemPra, was established and from 2009, began to run regular and popular Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) events and has developed a very useful website. An open access journal, *The International Journal of Social Pedagogy*, was established and a Massive Open Online Course developed, now available for free at Coursera. The Social Pedagogy Professional Association, (SPPA) a UK membership organisation set up in 2019 to develop quality assurance mechanisms for qualifications in social pedagogy. Reflecting this growing interest and activity, Claire Cameron was appointed the UK's first Professor of Social Pedagogy (at UCL) in 2017.

Despite the energy that surrounded such developments, there remains, across the UK, no widely accepted or practised body of knowledge and no state recognised professional qualification in social pedagogy. Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, which is the regulator for children's services in England, is aware of social pedagogic qualifications and will approve them for certain roles without institutionally endorsing them. Several training programmes that can lead to the designation of 'Social Pedagogical Practitioner' (category 2) are endorsed by the SPPA. However, presently, there are no programmes designated as 'category 1' leading to the title of 'Social Pedagogue' (Register of Endorsed Programmes | Social Pedagogy Professional Association (sppa-uk.org)).

A number of universities in England have integrated modules on social pedagogy within existing degree programmes in youth and community work, as well as social work. For instance, the University of Portsmouth offers modules as part of its BA (Hons) Childhood & Youth Studies program, while the University of South Wales also incorporates social pedagogy modules into its curriculum.

Furthermore, there are two Bachelor qualifications in Social Pedagogy available in England. The first is provided by Kingston University, offering a BA (Hons) 'Working with Children and Young People: Social Pedagogy,' which is a three-year, full-time programme preparing graduates for professional roles in various sectors such as health, social care, education, and youth justice. Core theory modules of the curriculum are 'Social Pedagogy Practice Values and Ethics', 'Children and Young People's Development, Relationships and Social Contexts', 'Children and Young People: Rights and Responsibilities', and 'Developing Creative Approaches to Working with Children and Young People'. Additionally, students undertake two work placements in settings such as

youth justice, early intervention, health services, schools, and children's centres.

The second bachelor's program, offered by the University of Worcester, is the BA 'Early Childhood in Society', which allows students to choose between the Department for Education and Ofsted approved qualification or the Social Pedagogy (category 2) pathway endorsed by SPPA. This program, offered as a 1-3 year full-time course depending on the entry route, is designed for individuals aspiring to work in the broader early childhood workforce, and is '*underpinned by the philosophy of social pedagogy*'. The pathway in social pedagogy aims to equip students for employment in areas such as residential care, the third sector, and counselling. It emphasises understanding the holistic nature of child development and its environmental influences, focusing on the child's development within their wider context and the implications for practice. The course advocates for quality provision for Early Childhood, fostering students' professional development and ability to work across professional boundaries. Students on this pathway also engage in mandatory 210 hours of practice-based learning each year in various early years settings and Ofsted registered settings or regulated, wider provision (Early Childhood in Society BA (Hons) - University Of Worcester). Again, however, none of these courses lead to a professionally recognised social pedagogy qualification.

In Scotland, a three-year BA in Social Pedagogy was developed in partnership between the Camphill Schools Aberdeen <https://www.camphillschools.org.uk/> and Aberdeen University and was accredited by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Formerly known as the 'BA in *Curative Education*', the BA in Social Pedagogy, initially reflected a theoretical framework based around Rudolph Steiner's concept of anthroposophy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/documents/BASPCelebration2014.pdf>). The evolution of the course from *Curative Education* to Social Pedagogy in 2010 signalled a transition from its erstwhile Steiner-based theoretical framework to a more expansive interdisciplinary and inter-professional knowledge base reflective of broader European social pedagogical traditions. It emphasised creativity, the integration of theory and practice, critical reflection, and personal and professional development. However, the programme maintained a fundamental tie to anthroposophy, so it couldn't be regarded as solely centred on an acknowledged body of social pedagogical knowledge. Predominantly comprising international students who concurrently resided and worked within Camphill communities in various care and education capacities, the programme faced several external challenges due to stringent new immigration rules and limitations on the ratio of practice/theory hours for international students. This, and reservations at senior management within the university around the course's ongoing connection with anthroposophy, led to its discontinuation in 2014.

Although the BA in Social Pedagogy no longer exists, social pedagogic principles continue to be visible in many of the Camphill Communities in Scotland with *ThemPra* continuing to deliver various SPPA endorsed learning

programmes (Our Courses - ThemPra Social Pedagogy). As well as continued buy-in from Camphill Communities across Scotland, *ThemPra* has also developed social pedagogic practice in Scotland through various training courses for both local authority and third-sector care providers.

However, despite some of these organisations stating that they are grounded in a social pedagogical orientation, it can be argued that these principles often form only a part of a broader array of approaches to social care, social work, and education. One example of this is a large provider in Scotland that offers a variety of residential and educational services for children and young people with complex needs. While claiming the foundational role of social pedagogy in guiding their practice and providing essential concepts and skills, they also emphasise the growing therapeutic and trauma-informed aspects of their approach.

There is arguably a conceptual mismatch between approaches built around social pedagogy and those that reflect the more individualised, clinical and, arguably, pathologising direction that is reflected in ACEs or trauma-informed practice. The risk is that a more nuanced social understanding of the human condition is overshadowed by a culturally ascendant and narrow turn to biology and specifically to neuroscience (Wastell and White, 2012).

11.3 Case study

Our case study draws on the experiences of one of the authors (Mark) who, with his family, became foster carers for an unaccompanied asylum seeker and, as an extension of this role, support several other boys (they were all boys) who had arrived in Scotland in similar circumstances (see Daly and Smith, 2021). The account that follows considers the case of ‘Amir’, a composite of several of those boys. It counterposes how Amir might be dealt with through what has become a dominant trauma-based approach with what a social pedagogical orientation might bring to a professional response.

Briefly, Amir was a 15-year-old Muslim boy when he fled his home and family in East Africa as a result of political strife and his ethnic grouping being targeted by security forces. He was smuggled out of his home country and transported by Jeep convoy across the North African desert, spending time in a Libyan work camp. He was then put on a small boat to cross the Mediterranean to Italy. The boat got into trouble and those on it were rescued by Italian coastguards. Amir and some companions were landed but not legally processed in Italy and spent the next six months travelling through Europe until they reached the Calais migrant camps. When the Calais Camps were closed and those housed there dispersed, the UK Government agreed to take a small number of unaccompanied minors, who were distributed across local authorities. They were placed in residential care or foster care settings.

Amir came to live with Mark and his family. Early on, we were confronted

with assumptions from doctors and social workers that Amir would inevitably be traumatised by his experiences. Any training on offer was around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (Felitti et al, 1998), which seemed ridiculously inadequate to capture the extent of experiences, which by any stretch of the imagination are about as 'adverse' as one could envisage. But trauma is only diagnosed by its symptoms and there was no sign of any of the boys showing the expected signs of trauma. This began to raise questions about the cultural specificity and the assumptions made by trauma-based approaches and how appropriate it is to take as a starting point, what is essentially a deficit-based approach to working with people who have encountered difficult experiences in their lives, and one which proceeds from an assumption of harm. This didn't fit with our observations or our orientations towards child care, which was informed by social pedagogical perspectives.

So what might a social pedagogical perspective bring to this scenario? In our case, responding to the care and upbringing needs of Amir and his friends required that we look beyond what had happened to the boys to consider their hopes for the future. This in turn called for a wide lens through which to understand what might be going on and to inform how we might best respond.

In the context of foster care, Pithouse and Rees (2011) describe care as happening «within the interdependencies and everyday moral 'workings out' between people in caring relationships. These relationships emerge from care itself as a social process and daily human activity in which the self exists through and with others» (p. 196). Care, they assert, is demonstrated «in broadly cultural and practical actions such as the symbolism of food, issues of the body and aspects of touch» (2011, p. 196). This happens in the context of everyday living and sharing a common life-space (Petrie et al, 2009) and in the course of everyday encounters (Cameron, 2020; Monteux and Monteux, 2020).

The first task for a social Pedagogue in such a situation would be to find out more about Amir, including where he has come from and who and what is important to him, recognising the importance of this associative life (Petrie et al, 2009). This requires theoretical but also investigative and reflexive qualities.

A theoretical understanding might prompt the practitioner to consider the global and local context of Amir and other asylum seekers having arrived in the UK, so researching but more so communicating as best one can with Amir about the political but also the everyday nature of his home situation. A practitioner's understanding should also encompass the political context of immigration policy in the UK, where the political thrust is, often, to promote a 'hostile environment' for asylum seekers or to minimise complexity (the rhetoric is different in Scotland but the political scope to do things differently is limited).

A social Pedagogue might then seek to research and reflect on the needs of asylum seekers. And, while their situations inevitably evoke themes of loss and uprooting, constructing UASC in psycho-pathological terms as passive and vul-

nerable can impose ethnocentric and over-generalised perspectives (Burman, 2016) and underplay their resilience (Wade et al, 2012). Ní Raghallaigh (2013) suggests that there is a need for approaches that emphasise these individual and collective strengths. Hopkins and Hill (2008, p. 404), in their research quoted a social worker who said, 'children don't need therapy, they need a life'. The same article identified the needs of UASC as mostly practical, centring around accommodation, information and legal support and the importance of education to capitalise on their commitment to doing well academically and moving forward in their new lives. All of this might point in the direction of a social pedagogical rather than a trauma-based approach to working with UASCs. So, our starting point was to assume a humanistic orientation towards offering help with practical, educational and recreational opportunities. We come on to consider some of the main tasks we identified for Amir.

An early task was to enrol Amir in the local school. As the literature suggests, most of the boys we have come across have been motivated by an educational ideal. School provided a structure (perhaps a distraction from other areas of their lives) and social opportunities.

Outside of school, football was a central feature of the boys' worlds, what might be thought of in social pedagogic terms as a common third experience (Hadi and Johansen, 2018), providing opportunities for participation and inclusion. All of the boys were football fans and each had a favourite English team. One of the defining moments in Amir's settling into our family was when, early in placement, one of our sons, who coincidentally followed the same English team, took him to London to a game. Family members also involved him in playing in regular five-a-side football games. Football can provide a sense of identity and belonging for children in care (Steckley, 2005) and for UASC it does so in a context where they do not need to know the language to know what is going on, to express themselves, to be understood and to gain status and social contacts.

11.3.1 Relationships

Clearly relationships have always been at the core of social pedagogical practice and, increasingly, are being reclaimed in social work more broadly (Ruch et al, 2018). However, personal/professional relationships aren't straightforward (Steckley, 2020). A social pedagogical perspective would consider relationships less from a clinical and more from a philosophical 'person in relationship' perspective (Macmurray, 1961). Such relationships are forged through adults and children sharing a common life-space.

11.3.2 Culture/Religion

In the case of UASCs relationships must take into account and develop in the context of their faith backgrounds, values and ways of life. A primary con-

cern in caring for children from other national or cultural backgrounds is to establish a sense of cultural safety which Fulcher (2003, p. 20) describes as involving 'the state of being in which a child or young person experiences that her/his personal wellbeing, as well as their social and cultural frames of reference, are acknowledged – even when not fully understood' by those caring for them.

One of the cultural dimensions we needed to begin to understand was around practices that are considered halal or haram. While we had some idea of halal in relation to food, we had no idea of the extent to which everyday but also major cultural practices were identified as either halal (permissible) or haram (forbidden).

For instance, the identification in Islam of alcohol as haram can extend to a reluctance to even go to places where alcohol is served, which can cut off everyday opportunities such as watching football games in a bar with friends.

