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## **The function of the school pedagogue – comparative Review in 10 European Countries**

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### **Abstract**

The professional goal of every school pedagogue is aimed at fostering development and in identifying and understanding the difficulties students face and providing assistance in overcoming them, as well as preventing learning and behavioral difficulties.

In this paper, we will try to explain and compare the function of the school pedagogue in schools in 10 European countries separately.

This publication contains an overview of the professional work of school teachers in 10 countries: Austria, Serbia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Croatia, Ireland, Macedonia, Malta, Russia, America. The author's interest was primarily focused on questions and professional problems of pedagogues in European countries.

Different names are used for the experts whose main function is to provide help and support to the students in the countries participating in the school work. In Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia they have the designation - professional associate in Bulgaria - pedagogical adviser, in the United States of America and Malta school adviser, in Austria, pupil or education adviser, in Ireland pedagogical adviser guidance, consultant in Denmark Counselor for Pedagogical - Psychological Service, and in Russia a pedagogue-psychologist in the school psychological service. Also, the names of the professional service in which these experts work in different. Let's say, in Croatia there is a development-pedagogical service, in Denmark a pedagogical-psychological service, in Malta a counseling service, in Russia a psychological service, in Serbia a professional service.

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Due to its terminological diversity, in situations where the professional work of these experts is generally discussed, and in our paper, it was necessary to decide on a term that would apply to all countries, regardless of the specific name they have in each of them. An adequate solution may be the school term school pedagogue, as it is most often found in the professional literature at the international level, but it is also the closest name used in a larger number of selected countries, so we'll use term – pedagogue. On the other hand, considering that in Serbia there is an appointment as a professional associate in a school, we decided to use it as a dominant collective term that applies to all countries.

**Keywords:** Education; student; teaching; teacher; family; school.

## **1. Introduction**

Education is one of the most promising areas in life. The student who will start his education in the first grade of primary school in 2022 will reach the peak of his professional activity in the forties of the 21st century. Therefore, the school does not prepare students for the world "today", but for the one "tomorrow", which is difficult to even imagine. But if humanity wants to survive, it has to deal with problems that will be solved by the student who is now sitting in the school desk.

The work of the school pedagogue has fundamental importance in the functioning of the educational process and no other educational and professional profile of a school worker can replace the work and function of the school pedagogue in schools.

In this paper, we put a special emphasis on the part in which we explain in more detail the entire work methodology of the school pedagogue, specifically in the elementary school. In this section, we elaborate the following areas of the school pedagogues work individually: planning, programming and evaluation of educational work; instructional - pedagogical work of the school pedagogue with the teachers; the school pedagogue work with students; the cooperation of the pedagogue with the parents; analytical-research work of the school pedagogue; cooperation of the school pedagogue with other professional bodies and social institutions.

The methodical work of the school teacher We put special emphasis on the part where we explain it in more detail the overall work methodology of the school teacher, specifically in the primary school. In this section we elaborate the following individually areas of work of the school teacher: planning, programming and evaluation of educational work; instructional-pedagogical work of the school pedagogue with the teachers; the work of the school teacher with the students; the cooperation of the school teacher with the parents; analytical research work of the school teacher; cooperation of the school teacher with other professional bodies and social institutions; and management and processing of pedagogical documentation and work preparation. The school teacher has many different work functions that are in the essence of personality traits. As properties and work functions of the following qualities are considered a school teacher:

□ observer,

- informant,
- consultant,
- advisor,
- initiator,
- coordinator,
- organizer,
- realiser,
- researcher and analyst,
- innovator, disseminator,
- document processor [12].

It is very important for the school teacher to possess not only professional and work qualities, but also personal qualities of a positive oriented person, and they are the following properties:

Human qualities: kindness, naturalness, sociability, good mood and sense of humor;

Qualities related to the attitude towards discipline and that: to be "fair" fair, consistent, disciplined and impartial;

Physical qualities: physical attractiveness, pleasant voice, neatness, youth, good health; Teaching qualities: good knowledge of his profession, helping of the students, acting in the interest of the student, to be interesting and enthusiastic, to be able to interest the student, to teach clearly, comprehensively and to emphasize what is important.

