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Existential Field 6:

The Professional Standards of Care Workers – The Development of Standards for Social Work and Social Care Services for Families

Extra Report (June 2010)



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Funded under Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities



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Working Reports

Funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme and co-ordinated by Technical University Dortmund, FAMILYPLATFORM gathers a consortium of 12 organisations working together to articulate key questions about the family for the *European Social Science and Humanities Research Agenda 2012-2013*.

There are four key stages to the project. The first is to chart and review the major trends of comparative family research in the EU in 8 'Existential Fields' (EF). The second is to critically review existing research on the family, and the third is to build on our understanding of existing issues affecting families and predict future conditions and challenges facing them. The final stage is to bring the results and findings of the previous three stages together, and propose key scientific research questions about families to be tackled with future EU research funding.

This *Working Report* has been produced for the first stage of the project, and is part of a series of reports, as follows:

- EF1. Family Structures & Family Forms**
- EF2. a) Family Developmental Processes**
 - b) Transition into Parenthood**
- EF3. Major Trends of State Family Policies in Europe**
- EF4. a) Family and Living Environment**
 - b) Local Politics – Programmes and Best Practice Models**
- EF5. Patterns and Trends of Family Management in the European Union**
- EF6. a) Social Care and Social Services**
 - b) Development of Standards for Social Work and Social Care Services**
- EF7. Social Inequality and Diversity of Families**
- EF8. Media, Communication and Information Technologies in the European Family**
- CSO Civil Society Perspective: Three Case Studies**

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1. Aspects of the Tasks to be Maintained in this Report

The FAMILYPLATFORM follows the ambiguous aim to bring together different voices and perspectives concerning the issues of families in current Europe (www.familyplatform.eu). This report is related to the Existential Field 6 “Social care and Social Services” of the FAMILYPLATFORM. In particular, this expert’s report will focus on the professional standards of workers in social services for and with families. It will provide a state of the art of the available comparative knowledge as well as identify the areas of missing knowledge and need for future research.

This report takes as starting point the definition of social care services used in the Report of the Existential Field 6 (Kuronen, 2010), which says that social care services include the assistance and surveillance provided in order to help children or adults with everyday daily activities in various organisational settings. In this report, the focus will be at the three core areas of services: social work, child day care provisions and direct social care services in families and in institutions.

This report sets out the current state of research into the quality standards of family-related services over the course of a life-time - for example, a day-care system for children or families counselling - in EU member states. Two aspects will be taken into consideration: firstly, the development of quality standards of care facilities in EU member states, including similarities and differences and evaluation standards, and secondly, the development of professional standards for care workers in EU member states, including similarities and differences and different types of professional training standard (see FAMILYPLATFORM, 2009).

2. Professions to be Considered and Concepts Used

The first draft and the content of this report were presented and discussed in the meeting of the FAMILYPLATFORM consortium in Jyväskylä on February 26, 2010. During that discussion, the focus of the report was clarified and directed towards an examination of the following professional fields of social care services for families.

- Child day-care services

This field includes several levels of professional pedagogical and care work in various types of services for child day-care in child day-care centres, kindergardens, and child day-care groups, as well as for child-minders in child day-care.

- Social work, child and youth care authorities, family counselling