Another area that anyone working with UASCs needs an awareness of is around sex. When Muslim boys reach puberty, there is an expectation that female teachers, carers and other female family members who had reached puberty should wear hijab around them. Most UASCs had left their countries of origin as boys, having only seen sexually mature females in Muslim dress, then arriving in the West as young men, to be confronted with girls' bodies and with their own sexualities in a cultural context where sex is not necessarily considered haram.

Muslim attitudes towards sex are set out in the Islamic concept of Zina, which decrees that sex should only happen within marriage. The need to commit Zina is mitigated in Muslim countries through early marriage, which is obviously more complicated for UASC. Even if marriage were practical, it would be difficult to find a girl from a similar cultural background given the imbalance between sexes among UASC.

So, one needs to grapple with what diverse cultural, including sexual moralities and sensibilities might mean in terms of how asylum seekers negotiate relationships in a new and strange world. None of this is mentioned or even considered in how social work engages or fails to engage with such complicated issues.

11.3.3 Encouraging a position facing the world

UASCs exist in a state of liminality (Kohli et al, 2010), navigating the space between their home and host cultures. This introduces a tension between them integrating into the host culture and maintaining their religious and cultural identities. Caring for Amir and the other boys in this liminal space has involved an inversion of what we would have considered to be normal upbringing practices. A key feature in Mollenhauer's (2014) idea of upbringing is of adults passing on a valued cultural heritage to a young person. While this might be a suggestive idea in a monocultural society, it becomes problematic in contexts

where what is valued in a culture can seem very different between carer and cared for. In caring for Amir, our task has been, largely, to negotiate a *modus vivendi* between two very different cultures, ideally encouraging a comfort across both, but always sensitive to the pull of Amir's birth culture, particularly in times of stress. While with our own children the parental role was often to shield them or to pace their entry into the adult world (Mollenhauer, 2014), the task with Amir has been to encourage him to reach a 'position facing the world' (Smith, 2014) – but to allow him to do so comfortably and without feeling that he is betraying his religion and his cultural identity in so doing.

To conclude this section (and this chapter) we would draw out some of the divergences between trauma, which has become the dominant social work response to social work practice, and a social pedagogical orientation. The former, because of its focus on the past and on difficulties encountered there, sticks approaches within a deficit frame. It also, potentially, sticks people's narratives within such a frame, preventing them from telling more hopeful stories. Such an orientation narrows practitioners' field of vision and their scope for imagination and creativity. It evinces a narrow, psychological and broadly 'therapeutic' worldview, which fails to appreciate alternative intellectual or professional perspectives, particularly those that express any level of social analysis or critique. A social pedagogical response, by contrast, requires a more humanistic and artistic approach that appreciates culture alterity, embraces complexity, and tolerates not knowing. While such an approach is much needed, the portents for it being accepted within the contemporary political and cultural landscape in the UK (and perhaps more widely) are not particularly hopeful.

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Chapter 12

Pedagogical Workers in the Czech Republic

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12.1 Introduction

At a time when the impact of the global economic crisis exacerbates social issues and inequalities in all stages of life, we need to launch an important debate about the role of education and social support. In the Czech Republic, where education is a key pillar of social stability, the growing significance of the teaching professions is evident. Despite their crucial importance to society, the teaching professions are facing many challenges in the Czech Republic. The education system at all levels is constantly changing and reforming. Currently, many schools are struggling with a shortage of qualified teachers; the teaching profession is not very attractive for young people, even though the state is trying to improve its social prestige and salary conditions. That's why we need continuous support of current educators as well as educators in training who will play an irreplaceable role in the education of future generations. Pedagogical workers can be crucial in coordinating between various educational and social institutions in order to effectively respond to the needs of diverse populations. In this context, the specific situation of social educators is hotly debated, as they are positioned at the intersection of education, social work and community work. Their job still does not have any anchoring in Czech legislation, which makes it difficult to plan and implement long-term strategies of working with socially disadvantaged and otherwise vulnerable groups.

12.2 Definition of a Pedagogical Worker and the Regulatory Framework

In the Czech Republic, the teaching profession is regulated by Act No. 563/2004 Coll., On Pedagogical Workers, which defines the requirements for their qualification and the forms and content of further education programmes for pedagogical workers as well their rights and obligations. The law also sets out the conditions for obtaining and recognizing pedagogical qualifications. Within the scope of the Act, the term 'pedagogical worker' (*pedagog*) applies to persons who are professionally engaged in education and training and carry out teaching, educational, special pedagogical or pedagogical-psychological activities by acting upon the person being trained or educated. Direct pedagogical activity is performed by teachers in facilities providing further training of pedagogical workers, educators, special educators, school speech therapists,

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psychologists, leisure time educators, pedagogical assistants, trainers, prevention methodologists at pedagogical-psychological counselling centers or senior pedagogical workers (typically the head teachers of their respective institutions). These professionals work in various educational institutions from preschools through primary and secondary schools to universities and other facilities that specialize in educational work with children, adolescents and adults. It is the duty of all pedagogical workers to carry out their pedagogical activities in accordance with the principles and objectives of education; protect and respect the rights of the child, pupil or student; protect the health and safety of the child, pupil or student and prevent all forms of risky behaviour in schools and school facilities; through their approach to education and training, create a positive and safe atmosphere in the school environment and support its development; maintain confidentiality and protect against misuse all personal data, information about the health condition of children, pupils and students as well as the results of counselling assistance of the school assistance facility and workplace, with which the pedagogical worker came into contact; provide to the child, pupil, student or their legal guardian information related to education and training (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.).

The history of the teaching profession in the Czech Republic is closely linked to the development of the education system, which has undergone many significant changes, particularly after 1989. Modernization of the education system included reforms aimed at decentralization, inclusive education and support of lifelong learning. One of the most important and eagerly awaited steps was the adoption of the new Schools Act in 2004 (Act No. 561/2004 Coll., On Preschool, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education), which had been prepared as a comprehensive legal standard for the entire field known as regional education and introduced many new elements. A new concept of curriculum documents has been adopted. For each field of education, Framework Educational Programmes are issued that are binding for the preparation of school curricula. The secondary school-leaving exam (*maturita*) has been transformed and generally speaking, the new Act attempted to deepen the democratization of education and strengthen the Czech education system in the European context. In addition to the Schools Act, another important piece of legislation was adopted: Act No. 563/2004 Coll., On Pedagogical Workers. Both together completed the process of pluralization, democratization and decentralization of education, the aim of which is to ensure that the out-of-school environment has a direct influence on the education system (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2009).

12.3 Training Path and Curricular Competences

Dynamic changes in the curriculum were introduced in the Czech Republic by the new Schools Act (No. 561/2004 Coll.) of 2004, mentioned above. The curricular reform introduced Framework Educational Programmes for all types

of schools as well as School Educational Programmes, which are defined by each school. This change placed new demands on teachers and their further education (Šejnohová, 2023).

In the Czech Republic, there are several key organizations that represent the interests of pedagogical workers. These include the Chamber of Pedagogy, which is currently the largest association in Czech education. The Czech Association of Pedagogical Research (ČAPV) is a professional interest organization whose mission is to improve the educational process through pedagogical research, exchange of information between pedagogical researchers and the dissemination of the results of pedagogical research as well as their practical application. The ČAPV organizes an annual conference that brings together pedagogical workers and researchers from all over the Czech Republic and abroad. Another organization is the Czech Pedagogical Society, which also focuses on the professional development of educators, as well as the Czech-Moravian Trade Union of Education Workers, which is dedicated to protecting the rights and interests of people working in the education system. There are also many other associations that bring together pedagogical staff in specific areas (e.g. the Association of Preschool Education, Association of Primary School Educators, Association of Social Educators, Association of Special Educators, etc.).

In addition to these associations and unions, pedagogical workers are also supported by the Faculties of Education, which are part of many Czech universities. There are also private and public tertiary schools that among other things prepare future educators for their teaching practice. Becoming an educator in the Czech Republic requires an academic degree in education, which is offered by Faculties of Education at various universities. The degree must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The basic educational path is study at a Faculty of Education or another faculty that includes Bachelor's and subsequent Master's courses. The Bachelor's programmes typically take 3 years and focus on core pedagogical disciplines and preparation for further study. The Master's programmes take two years and are more specialized, preparing students for specific teaching positions or other roles in education. The total duration of education required to become a fully qualified pedagogical worker is usually five years. However, the system for training pedagogical workers does not end with the five-year study programmes. A pedagogical worker is obliged to continue to expand, deepen and renew their education and broaden their qualifications throughout their career, which means even after completing their studies leading to professional qualification. The system of further education of pedagogical workers includes programmes that can expand or improve their qualification; these are in particular lifelong learning programmes run by universities or other facilities for further education of pedagogical workers as well as self-study options.

The structure of educational programmes providing qualification for the teaching profession combine theoretical and practical knowledge. They include

subjects such as pedagogy, psychology, didactics, teaching methodology and subject-specific disciplines depending on the focus (e.g. mathematics, languages, natural sciences, special education, social education, etc.). According to Government Decree No. 275/2016 Coll., On the Areas of Education in Higher Education, courses providing qualifications to pedagogical workers are classified under the areas of teacher education, psychology and non-teacher pedagogy. Typical courses in the field of teacher education are preschool teaching, primary school teaching and secondary school teaching. The general profile of graduates of these programmes includes, depending on the type of course, the knowledge of: pedagogy, special pedagogy, evaluation, interventions and pedagogical psychology; subject-specific specialization; subject didactics and the theory of teaching and learning; knowledge of school legislation; and understanding of the ethical dimension of working with people. With regard to the type of course, graduates are able to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate teaching with respect to the individuality of their pupils and the educational and social context; choose the right methods for assessing the teaching process and learning results, including self-assessment; create a psychosocial environment conducive to learning; suitably communicate with a pupil's legal guardians, all at an appropriate scope and level of detail. The typical professions in this area include: preschool teacher; 'first stage' primary school teacher (years 1–5); 'second stage' primary school teacher (years 6–9); secondary school teacher; teaching assistant; teacher of artistic vocational subjects at a primary art school, secondary school or conservatory; teacher at a higher vocational school or special educator.

The list of typical courses in non-teacher pedagogy include pedagogy, education, special pedagogy, speech therapy, andragogy, leisure time pedagogy and social education. The general profile of graduates of these programmes includes, depending on the type of course, the knowledge of: the terminology, theories and methodological approaches to pedagogy and related fields, in particular psychology and sociology; methodological and conceptual approaches to learning and pedagogical influence over the processes and phenomena of pedagogical reality; methods of learning and pedagogical and pedagogical-psychological personality diagnostics; terminology, theories and methodological approaches to special pedagogy diagnostics and methods for individuals with congenital and acquired sensory disorders of speech and communication at all age levels; communication strategies and approaches, including educational and communication strategies for work with people with special educational needs; historical and contemporary context of a specific field of pedagogy and pedagogy as a whole. With regard to the type of course, graduates are able to: design, conduct and systematically assess the implementation of a pedagogically appropriate solution of pedagogical problems and situations with respect to the specific character and requirements for resolving these problems and situations; apply basic diagnostic and communication strategies and approaches, including educational, counselling and communication strategies

for people with special educational needs; apply strategies from the fields of special pedagogy, diagnostics, therapy and compensation and various approaches including educational, counselling and communication with individuals with sensory disorders of speech and communication at all age levels; utilise knowledge from other fields in a multifaceted pedagogical activity; lead others in the handling of a multifaceted pedagogical issue, all at an appropriate scope and level of detail. Depending on the field of study, graduates can find employment for example in institutions providing education, training, counselling and social care in health and corporate education, HR and non-profit organizations (Government Regulation No. 275/2016 Coll.).

