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# Professional Education of Social Pedagogues in Kazakhstan

### Educación Profesional de Pedagogos Sociales en Kazajstán

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

Professional education of social pedagogues in Kazakhstan took a major step in 2010 when it was introduction into higher educational institutions. This study examines certain social problems and proves that social pedagogues are specialists who can solve these problems. The study focuses on the content of basic social pedagogue training standards. The data used in this study describe the attitudes of social pedagogues to practice-oriented education. The findings indicate that higher educational institutions should cooperate with social institutions in order to develop students' skills of socio-pedagogical activity. The suggestion is to implement summer camps and the "Schoolmaster" course into the educational program of prospective social pedagogues, where students will be able to acquire practical knowledge and improve their professional competency.

**Key words:** Practice-oriented education, Social pedagogue, Social worker, Socio-pedagogical education

#### **RESUMEN:**

La formación profesional de los pedagogos sociales en Kazajstán dio un paso importante en 2010 cuando se introdujo en las instituciones de educación superior. Este estudio examina ciertos problemas sociales y demuestra que los pedagogos sociales son especialistas que pueden resolver estos problemas. El estudio se centra en el contenido de las normas básicas de formación de pedagogos sociales. Los datos utilizados en este estudio describen las actitudes de los pedagogos sociales hacia la educación orientada a la práctica. Los hallazgos indican que las instituciones educativas superiores deben cooperar con las instituciones sociales para desarrollar las habilidades socio-pedagógicas de los estudiantes. La propuesta es implementar campamentos de verano y el curso "Maestro" en el programa educativo de posibles pedagogos sociales, donde los estudiantes podrán adquirir conocimientos prácticos y mejorar su competencia profesional.

**Palabras clave**: Educación orientada a la práctica, Pedagogo social, Trabajador social, Educación sociopedagógica

## 1. Introduction

Education is an integral instrument of social development. Consistent education and transfer of knowledge and skills is necessary for the development of the nation and the state (Markova et al. 2016, 3457-3462). For developing countries, such as Kazakhstan, improving the quality of education is a top-priority task. During the transformation of national education, Kazakhstan uses the positive experience of advanced countries and participates in international treaties in the field of education, such as the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Declaration. However, successful integration into the world community requires not only technical knowledge, but also the improvement of social education, which will enable prospective specialists to become active members of a multicultural community (Rassolov et al. 2016, 10987-10997).

The training of social pedagogues at higher educational institutions is one of the most important components of pedagogical education that results in the acquisition of special knowledge and skills by a prospective pedagogue, development of a social way of thinking, and an increase in social awareness, which allows these pedagogues to constructively perform their duties in accordance to the job requirements.

From a pedagogical point of view, a social pedagogue's job is aimed at supporting an individual over the course of his/her social development and addressing different social challenges. According to Hämäläinen (2003, 69-80), one

of the researchers of social pedagogy, "social pedagogy as a branch of study, has an approach to theoretical questioning of its own, comprising the standpoints of other disciplines and reinforcing the knowledge bases of different professional fields. From this angle, social pedagogy can be seen as strengthening the theoretical framework of social work education as well as being educational, dealing with human well-being. The message here appears to be that the concept of social pedagogy is not about painting towns and cities red with brightly coloured posters, goading mankind to transform the world. It is about adding value to social needs, with the stroke of a scientific brush".

This study aims to investigate the state of social-pedagogical education in Kazakhstan.

#### 1.1 The enhancement of the role of social pedagogues

The enhancement of the role of social pedagogues in the educational process is determined by the increasing rate of social crises, the unpreparedness of the younger generation to social challenges, and their ignorance of ways of tackling said challenges (Kolumbayeva 2000, 168; Menlibekova 2002, 292).

European countries and the USA pay special attention to training social pedagogues (Hatton 2013; Kyriacou et al. 2016). However, each system of social pedagogue training has its distinguishing features. For instance, in the USA, the training of specialists focuses on psychoanalysis, since it is responsible for the improvement of the individual and personal level. In Western Europe, the following models of prospective social pedagogue training can be distinguished (Stephens 2015, 24; Bolger 2015, 287):

- The model of personal growth and development based on therapeutic models.
- The "student" model, based on the analogy with workplace training models, where students observe the work of experience specialists.
- The structured learning model, which is based on a modular curriculum.

