



International Network for School Social Work

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

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Electronic Newsletter September, 2009

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National Training for Education Social Workers in Mongolia Munkhjargal, Bujgar - President, MASSW and Erdenetsetseg, Tserenpuu - Officer, MASSW

History of Education Social Work in Mongolia

Social work, a relatively new profession in Mongolia, was first introduced to public schools in 1997 when Save the Children UK, in collaboration with the Mongolian Child Rights Center (MCRC), piloted a project “School Social Work” in Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia. The program was extended during the 1999-2000 school year, when Save the Children UK, Save the Children Norway, MCRC and the Social Work Center at the State University of Teachers prepared the first social workers to provide school services in three regions of the country. After completing training, they received certification as education social workers. By April 2001, there were 77 school social workers working in the schools. Now it is estimated that 630 education social workers are employed in public and private schools throughout Mongolia. The title “education social worker” is the one used in the Education Law.

The Training Program

To date there have been many kinds of training for education social workers, such as vouchers, modules, certificate and tailor-made training, but training for all workers in the country was never organized at the national level by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Finally a national training program for education social workers took place in 21 aimags (administrative unit) and 9 districts lasting from the 24th of June until the 7th of July 2009. It was financed by the International Foundation “Catalitic” and arranged by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The aim of the training was to develop the knowledge, experience and skills of the education social workers in order to work with the 6 year-old children who are to enroll in the schools in the new academic year 2009–2010. Prior to the 2008-2009 school year children started school at age 7, so the schools are preparing to work with 6 year-olds for only the second time.

To prepare for the national training program, the training team members developed a handbook “Social Work Service”. The handbook contains five main parts including education

social work, development characteristics of 6 year-old children, education social work service and social work program. When the handbook was ready, 20 national trainees were prepared using the contents of the handbook. Then, the national trainers organized and presented the training to all education social workers from the aimags and city districts. Attendance was excellent with 560 social workers from 21 aimags and 9 districts participating. The work was done under the supervision of Mrs. Kh. Ulziitungalag, professor, Department of Social Work, MSUE.

Outcomes of the Training

The main outcomes of the training were that:

- The social workers have been given the general knowledge and awareness of social work, particularly basic skills and techniques for working with children
- It was a good opportunity for the social workers to share their experiences of working in the schools
- The social workers developed the following proposals regarding future social work service at the schools and sent them to the Ministry, the Association and the Universities.

Proposals sent to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science include:

- Appoint officers for professional supervision and evaluation of educational social work services in the aimags and city districts
- Make various amendments to the new job description
- Recommendations regarding salaries and vacations
- Provide a professional rank for education social workers
- Provide for training of school directors to increase their knowledge and awareness of education social workers
- Organize annual trainings with appropriate certification

Proposals for educational institutions preparing education social workers:

- Improve the quality of practicum supervision
- Teach methods for working with abused children, including services for preventing abuse and neglect
- Teach psychological counseling techniques

Proposals for the Mongolian Association of School Social Work:

- Work with the Ministry and the universities to organize further trainings
- Provide supervision and counseling to the education social workers on developing their program and carrying out the new job description
- Upgrade the journal “School Social Work Practice” so it will be a platform for sharing professional experience
- Become involved in a working group on the issue of evaluating performance of educational social workers.