Non-teaching pedagogy is understood to also include social education, but, despite the fact that Czech universities have been teaching this discipline for more than 30 years, it's still not officially recognized and regulated. The position of a social educator has evolved over the years and keeps evolving, in particular in response to the growing challenges that affect the educational and teaching process of pupils. As the needs of schools increase, social educators are becoming increasingly common and integral members of school counselling teams both at primary and secondary schools. The main task of social educators is to support the academic success of pupils and provide early help and support. Their target groups are mainly pupils, but also pedagogical workers and pupils' families. Social educators are often seen as a bridge between the family and the school. Their typical activities include prevention and preventive action, working with school and classroom atmosphere, intervention, diagnostics and screening, methodological support for teachers or work with pupils with social and other disadvantages. They also work intensively with the pupil's family, including in a family environment, support the pupil's academic success and provide counselling. A social educator performs a range of activities at school, mainly focusing on comprehensive support of pupils. All activities thus aim to improve the conditions for the pupil's development, education, learning and socialization (Daněk & Šmída, 2024). According to Němec (2023), a social educator's role is particularly important when working with socially disadvantaged pupils. This is a growing issue today, in particular in the context of social inequalities in education.

Daněk and Šmída (2024) explain that the efforts to define the position of a social educator in Czech law have been ongoing since 2011. At that time, the position was mentioned as one of the actions of the 2011–2015 Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion. The gradual development and efforts to formally recognize the profession led to the establishment of the Association of Social Pedagogy Educators (AVSP) in 2013. The AVSP played a key role in attempts to include social educators in Act No. 563/2004 Coll., On Pedagogical Workers; in 2014 and 2019, the association submitted its comments on proposals attempting to define the role in legislation. In 2017, the AVSP prepared Standards of Education in Social Education and in 2020 the Job Description of a Social Educator at a Primary School. These documents are

essential for recognizing and defining the professional competences of social educators. Despite these efforts and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child of the Human Rights Council of the Czech Government issued in 2016, social educators continue to be defined in legislation as non-pedagogical workers. This classification complicates the integration of social educators in School Counselling Centres (ŠPP) where other positions such as school psychologists and special educators are recognized as pedagogical workers. In recent years, the position of a social educator has been mentioned in strategic documents such as the Action Plan of Inclusive Education for 2019–2020 and Social Inclusion Strategy 2021–2030. These documents point to the growing need for strengthening social work in regional education and the integration of social educators into the education system. The latest initiative is the establishment of the Association of Social Educators (ASOCP) in 2022, which is committed to further development of social education and advocates for legal recognition of the profession.

Another problematic area related to this lack of definition in the law is the funding of this position. According to Šmída et al. (2023), the job can be funded in various ways, each offering specific possibilities. Common sources of funding are multi-year projects that allow for the creation and funding of the position. The problem is that once the project ends, the school needs to find other sources of funding, otherwise the position ceases to exist. The currently used sources of funding include for example the Operational Programme Johannes Amos Comenius (OP JAK). Another significant source is the 2022–2026 Equal Opportunities Support project funded from the National Recovery Plan, which provides support to schools with high numbers of socially disadvantaged pupils and can be used to pay for support positions, including social educators. In addition to these projects, the position can also be funded from the budget of the school's founder, typically a municipality, or through project funding on the level of city districts or regional action plans. Another option is to provide funding through support actions. There are even more options than that (currently, we are aware of nine), but they all tend to lead to various complications in the long run.

12.4 Areas of Intervention

Currently, educators are a highly sought-after profession on the labour market in various educational fields, both in traditional school environments and in areas such as leisure time pedagogy, social services, prisons or healthcare. The increase in the demand for qualified educators is mainly due to the growing need for education and development programmes, reflecting global trends in education (MoEYS, 2023).

The typology of pedagogical workers is ever more varied, from traditional teachers to specialized positions such as school counselling center workers or

pedagogical workers at various departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice. This trend is also strengthened by further education and professional development, supported in the Czech Republic through various projects and initiatives such as the System of Support for the Professional Development of Teachers and Head Teachers (Šejnohová, 2023).

The pay of teachers depends on the specific field, region and level of education, but generally speaking, while the education sector is given high priority in the Czech Republic, this is not always reflected in the salaries of pedagogical workers. Compared to other jobs, their pay tends to be lower, but there are various premiums and bonuses for special qualifications and hard-to-fill positions. In recent years, the state-defined salaries of teachers in the Czech Republic have been on the rise. In 2023, the government issued a guarantee that teachers would be paid 130% of the average salary in the Czech Republic. In other pedagogical professions (e.g. teaching assistants, educators), the situation is very different and the salaries are below the average of other helping professions (Platové tabulky učitelů, 2024).

The government and the ministries continue to work on improving the conditions for teachers through various programmes and strategies such as the 2030+ Strategy (MoEYS, 2020) and the Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System (MoEYS, 2018), which aim to modernize and improve the quality of education in the country.

12.5 Case study: Social Educator at a School

Let's use the example of Nicola Blábolilová to illustrate the life story and experience of a Czech social educator. Nicola is 33 years old and studied Social Education at a university as part of her consecutive Master's degree. She is also a graduate of a Higher Vocational School of Social and Legal Studies and has a Bachelor's degree in Andragogy. There was a fairly significant time gap between her individual study courses, which she perceives as more of an advantage that helped her gain more experience. She sees the role of a social educator as both personal and professional. She gained experience working in the department of social and legal child protection as a curator for children and youth, a social worker with individuals at risk of social exclusion, a recreational activities instructor for children, an assistant to instructors of developmental psychology seminars, and as a teaching assistant. All these roles had the same goal: supporting children and their families. Now, she works at an elementary school as a full-time social educator. She finds work in a school environment very meaningful. Children spend a large amount of time at school. In this environment, there are many opportunities for identifying and supporting children at risk.

She is currently employed as a full-time social educator at a primary school. It's a large school in a city, with about 700 pupils. The position of a social educator was established here in September 2022. At first, Nicola worked here part-time, but now she is a full-time employee. It was she herself who con-

vinced the school leadership of the need to introduce this position. Her colleagues supported her. She presented to the head teacher all the ways in which a social educator can help resolve children's life situations. She managed to explain why this position was beneficial to the school. Regular teachers no longer have the capacity to handle children's individual issues. A social educator plays an important role because they do not teach and have the time and specific expertise to devote to these issues.

The school has a school counselling center staffed by two educational counsellors, a school prevention methodologist and a social educator. In the future, the school wants to add a school psychologist. Nicola also works as a family, individual and couple psychotherapist. She is enrolled in a psychotherapeutic training course. She also works as a teaching assistant and volunteers. She is also a co-founder of the Association of Social Educators, where she serves on the Executive Board. She is part of various expert working groups, focusing for example on children at risk, specifically of domestic violence, abuse, CAN syndrome and social disadvantage. She believes it is important to set the right boundaries.

She thinks that the job of a social educator at a school has an important preventive role. She describes how she affects the atmosphere at school, among the teaching staff and among all the children. But she believes that the most important part of her job is providing help and intervention for children in need. Problems that children experience at home don't disappear when they come to school. A social educator's task is to help the child as much as possible and to create a school environment where children can focus on their learning, be engaged, enjoy the process, and most importantly, feel good at school.

There is no such thing as a typical working day for a social educator at school. Nicola describes one of her work days like this:

«Today I started at 6:30 a.m. I compiled a list of children who will receive subsidies for their lunches. I also prepared for an individual meeting with a student. Before the children went to their lockers, I made preparations and mind maps on whom it would be appropriate to seek out today and what to discuss with them regarding the currently addressed topics. In the morning, I greeted students by the lockers. It's an opportunity for more relaxed and less formal conversations. I also went to the teacher's lounge to check changes in the schedule. There will soon be several day trips as well as enrolments in first grade. The number of children and families I individually work with changes over time. Right now, I work with about 40 children; today I spoke to six of them. I had to pull two of them out of their class, because their issues can't be solved during breaks. Teachers don't like that, but sometimes I have no other option. I also often work directly with the students' families. This includes various forms of counselling, case management and diagnosing the needs of the family and the child. I also work with other members of the school counselling center, the school management and class teachers. Today I also collaborated with a teaching assistant. The teaching assistants are with the children all the time, in particular during breaks. It's very useful to learn their experience and

how they perceive the children's situation. Sometimes they see things that the teachers fail to notice. It's early April now, which means that the ninth-graders will soon sit their entrance exams to secondary schools. Immediately afterwards, we have planned a special preventive programme for these classes with the management. It's supposed to be mostly relaxing in character. It's something of a gift to them before they leave primary school to start their secondary education. We're also currently preparing a workshop for pedagogical staff. From September, we're also planning 30-minute voluntary relaxation breaks for everyone to support wellbeing and the overall positive climate of the school and the teaching staff».

The social educator learns about children at risk from their class teachers. They are often happy to inform her about cases that require intervention. Some children actually turn to the social educator by themselves. They know what she can help them with, and what she can't. The children talk about their consultations and programmes with their parents at home. Parents are another group that consults the social educator. Sometimes they want to share that they have an issue with a specific teacher, or that something is happening with their child at school and they don't know what to do. Occasionally, she is contacted by the staff of a children's home or a low-threshold facility for children and youth. This is made easier by the fact that she's widely known at the school and has a good reputation. For example, when there was a case of social abuse of a pupil, the head teacher contacted the social educator and told her: *«I want you to deal with this. You're the expert»*. Nicola herself describes that humanity, respect, and openness are important components for the work of a social educator, which are essential personal competencies. Even when something doesn't succeed, it is worth continuing to try. Because even if it helps just one child, not only in terms of academic success, it makes sense.

In the interview, Jana describes her hopes for the legislative anchoring of the profession: *«I have a tiny little hope that through cooperation with the Ministry of Education, it will be possible to define the role of the social educator in legislation. If you asked me a month ago, I wouldn't be nearly as optimistic, and I would tell you that this is our biggest problem. There still are uncertainties in the system in terms of how the position of a social educator is financed by the school. It continues to be funded from various grants and projects. I feel that there is still a low awareness among schools of what a social educator does and what's the benefit of their job for the school. Teachers also sometimes don't quite understand what a social educator does. They may have a different perspective on solving problems because they have entirely different roles and expertise. However, I believe that with legislative anchoring, there will be greater transparency and utilization of this specifically professional position»*.

She concludes by sharing her positive experience of collaboration with social educators: *«I'm so happy that the topic of social education and the role of social educators is being discussed more and more. I see that groups of social educators are being created to facilitate meetings on the regional level. There are new organizations and associations focused on work with children at risk. Supporting case*

study seminars are being developed directly for social educators. There is support from the National Institute of Pedagogy. Various webinars are available. I'm happy about that, and I think it's important not just for social educators, but pedagogical workers in general. This all oversees work with at-risk children not only in schools, which makes sense not just to me, but to society as a whole».

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Chapter 13

The Pedagogue in Spain

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13.1 Definition of the Role of the Pedagogue and Regulatory Framework

The Pedagogue is a key professional in the educational field, specializing in the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational processes across a wide variety of contexts (Tallón et al, 2018). Their training encompasses both the theoretical foundations of education, as well as the practice and management of learning environments (Michavila et al, 2018; Roa, 2023). While teachers play a fundamental role in direct and daily instruction within the classroom, Pedagogues complement this work with a broader perspective on educational processes. This allows them to work on the design and improvement of pedagogical strategies, as well as intervene in broader contexts, both educational and non-educational (Franco et al, 2019).