In post-Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan, social pedagogy developed parallel to significant social and axiological changes. The development of the socio-pedagogical education in Kazakhstan is related to many social problems, such as a growing crime rate, homeless and neglected children, child alcoholism and sex trade, and mental and physical deviation among children (On Special Social Services 2008). This is confirmed by the following statistical data: according to the National Report on the Drug Abuse Situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014, the number of people taking injectable drugs is 112,740 (0.7% of the population aged 15-64). According to the data of the Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Medical and Social Problems in 2012, 15.8% (± 1.9) of the 16-year-old pupils have ever tried some form of addictive substances. The drugs are mostly taken by males aged 22 (The National Report 2014). More than 18 thousand children in Kazakhstan are from troubled families. The number of crimes among this category of children increased from 1885 crimes in 2010 to 3623 crimes in 2014. During the first half of 2015, the number of such crimes was 1881. The number of divorces has been increasing, too. For instance, in 2014, the number of marriages and divorces was 84 thousand and 30 thousand, respectively. More than 20% of children in Kazakhstan are born by unwed mothers. Nowadays, there are over 49.1 thousand disabled and 58.8 thousand lifelong disabled children in Kazakhstan. The number of pupils with good health is also declining. There are more than 32 thousand orphans and children deprived of parental care. Each third child of this category lives in an orphanage.

The above data prove that the society needs specialists capable of helping people, families, and children that have been through difficult life situations. A social pedagogue is one such specialist and this study investigates the professional training of social pedagogues in Kazakhstan in current conditions.

In Kazakhstan, the social pedagogue profession was officially registered in governmental documents in 1991. According to studies of Kazakhstani researchers, social workers/pedagogues are trained in Kazakhstan in line with the development of the social protection system (Narikbayeva 2012, 216). The "Social Pedagogy" specialization was introduced into higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan in 2010.

# 2. Methodology

According to Shapiro (1996, 2), professional competence includes conceptual competence that provides the understanding of theoretical fundamentals of the job, the ability to analyze, synthesize, and formulate the problem.

In this regard, we surveyed second- and third-year students majoring in social pedagogy at the Eurasian National University, which is one of the leading universities in this field in Kazakhstan.

A total of 100 students (52 second-year students and 48 third-year students) were involved in the survey. The questionnaire had three question pools: 1) laws and regulations covering the organization and content of sociopedagogical work in different social institutions; 2) framework of terms and concepts of sociopedagogical activities; 3) technologies and methods of social pedagogue's activities.

**Table 1.** Analysis of knowledge and skills of second- and third-year students in 2012-2013

# Knowledge and Skills	No	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
	answer	answer	answer	answer

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Fundamental international laws in the field of state social policy	10	70	15	5
2.	Fundamental laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of state social policy	15	65	15	5
3.	Main social policy directions of modern Kazakhstan	0	30	50	20
4.	Content and substance of social protection of children	0	30	50	20
5.	State programs for improving the status of children and families in Kazakhstan	15	82	2	1
6.	Structure of the content, objectives, tasks, and main directions of the State Programs for improving the status of children and families in Kazakhstan	15	85	0	0
7.	Main laws and regulations covering social pedagogues' activities	0	10	80	10
8.	Main specializations of the socio-pedagogical activities	50	25	15	10
9.	). Job duties of social pedagogues		10	70	20
10.	Fundamental rights of social pedagogues	20	40	20	20
11.	Basic functions of social pedagogues	0	35	40	25
12.	Content of criminal responsibility for crimes against children	80	10	10	0
13.	Fundamental laws regulating adoption, custody, and guardianship	75	15	10	0
14.	Juridical grounds for parental rights deprivation	90	10	0	0
15.	Definition of the "family" concept	0	10	50	40
16.	Definition of the "social education" concept	0	20	40	40
17.	Definition of the "implicit concept of education" concept	40	30	20	10
18.	Definition of the "victimology" and "victimization" concepts	50	20	20	10
19.	Definition of the "victim of unfavorable socialization" concept		40	25	25
20.	External reasons behind an individual becoming an unfavorable socialization victim	25	50	20	5
21.	Internal reasons behind an individual becoming an unfavorable socialization victim	25	50	20	5

