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## Where the Soul Is: Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Orphan Younger with Intellectual Disabilities in the Social Context of Education

### Abstract:

*The question of special needs, more than psychosocial needs, of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the context of education is being of growing interest and concern to professionals in Albania.*

*The contribution in this paper intends to give an overview of key aspects regarding psychosocial needs of these persons in the social context of education.*

*It provides further a description how one professional can meet their psychosocial needs and where the soul of all that is.*

*At the end, there are suggested some guidelines to be taken into account from professionals from area of health, psychology, psychiatry and education and policy making in order to make external efforts to improve the wellbeing of these vulnerable persons and their future education too.*

**Key words:** *psychosocial needs, orphan younger with intellectual disabilities, social context of education*

## 1- Introduction

All orphans younger with intellectual disabilities are vulnerable to a certain degree. When the autonomy of a group of individuals is guided and they are placed under the care of another group of people, and when this takes place in an environment which is to a large extent public aware, the kind of intervention and social care has to be taken into consideration. To this context, Stenfert & Kroese, (1998) believe that: "Despite the vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities to mental health problems, historically there has been a general lack of interest in or regard for the needs of this client group". I think, in recent years, the interest is growing: this is why a range of international and regional instruments have been adopted by the international and regional bodies to ensure that the fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities are protected in all the fields of life. However, if we would refer among others to the education as a human right to them, they need additional intervention and protection; it's not merely a question to be included in education. Some of them may experience increased suffering due to inadequate facilities and lack of professionalism available and not only, but addressing to all the needs in a wider social context. The classroom environment for example itself will exacerbate their existing problems. They, as persons, may suffer from humiliation, physical and psychological abuse, due to their disability. They suffer both due to their existing special needs, and due to the additional risks they confront, stemming from their particular status. In this regard, the question of special needs, more than psychosocial needs, of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the social context of education is being of growing interest and concern to professionals in Albania which as a society is being confronted by the challenge of integrating the disability face in everyday life, in their home, in the street, in the classroom etc. Competence and human right in dealing with this significant issue is being recognized as a requirement by the European Union as one the prerequisites to have fully access as one of its members and already something has begun to move developing integrating strategies as National Strategy of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which recognizes the human rights of persons with disabilities to be respected; it was drafted to improve the access of persons with disabilities to social and medical care, education, culture, sport, employment, information, transportation, and participation and representation in public life.

But due to the vulnerable issue, their special needs cannot be considered as a marginalized component of only certain education management policies. To one can assume that we have to guarantee that orphan younger with intellectual disabilities with particular needs are treated in accordance with the requirements of international human rights standards, while their prospects of social integration in the social context of education are enhanced. Therefore, in this contribution, it is hoped to provide some answers addressing to following questions:

1. Which are the key aspects regarding psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the social context of education?
2. How one professional can meet the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities?
3. Results: *Where the soul of all this is?*

*Suggestions: some guidelines to be taken into account from professionals and policy making*

*as a society is being confronted by the challenge of integrating the disability face in everyday*

## 2-Overview Of Key Aspects Regarding Psychosocial Needs Of Orphan Younger With Intellectual Disabilities In The Social Context Of Education.

When discussing intellectual disability question, a complicating factor is the absence of agreement on the most appropriate terminology. Moreover, some of the existing terms reflect very important and sensitive debates; nevertheless the operational concepts are given according to objective of the article:

**Firstly:** *psychosocial needs-are the needs that all people have – especially orphans younger whose brains, bodies and social lives are developing – to be happy, creative, to belong in social groups, and to have hope for the future.*

**Secondly:** **an orphan younger with intellectual disabilities-** is a person socially abandoned or biologically left who suffers a generalized disorder appearing before adulthood, characterized by significantly impaired cognitive functioning and deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors. Thus, emotional difficulties and acute or persistent mental disorders can present in both typical and atypical ways

**Thirdly:** **social context of education** here focus on the intersection of schooling and broad social policy, including health, housing, work, and community development; it involves the relationship between schools and society, with specific reference to the role of race and ethnicity, social class, and gender in education (Oxford Bibliography)

### 2.1-Overview of key aspects

It is mentioned here not only disability issue but as well orphan disabled, with nobody. Therefore the orphaned younger due to their intellectual disability experience more psychological distress than children who still have both parents, or children who are orphaned due to other causes. These younger require protection and nurture that meets their needs and ensures their health, affectionate relationships that support their developing psychological and social capacities, and ongoing interactions with encouraging adults that promote their language and cognitive development regardless their disability. The psychological, social and material needs of these younger during their development are best met by a constant group of dedicated people, related to one another, in lifelong family-type groups or as the case of home-families. When it is referred to the psychosocial needs of these persons, it can be based on the psychosocial approach which emphasizes the close connection between

- psychological **aspects of an individual's experience** (namely, thoughts, feelings and beliefs) and

- the wider **social experience** (namely, relationships with family, community and friends) as well as the broader social environment (i.e. culture, traditions, religion, socio-political environment).

