

SCHOOL CAREERS IN THE SELF-PRESENTATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING OUTSIDE THEIR FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

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This paper examines some of the findings reached in a Social Pedagogical Diagnosis study based on qualitative analysis of the semi-structured self-presentations given in interviews by 60 young people aged 15 to 19 residing in various forms of institutional care. It describes the findings concerning the most pressing school-related issues highlighted by the young people themselves. The study confirms the interconnectedness of developmental burdens and a range of stressful life circumstances which young people in institutional care (housing groups, young people's homes, institutes) had been exposed to. The results help to give us an insight into the life circumstances of young people with problems in the process of schooling. The emphasis is on the significance of self-presentation as an important element in individualised educational work.

Key words: child/young person with difficulties in social integration, schooling, self-presentation

Introduction

For many young people in institutional care school is a place they feel unable to cope with because of their unstable family situation and lack of support. They struggle to meet the expectations of the school and this puts them under additional pressure, increases stigmatisation and affects their educational and vocational expectations, which as a result are significantly lower than those of their peers. Empirical data provided by Slovenian research carried out among primary and secondary school children confirms the vital importance of school success for young people and their parents. Study results show that school success or failure is an important element of family relations. The worse the school results, the greater the proportion of children who feel they lack parental trust, feel under too much pressure from their parents and do not feel comfortable at home, and the lower the proportion of these whose parents trust their intellectual capacities (Ule et al, 2000). Data on family relations gathered by a slightly older study (Škoflek, 1989)

which covered young people in institutional care for other reasons, including problems in school, showed that 50.9% of these children felt they were not emotionally accepted by their parents, 55.5% said that their parents neglected their education and 21.9% of them had a stressful childhood. Numerous studies confirm that school results expressed in terms of grades affect the individual's desires, plans, self-assertiveness and position within his or her social environment. In her 1992 study of the motivational strategies of young people living outside the family environment, Kobolt found that failure at school is a syndrome of inter-related factors which externally is reflected in the following characteristics: unsuccessful children are less able to postpone gratification of their needs, they find it more difficult to control themselves and their behaviour and this leads to poorer social adjustment, weak social promotion and poor social acceptability. An analysis of the individual stories about the circumstances which led a young person to perform worse in school and subsequently to abandon education before completing school reveals a

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