

Educational Carrier with Public Care Background in Hungary

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Abstract: *An important characteristics of the post modern society is uncertainty which is not only confined to individuals and families who have low social status. Postmodernism has produced significant change in the interpretation of childhood, the relationship between child and adult has been fully restructured. Parent have less and less time for raising their child so their extension and nature of responsibility become vulnerable. In our study we deal with the school career of children and young adults who are living in the Hungarian child protection system, based on research results and literature. In connection with examination of school career, we discuss the situation of Roma children too.*

Keywords: *child protection, educational carrier, children in care, social integration*

1. INTRODUCTION

An important characteristics of the post modern society is uncertainty which is not only confined to individuals and families who have low social status. Beck (1997; 2003) highlights, the traditional institutions cannot response, in the risk society people are responsible for their own life and risks associated with health, aging, unemployment, poverty became individual. Postmodernism has produced significant change in the interpretation of childhood, the relationship between child and adult has been fully restructured, blurring the boundaries between different stages of human life. Winn (2000), for example, argues that the children's lives and knowledge are hardly separated form those surrounding adults who protect and rear them. It is important to mention in terms of family functioning as a whole, global challenges have great influence as the parent have less and less time for raising their child so their extension and nature of responsibility become vulnerable. These are important to be taken account when it comes to consider about the challenges of child protection. In the followings we deal with the school career of children and young adults who are living in the Hungarian child protection system, based on research results and literature. In connection with examination of school career, we discuss the situation of Roma children too. We examine that in the child protection system what kind of challenges need the professionals face in terms of supporting studies at before and after the compulsory school age and encouraging them to work.

2. LIFE IN CHILD PROTECTION AND SHOOOL

2.1. School career examination of those who live in child protection

The XXXI. Act (1997) of child protection and child welfare administration states it is a fundamental requirement that the children in family get every kind of support in order to have the children growing up in family, that is, the principle is that the preventive solution gets the major role. When it is impossible to have the children growing up in family, the instant after removal should the professional work focus on family reunion and if the child cannot be replaced in her/his family the aim of caring place should be the preparation of successful social integration including institutional and foster family forms as well. After removal, naturally it is fundamental right of the children to get education in accordance to their age, development, health and other needs and to participate in talent support programs. It is also a right of them to express their view about rearing, education and care.

Staying in child protection system can be the reason why the young adults are unable to become independent. Solving housing for young adults after leaving the system is problematic, social integration has another important requirements like work and location. Preparation for independence should be started at an early age, age of 12 is typically an appropriate age to start it. (RÁCZ 2013)

Hungary has a population of 10 million, and approximately 2 million of it is under the age. The number of the youth age (0-29 years old) is 4 million, it is 40% of the total population. The number of under the age youth who are at risk has been 200 thousand people per year since 2007, while the number of children who are under protection has been increasing drastically. This number was extremely high in 2011, 29451 children exactly, it is due to the change in law regarding school truancy. (Papházi 2014: 172) As for the data about long-term care, the number of children placed in foster care has been increasing since 2003, compared to the number of those who were placed in children's home. In 2011, 8431 children and young adults lived in children's home and 12638 in foster care. (Papházi 2014: 208)

Many research in Hungary deals with the school participation of disadvantaged and Roma children (eg. Being Gypsy (Cigánylét) 1991; Forray-Hegedűs 1998; Réger 1995; Kertesi 2005). The range of statistical data and research results regarding school career of children who live in long-term care is limited, although in recent years many study dealt with is issue.

Two-thirds of children living in long-term care is at the compulsory school age and half of the children in care is in the age-group of elementary school (KSH 2012:10). According to the OSAP data of 2011 we can conclude that larger proportion of children between 15-17 living in foster care, engage in secondary education, 86 % of them study opposed to the children who live in children's home where it is only 61,1 %. There is a significant difference between the two forms of care regarding the engagement in education that ends with leaving certificate (high school or vocational secondary school) which later becomes determinant in terms of positioning in labour market and social integration. 54,3 % of this age group living in children's home study in secondary vocational school or vocational school and only 10,3 % of them continues their studies in school that ends with leaving certificate. In foster care 31,7 % of the children study in school that ends with leaving certificate and 50,9% in vocational school or vocational school. Papházi 2014: 187) However, it is important to mention that the number of children participating education that provides leaving certification has been increasing slowly, in 2002 from 22% to 25%. (KSH 2012: 10) Educational level is an indicator for social integration of those who are of full age and leave the system. As for young adult, between 18-25 leaving the system, every second finishes elementary school. In 2011 in case of young adults who left the system it was nearly 40%. In the reference year 56,3% of those who left the system had secondary and 3,2% of them had higher education qualification. (KSH 2012: 12)

Many research, made over the past several years, confirmed the differences between the two types of care in terms of success or failure regarding school career. According to the results of National Competency Test in 2008, place of growing up strongly determines school performance. In the previous year, children who lived with their families had almost grade better average than those who lived in children's home (children in families: 3,96, children in children's home: 3,15). Children who live in foster care achieve better that those who live in institutional care (grade average: 3,47). The secondary study plans for the future are the same as the child protection data. 41% of children living in children's home prefers secondary vocational school, opposed to those who live with their families, where it is 11%. (RÁCZ et al. 2009; Gyarmati 2011)

Before concluding unilaterally that children living in foster care perform better in school than their peers living in institutional care, it is worth to quote Mária Neményi and Vera Messing's research¹ that states younger children who have normal needs have greater chance to be in foster care, and also girls and non-Roma children are easier to be placed. The research also showed that in case of teenagers the most typical reason of get into care is truancy and behavioural problems.

