

## PROJECT ACTIVITY OF DEPARTMENT "SOCIAL WORK" AND STUDENTS' COMPETENCIES IMPROVEMENT

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF AT  
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**ABSTRACT:** PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN PROJECT WORK HAS CHARACTER ON BUILDING THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES. PROJECT ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS IS A KEY FACTOR FOR THEIR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AS COMPARABLE TO EUROPEAN STANDARDS PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION, SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALIFICATION. IT STIMULATES SELF-SEEKING SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND MASTERING OF BASIC SKILLS FOR THE HANDLING AND APPLICATION IN PRACTICAL SITUATIONS. HELPS SELF DISCOVERY OF NEW SCIENTIFIC FACTS, ENRICHES EXISTING INFORMATION FOCUSED RESEARCH TO CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND PROBLEM SOLVING; IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE INNOVATIONS EXPERIENCED RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION; TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, METHOD AND PROCEDURES AND STUDY THEIR EFFECT OPTIMIZER.

**KEY WORDS:** PROJECT, PROJECT ACTIVITY, INNOVATION, RESEARCH STRATEGIES, EXPERIMENTATION, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, METHODOLOGIES, INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE, SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES, CREATIVE THINKING, SELF DEVELOPMENT, AKMEOLOGIYA

As a member the European family, Bulgaria should bring their education in the light of **The Lisbon Strategy in 2000** [2] and **Strategy "Europe 2020"** [3] to be able to "produce" highly qualified, ready to compete at the international labor market. This task corresponds with the complex economic environment in which global world is situated. As the Bulgarian researcher of these processes **Z. Zhekov** writes: „In the terms of economic crisis and globalizing dynamic international competition very actual takes place the scientist's dedication and the active research activities. Exactly for this reason it is necessity the creation of supportive environment for developing of scientific researches and the transforming the scientific results into economic advantages [10, p.15]”. The author also writes that, ...Sustainable economic growth through education quality improving is realized. This is achieved in exchange for the dry theory with pragmatically approach. It is necessity the knowledge into an innovation and into a tool for decisions taking to be changed [10, p.15]”.

THE project work of students in the Department of "Social Work" in Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" - Bulgaria is associated with basic research, applied researches, evaluation and project management, expert consulting and other scientific and artistic activities. These activities are carried out systematically and **aim to:**

- *encourage interdisciplinary research;*

- *creating and spreading knowledge;*
- *development of creative thinking and expression;*
- *development of studies related to the needs of the society.*

**ALL this aims at upgrading knowledge and skills among the future specialists prepared for the social sphere.** As Bulgarian scientist **N. Dimitrova** writes: „Modernization in contemporary life changes are necessary in any educational system released to meet the contemporary requirements. [8, p.53] The author further adds: „Project work in the training of students helps to create a work environment that motivates self-seeking, processing and analyzing information. [8, p.54]”.

**THE** main forms of research activity are: student projects, conferences and research forums, university and in collaboration with other institutions offering social work.

**FROM** the above **target** arise tasks set by the Department with the participation of students in research projects, and in their nature they are:

- 1. Stimulation of the interdisciplinary research;*
- 2. Improving the quality of education through the integration of research results in the teaching process;*
- 3. Application of the research results and putting the skills of academic staff in the service of education, science and public practice.*

**SCIENTIFIC** research projects are developed according to the objectives, strategies and policies of the university. Priority is given to activities that create, generate or discover new knowledge and contribute to the continuous encourage of scientific work and creativity, innovate and practical applications aimed at understanding the North-East region and Shumen region, corresponding to their needs.

**POLICY** of the Department is dissemination of the scientific results through scientific forums at international level or published in prestigious scientific periodicals that promote its whole reputation of this university, faculty and students.

**STUDENTS** work on projects besides having features while upgrading ensures the unity of research and teaching as a defining characteristic of the interactions between them and the academic community. It is indispensable for achieving the optimal balance of learning and research and quality improvement of their education - cognitive activity.

**ACCORDING** to **D. Fried-Booth** project activities of students is a key factor for their personal development, as comparable to European standards professional qualification, successful social integration and continuous improvement of the qualification. It stimulates self-seeking scientific information and mastering of basic skills for the handling and application in practical situations. Helps self discovery of new scientific facts, enriches existing information focused research to critical analysis and problem solving; implementation of innovations experienced research and experimentation; transfer of technology, method and procedures and study their effect optimizer [9].