22.	Definition of the "informal youth groups" concept	0	30	40	30
23.	Definition of the "non-traditional religious cult" concept	0	80	20	0
24.	Definition of the "refugee" and "forced migration" concepts	0	82	18	0
25.	Definition of the "socio-pedagogical activity" concept	0	20	50	30
26.	Fundamental principles of social education	0	20	50	30
27.	Definition of the "social experience organization" concept	0	70	15	15
28.	Definition of the "socio-pedagogical contradictions" concept	20	70	10	0
29.	Main types of socio-pedagogical contradictions in the modern Kazakhstani society	20	70	10	0
30.	Definition of the "pedagogical information technologies" concept	0	80	10	10
31.	Pedagogical problems resulting from the impact of mass media on a person's points of view		30	40	15
32.	Methods of social pedagogues' work with children	0	25	50	25
33.	Family support provided by an educational institution	0	20	50	30
34.	Methods of socio-pedagogical support for troubled families	0	30	40	30
35.	Specificity of social pedagogues' work at school	0	20	50	30
36.	Specificity of social pedagogues' work in communities	5	70	15	10
37.	Deviant behavior prevention methods	0	30	50	20
38.	Social pedagogues' interaction with informal youth organizations	10	80	10	0
39.	Methods of pedagogical settlement of a conflict	15	70	15	0
40.	Technology of social pedagogues' work with religious communities		75	5	0
41.	Technology of socio-pedagogical work in multiethnic communities	0	90	10	0
42.	Social diagnostic methods	0	60	30	10

43.	Technology of providing social support to refugees and forced migrants		90	10	0
44.	Content of support of refugees and forced migrants	0	90	10	0
45.	Social pedagogues' activity in orphanages	0	60	30	10

Now it is necessary to analyze the professional knowledge and skills of second- and third-year students majoring in social pedagogy. Columns 3 and 4 of the questionnaire contain negative answers, while columns 5 and 6 contain positive answers.

In the first pool of questions, which concerned laws and regulations covering the organization and content of socio-pedagogical work in different social institutions, the best answers were given to the following questions: main laws and regulations covering social pedagogues' activities - 90% (in % to the total number of respondents); job duties of social pedagogues – 90%; main social policy directions of modern Kazakhstan – 70%; content and substance of social protection of children – 70%; fundamental rights of social pedagogues – 40%; main functions of social pedagogues – 65%. Negative answers to the other questions of the first pool ranged between 75 % and 100 %. The questions "Juridical grounds for parental rights deprivation" and "Structure of the content, objectives, tasks and main directions of State programs for improving the status of children and families in Kazakhstan" showed the worst results. Thus, 0-25% of respondents gave right answers to eight questions, while 40-90% - to six questions of the first pool. The data shows relatively poor juridical knowledge of prospective social pedagogues.

The second pool of questions, framework of terms and concepts of socio-pedagogical activities, showed mixed results. The most positive answers were given to the questions related to the definition of the concepts of: "family" – 90%, "socio-pedagogical activities" – 80%, "social education" – 80%, "victim of unfavorable socialization" – 70%, "informal youth groups" – 70%, and "fundamental principles of social education" – 80%.

The survey also revealed very poor knowledge of answers to questions about the definitions of the "refugees" and "forced migrant" concepts – 18%; external and internal reasons behind an individual becoming an unfavorable socialization victim – 25%; main types of socio-pedagogical contradictions – only 10% of respondents.

A lower level of knowledge and skills was found according to answers to the questions about the technology and methods of social pedagogues' work. The level of knowledge of traditional technologies and methods of social pedagogues' work (socio-pedagogical work with families, socio-pedagogical work with troubled families, deviant behavior prevention technology, organization of socio-pedagogical work at school, socio-pedagogical diagnostics) was rated highly: positive results ranged from 80% to 40%. Correct answers to other questions of the third pool did not exceed 15%.

According to the survey data, second- and third-year students have minimum basic knowledge and skills required to perform professional activities.

What can such a low level of knowledge of prospective social pedagogues be attributed to? In order to answer this question, we analyzed the curricula for special training in social pedagogy and summarized the results in the Table 2, which shows the inclusion of the following topics in the curricula: social and legal protection of families and children, socio-pedagogical victimology, technology of providing socio-pedagogical support to refugees and forced migrants, technology of pedagogical settlement of conflicts, technology of pedagogical interaction with informal youth organizations, technology of socio-pedagogical work in multiethnic communities, technology of socio-pedagogical work in religious communities.