This approach takes into account:

- **spiritual aspects** (value systems and beliefs) which may include traditional healing, traditional beliefs in ancestors, the existence of a Supreme Being or God, and cultural rituals and traditions associated with various rites of passage

- **physical aspects**, there is a dynamic relationship between the psychological and social effects of experiences on the individual person, with each continually influencing the other.

Reflection: Putting these persons into inclusive classroom as a human right and a human need, it is necessary to be taken into account what Newman explains that “behavioral and emotional disorders are repetitive persistent patterns of behavior that result in significant disruption of other students.” In this case it is given in the article: Guidelines for Understanding and Serving People with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders, that “the influence of the environment directly impacts the neurological development of the brain. Social relationships are usually difficult for people with mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Researchers believe that this may be the result of distinct neural systems in the temporal cortex which may impact the understanding the actions of others and in determining one’s intentions and the intentions of others” (O’Connell et al., 2009, pg 2).

Therefore, although in the social context of education it can be used by educators the **Universal Design** as a benefit of universal accessibility for all, taking into consideration the Universal Design for Learning that is an educational approach that seeks to establish classroom accessibility for all students (Meyer & Rose, 2006), it is still a very difficult process. Moreover, the authors Giangreco F. M & Putnam W. J. note that “the essence of regular class integration for students with severe disabilities is providing specially designed instruction in regular education environments” (pg 246).

It can be discussed in this line another important element; the social context, the relationships. Just as strong foundations provide the basis for positive and healthy adaptations, weak foundations create physiological disruptions that can undermine subsequent learning, behavior, and lifelong physical and mental health. This biological evidence explains how, in the absence of nurturing and supportive relationships—the type of environment in which many these may live and participate—adversity can create “toxic stress” that undermines all aspects of an orphan younger’s with disabilities subsequent development, creating significant, physically based, long-term obstacles to positive outcomes for them. Therefore it is needed the psychosocial care which is to be given day-by-day, consistently nurturing care that constitutes the building blocks of younger psychosocial wellbeing, including how they learn, develop and adapt. Such efforts are key investments in human capital development provided through interpersonal interactions.

Another investment would be Cultivating Caring Teacher–Student Relationships according the author Mihalas. S (2008,) who points that “Although there is no one solution to the multifaceted issue of effectively educating children and adolescents with Emotional and Behavior Disorder, an important step that schools can take is to create a school climate that values and emphasizes caring. A growing emphasis by researchers on approaches such assuring positive behavior supports and wraparound services (e.g., Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Marquis et al.,2000; Stichter, Clarke, & Dunlap, 2004); emphasizing collaboration among educators and related service providers. (pg 3).

## 2.2- How one professional can meet the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities?

In the beginnings of 2011 working with persons with disabilities as a clinical psychologist, I began to carefully study the existed programs and social policies to this field. One of the main things based on Manual of Standards of Social Service of State was the evaluation of needs and problems of persons with disabilities in the fields as autonomy, psychomotor, communication, health and education. At meetings with multidisciplinary equip, I often noticed the caregivers mentioning the sentence “they have special needs” in a certain given field of development. They talked to me mainly within the field of care giving and less about the education one. Then it suddenly came up an idea, discussing the concept of psychosocial needs in providing as a response the psychosocial care in the social context of education, too.

Under the rubric ‘we are all human’ is the implication that ‘we are all the same’ it is predicted for a practical understanding of the concept worldview as one’s experienced reality that can be translated: “We must be able to recognize that we operate from our worldview and simultaneously be able to be free of our worldview so that we might be able to understand and appreciate the meaning of another’s worldview perspective”. Having this into account, we as professionals in the area health, psychology, education and psychiatry also need to acknowledge competent and human behavior as a necessary professional passport not only to avoid harmful and costly deficits in effective care but building supportive and fostering relationships with these persons in need. When it is possible, provide psychosocial care and where is needed, provide psychosocial intervention. Although the author P. Willner (pg 73), states that “Historically, people with learning disabilities have had little or no access to psychotherapeutic interventions, although there are signs that, over the past decade, this situation has seen some gradual improvement”, we as professionals have to know that psychosocial care describes a continuum of care and support and aims at ensuring the social, emotional and psychological wellbeing of individuals, their loves and communities in order to ensure endlessness improvement.