The work of Pedagogues includes the planning and management of educational programmes, the development of educational policies, academic guidance, and intervention in contexts of social vulnerability, promoting inclusion and equitable access to education (Bedriñana, 2022; Amorós-Poveda, 2020; Nieto-Taborda et al, 2020). These interventions are crucial in situations where special attention is required for the educational needs of at-risk groups, such as disadvantaged populations or those with special educational needs (Llorent et al, 2020). In this sense, Pedagogues play a cross-cutting role that ranges from educational intervention to the creation of public policies aimed at improving the educational system.

Historically, Pedagogues have played a central role in defining educational policies and structuring teaching systems. In Spain, this process culminated in the mid-20th century with the institutionalization of Pedagogy as an academic discipline. The first Faculties of Pedagogy were established in the 1970s, notably at the University of Barcelona (1974) and the Complutense University of Madrid (1975), following earlier developments in teacher training schools. These faculties marked a turning point by offering a specialized academic curriculum in Pedagogy, distinct from general teacher training, which not only consolidated the profession but also elevated its academic and social recognition. This institutionalization allowed Pedagogues to contribute more actively to educational research, curriculum design, and school organization, reinforcing their influence within the broader educational system (Beneyto-Seoane & Martínez, 2023; Montes & Suárez, 2022).

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However, despite the importance of their work, the legal recognition of the pedagogue's role has been limited compared to other professions in the educational field, such as teachers. Although Pedagogues receive regulated university training as part of official university programmes under Royal Decree 1393/2007, there is no national law that specifically regulates the competencies and functions of this professional figure (García & Puga, 2022). This lack of specific regulation has led to a fragmented formal recognition of the profession and has sparked debates about the need for legislation that defines the scope of Pedagogues' competencies in Spain.

In some cases, there are professional associations that bring together Pedagogues, such as the Colegio de Pedagogos de Cataluña (College of Pedagogues of Catalonia), but at the national level, there is no mandatory professional college representing all professionals in the country (ANECA, 2004). Additionally, Pedagogues are often organized in professional associations, such as the Asociación Española de Pedagogía (Spanish Association of Pedagogy, AEP), which promotes educational research and the continuous improvement of Pedagogues in all their fields of activity (Carvajal Díaz, 2019). While these associations play an important role, the absence of a national official college limits the recognition of pedagogy as an independent profession within the educational system.

13.2 Educational and Curriculum Competencies of Pedagogy

13.2.1 Pedagogy Education in Spain

Pedagogy education in Spain is versatile and does not focus on or lead to a specific profession within a particular educational field. It could be said that it has an interdisciplinary approach, combining knowledge from areas such as psychology, sociology, law, and technology, allowing professionals to adapt to multiple sectors. It is designed to provide a solid foundation in educational sciences and to prepare professionals to intervene in both formal and non-formal educational settings. In Spain, pedagogy is a degree offered by approximately 30 universities across the country, within their respective education faculties.

These studies belong to the Social and Legal Sciences branch and span four years, with 60 ECTS credits each year, making a total of 240 credits across 4 academic years. The study plans for the Pedagogy Degree are not identical across all universities, but the subjects are generally organized into several blocks:

- Theoretical foundations of pedagogy: this subject includes the History of Education, Theory of Education, Sociology, Sociology of Education, etc.
- Educational methodologies: this block includes Teaching and Learning Techniques, Curriculum Design, Educational Innovation, etc.

- Organization of educational institutions: subjects in this block include Evaluation of Educational Institutions, Organization of Centers, Teacher Consultancy, etc.
- Educational intervention: this includes Attention to Diversity, Inclusive Education, Addressing Educational Needs, etc.

These degrees in Spain conclude with the preparation of a Final Degree Project, where the knowledge gained is applied in a research, intervention, or innovation project. There are also mandatory practical credits in educational centers, social institutions, or other organizations.

The Spanish legislation is based on Royal Decree 915/1992, which establishes the official university degree in pedagogy. It outlines the general guidelines and the mandatory subjects to be included in all study plans (indicated in the following list with an asterisk*). However, faculties have adapted this list specifically in each case, placing some of these subjects under the category of optional elective courses. The following list includes the subjects for the Pedagogy Degree at the University of Oviedo. All have a composition of 6 ECTS credits, except for the External Internships, which are worth 18 credits in this case:

1st Year (or Academic Year)

- Information Management in Education
- Basic Psychological Processes
- General Didactics*
- Theory of Education*
- Society, Culture and Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Data Measurement and Analysis in Education
- History of Education in Spain*
- Curriculum Design, Development and Innovation*
- Educational Technology*

2nd Year

- Educational Diagnosis
- Educational Policy and Planning*
- Educational Research Methodology*
- Social Pedagogy*
- Attention to Diversity and Inclusive Education
- Anthropology of Education*
- Sociology of Education*
- Occupational and Labor Pedagogy
- Specialized Educational Intervention
- Contexts and Professional Roles

3rd Year

- Research in Educational Contexts (Elective)
- Economics of Education (Elective)*
- Techniques for Information Gathering (Elective)

- Action Research as a Strategy for Socio-educational Intervention (Elective)
 - Gerontological Pedagogy (Elective)
 - Sociocultural Animation (Elective)
 - Education for Cooperation and Sustainable Human Development (Elective)
 - Educational Guidance
 - Organization and Management of Socio-educational Institutions*
 - Evaluation Methodology in Education
 - History of Pedagogical Ideas and Curriculum
 - Comparative Education*
 - Mediation and Conflict Resolution (Elective)
 - Family Counseling (Elective)
 - Educational Psychology (Elective)*
 - Education and Communication Skills (Elective)
 - Education in Rural Areas (Elective)
 - Social Reintegration Pedagogy (Elective)
 - Environmental and Intercultural Pedagogy (Elective)
 - Learning Difficulties (Elective)
 - Management and Development of Training in Social and Labor Organizations
 - Programmes for Disability Support
 - Analysis and Design of Educational Materials
 - Evaluation of Educational and Training Programmes and Institutions*
- 4th Year
- Career Guidance
 - Virtual Environments for Education and Training
 - External Internships* (18 Credits)
 - Final Degree Project

13.2.2 Competencies of the Pedagogy Degree

The competencies typically developed in the Pedagogy Degree are related to: the design and evaluation of educational projects, focusing on planning, managing, and evaluating educational plans in different contexts. Intervention in diverse contexts, in situations of exclusion, cultural or social diversity, and attention to individuals with special educational needs. Pedagogical advising to guide educational managers, teachers, and other professionals on methodologies and training processes. Innovation, creation, and application of novel proposals adapted to social and technological demands. And scientific educational research to solve problems and improve the educational environment. In the specific case of the Pedagogy Degree at the University of Oviedo, studies are conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (https://calidad.uniovi.es/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=2535619&folderId=44882

69&name=DLFE-58137.pdf), as occurs in other Spanish universities, these studies consist of a total of 240 credits, but here they are divided into 186 theoretical credits, 30 elective credits, 18 external internship credits, and 6 for the Final Degree Project. These subjects are divided into the following competencies:

Basic Competencies:

CB1 – Students must demonstrate that they possess and understand knowledge in a field of study that begins with secondary education and includes knowledge from the forefront of their area of study.

CB2 – Apply their knowledge to their work or vocation professionally, demonstrating the competencies typically shown through the development and defense of arguments and problem-solving.

CB3 – The ability to gather and interpret relevant data to make judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific, or ethical topics.

CB4 – The ability to convey information, ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialized and non-specialized audiences.

CB5 – The development of learning skills necessary to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy.

General Competencies:

T1 – Ethical commitment (critical and self-critical capacity/capacity to display attitudes consistent with ethical and deontological conceptions).

T2 – Develop critical thinking and reasoning and know how to express it in different situations.

T3 – Learning and responsibility (capacity for analysis, synthesis, global visions, and the application of knowledge to practice/capacity to make decisions and adapt to new situations).

T4 – Teamwork (ability to collaborate with others and contribute to a common project/capacity to work in interdisciplinary and multicultural teams).

T5 – Autonomous work (develop autonomous learning strategies by making appropriate decisions for the development of a task).

T6 – Creative and entrepreneurial capacity (capacity to formulate, design, and manage projects/ability to seek and integrate new knowledge and attitudes).

T7 – Maintain an attitude of respect toward the social, natural, and cultural environment to foster values, behaviors, and practices that promote gender equality, equity, and respect for human rights.

T8 – Respect diversity and the plurality of ideas, people, and situations.

T9 – Communication skills (ability to understand and express oneself orally and in writing, mastering specialized language/ability to search for, use, and integrate information).

T10 – Capacity to adapt and apply pedagogical knowledge in different educational contexts.

T11 – Capacity to solve educational problems from a multicultural and complex perspective.

T12 – Development of an innovative attitude toward educational and professional processes by adopting an interdisciplinary and intercultural approach.

T13 – Capacity to adapt to changes in the knowledge society.

T14 – Capacity to convey educational knowledge to different audiences.

T15 – Critically analyze personal work and use resources for professional development.

T16 – Analyze and recognize one's own socio-emotional competencies to develop those necessary for professional performance and development.

Specific Competencies:

E1 – Know and understand the theoretical, historical, cultural, comparative, political, environmental, and legal frameworks of educational processes.

E2 – Diagnose the needs and development possibilities of individuals to support educational actions.

E3 – Understand teaching and learning processes and their impact on comprehensive training.

E4 – Understand current educational systems, as well as educational policies and legislative developments at both national and international levels.

E5 – Design plans, programs, projects, actions, and resources adapted to different levels of the educational system, in both face-to-face and virtual settings.

E6 – Design training plans for teachers, trainers, and other professionals, adapted to new situations, needs, and contexts.

E7 – Design innovative training programmes, projects, and proposals for resource development in work settings, in both face-to-face and virtual formats.

E8 – Develop strategies and techniques to promote participation and life-long learning.

E9 – Apply and coordinate educational programmes for personal, social, and professional development.

E10 – Develop and coordinate educational interventions with individuals or groups with specific needs, in situations of risk, inequality, or discrimination based on gender, ability, class, ethnicity, age, and/or religion.

E11 – Evaluate educational policies, institutions, and systems.

E12 – Evaluate plans, programmes, projects, centers, actions, and educational resources.

E13 – Evaluate teaching-learning processes and educational agents.

E14 – Organize and manage educational centers, institutions, services, and resources.

E15 – Supervise educational plans, programmes, centres, and professionals.

E16 – Develop processes and quality management models in education and training.

E17 – Apply tutoring, guidance, peer consultation, and advisory strategies and techniques in educational and training processes.

E18 – Advise on the pedagogical use and curricular integration of teaching media.

E19 – Analyze, design, and evaluate the applications of information and communication technologies related to educational and training processes.

E20 – Identify educational approaches and problems, investigate them, and obtain, record, process, and interpret relevant information to make reasoned judgments that allow for the improvement of educational practice.

E21 – Conduct prospective and evaluative studies on pedagogical characteristics, needs, and demands.

E22 – Advise and support professional development processes.

Training in Pedagogy can be complemented with certain specializations, such as educational psychomotor skills, therapeutic pedagogy, special education, among others, as well as with postgraduate studies, for example, in the educational field, students can pursue a master's degree in secondary education teacher training.