We reviewed 16 curricula of basic and elective courses and practices and managed to find the required materials in only three of them: 1) Introduction to Social Work; 2) Methods and Technology of Social Pedagogues' Work; 3) Social Psychology (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Analysis of the inclusion of materials on the peculiarities of social pedagogues' activities in the curricula of special training in social pedagogy («+» - materials are included; «0» - materials are insufficient; «-»- materials are not included)

#	Curriculum		Materials supplementing basic knowledge and skills								
		Social and legal protection of family and children	Socio- pedagogical victimology	Technology of socio- pedagogical work in	Technology of providing socio- pedagogical support to refugees and forced	Technology of pedagogical settlement of conflicts	Technology of pedagogical interaction with informal youth organizations	Technology of socio- pedagogical activity in multiethnic communities	Technology of socio- pedagogical work in religious communities		

					migrants				
			Cı	urricula for spec	cial training in S	ocial Pedagogy			
1.	Social Pedagogy	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	-
2.	History of Social Pedagogy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Social Policy	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Childhood social protection system management	+							
5.	Introduction to Social Work	-	0	-	0	-	-	0	-
6.	History of Education and Pedagogical Thought	•							
7.	Pedagogical Anthropology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Introduction to Carrier Guidance	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Methods and Technology of Social Pedagogues' Work		0	0	0	+	0		
10.	Methods of Psychological and Pedagogical Researches								
11.	Developmental Psychology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Social Psychology	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-
13.	History of Psychology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Counseling Psychology for the Family	0							
15.	Psychological and Pedagogical Diagnostics								

16.	Introduction to Counseling Psychology and Psychocorrection								
17.	Elective Courses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	National and Cultural Component		+	0				0	
19.	Specialization Subjects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Content of Practices	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-

### 3. Results

The analysis of professional training of social pedagogy students at the Eurasian National University found a number of apparent challenges:

- The level of knowledge and skills of social pedagogy students does not meet the requirements set in "The Job Description of Educational institution Employees of the Republic of Kazakhstan";
- The level of the professional training programs is insufficient for training social pedagogues capable of perform all of their job roles and duties. In this regard, it is expedient to refer to the opinion of Philonov (1997, 42), who argues that social pedagogy should be developed based on the integrative concept of cross-disciplinary researches, practice-oriented models of social work, and development of region-specific social education models;
- The pedagogical potential of elective courses, specialization subjects, and internships is not used to the fullest extent in social pedagogue training;
- Experienced specialists of social institutions are not involved in the training process as teachers or as practice supervisors and leaders.

In order to change this situation, in the next experiment, we made amendments to the curricula of special training in social pedagogy in terms of practices.

In general, pedagogical practice that includes socio-pedagogical and psychological practices is a link between theoretical training and independent work of students at educational institutions.

The curricula for special training in social pedagogy provide for two types of practices: 1) psycho-pedagogical practice – seven weeks during the third and fourth semesters; 2) socio-pedagogical practice – four weeks during the fifth semester.

The psycho-pedagogical practice program includes the following:

- 1. Playing of roles of a school psychologist and a homeroom teacher;
- 2. Development of psychological readiness for educational activities through motivational, cognitive, procedural, and emotional-volitional components;
- 3. Study of methods of improving the feelings of psychological comfort, success, and trust in children;
- 4. Study of educational method systems with regard to the personal qualities of pupils and parents, family, school, and social conditions;
- 5. Development of students' psychological readiness for doing educational work;
- 6. Consolidation of skills of psycho-preventive work;
- 7. Consolidation of skills of consulting parents and colleagues on psychological issues

Socio-pedagogical practice differs from the above practice in the following:

- 1. Study of laws and regulations covering the main areas of the social policy of Kazakhstan;
- 2. Study of the main tasks, directions, and content of the activity of socio-pedagogical institutions: study of regulatory documents (types, structures, charters, programs, concepts, etc.); socio-demographic passport of a local area (type of area, types of families living in that area, conditions for personal development and socio-pedagogical work);
- 3. Study of the content of social pedagogues' professional activity: the main job duties of social pedagogues, methods, forms, and techniques used by social pedagogues to influence an individual, group of teenagers, and families, including troubled families (content, technology);
- 4. Analysis of the effect of social factors (macro-, meso-, and micro-factors) on socialization;
- 5. Development of skills of assisting parents in performing parental functions, sharing of knowledge of how to bring up children;

- 6. Acquisition of skills of consulting individuals and groups at rehabilitation centers;
- 7. Study of entertainment organization methods.