¹ 1866 was the number of element in the sample, three age groups were examined: infant age, school entering age and adolescent

A previous study identified similar level of immaturity and serious problems regarding school career. 37% of the children living in foster care fell behind so much that it made learning and social integration harder. (Fülöpné 2003)

It can be seen for children in child protection vocational trainings are the basis of secondary education. As a research made in 2009 highlights, children's school performance between the age of 15-18 is very bad, a third of them repeated elementary school class. 60% of the young people have no teacher who they could tell their problems honestly. According to young people's view, bad school atmosphere is resulted from dishonest relationships, only truancy can be the response. Hegesús made a research (2004) on relationship with family, school and violence of young criminals. In the research young people were asked to finish the sentence: "*The school is like...*". The answers were: *...like prison, torture chamber, morgue, homeless shelter or the place where somebody gets humiliated*. Several of them reported physical maltreatment. Rausch's (2013) two-county wide online survey shows a better image, the majority of children felt that they could fit in the class and the teachers weren't prejudiced towards them, although boys were more pessimistic in the assessment of teachers and more often got into fight. In Fülöpné's previously cited study (2003), 7% of children showed the symptoms of anxiety. In connection with the feeling of loneliness, those who lived in institutional care, many feel lonely (30,9% of who live in children's home often feels so, and this proportion is 32,4% in apartment home) while children in foster care only feel it occasionally. (Rausch 2013)

Viewing these issues, it is interesting to mention Herz Mária's (2005) published research results on the teachers professional self-image and children's self-image. The results are a great testimony for child protection. According to teachers the relationship between students and teachers continuously deteriorate in accordance with the age of the children. For teacher the most important things are good intellectual ability and quick understanding. Teachers who teach in elementary or grammar school claim that smart children are described with quick understanding, while teachers in vocational school states smart children are those who has general knowledge. 56% of the teachers believed in development. In terms of children living in child protection, it is helpful that those teachers believed in the importance of developing and its beneficial effect on children as well as in modern developing programs, who teach in elementary and grammar school. Hegedűs' (2014) latest research reveals that teachers face many problem in school and they are helpless in solving and addressing them. For example, deficiency in family structure, issues of children maltreatment, addiction in family. Several teachers reported that they feel themselves without any tool to deal with children with problems relating integration and behaviour.

Approximately 5% of people living in child protection study in higher education. (Rácz 2009). However Competency Tests indicate that more people would like to study in higher education, even though the reality of this vision is unknown at present. 55% of children and young adults living with their own family want to get higher education, while in case of people living in care it is 26% and 15% among who live in children's home. (Rácz et al. 2009) Several factors contribute and inhabit the way from child protection to higher education. On system level, place of care and its stability, approach of child protection workers and assistance in accessing to supports for participation in education have important role in the success of school life. Additionally, the school participants (teachers, students) have great influence on career development, in other words, whether they get stigmatized or get positive treatment in the education system because of their background. Individual factors also have significant effect; motivation, love of learning, desire for creating secure future also lead to higher education. (Rácz 2009; 2012a; Rácz - Korintus 2012) However, Rákó's research (2014) draws the attention to the students getting into higher education are in difficult situation, they need to face not only financial difficulties, for example, even administrative tasks can mean problem. They are great need of active support of their peers.

2.2. Examination of school career of Roma children living child protection

In our study we separately discuss the situation and school career of Roma children living in child protection. Because of the prohibition of recording origin, we do not have information regarding the proportion of Roma children in primary and long-term care. Many researches indicate that Roma children are overrepresented in child protection. (Neményi - Messing 2007; Herczog - Neményi 2007, ERRC 2007) According to professionals, getting into the system depends not on the origin but the degree of danger and deviant behaviour of the parents. They have prejudiced

view about the success of care back to the family: financial security in the system opposed to the circumstances at home. (Herczog - Neményi 2007) Roma children's ethnic identity formation is not supported in the system either, since these children live mostly in non-Roma environment and in different sociocultural environment from their biological family. (ERRC 2007) In Neményi and Messing's cited research, 32% of the children were Roma². Roma children get into children's home more often than their non-Roma peers.

The relationship between origin and school career showed that 43% of Roma and 57% of non-Roma study in the class that is appropriated to their age. Roma children have to fight with many prejudices in school and in the child protection system too. Those who are over the age and stay in the system have to face with discrimination in the labour market and health care because of their origin. (RÁCZ 2012b)

3. KEY AREAS IN CHILD PROTECTION WORK TO ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT LIFE

In terms of establishing independent life (not enough to start as adult) the following areas should be strengthened besides keeping the principles and professional methods.