13.3 Professional Perspectives

13.3.1 Areas of intervention

This degree does not qualify or link to a regulated or specific profession in Spain; however, it offers numerous career opportunities in the educational, business, and social sectors. The field of intervention of the Pedagogue is broad and covers both the formal education system and other non-formal sectors, and more recently, the business sector, acting as a guide and designer of training programmes in schools, institutes and universities (Tallón et al, 2018). Some activities are related to educational counseling and guidance in schools and companies, where academic and professional guidance services are provided; to the organization of educational centers and school management; to intervention in social institutions, town halls, NGOs, and social centers; to research in universities or research centers on the development of new methodologies; and to the organization of educational projects in companies and human resources departments.

13.3.2 Career Opportunities in Education

In the context of formal education, Pedagogues are responsible for planning and evaluating educational programmes, as well as providing academic and career guidance to students at all stages of the education system (Bedriñana, 2022). However, the role of the Pedagogue has evolved over the past few decades, expanding into adult education, social intervention, and the corporate sector (Tallón et al, 2018). Pedagogues have gained importance in the field of employment training and lifelong learning (Calegari-Falco et al, 2022). It is a cross-cutting field, and in adult education, Pedagogues design educational programmes that help improve job skills or access new professional opportunities.

For example, in the case of the Pedagogy Degree at the University of Málaga (<https://www.uma.es/grado-en-pedagogia/cms/menu/informacion-grado/salidas/>), the following career options in the educational field are highlighted: Pedagogical consulting and training; personal, academic, and family guidance; coordination of adult education schools; coordination of hospital classrooms; teacher training; and the design and development of educational materials.

13.3.3 Career Opportunities in Social Intervention

On the other hand, the field of social intervention has shown notable growth in pedagogy. Pedagogues collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public institutions, and community centres to develop educational programmes aimed at groups at risk of social exclusion, such as migrants, ethnic minorities, or people living in poverty (Llorent et al, 2020). In these contexts, Pedagogues work directly with these groups, designing and implementing pedagogical strategies that promote their social and educational inclusion. In the aforementioned Pedagogy Degree at the University of Málaga, the following career options in the social field are listed: Pedagogical consulting for centers, associations, socio-educational and cultural entities or foundations; project management; socio-educational mediation; and consulting on educational policies.

13.3.4 Career Opportunities in Corporate Employment

In the business sector, Pedagogues have increasingly taken on an important role in the continuous training of employees and talent management within organizations (García & Puga, 2022). This new area of intervention has led Pedagogues to collaborate in the design of corporate training programs, expanding their scope of action beyond the traditional educational system and opening up new job opportunities. In the Pedagogy Degree at the University of Málaga, the following career options in the business field are highlighted: Human resources management; professional guidance; pedagogical consulting for publishing companies; cultural project management; design of educational programmes through online platforms; consulting in educational media; and consulting on innovation projects. Although the public sector has traditionally been a major area of employment for Pedagogues, the private sector has increasingly valued these professionals in fields such as corporate training, human resources, and educational consulting (Calegari-Falco et al, 2022). This growth in demand also responds to the need to design inclusive educational programmes that address diversity and promote equal opportunities.

13.3.5 Impact on Society

In summary, related jobs are found in prisons, hospitals, training companies, counseling offices, child reception centers, psycho-pedagogical offices,

educational publishing companies, cultural associations, Educational Counseling Teams in schools, and town halls. As is common, there are also academic career paths related to postgraduate and Master's studies. In the case of the University of Oviedo, with a total of 350 students, this option is chosen by 22% of graduates. Specifically, out of 63 graduates, 35 continue pursuing higher studies (https://calidad.uniovi.es/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=2535619&folderId=4489539&name=DLFE-89210.pdf).

Salaries for Pedagogues in Spain vary considerably, depending on the professional's experience and the sector in which they work. According to projections for 2024, newly graduated Pedagogues typically earn an average annual salary of around €23,453, a figure reflecting the entry-level in the profession, primarily in roles related to educational counseling and programme management in the public sector (Indeed, 2024). As they gain more experience and specialize in more complex or higher-responsibility areas, such as educational management in large institutions or pedagogical consulting in the private sector, salaries can increase significantly, reaching up to €39,227 annually (Glassdoor, 2024). This increase is also linked to the growing demand for Pedagogues in non-traditional sectors, such as corporate training and social intervention, where their skills in managing educational processes and developing competencies are highly valued.

13.3.6 Relationship between Pedagogue training and their role in the job market

Although the Pedagogy Degree offers a solid theoretical foundation, the gap between academic training and labour market demands is one of the most evident tensions in the profession (Albert et al, 2018). Pedagogy curricula in Spain focus on educational theory, providing students with a deep understanding of learning theories, developmental psychology, and didactics. However, the contemporary job market requires Pedagogues to have practical skills that enable them to manage complex educational environments, incorporate digital competencies, and adapt to the rapid changes affecting the educational sector, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic (Nieto-Taborda, 2020).

Due to the breadth of this training, the lack of specialization is another factor that complicates Pedagogues' entry into more specialized sectors. Often, Pedagogues must compete with other professionals who have completed specific studies in areas such as educational counseling or social intervention, leaving Pedagogues with a more generalist education at a disadvantage (Quiles-Piñar & Rekalde-Rodríguez, 2021; Arboleda, 2023). This situation highlights the need to offer pedagogy students more specialized academic pathways that allow them to acquire the practical skills demanded by the market.

Moreover, the lack of a specific regulatory framework governing the Pedagogue profession has contributed to limited visibility for this figure in the job

market. Despite Pedagogues receiving training regulated by the official university system, there is no national law that clearly defines their competencies and functions. This has created uncertainty regarding the role of Pedagogues in the workplace, especially compared to other professions in the educational field (García & Puga, 2022).

However, digital transformation has opened up new opportunities for these professionals, particularly in managing virtual learning environments and training teaching staff in educational technologies. In a context where online education has gained importance, Pedagogues can play a fundamental role in designing and implementing pedagogical methodologies tailored to these environments. Nevertheless, it is essential that university curricula adjust to these market demands, incorporating these competencies more integrally, which can no longer be viewed as optional but as a core part of the pedagogue's profile in the 21st century (Amorós-Poveda, 2020).

In conclusion, the tensions between Pedagogue training and their entry into the job market highlight the need for a review of curricula at Spanish universities, to adapt Pedagogue training to the emerging demands of the educational and social sectors. The incorporation of digital competencies, greater specialization in key areas, and the creation of a more robust regulatory framework could improve the employability of Pedagogues and maximize their contribution to an increasingly competitive job market. It is essential that the education system evolves to prepare Pedagogues for future challenges, ensuring their relevance and impact in 21st-century education.

13.4 Case study

The aging of the Spanish population presents a source of employment in the field of pedagogy by creating new demands from society. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (as of January 1, 2022), there are 9,479,010 elderly people, accounting for 19.97% of the total population (47,475,420 citizens), and octogenarians represent 6% of the entire population. It is estimated that by 2040, there could be over 14.2 million elderly people, which will create jobs in the third sector related to health and well-being services.

These health and social services are considered a priority in the areas of intervention of the Aging Strategies of the Autonomous Communities of Spain to address population aging and its implications. Unwanted loneliness is one of the greatest challenges that society will have to face both in the present and the future. Below is a professional intervention from the field of Pedagogy in this area.

Unwanted loneliness is a complex feeling linked to multiple aspects that vary over time and space, depending on the different contexts in which it can manifest (Díez & Moreno-Páez, 2015). Education is seen as a fundamental pillar in addressing this issue through socio-educational intervention proposals.

Various studies indicate that unwanted loneliness is associated with in-

creased morbidity and mortality, potentially causing a wide range of daily life issues (Yanguas et al, 2018), including impacts on both physical and psychological health, deteriorating the quality of life for those who suffer from it:

- Increases sleep problems.
- Amplifies motor decline.
- Worsens nutrition.
- Predicts depressive symptoms.
- Increases the likelihood of recurrent strokes.
- Worsens scores on neuropsychological tests in various cognitive functions such as immediate, visual, episodic, and semantic memory, processing speed, and executive function.

At this point, several questions arise: Can education implement mechanisms or tools to address this challenge? What kind? What role does the Pedagogue play in improving the quality of life for elderly people?

Carrying out multidisciplinary actions to help people combat unwanted loneliness leads to a significant improvement in their quality of life. As a result, socio-educational proposals such as intergenerationally emerge.

13.4.1 Intergenerational Programmes

Pedagogues face new Intergenerational Programmes that aim to promote relationships between individuals from different generations (Gutiérrez, 2011). They have a clear social purpose, which is to obtain individual, social, cultural, and economic benefits through the exchange of experiences. Therefore, Intergenerational Programmes are understood as activities that promote cooperation, interaction, and exchange between two or more generations, involving the continuous and deliberate sharing of resources (Kaplan et al, 2002) to connect local residents and rebuild social bonds (Glass et al, 2004; Murayama et al, 2019).

Intergenerational Programmes are seen as valuable proposals with proven results, which can be designed and implemented by pedagogical professionals, creating a significant impact on the educational and social transformation of the individuals involved and on society as a whole. Canedo-García et al (2014) highlight the benefits that older people gain from participating in intergenerational activities: reintegration into family and community, knowledge transfer, increased vitality, self-esteem, and motivation, reduced feelings of loneliness, enhanced memory and other abilities, improved perceptual skills, and better mobility.

13.4.2 How to design an intergenerational programme in the field of pedagogy?

Pedagogues delve into the phenomenon of unwanted loneliness among the elderly by analyzing and identifying the needs for socio-educational interven-

tion. To do this, they can start with an in-depth literature review on the political framework of 'active aging' by studying the strategies and programmes previously implemented.

Next, the design of an intergenerational programme will require the Pedagogue to become familiar with Intergenerational Programmes, examples of models, and best practices. For example, the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes. After this initial approach, research begins to identify the needs for socio-educational intervention. One possible hypothesis is the interest of elderly people in participating in an intergenerational programme as a response to unwanted loneliness. The general research objectives could be:

- Study intergenerationally as a tool to combat unwanted loneliness among the elderly.
- Analyze the interest in participating in intergenerational activities with children and adolescents in educational centers or other contexts.

The descriptive methodology combines both quantitative and qualitative instruments, which, according to Cháves-Montero (2017), is characterized by:

- All obtained information must form a whole, combining the findings at a specific point.
- The strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be used while minimizing their potential weaknesses.
- Triangulation. A methodology that integrates both perspectives in research.
- Words, images, and narratives can be used to understand quantitative information.

Based on the research results, the design of the socio-educational intervention project begins, which will include:

- A description of the problem or need, based on the research results.
- Theoretical foundation, supported by theories, research, and experiences related to intergenerational programmes to combat unwanted loneliness.
- Purpose of the intergenerational programme and expected outcomes after implementation.
- Planning, which details the context, methodology, activities, necessary resources, involved agents, and schedule.
- Evaluation of the project: initial, process, and final.

Including: Sources and techniques for data collection and analysis; Achievement indicators, etc.

- Evaluation of the intergenerational project: Strengths and Weaknesses.

In the implementation of the intergenerational socio-educational intervention project, the pedagogue's training as an intergenerational specialist plays a crucial role, a term coined by Rosebrook and Larkin (2003), who formulated a series of 'guidelines for professional intergenerational work':

- Identifying similar and different needs between young and older individuals.

- Understanding how people learn at different stages of life to plan inter-generational activities.
- Designing intergenerational actions that stimulate the brain (physical, social, and cognitive activities).
- Recognizing the need for all individuals to feel included, cared for, and safe.
- Understanding the importance of play, self-esteem, autonomy, loss, grief, and friendship.
- Recognizing signs of the most typical problems that arise at different stages of life.

They also provide guidelines for professionals regarding ‘professional inter-generational work’ related to communication, commitment to collaboration, and working in partnership with other people and institutions. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of knowing and using appropriate and adapted evaluation techniques from the fields of education and social sciences; this entails being able to integrate knowledge from various disciplines.