We developed a new curriculum that included two practices: summer camp practice (four weeks during the second semester) and "Schoolmaster" auxiliary qualification practice (four weeks during the sixth semester).

The summer camp practice includes the following tasks:

- 1. To develop students' vision of all types of summer camp activities;
- 2. To study the methods of planning summer camp activities;
- 3. To acquire skills of carrying out socio-pedagogical activities that involve cognition, sports, tourism, culture, etc.;
- 4. To develop in students a responsible and creative attitude to work with children and skills of using their knowledge;
- 5. To organize different types of activities;
- 6. To develop self-organization skills;
- 7. To develop students' skills of building relationships with children, teenagers, and adults, and creating an atmosphere of good will and cooperation.

The "Schoolmaster" auxiliary qualification practice includes the following tasks:

- 1. To consolidate the knowledge of the theoretical background of education, upbringing methods, and to develop practical educational skills;
- 2. To study schoolmasters' working methods in different types of educational institutions;
- 3. To study the basics of special needs education and ethno-pedagogy in the educational/upbringing work with children and awareness-raising work among parents;
- 4. To acquire skills of analyzing and comparing alternative educational programs and selecting the best ones.

The pedagogical practice was conducted in different places: at municipal social and educational institutions and at the university.

The methodological work at social and educational institutions aims to promote the social pedagogue profession, spread socio-pedagogical knowledge, provide professional training of social pedagogues that work in different educational institutions, and share experience. The following events were held at social and educational institutions as part of these studies:

- a) Research & Methodology Seminars: "Social support for disabled children", "Social protection for the public", "Protection of children's rights", "Social protection for children deprived of parental care and orphans" (2013-2014);
- b) Round Tables: "USA and Kazakhstan's experience in training social workers", "Social protection of childhood as a global challenge", "Organization of free time of children and teenagers", "Social rehabilitation of children with intellectual disabilities" (2013-2014);
- c) Lectures: "Why does a child drink alcohol or take drugs?", "Parent-child relationships", "Methods of identifying children's problems", "Developing moral values of senior pupils", etc. (2013-2014).

In direct interaction with children, young people, and families, students acted as specialists close to the families' places of residence. They brought in the innovations that were individual and adequate in the situation.

### 3.1 The practical training of socio-pedagogical activities

According to the curricula, the content of internships includes only two practices: psycho-pedagogical and socio-pedagogical. The two practices, summer camp practice and "Schoolmaster" auxiliary qualification practice, allow developing a student as a pedagogue who understands the entire potential of socio-pedagogical work and as a specialist who is able to use such potential in the course of professional activities.

It is worth mentioning that in 2013-2014, the students' socio-pedagogical activities involved researches, the study of methodical literature, consultations with the social institution specialists and their teachers. According to our survey, the practical training enabled the students to develop their design, projection, critical thinking, flexibility, self-development, and other skills (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of knowledge and skills of the third-year students acquired during the 2014-2015 internships (49 students).

#	Knowledge and skills	No answer	Unsatisfactory answer	Satisfactory answer	Good answer
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Fundamental international laws in the field of state social policy	0	4	15	30
2.	Fundamental laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of state social policy	0	2	20	27

3.	Main social policy directions of modern Kazakhstan	1	1	20	27
4.	Content and substance of social protection of children	0	0	20	29
5.	State programs for improving the status of children and families in Kazakhstan	0	2	22	25
6.	Structure of the content, objectives, tasks, and main directions of the State Programs for improving the status of children and families in Kazakhstan	0	4	20	25
7.	Main laws and regulations covering social pedagogues' activities	0	0	14	35
8.	Main specializations of the socio- pedagogical activities	0	2	14	33
9.	Job duties of social pedagogues	0	0	9	40
10.	Fundamental rights of social pedagogues	0	1	16	32
11.	Basic functions of social pedagogues	0	3	14	32
12.	Content of criminal responsibility for crimes against children	0	5	15	29
13.	Fundamental laws regulating adoption, custody, and guardianship	0	2	16	31
14.	Juridical grounds for parental rights deprivation	2	6	15	26
15.	Definition of the "family" concept	0	0	5	44
16.	Definition of the "social education" concept	0	0	5	44
17.	Definition of the "implicit concept of education" concept	3	7	20	19
18.	Definition of the "victimology" and "victimization" concepts	0	0	14	35
19.	Definition of the "victim of unfavorable socialization" concept	0	0	14	35
20.	External reasons behind an individual becoming an unfavorable socialization victim	0	0	14	35
21.	Internal reasons behind an individual becoming an unfavorable socialization victim	0	0	14	35
	Definition of the "informal youth				

