

Abstract – English

## **Glossary „Social Work in Public Space“**

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The research project „Compilation of a Glossary on Social Work in Public Space“ has formed the framework for an identification of terms and concepts on social work in public space. The intention of this glossary is to provide those active in the field of social work in public space with orientation on professional and content issues. Areas addressed are connected within the network of an inter-departmental consultation group comprising five specific departments of the Municipality of Vienna, these are: Education, Youth, Information and Sport; Health and Social Affairs; Integration, Womens’s Issues, Consumer Protection and Personell; Urban Development and Transport; Housing and City Renovation.

The glossary intends to enable and enhance a specific approach toward the role and organization of social work in public space. The terms refer to professional social work in partly public, semi- public and public space.

From a social work point of view, public space refers to location for public action with regard to a variety of different interests, problem areas and needs and does not only imply the concept of property relations or actual use. Public space is defined by different interests which have become visible, this visibility allowing for conflicts to emerge to the surface leading to public discussion, balance and equalization of interests (democratic political dimension).

The democratic political dimension of public debate and balance of interests implies a specific significance to public space and access thereof, especially for individuals and groups who are neither in a position nor have the possibility to articulate their interests in public. Therefore, particular attention must be placed on ensuring their access to such areas (see „Wiener Leitbild für den öffentlichen Raum 2009“

Social Work is defined as a professional activity, in both the socialpedagogical and traditional form, addressing social problems, societal issues and development realities. Aim in this connection being the promotion of individual and collective capabilities and possibilities for action, the provision of support as well as the attainment of social change in view of social imbalance and discrimination. Social work is hereby guided by such basic principles as Human Rights.

The task and objective of social work in public space is to take up issues of social safety of individuals and groups and to counter and confront their marginalization and suppression. A sociopolitical dimension of social work is to make interests and needs visible and to empower and organise democratic processes. Social work , on the one hand takes an explicit stand against the suppression of specific individual or groups interest from public view, however on the other hand it also carries responsibility for protecting individuals or groups from the public if they are in danger of becoming stigmatised.

Social work is involved with processes of care and education and has expertise in the area of how individuals accomplish these tasks, which resources they require for these tasks, and which problem areas they are confronted with.

In its dimension of care, social work has the task of making visible which needs, interests and problem areas are related to issues of „Care“ ( child care, care for the ageing and the sick, etc). These care problems may indeed already be visible or there may be the need to make them visible publically, in order to address public or private responsibility.

The education- dimension of social work aims at furthering capabilities for action. In addition this dimension refers to critical debate on societal rules, regulations and norms. In connection with public space, rules, regulations and norms can ensure that people may use public space, however they can also lead to dynamics of suppression, thus making the reflection and critical address of social work in public space particularly necessary.

The empiric base for this glossary are institutions which carry out social work in public space. These are organizations occupied and confronted with conflicts, social problems and development realities in public space and whose goals and activities relate to public space. These organizations include those involved with non-institutional youth work on the street and in parks, drug-related streetwork, Help U, SAM, specific local areas responsible for urban development, neighbourhood and city area centres, projects and institutions of department 17 of the Municipality of Vienna, services dealing with the homeless, with prostitution, psycho-social services, network structures and regional forums.

The outlines and profiles of these institutions form the basis of the empiric compilation for the identification of terms and concepts relating to social work in public space. Relevant terms are identified and their usage in various institutions and areas reviewed, reflected and contrasted. In a second stage, the contemporary-theoretical discourse is summarized and placed in perspective to the above mentioned terms and concepts. In addition, theoretical terms of central relevance which have emerged as relevant for the discussion of social work in public space are divided into levels, reflected and contrasted.

Professional concepts of action stipulate basic concepts for social work in public space, these varying and mixing according to their specific task area. In this regard, for example, institutions of non-institutional youth work are oriented toward community work, with aspects of out-reach social work inherent in their concept.

Under the umbrella term „professional task areas“ definitions are identified which stipulate extensions and specifications of action concepts (including professional attitudes and methods) and terms which are used in practise and which have relevance for social work in public space (e.g. multiple use and transitional use).

The terms „social-pedagogical“ and „social work relevant“ refer to approaches which portray professional task areas in contemporary discussion from a social work perspective.

Social and societal approaches refer to basic trains of thought which have relevance in relation to social work in public space and which form their societal framework.

The terms and concepts in this glossary describe social work in public space in Vienna according to their specific theoretical and practical differentiation. These selected terms and definitions enable a reflection of different approaches and positions in regard to attitudes, approaches and perspectives formulated in this compilation. The glossary includes abstracts and their corresponding full versions, the latter with bibliography.

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