Finally, Rosebrook and Larkin (2003) clarify that the intergenerational specialist is a reflective, understanding, and compassionate professional whose main goal is to bring people of different ages together for mutual benefit. This professional profile aligns with Pedagogues trained to identify, diagnose needs, plan, intervene, propose alternatives, use different resources, strategies, and methodologies, and evaluate.

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Chapter 14

Pedagogue's Profession in Hungary with National Specialties

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14.1 Introduction

In Hungary, the profession of the Pedagogues is a distinctive and multifaceted field shaped by the country's unique historical, cultural, and socio-political context. This chapter explores the intricacies of the Hungarian educational landscape, focusing on the specialized roles and responsibilities that educators assume within this system. Hungary's tradition of valuing education, coupled with its evolving policies and reforms, has led to a profession that is both appreciated and challenging. By contrasting the roles of social Pedagogues and general teachers, this chapter aims to highlight the distinctive contributions of each to the educational framework.

In global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war between Ukraine and Russia, and the migrant predicament, Hungary finds itself at a crossroads, grappling with multifaceted challenges that transcend geographical boundaries. Here we deal with the pivotal role of Pedagogues in mitigating the impact of these crises and fostering resilience within society. The global economic crisis, exacerbated by the political events, has given rise to profound social issues in Hungary. Escalating unemployment, strained healthcare systems, and heightened socio-political tensions underscore the urgent need for intervention. Pedagogues emerge as crucial facilitators, bridging gaps by fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Their role extends beyond traditional classroom settings, as they become orchestrators of collective efforts aimed at addressing developmental needs on a societal scale.

Social Pedagogues, who often work with marginalized or at-risk populations, play a crucial role in addressing social inequalities and providing holistic support, whereas general teachers are primarily focused on academic instruction and classroom management. Through this exploration, we seek to illuminate the unique aspects of Hungarian pedagogy and thereby contribute to a broader understanding of the global educational discourse.

In Hungary, social Pedagogues and teachers have distinct roles, training, and workplaces, though both aim to support and develop individuals. Social Pedagogues typically earn degrees in social pedagogy or social work, focusing on social issues, psychology, and community work. They work in settings like community centres, child protection services, and non-profit organizations,

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providing social support, counselling, and organizing social activities. Teachers, on the other hand, follow a structured educational path based on the level they teach. Kindergarten educators and primary school teachers require a BA in kindergarten or primary education. Secondary teachers need a master's degree. While social Pedagogues focus on holistic development and social integration, teachers concentrate on academic achievement and cognitive development. Both professions require interdisciplinary knowledge and aim to foster the growth of young individuals within their respective domains.

This introduction to the education system of Hungary is based on the currently applicable law which governs its operation. Three case studies of professional interventions by Pedagogues in Hungary have been chosen, besides dealing with young children or students with different social or economic disadvantages.

14.2 The education system in Hungary

With Hungary's accession to the Bologna process, teacher training was introduced in 2006 at two levels. After three years of Bachelor's degree studies, a two-year Master's degree could be obtained. The Higher Education Act of 2011 defined primary and secondary school teacher training in a unified form: the primary school teaching programme has eight semesters of training, while the secondary school teacher programme has ten semesters of one year of training after graduation.

The right to education is regulated by law, which requires compulsory schooling until the age of 16. Citizens have the right to education in their mother tongue at the primary level and the Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for public education in kindergartens and primary schools. The ministry's responsibilities also include issues of Roma integration, programmes that support children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and developments related to equal opportunities. The current law regulating the education system is Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education. From the school year, 2016/2017 the administration and governance of public education institutions was taken over by the Klebersberg Institutional Maintenance Centre, which divided the previously centralised management of the institutions into school districts. The public education system was organised and operated according to detailed principles including the development of greater state involvement to achieve uniform and high-quality education. In addition to the regulations for maintaining and organising educational institutions, increasing the prestige of the teaching profession was also a stated objective (Varga et al, 2022).

Since 2009, there has also been a BA in Infant and Child Care Studies in Hungary. The training is provided by faculties training teachers and nursery school teachers, which shows that the profession of early childhood educator now follows a teacher's career model. Previously, the training of 'nursery nurses'

had been provided within the framework of vocational training in the health sector, later in the social sector. An Infant and Child Care Studies BA (level 6) can entitle holders to provide care and development for infants and toddlers in need of assistance, employing developmental and educational methods, from infancy up to the age of 3. The Infant and Child Care Studies BA programme utilizes both developmental and educational methods to support children from infancy up to the age of three. It is necessary to state that in Hungary infant and early childhood educators do not belong to the public education system but to the social sector. Professionals who work with infants and small children are not part of the public education but the social system. This distinction is important because it reflects how early childhood care is structured and funded in Hungary, differing from how it might be organized in other countries where such roles might be more closely tied to the education system.

Professionals with two different qualifications can work in kindergartens. Those responsible for the growth and development of children are kindergarten educators who must have a Kindergarten Educator BA degree (level 6). On the other hand, those who help pre-school teachers in their professional work must have a secondary level qualification as a teaching assistant or nanny, which can be obtained in specialised secondary schools or through secondary education.

The equivalent of the kindergarten used in English, expressing the Hungarian ECEC approach, is 'kindergarten', the teacher working there is 'kindergarten educator'. Not even the kindergarten educators call themselves teachers as they do not teach in a direct and regulated way in the Kindergarten, e.g. reading or writing. Hungarian kindergarten provision is characterised by unstructured play, unconditional love and child-centredness.

Primary school teacher training accounts for 8 semesters. Primary teachers in the lower primary school section receive a Bachelor's degree equivalent to a BA degree. However, 240 credits are required to complete a Bachelor's degree and teacher training is strongly practice-oriented, as the number of practical hours accounts for 60-70% of the total number of course hours. At the end of the training, students must submit a dissertation.

The Higher Education Act of 2011 defined teacher training as non-specialised in the general phase (7.4). In general education, the length of training for elementary school teachers is 10 semesters, of which the last two semesters are school practice. The initial education of upper secondary school teachers is also offered as an integrated extended programme lasting 12 semesters including a compulsory traineeship of two semesters. In the case of vocational education, degrees are provided both as specialised and generic programmes. Both types of teacher education programmes end in a Master's degree. In teacher training for general subjects and specialized teacher training in certain arts subjects, teachers are required to obtain two specialist teacher qualifications. Teachers' special training in vocational teacher training offers preparation

for teaching several specific subjects. The pedagogical career of teacher training is strongly feminised.

The teacher career model was introduced in September 2013, its first two years (or 1 year in the case of those who participate in an integrated long programme) consist of a compulsory traineeship period that ends with an evaluation exam. Following a successful examination, the Pedagogue becomes 'Teacher 1'. The next level is 'Teacher 2', which is also obligatory for teachers. The two top levels of the career model are Master Teacher and Researcher Teacher grades, which are optional.

Participation in preschool (kindergarten) is compulsory for a child from the age of three for at least 4 hours a day (Ministry of Human Capacities, 2012). Section 8 (2) requires a child to attend kindergarten from the first of September in the year in which he or she reaches the age of 3 by 31 August.

In Hungary, primary teachers teach all subjects in the first four grades of elementary school (lower primary school) and may teach a subject in grades 5 and 6 that was their speciality during training. The teacher (*tanár*) can teach two subjects in upper primary school (grades 5-8). The teacher - in the upper primary sector – must have studied at the MA level at a teacher training university.

14.3 The Hungarian Primary School System

There are eight school years in primary education institutions, the educational content of which is laid down in the National Core Curriculum (2020). The main goal of primary education is to prepare pupils for further education in secondary school according to a uniform set of requirements, based on their interests, individual abilities, and talents. Compulsory schooling begins in the year in which the child reaches the age of 6 by 31 August at the latest and lasts until the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of sixteen. There are two stages of primary education: the lower section (primary school) (Grades 1-4) and the upper section (lower secondary education, Grades 5-8). Since compulsory education extends to the age of 16, two potential pathways emerge. One option is to remain in primary school until the age of 16 due to grade repetition, while the alternative involves commencing secondary education but ultimately dropping out upon reaching the age of 16. The law states that schools must provide an appropriate environment for education as well as monitoring students' health and safety. This takes place through health screenings (dental, eyesight, and general medical examinations) at least once a year with the involvement of the school dentist.

The possibility of integration for students with special educational needs (SEN) within compulsory schooling is realised in primary schools although, if necessary, compulsory education can also be completed in a medical institution (Chapter 12 of Act CXCV of 2011 on National Public Education).

The main function of the National Core Curriculum (2020) is to establish the principle and perspective of the content of public education taking account of the independence of the school. It also defines the general goals of public education, the main areas of education to be covered, the division of content in public education and the development tasks to be implemented in each phase as well as the key competencies, development tasks and areas of literacy. However, it is within their own competence for schools to design their pedagogical programme and define their specific objectives and methods on the basis of their local values and capacities.

In addition to several smaller professional unions, two major teachers' unions, which are non-party organisations, represent the interests of teachers/Pedagogues.

The Trade Union of Teachers and the Democratic Trade Union of Teachers are the interest groups of the public education, vocational training and child protection workers in Hungary. Their basic ambition is to expand the legal guarantees of interest protection and to establish an effective system of interest reconciliation and social dialogue based on bargaining power, which creates the conditions for a modern education policy, for securing employment and for the adjustment of earnings, social and pension conditions to those of the European Union.

To achieve their objectives, they participate in the work of the various levels of public education and public sector interest dialogue forums. Their advocacy work is supported by several national professional chapters and working groups. The Teachers' Trade Union has its own journal, which deals with important current issues in the public sector, public education, and trade union life. The organisations maintain intensive contact with Teachers' Unions in other countries and with international associations.

14.4 The social pedagogue

In Hungary, teachers are often supported by social Pedagogues. They are also trained at BA level at teacher training universities. The duration of the training is 7 semesters, as a longer period of practical training complements the theoretical training. The training of social Pedagogues is practice-oriented, and students can get to know their future client groups in several fields. These include educational areas (nurseries, schools, dormitories), child protection, care for the homeless, care for the elderly and institutions for people with disability.

Before 1945, social assistance in Hungary was primarily carried out by churches, social organizations, foundations, and associations. The late 19th century saw a surge in the establishment of associations and foundations aimed at addressing social issues, with a particular focus on orphan care. Hungarian pedagogy underwent significant renewal during this period, influenced by Ger-

man philosophical and educational theories as well as emerging disciplines like psychology and sociology. Social pedagogy emerged as a distinct field, examining education and upbringing from a societal perspective. Imre Sándor, a Hungarian Minister of Religion and Education in 1919, emphasized the alignment of social education with national education and promoted its application beyond schools. Institutionalized training in social pedagogy began between the world wars, notably with short courses organized by the Hungarian Red Cross. A major milestone was the establishment of the Social Academy in 1937 by the National Social Institute. By 1942, university-level courses were introduced under government regulations, creating a structured approach to social pedagogy training. However, Hungary lagged behind Poland in this field, as Polish social pedagogy had already been institutionalized by 1925. In contrast, Hungarian efforts during this time were limited to general social knowledge courses rather than comprehensive social pedagogy programmes (Godawa - Rákó, 2022).