3.1. Promoting school career

- In children's home/foster care concentrated efforts should be made to have the children and young adults to earn good school performance as much as they can (in accordance with their ability) and to obtain qualification based on their abilities.
- The institution should establish the conditions of schooling and learning.
- Children should start or continue their studies where adequate school programs are provided for themselves.
- Children living in children's home can attend the same schools as their peers who live with their families.
- The staff has attentive, helpful, encouraging, rewarding, honest educational behaviour in relation to the child's school work.
- The professional staff – with family engagement – plans and evaluates the child's school activities, habits, learning activities, progress and school career.
- The professional staff strengthen the children's motivation, interest and curiosity to learn, using various developing processes and methods.

3.2. Career orientation

- Young people in care get career guidance and support from the professional staff and other invited experts.
- The professional staff – with the active engagement of young people concerned and their biological parents – prepares, plans and coordinates.
- The professional staff make resources, tools, methods available to develop intensively the young people's career-orientated skills and personal traits.

3.3. Learning sexual identity and roles

- The professional staff models, talks, interprets and practices with the children about how to contact, communicate with the other sex.
- Children get information in accordance with their age about psychical and sexual development from the professional staff.
- The professional staff prepares – preventive, educational, spectacular work – the young people growing up for healthy sexual life.

² Determination of origin was based on whether there is data in the children's documentation that relates to origin and whether the professional who fill the form considers the child to be Roma

3.4. Independence education: housework, financial management, administration

- One of the most important element of professional work in children's home is to have the children understand the importance and acquire the value of housework and make them to practice.
- For children and young adults, the professional staff becomes a role model in terms of household management.
- the professional staff deals with the financial management issues, the income and expenses of the household will be public for the children and young adults.
- Youngsters and young adults are involved in managing purchases and payments.
- In order to obtain essential knowledge and experience in personal administration the professional staff gives tasks to youngsters and young adult to do them individually.
- The professional staff prepares youngsters, for example, how to go the doctor, pay the bills or fill a form.

3.5. Learning adult roles

- If a young adult moves from children's home, the professional staff provides – continuous – support in terms of starting independent life, lifestyle, problems and solutions of households.
- In case of returning family-kinship environment, the staff strengthens family understanding, acceptance, adaptation and controls the process of integration.
- Children's home involves those young adults over 18, who are unprepared for independent life, into programs in which they can finish school, continue learning skills and knowledge that are necessary for autonomous life and they can get independent from the institutional care progressively.
- They will get support to fulfil educational requirements and to acquire the aimed skills, qualification and professional.
- The professional staff designs strategic plan for young adults about how to extend individual life and lifestyle and how to prepare independent lifestyle.
- Solving long-term housing: mobilizing community, local, family resources and getting information about possibilities and conditions of financial housing support.
- The professional staff provides specific support for those young adults who have disability (moderate and severe) to work out long-term helping care and secure livelihood and to access them to housing. Mostly they go to social institutes from child protection.

4. CONCLUSION

Research findings indicate that the education of youngsters is inadequate. The number of those who discontinue their study or drop out is high. In child protection the aim is to have children to have at least secondary level of education because it makes them easier to become employed. (Szikulai 2004) During enrolment children should take into consideration that they should learn a profession which is looked for in the labour market. Talent support is needed and the number of children who learn in higher education should be increased as much as possible. Learning disorder as a symptom can be resulted from many reason: basic learning skill is not developed enough, inadequate learning techniques and strategies, confusion in motivation or lack of motivation.

In order to overcome disadvantages in school, complex, starting form the basis, special skills and assumed good educator-child relationship are required. It is, therefore, important to properly structure the preparation, to fulfil objective and subjective conditions of learning (suitable environment, preparation of learning tools, clearing motivation and problems).

During planning learning, individual characteristics should be taken into account and developing individual learning techniques, learning self-check gradually, increasing self-confidence should

be strived for. (Rác 2013) Children's individual skills, recognising their talent and letting it unfold contribute to their personality development. In this organised frame, it should be a customized achievement. Conscious talent support, personal skill development have positive effect on the individual's personality development as a whole. Further education plans and realistic possibilities should be talked over with the child in the last years of elementary school and with the engagement of parents if it is possible. Formulating realistic aims and way leading to them should contribute to increasing motivation and enhance their ability to fight. As the YIPEE international research pointed out, schools are not ready to deal with children who live in child protection. More attention should be paid on psycho-social support for children in school and in child protection. In addition, experts with special knowledge are needed in child protection, for example, development teacher, psychologist, and successful examples, having programs and celebrations with those who managed to fit in the society.

Difficulties in employment hamper to work out young adults' independent lifestyle, because great number of them do not have stable job and thus income either. This is usually due to inadequate education and because of unemployment, young adults without proper qualification belong to the group of vulnerable. (Szikulai 2004) In case of employed young adults, the child protection should strengthen skills relating to finance management, dealing with money and survival strategies on the level of daily life management and on the level of future planning, that is, consequences should be taken into account which are resulted from conditionality/temporality (existential uncertainty) as well as fulfilling civic obligations. (Kuslits et al. 2010)

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