**FURTHER** down in the article are listed research projects carried out by students studying in the major "Social activities" carried out by different methods: assisted and independent observations; fieldwork and research, conceptual and prognostic feasibility studies and models; simulation and real experiment, conducting formative and corrective work; comparative research, methodical and technological innovation; statistical processing,

analysis and summary of experimental data, preparation of research reports and various publications, participation in research and creative activities, etc. /Table 1/

**Table 1: Design work of the students building on their potential**

Essence of the project	Study disciplines for acquiring basic knowledge in students	Additional knowledge and skills developed in students in project work
Project № RD-05-449/07.05.2008 – "Social inclusion of students from institutions for children through educational forms together with the Pedagogy Faculty of the Shoumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" (on the experience of orphanage "Clover" in Shumen)	"Social pedagogy" "Social work with groups" "Social work with individuals and families" "Social work" "Social legislation and social protection"	Upgrading the knowledge about the types of children placed in the institutions and the differentiated approach to them. Developing specific methodological approaches to work independently, according to the individual characteristics of each child. Development of unique forms of extracurricular work relating to the ability of the given institution.
Project № RD-05-245 of Shoumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" "Formation of social competence of social work of the students studying in the professional Social activities through participation in planning, management and evaluation of projects for develop" /together with a team of the University - Friedensau, Germany / Shumen, 2009	"Social work" "Methods of the social work" "Social studies" "Sociology" "Working on project" "Innovations in the social work" "Social work with ethnic and social differences"	Practical realization of the knowledge in terrain, consistent with the ethno-social differences in the local community. Application of specific approaches, arising in movement during the fieldwork. Innovate of a causal approaches called for by working with individuals and families. Experience of working with other institutions whose field of work is social. Processing of an effective behavior in case of extreme social conflict, requiring immediate actions of social workers. Actually managing the project for the social development of isolated communities.
Project № 5192/2011 of Shoumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" - "Futurological forecasting for the future of social services in Bulgaria"	"Sociology" "Social studies" "Forecasting, planning and modeling in social work" "Social work"	Development of knowledge and skills for long-term forecasting. Effective participation in the development of futurological forecasts by Delphi method, Ringi method, brainstorming, Content - analysis and others. Acquiring knowledge about science futurology, which is not included in the curriculum of students.
Project № RD-08-305/15.03.2013 of Shoumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" "Socialization through art therapy in orphanage "Clover" in Shumen	"Sociology" "Art therapy" "Innovations in the social work" "Management of the social institutions" "Social work with individuals and families"	Exceeding the theoretical idea of socialization through direct work with children living in an institution. Awareness of their specific socialization. Application in the actual practice of various forms of art therapy provide a more accelerated, active involvement of institutional children in the society.

**THESE** and other projects end with student compilations of scientific production, where participants presented their work and significant conclusions arising therefrom [4], [5], [6], [7].

**BY** participating in research, project work students in "Social activities" self-empowerment in the context of the writings of **N. Dimitrova**: „Project work allows students to integrate their knowledge from different fields to apply them in practice and reach new knowledge, ideas and material values in solving a problem [7, 54]”. Moreover, she connects the work in projects the akmeology which sets as: „Science "akmeology" is a branch of

psychology and the relatively new scientific knowledge ... examines the regularities and mechanisms that provide opportunities for every individual to reach its peak of development. She studied the laws and principles of human potential when reaching its highest level of development [8, p.54]". Thus in akmeological context [1] project work of the students appeared not only as a process of upgrading knowledge, but as a process of self-development. Her opinion is completely covered with that of **A. Derkach** and **V. Zazikin** on the discussed problem [1].

In its scientific publication **Z. Zhekov** expressed the opinion that: In the European Union a significant potential in terms of the research units, science and technology parks is made that serve as centers of knowledge creation and for their transformation into innovation results (radically new and/or improved processes, products and services). Nevertheless and especially in the times of crisis the European research community a number of challenges is faced. [10, p.18]". But in this connection it should be said in the final, that the Department "Social work" of the Shoumen University - Bulgaria occupies a significant place in the infrastructure of the realized design work with his students.

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