

Declaration of the third National Congress of Social Educators

«The Potential of a Social Educator in Modernizing Russian Society: Current State and Prospects», Anapa, 2012.

We, the participants of the third National Congress of Social Educators (date: 21-25 of September 2012; venue: federal financed health and educational centre for children “Change”; participants: leading scientists and experts from Russia, Denmark, Poland, Ukraine) having discussed the current state of social education as a science and as a professional sphere, have decided to report the following resolution to educational managers and professional community.

We witness a positive trend of social education becoming an independent scientific area with its unique object, subject and methodological basis. Though it should be stated that notwithstanding the variety of scientific approaches to problem-solving in the area of organizing socio-educational work, the conditions under which scientific knowledge can become a powerful resource of the improvement of quality of multifunctional socio-educational work in various regions of the country with different categories of children, young people and families with children are not properly studied and described.

We believe that it's necessary to recognize social education an independent branch of scientific knowledge and according to this status new specialties for postgraduate and doctoral research in this particular sphere should be founded.

In our opinion centralized scientific projects (including international ones) for leading Russian scientists in the field of social education of children and youth aimed at development and experimental testing of multisided, flexible models of socio-educational activities to provide professional help for modern generation of children, youth and young families with children in the changing multicultural world are necessary.

The potential of a social educator in the modernization of Russian society can be revealed in his or her active involvement in solving social problems, connected to social protection and help, socio-educational support for different categories of children and families with children.

Congress participants share the opinion that the institution of social educators should develop in all social spheres. It's essential to stop common practice of reduction of positions of social educators in preschool, primary, secondary and professional education, children clubs. We consider the practice of distribution the functions of a social education between other members of educational process irrational.

A social educator is a specialist who is capable of providing a profound analysis of a social situation of child development and its consequences for psychosocial development of a young man, setting correct objectives and planning the activities necessary for their achievement, building up an individual support plan for a particular child or student.

A social educator is capable of involving the recourses of the family, law-enforcement organs, medical and educational establishments, children and youth unions and organizations, social support centres and is able

if necessary to act as a mediator for both the general public and deputy members in solving various problems in socialization and upbringing of different categories of children and young people.

The increased role of social educators in the society requires the improvement of their professional training. Due to the work of educational and methodological union of social educators a cluster “Psychology and Teaching in Education” was supplemented with social education as a separate area of professional training and the standard for “Psychology and Social Education” was introduced. Recognizing the benefits of uniting psychology and social education we at the same time consider it necessary to point out that the peculiarities of professional education of social educators should be preserved and a possibility of training social educators as an independent programme should be accepted.

The practice of social educators training reveals a number of challenges preventing us from solving the current problems:

Firstly, a present curriculum lacks socio-cultural and legal subjects, which are meant to enhance the level of cultural and legal awareness of a social educator; the subjects forming communicative, analytic, prognostic and reflexive abilities.

Secondly, we consider it necessary to broaden the number of parties getting education in the field of socio-educational work by including such categories as parents (natural, foster and guardian), agents of guardianship bodies, juvenile inspectors, volunteers; it’s important to popularize socio-educational knowledge for the general public using the resources of the Internet, radio, TV, newspapers and magazines.

We suppose that continuing education in the field of social education based on the succession of programmes of secondary school, high school, university and additional qualification institutions will contribute to the enhancing of quality of professional training.

Further activation of contacts between the scientists working on social education challenges and the advanced specialists in the practical field is required in the conditions of modernization of the Russian society.

Translated by Peter A. Stepichev