22.	groups" concept	0	5	14	30
23.	Definition of the "non-traditional religious cult" concept	0	6	15	28
24.	Definition of the "refugee" and "forced migration" concepts	0	6	14	29
25.	Definition of the "socio-pedagogical activity" concept	0	0	15	34
26.	Fundamental principles of social education	0	1	15	33
27.	Definition of the "social experience organization" concept	0	1	15	33
28.	Definition of the "socio-pedagogical contradictions" concept	2	8	11	28
29.	Main types of socio-pedagogical contradictions in the modern Kazakhstani society	2	8	11	28
30.	Definition of the "pedagogical information technologies" concept	0	6	11	32
31.	Pedagogical problems resulting from the impact of mass media on a person's points of view	0	3	14	32
32.	Methods of social pedagogues' work with children	0	0	14	35
33.	Family support provided by an educational institution	0	0	11	38
34.	Methods of socio-pedagogical support for troubled families	0	0	14	35
35.	Specificity of social pedagogues' work at school	0	0	11	38
36.	Specificity of social pedagogues' work in communities	2	2	15	30
37.	Deviant behavior prevention methods	0	1	14	34
38.	Social pedagogues' interaction with informal youth organizations	0	2	12	35
39.	Methods of pedagogical settlement of a conflict	0	2	10	37
40.	Technology of social pedagogues' work with religious communities	0	2	10	37
41.	Technology of socio-pedagogical work in multiethnic communities	0	5	12	32

42.	Social diagnostic methods	0	5	20	24
43.	Technology of providing social support to refugees and forced migrants	0	1	11	37
44.	Content of support of refugees and forced migrants	0	1	11	37
45.	Social pedagogues' activity in orphanages	0	0	19	30

Over the last five years, Kazakhstan has paid special attention to improving social life by focusing on the development of socio-pedagogical education. This is indicated by the following:

- A social pedagogue position was introduced on mandatory basis into all comprehensive schools of the country.
- The Law "On Special Social Services" establishes social work as a new independent profession that acknowledges the human rights to a worthy living standard.
- Social pedagogy is offered as bachelor and master academic programs in leading universities across the country.
- New types of institutions that provide support to people in difficult life situations are emerging alongside an increase in the number of social protection agencies.
- Non-governmental and private organizations have been assigned by the state to provide special social services as well.
- Offices of pedagogical and psychological support, social support for disabled children and many similar offices and/or agencies are opened every year.

In each regional center, social services are provided by dozens of governmental, public, and private institutions. Thus, social pedagogues should be prepared for taking the region's needs into consideration; for instance, in the Semipalatinsk Region, where nuclear tests resulted in an increased incidence of child disabilities, the specialization should be aimed at rehabilitation and integration of these children.

#### 4. Conclusions

Socio-pedagogical activity consists of pedagogical and social components. The pedagogical component is aimed at science-based pedagogical support of harmonization and humanization of social relations in all spheres of the civil society.

Social pedagogues help people to use personal resources and reserves to overcome difficulties and solve various problems.

A social pedagogue in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a specialist of governmental institutions, social institutions, state and private educational institutions, centers dealing with the problems involving the education, socialization, and personal growth of the younger generation.

All this brings forth the fact that in order to cope with the civilization crisis and solve global problems of humankind, emphasis should be placed on socio-pedagogical education, which develops relevant competencies in prospective pedagogues. This trend in the development of the educational system is fundamental for this study.

The survey showed that that professional education of social pedagogues in Kazakhstan should be practice-oriented. This points to the fact the higher educational institutions should closely cooperate with social institutions to develop students' skills of social diagnostics, planning, problem assessment, and supporting people in difficult life situations. We also recommend including the summer camp and "Schoolmaster" auxiliary qualification practice into the curricula, because professionals are able to manage the assistance within small units and arrange help, such as counseling units, foster families, youth clubs, and houses of residential care.

However, there is still much to be done to consolidate the profession of the social pedagogue in Kazakhstan and to reach an optimum level of socio-pedagogical recognition.

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