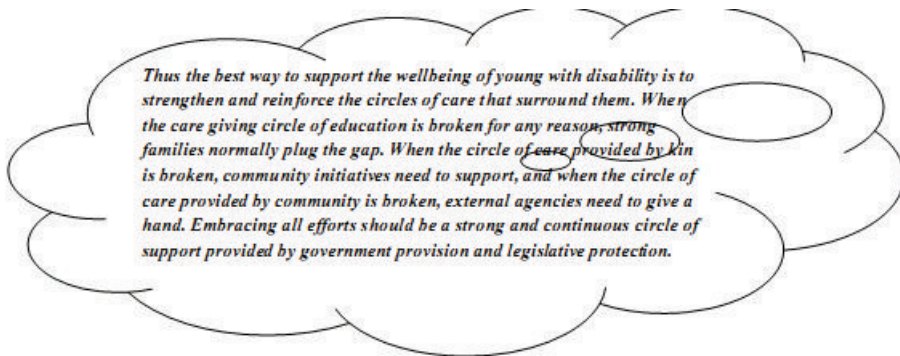
In the article How to respond to psychosocial needs from International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial it is given “Support from a community-based approach which is based on the premise that communities will be empowered to take care of themselves and each other. In this way dependency on outside resources is reduced, through community mobilization and strengthening of community relationships and network.(pg 42-43)

Another kind of intervention which has its core in behavioral principles is arguably the most effective way of treating emotional and behavioral disorders according (Hallahan and Kauffman; Kauffman and Landrum; Stichter; Walker, Ramsey and Gresham [15]. The Behaviour Modification Model, the Development Sequence Model, the Biosocial Interaction Model of Childhood Externalizing Behavior and Hayden’s Storied Model have all been widely accepted as tools to be used with children who exhibit emotional and behavioral disorders- stated at Anderson S, (2012).

### 3-Conclusion and Suggestions

#### 3.1- Where the soul of this is?

Given my experience: The psychosocial care is to be found in the “the warm social climate” and it is here the soul that the main thrust of external efforts to improve the wellbeing of orphan younger with intellectual disability must be directed. These Younger have many needs, most of which are met through everyday activities in their home-families, supported by communities and assisted by government services. They need stability, affection in an attempt to be educated and have the education as a right access and to be supported in the continuum pathway. In this case they do not have a family, so the social context can be a family setting, with the same characteristics of commitment, continuity and individualized affectionate care.



Then the social contexts are best placed to provide the right response to the psychosocial needs of these younger that have nobody and suffer from a disability.

#### 3.2- Suggestions: Guidelines to Be Taken Into Account From Professionals And Policy Making

Responding to the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with disabilities in the social context of education by providing day to day psychosocial care is not an easy process. If one cannot provide this vital need to them during school context, after that, another professional have to prepare psychosocial interventions to treat and manage the severe cases turning back to the first point which is not welcome at all for the mental wellbeing of these younger.

- A professional needs to look at its own practices, structures and policies to see what factors hinder the inclusion of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities and contribute in their wellbeing and education by prioritizing everyday systems of care – families, schools and communities.

- All efforts to enhance the psychosocial wellbeing of these young must ensure the support of these natural systems of care in everyday life. This younger need to be included in the design, implementation and evaluation of psychosocial projects to ensure their participation and foster hope for their untraveled future.

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- It may be suggested a human nature and as well a flexible adaptation of psychosocial programmers to be able to adjust to the needs of these younger. Generally, the work needs to be regarded as a continuous process of learning for the professional himself. Learning about other cultures requires first of all a self-reflective stance.
  - Integrated responses are needed, and these are best provided by all of us by investing long-term in integrated services to promote psychosocial wellbeing.
  - However, there is now a need to call the policy makers who have a crucial role to play, particularly in providing education, health and social services that meet their needs and in developing policies that promote their physical and psychosocial wellbeing,
  - Governments need to lead as well as resource coordinated efforts that match the vigorous responses to vulnerable younger that are striving to enter in Civil Society as citizens with full rights.

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