

Social Workers Education and Human Rights Realization

The present research about “Social Workers’ education and the Human Rights realization”, aims to show specific perspectives which are being developed regarding the concept Social Work as a Human Rights Profession, systematized in the United Nations Manual, “ Human Rights and Social Work”. Nowadays this concept is discussed and evaluated by Social Work researchers, who realize its pertinence due to the disruption of the Welfare State. With the publication of this Manual, it is the first time that it was brought to our attention to focus on the strategic role of Human Rights as a scientific base to the Social Workers’ practices.

We would like to know how future Social Workers is educated, in order to become Human Rights mediators in their professional practices and according to the International Definition of Social Work. In this research, some objectives are accomplished like understanding the influence of Human Rights in Social Workers’ education, identifying the teachers’ ideas about the Human Rights concept. Related to this concept, the debates reported up to date with the emergence of Human Rights and the steps of a renewed concept in the contemporary society were taken into consideration. We also want to understand how those teachers see the relationship between Social Work and Human Rights during its historical process, with the aim of finally understanding what kind of competences are developed at the schools in the Social Workers’ education.

In the methodology approach three Social Work schools localized at several regions of the country were studied. The curricula analyses at each selected school were done and interviews were carried out with the teachers. At the first level of this analysis, an exploration of the competences developed with the students was accomplished and therefore it showed how it can contribute to a Human Rights education. At the second level of analyses, we tried to understand what are the predominant concepts of Human Rights that those teachers master, and how they see the Human Rights influences in Social Work practices during the span of history. The main objective was to understand how such concepts interchange with their methodologies and pedagogical strategies, concerning the education of the forthcoming professionals.

The data obtained brought different views about the concept of Social Work as a Human Rights Profession and education models. However in general, the urgency of a more consistent education about this topic was realized and mainly reported to the Social Work teachers training once they are interested in pursuing an education in order to become Social Workers as Human Rights mediators.

Key words: Human Rights, Social Work, basic and universal needs, Social Work education, mediation.