The figure of the pedagogue, specifically the social pedagogue, plays a crucial role in addressing social issues within the educational system. While social work focuses on social problems and disadvantage, social Pedagogues are responsible for supporting the educational activities of socially disadvantaged young people and clients. The social worker is a bridge between the educational institution and the socially deprived child. Social work is part of social education and social Pedagogue is part of education. Social Pedagogues are professionals dedicated to enhancing the well-being of children, adolescents, and young learners by focusing on the social aspects of their lives. The genesis of this professional profile dates from the 1990s when school social work experienced a fluctuating development, finding its place among various social services with diverse forms and levels of support (Banai, 2015).

Although the need for social workers is growing, as the number of disadvantaged families and children is increasing, fewer and fewer schools are able to provide adequate social work. Somewhere in between social work and education, the work of social workers is somewhere in between, which makes their role more difficult.

Social Pedagogues undertake diverse tasks in educational institutions, child protection, care for the homeless, care for the elderly, institutions for the disabled, primarily focusing on children, youth, and students. Their responsibilities encompass addressing integration difficulties, behavioural changes, and learning challenges, including issues such as school phobia, avoidance, and dependencies. Social Pedagogues assist in the development of emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention. In the school environment, they collaborate with teaching staff on school climate, safety, and child protection (Boros, 2018). When supporting parents and families, social Pedagogues address family conflicts and child abuse and engage parents in school activities. They also play a role in organizing preventive programmes and comprehensive actions, emphasizing integration initiatives and career guidance.

Additionally, social Pedagogues work on fostering collaboration between schools and local communities, identifying and mobilizing community resources to address challenges in the social and educational spheres (Bányai, 2018).

The effective collaboration between school social Pedagogues and educators is the foundation for building trust-based interdisciplinary cooperation with professionals from various fields. This collaborative effort extends beyond the school to the neighbouring community, local institutions, civil society organizations, peer helpers, diverse support networks, and volunteers (Fehérvári, 2015). The 1960s in Hungary saw significant educational reforms and social changes. While specific details about social pedagogy's formalization during this period are hard to identify, the era was characterized by broader educational and social transformations that could have facilitated the recognition of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy gained prominence in several European countries during the post-war period. This trend suggests that Hungary might have followed similar patterns in recognizing and formalizing social pedagogy as a distinct profession, although specific Hungarian developments are not detailed in the provided sources. The search results do not provide direct evidence or specific examples of how social pedagogy was formally recognized or institutionalized in Hungary during the 1960s. However, the broader context of educational reforms and the European trend towards recognizing social pedagogy as a profession support the possibility of such developments.

In 1989, the country's first social pedagogy training was launched, combining teaching and social pedagogy in a unique dual-degree program. This innovation aimed to address the needs of educational and social institutions by training professionals who could support children and their families. The higher education system evolved to include two main sectors: social pedagogy and social work (Adams, 2003; Varga, 2015).

The career model for Social Pedagogues is governed by the provisions outlined in the 2023 Act LII. law, with its latest amendment being the Government Decree 401/2023 (VIII. 30.) on the implementation of the new career system for educators, effective from January 19, 2024. The acquisition of all pedagogical degrees is subject to specific conditions. Pedagogues entering positions covered by the career advancement system must possess the required qualifications and expertise, with variations that reflect experience levels, such as a minimum of two years of professional practice or, for those completing integrated teacher training, less than one year of practical experience. The career model introduces a classification called 'Intern' for those with limited experience. The duration of Intern (Trainee) status is influenced by factors like prior professional practice, and if the qualifying exam is scheduled within a month of the Intern (Trainee) status having expired, an extension of up to six months may be granted. The model also outlines pathways for advancement, with successful completion of a qualifying exam leading to the Pedagogue I. grade. Further advancement to Pedagogue II. grade and Master Pedagogue

grade involves additional criteria, such as years of experience, participation in professional development, and voluntary involvement in extra responsibilities. The attainment of these higher positions may also include eligibility for roles like a mentor or participation in nationwide educational inspections. Moreover, the model introduces also the possibility of obtaining the Research Teacher grade, a research-focused position, contingent on meeting specific criteria related to a research programme development and collaboration agreements. Additionally, provisions for degrees are extended to individuals in specialized roles within the education system, allowing them to achieve recognition in the Pedagogue I., Pedagogue II., Master Pedagogue, or Research Teacher categories based on their qualifications and experiences. The qualifying examination and the certification procedure for teachers are organised by the Education Office. The Pedagogues' career model is a comprehensive framework that encompasses various stages of professional development, qualifications, and practical experience, providing a structured path for educators in the field, guided by the latest legislative updates.

14.4.1 Areas of intervention

Teachers, helped by social pedagogy, actively engage in students' holistic development, advocating for social justice and equity. This progressive approach prepares students for a rapidly changing world, emphasizing community, empathy, and social responsibility. In conclusion, teachers in Hungary contribute significantly to both education and society, with social pedagogy shaping a holistic and progressive teaching philosophy (Godawa & Rákó, 2022).

In Hungary, social Pedagogues and teachers share the common goal of supporting and developing individuals, but they do so through different methods and in varied environments. Social Pedagogues primarily operate within educational institutions, but their expertise can also be applied in a wide range of social environments. These settings include community centres, child protection services, juvenile correctional facilities, non-profit organizations, residential care homes, as well as schools and kindergartens. Their tasks involve providing social support, counselling, organizing activities, and developing intervention programmes to enhance social functioning and integration, focusing on holistic development that addresses social, emotional, and sometimes educational needs beyond the traditional school curriculum. In contrast, teachers primarily operate within educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools, vocational schools, and higher education institutions. They are responsible for planning and delivering lessons, assessing student progress, managing classroom behaviour, and fostering academic and personal development within the structured educational curriculum, emphasizing academic achievement and cognitive development. Both professions require interdisciplinary knowledge in psychology, child development, and communication

skills, underscoring their supportive roles in guiding young people, albeit from different perspectives - social Pedagogues through social integration and teachers through educational instruction.

In Hungary, social pedagogy has grown to include various approaches. There has been a notable change in the traditional roles, especially in how curricula and classrooms are managed. Social Pedagogues are crucial in shaping what students learn, making sure they meet their evolving needs. This expansion creates a more flexible and responsive educational environment. Additionally, their involvement in extracurricular activities and community outreach shows a commitment to overall development. Outside the classroom, social Pedagogues connect with local communities, promoting social responsibility and community unity (Godawa & Rákó, 2022). By actively contributing to policy formation, these professionals help create a more inclusive and fair educational system. Their understanding of diverse learners and communities guides policy decisions, making education responsive to each student's strengths and challenges. Their active role in policymaking ensures that education stays adaptable, addressing the complex needs of a rapidly changing society.

Social Pedagogues understand the importance of educating individuals who are not only academically proficient but also empathetic and socially aware. By incorporating societal engagement into education, they aim to instill values like tolerance, understanding, and active citizenship in students. This approach goes beyond traditional learning methods, aspiring to shape a generation that is knowledgeable, socially responsible, and compassionate. Social Pedagogues play a significant role in the multifaceted development of students and society. Their emphasis on creating informed and empathetic citizens underscores their dedication to nurturing individuals who are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of our rapidly changing world (Zolnai et al, 2016).

In Hungary, social pedagogy involves a multidisciplinary approach to supporting and empowering vulnerable individuals, particularly children and youth, through education, social support, and community engagement. Social Pedagogues play a critical role in promoting social justice, inclusivity, and the overall well-being of those they serve in schools and kindergartens as well. They now act as facilitators and mentors, moving from traditional methods to a more inclusive approach (Cameron, 2011). Social Pedagogues focus on individual student needs, creating a supportive learning environment. They are also committed to community outreach, ensuring education is accessible to everyone, regardless of background (Gortka-Rákó, 2018).

14.5 Top of Form

In shaping educational policies, Pedagogues contribute significantly to aligning themselves with the evolving needs of society. Their deep understand-

ing of the educational landscape empowers them to advocate for policies that promote inclusivity, equity, and relevance. By actively participating in policy discussions and decision-making processes, Pedagogues become catalysts for positive change, ensuring that educational systems are adaptive and responsive to the broader societal context. The functions of Pedagogues in Social Pedagogy in Hungary reflect a holistic and forward-looking approach to education. Their evolution into educational facilitators and mentors, active engagement in community outreach, commitment to pioneering educational innovation, and contribution to shaping educational policies highlight their multifaceted role in nurturing a learning environment that is not only academically enriching but also socially inclusive and aligned with the needs of a rapidly evolving society (Banai, 2015).

In Hungary, the job market for educators with a focus on social pedagogy is experiencing a notable surge in demand, reflecting a growing awareness of the crucial role teachers play in shaping individuals' personal development. A significant factor contributing to this high demand is the recognition of teachers as not only disseminators of academic knowledge but as essential contributors to students' holistic growth. Schools and educational institutions are actively seeking professionals with diverse skill sets that extend beyond traditional teaching methods. This multifaceted approach is evident in the specialised areas of demand, with an increasing emphasis on mental health awareness, inclusivity, and technological literacy. Teachers with expertise in these domains are seen as invaluable assets, addressing contemporary challenges faced by students. Furthermore, there is a palpable emphasis on preparing students for global competitiveness, acknowledging the interconnectedness of today's world. As such, educators with a social pedagogy focus are held to impart subject-specific knowledge and essential life skills, fostering a well-rounded and adaptable generation (Rostáné, 2021).

The salaries of social workers are often determined by the civil service wage scale and the guaranteed minimum wage. In 2025, the guaranteed minimum wage for higher education graduates was HUF 348,800 (approx. €870) gross per month. In practice, this is the lower limit for the gross salary of early career social Pedagogues.

In net terms, this means around HUF 232,000 (€580) for single workers without children). Beginning social workers typically earn around the guaranteed minimum wage. This is about 348-350,000 HUF (€870) gross, which is about 230-235,000 HUF (€580) net. Intermediate professionals (with a few years of experience) can earn slightly more: around 400,000 HUF (gross, which is approx. 265,000 HUF net).

Experienced professionals (with 10-20+ years of experience) may have a gross salary of close to or up to HUF 450,000 (€990), which is equivalent to about HUF 300,000 (€745) net. It is important to point out that even after decades of employment, the salary of a college graduate is often below the average salary in the national private economy.

At regional level, there are no significant differences: wages in the capital and in the countryside are almost the same in this profession. However, allowances and bonuses provide some extra income and, in the long run, jubilee bonuses can compensate to some extent for the financial difficulties of the career. All in all, those who choose this profession should expect that in 2025, a social Pedagogue in Hungary earned an average net monthly salary of around HUF 220-250,000, (€620) well below the national average. At the same time, the career offers a predictable salary, nationally uniform income levels and a degree of financial security through the status as public employee. Future wage developments will depend to a large extent on public wage policies and on whether there are meaningful wage adjustments in the social sector. Professionals are confident that in the future their salaries will be closer to the averages for more highly qualified careers (453/2024. (XII. 30.) Government Decree).

The responsibilities of social educators have broadened significantly in recent years, accompanied by a rising demand for their expertise. Regrettably, institutions often struggle to recruit adequately qualified professionals to fulfil these roles, largely due to financial constraints. Nevertheless, the indispensable nature of social educators' contributions as a vital adjunct to the work of teachers remains incontrovertible. Their efforts enrich the educational experience and address critical social and emotional needs within the learning environment. Moving forward, it is imperative to enhance both the societal and financial recognition of this profession, thereby elevating its prestige and ensuring its sustainability.

14.6 Case study

14.6.1 Introduction

The three case studies have been chosen because each of them deals with young children or students with different social or economic disadvantages. The Erzsébet camps, the Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies, and the Sure Start Programme in Hungary are presented as professional interventions conducted by Hungarian Pedagogues with a social orientation. The connection between the three cases is that in each case children or students coming from several disadvantaged families are at the centre and the professional's role is to reduce the disadvantages, ensure their holistic development, and facilitate Roma students to obtain a university degree at the Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies. Those educators working within these programmes can be infant and childcare educators, kindergarten educators, teachers, social Pedagogues and psychologists.

Enhancing Children's Summer Camp Experience - Erzsébet Foundation's 'Connecting Camps - Erzsébet Camps' EU Project

Commencing its work in 2017, financed jointly by the EU Social Fund and the Hungarian government under the identifier EFOP-1.2.12-17-2017-00006, the Erzsébet Foundation's² initiative, 'Connecting Camps - Erzsébet Camps', represents a transformative undertaking to provide the possibility of a summer camp experience for children across the culturally rich expanse of the Carpathian Basin. This ambitious European Union project is designed not only to provide children with a memorable and enjoyable summer respite but also to cultivate the digital and social competencies essential for navigating the complexities of the modern world. Through activities and cultural experiences in the Carpathian Basin, the Erzsébet Foundation wants to create a rich environment where kids enjoy summer and learn important life skills. The project focuses on teaching digital literacy and social skills to positively impact society by developing the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of participating children.

Description of the Case

The initiative, 'Connecting Camps - Erzsébet Camps', unfolded as a project to metamorphose the leisure and summer camp sites of Zánka and Fonyódliget on Lake Balaton into modern, well-equipped centres of learning and recreation. It emphasized the significance of play in cognitive and emotional and general child development, resulting in the creation of lively and engaging playgrounds to encourage creativity, social interaction, and physical activity. The integration of Information and Communication Technology aimed not only to provide participants with exposure to digital tools but also to equip them with the digital literacy skills crucial for the contemporary economic landscape.

Besides improving the physical aspects, the project's influence extends beyond Zánka and Fonyódliget. A methodological framework, derived from best practice examples and refined throughout the project's lifecycle, serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to emulate its model.

14.6.2 Methodology

The project operated with the hypothesis that improved facilities, diverse programmes, and targeted competency development would positively impact children's overall camp experience. The hypothesis also assumed that pedagogical and methodological support for camp organizers would contribute to the success of similar initiatives.

The Erzsébet Foundation's methodology is an example of a social pedagogy approach and aimed to understand the needs and resources crucial for a transformative camp experience. The foundation conducted a detailed analysis of existing camp infrastructure, aspirations of campers, and the broader socio-

² See <https://erzsebettaborok.hu/>. For description of this government-supported Hungarian leisure organisation see: https://isto.international/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EN_Tourism-in-actions-20-examples-of-social-policies-programmes-around-the-world-28-29.pdf

educational context. This went beyond identifying restorative needs, envisioning a holistic rejuvenation for modernizing camps and fostering optimal child development. The foundation recognized that transformation processes involve both tangible upgrades and thoughtful programme curation, aligned with participants' preferences and the overarching goal of personal growth. Acknowledging changing educational paradigms, the project integrated cutting-edge digital tools. This involved understanding technological proficiency, the educational value of digital experiences, and anticipating the long-term benefits of nurturing social competencies in the digital realm (Tomka, 2021). It employed continuous monitoring throughout the project to ensure the successful implementation of objectives.

Evaluation Systems Adopted

Anonymized questionnaires were filled out by over 60,000 children and accompanying staff from 2017 to 2023. This family sociological research was conducted in collaboration between the Erzsébet Foundation for Children in the Carpathian Basin and the Mária Kopp Institute for Demography and Families³ in the summer of 2020 surveying children aged 6 to 16 who participated in the Erzsébet Camps. The questionnaires were distributed to all camp locations across the country; however, participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous, under usual ethical and methodological procedures for social science research.

Beyond assessing their demographic data, the children were asked about their social relationships, leisure activities, learning habits and difficulties during the COVID pandemic, as well as their overall well-being.

In summary, the Erzsébet Foundation's 'Connecting Camps - Erzsébet Camps' project has not only revitalized the Zánka and Fonyódliget camps but has also laid the groundwork for sustainable and impactful youth development programmes. Through careful needs analysis, strategic planning, and continuous monitoring, the foundation states that it has successfully achieved its objectives, creating modern, inclusive, and enriching environments for the summer camps. The collaborative efforts with educational institutions, child welfare organizations, and the establishment of a professional network have demonstrated the foundation's commitment to fostering a holistic approach to children's well-being.

14.6.3 The Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies

The Christian Roma Colleges Network (KRSZH in Hungarian)⁴ was founded in 2011 with the participation of the Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Reformed and Evangelical Churches and the strong support of the

³ A support institution of the State Secretariat for Families within the Ministry of Culture and Innovation funded by the Hungarian government, see <https://www.koppmariaintezet.hu/en/intro>.

⁴ See <https://www.meersz.hu/rolunk/>

then Hungarian government to promote the empowerment and social reconciliation of members of the Roma community through learning and community life. In addition to mentoring and professional programmes, some university-based colleges have joined the church-based colleges in providing support alongside their educational initiatives.

The main aim of the Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies is to support students from disadvantaged social groups and backgrounds, mainly Romas, in higher education, whose institutional integration and social mobility require a level of performance that students are in most cases unable to meet without external support. Their objectives are to reduce drop-out rates, to strengthen students' social engagement and community activism, and to increase the motivation of Roma students to continue their studies through the example of other Roma college students.

The Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies are residential. Students receive a merit-based scholarship, in all cases linked to measurable professional research academic performance. They benefit from support programmes and personalised mentoring, tailored to their individual needs. The students' mentors are academic university lecturers, but their role is based on social pedagogy principles: supporting students' well-being, coordinating their studies, and providing life guidance to help them solve everyday challenges.

Every year, hundreds of students study in eleven Roma colleges for Advanced Studies in Hungary. They provide a base for services that create opportunities and promote the social inclusion and community activism of Roma graduates, to increase the proportion of Roma intellectuals and indirectly thereby improve the social relations between majority and minority groups. The Hungarian Government provides budgetary funding for the function of the qualified, accredited mentors. They have to meet strict criteria, having undergone an official evaluation procedure. The Hungarian Network of Colleges for Advanced Studies is a model institution for integration in a multicultural and diverse community.

14.6.4 The Sure Start program

The importance of early childhood programmes in lessening the reproduction of social inequalities is increasingly recognised. Our knowledge of child development and international experience of various early childhood programmes clearly show that adverse development is more easily reversed in the early years than later in life (J. Heckman).

The Sure Start programme provides support for children and their families living in deprivation. The Biztos Kezdet (Sure Start) programme was introduced in Hungary in 2003 through a collaboration between the British Embassy and the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs. The pilot programmes were implemented in various regions and types of settlements, funded by the European Union. It is now funded by the local municipalities

or associations in Hungary. The goals of the English Sure Start children's centres, which served as a model, were adapted into the Hungarian programme to the following strategic objectives (Szomor & László, 2014):

1. Ensuring that children on reaching compulsory school age are healthy and achieve an optimal development of their innate abilities. This is facilitated through a professionally grounded environment—both human and material—that supports all areas of development, including motor skills, cognition, emotions, language and communication, and perception.
2. Engaging and supporting parents in mobilizing their own resources and acquiring the necessary competencies to foster their child's healthy, harmonious personality development and optimal potential.
3. Encouraging the integration of the programme within local communities to ensure that these communities provide infrastructural and professional support to the programme staff.
4. Increasing the visibility of institutions and professionals working with children aged 0-5 at the local level, promoting collaboration among them, and making services accessible for early identification and prevention.

The Hungarian adaptation of the programme was guided by the need to address social inequalities and disparities in access to services. The Sure Start Children's Houses were established in communities where there was a local shortage of services, such as nurseries or healthcare provisions, and where the population faced multiple disadvantages.

The Sure Start Children's Home provides a favourable environment for development in areas where poverty is greatest and where the incidence of developmental risks is highest. It aims to improve the developmental chances of children living in poverty from birth. By using knowledge about early childhood development and complementing the domestic institutional system, the Sure Start programme offers a real opportunity to renew the institutional system for children and families and the way of thinking about children and society. Children who have attending a the Sure Start project commence kindergarten with an advantage in social competences like hygiene and social interaction.

The playful activities (drawing, painting, pattern-making, needlework, reading bedtime stories, children's rhymes) are not only fun for the children but also teach parents the importance and joy of caring for their children.

14.6.4.1 Methods

Sure Start Children's Houses are part of the basic child protection services⁵. They receive public budget support for their work.

In the Sure Start Children's Houses professionals, who are mainly nurses,

⁵ See https://firstyearsfirstpriority.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case-Study_-Hungary-2020.pdf

and infant and childcare workers, not only work with children to relieve the burden on parents but also with parents, educating whole families. The professionals help with the process of becoming parents and with the development of parental responsibility, as there is no safer social network than the family, and this is where the Sure Start Children's Houses help. Only together with the parent, through the parent, can we achieve a positive effect on the child's development, which is why it is important to address the parent. The Sure Start Children's House provides a space for children aged 1.5 to 3 and their parents to visit regularly because according to their programme, the development of young children can only be influenced through regular, repeated participation. At least one of the staff members has a recognised academic qualification in their field to work with young children. The compulsory opening hours are morning times five days a week.

The strategic objectives are to support children's development, to work with parents, to improve the situation of parents, to create a vision for parents, to mobilise community resources, and to cooperate with professionals in the municipality as for example, paediatrician, general practitioner, family doctor, child welfare worker, kindergarten educator, development teacher, special needs teacher, child dentist, specialised pedagogical service, early childhood development specialist, psychologist, psychiatrist, educational counsellor, family support coordinator. The majority of Sure Start Children's Houses are run by municipalities, but there are also some run by NGOs and churches. This network can be successful thanks to social and family partnerships.

14.7 Conclusions

In summary, this contribution explores the Hungarian educational approach focusing on the specialized roles and responsibilities that educators assume within this system. In Hungary, educators are professionals who work in public education and schooling institutions, carrying out teaching and educational tasks. This group includes preschool teachers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, special education teachers, social Pedagogues, facilitators, and other professionals with pedagogical qualifications.

The chapter aims to highlight the distinctive contributions of Pedagogues to the educational framework and to illuminate the aspects of Hungarian pedagogy as a comprehensive concept, contributing to a broader understanding of the global educational discourse. Educators, teachers and social Pedagogues have developed opportunities and competences to deal with children or students coming from several disadvantaged families and reduce the disadvantages, to ensure their holistic development and obtain a university qualification for them.

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Afterword and acknowledgements of the Editors

This text has its roots in the dreams of its editors, who, at different times and in different ways, have shared for years the need to provide an overview of the current state of the pedagogical professions in Italy and Europe. This milestone marks a milestone in a journey that will require further exploration and research, but it also highlights the urgent need for recognition of the importance of educational work at the political and institutional level, and calls for the expansion of a defined space for pedagogical action in local services, including schools.

For this reason, we have opted for a “shared” introduction among those who currently represent the engaged components of the educational world in Italy and who collaborate in research, teaching, and operations to foster the creation of this space. We have also avoided including conclusions to emphasize that we will continue to work on these themes.

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This volume aims to provide a survey of the state of the art regarding the profession of the pedagogue in Europe. The pedagogical professions in Italy are undergoing a new phase of development in the light of Law 55/2024, which regulates their functions and qualifying training courses. An international comparison is therefore necessary in order to establish some common premises aimed at framing the role of the pedagogist in a European perspective. This volume stems from the intention to set up an initial network of colleagues from different countries, engaged both in theoretical research and in the educational realities of the countries concerned, as a starting point for a fruitful and lasting collaboration in the years to come.

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