The traits and characteristics of the school teacher represent a very important element that enables correct and consistent execution of work tasks, but of course also expressing love for work and love for the participants in the school, i.e. students, who need it the most support and help from such a professional associate in the school. At the teacher's it is not the same as with the teacher, because in the first place his is not evaluated teaching role, although that is also important, but more important is the creative role of planner and strategist of the entire course of the teaching process and educational work in the school, especially its educational role in direct contact with the students. In the school, the teacher always has a basic direction and ultimate goal of all his activities, and that is the student, that is, following his development, training, amount of acquired knowledge, discipline, but also cooperation with teachers, parents and the student body.

Basic characteristics of the school teacher, according to [12] in the domain of the intellectual sphere are the following:

- broad general education;
- general pedagogical culture and pedagogical tact;
- special knowledge of his field: school pedagogy and work methodology of a school teacher;
- methodological competence;
- sense of organization of one's work and the work of others;
- readiness for continuous self-education [6].

Apart from the features that encompass the intellectual aspect of the personality of the school teacher, personal characteristics are very important of the school teacher, and according to Jurich they are the following:

- professional ethics, honesty and objectivity;
- communication and cooperative relationship with colleagues;
- emotional stability and love for one's work;
- persistence, perseverance, value and accuracy;
- Courage and openness in presenting truths and facing them the problems [6].

The school teacher outside of his professional duties and obligations it is necessary to engage in solving some problems of his profession, which are outside the school and his workplace. These are, for example, problems of the type: influence of the way of schooling of future schoolchildren pedagogues, procedures for adopting a program for school work teacher, on the quality of methodological instructions and other professional instructions for preparation of school teachers, methods of guidance, monitoring, controlling and improving their work. According to these perceived characteristics of the school teacher we can

let's clearly see that the work of the school teacher has a fundamental significance in the functioning of the educational process and none another educational and professional profile of a school worker cannot in completely to replace the work and function of the school teacher in the schools. Transfer of theoretical pedagogical knowledge and application of the abilities, that is, the skills and habits that are built in accordance with that knowledge are the basic tasks of the work methodology of the school teacher. However, the work of the school teacher in primary schools is conditional and aimed at achieving the goal and the main tasks that are basis of every teaching plan and program. According to [13] the program basis for achieving the goal and tasks in primary education, in in relation to the work engagement of the school pedagogue they make up contents of

work and activities from the following areas of work namely:

- planning, programming and evaluation of education work;
- instructional-pedagogical work with teachers;
- working with students;
- cooperation with parents;
- analytical-research work;
- cooperation of the school teacher with the parents;
- cooperation with professional social bodies and professional social organizations institutions
- management and processing of documentation and preparation for work [6].

With all these areas of work of the school teacher in elementary schools, its work, activity and function is complex and complete. However we must emphasize that the basis of the school's work methodology theoretical knowledge, methodological competence and the ability to apply practical skills and habits in pedagogy practice that are acquired during the course of study, and are perfected through professional practice in schools.

### ***1.1. Functions of the school pedagogue in Austria***

U gore pomenutoj Uredbi iz 2017 godine, [3] ukazuje se na dve osnovne funkcije učeničkog/obrazovnog savetnika:

- Informing students from the first grade and from every level when and how they can address school/educational issues advisor.
- Informing the students from the penultimate grade about the possibilities of achieving professional orientation as well as professional counseling in the school and outside it.
- Informing the final grade students about the possible directions and requirements for further education, including professional education and training as well as the state of the labor market.
- Support for achieving activities in the school itself.

2. The function of individual counseling and provision mediation help. Tasks within this function are:

- Advising students in terms of making a decision about future education and direction in a certain direction in cohesion with
- interests, abilities and desires of students. If so, students are provided with an additional opportunity for information and counseling.

- Counseling and mediation in providing help in cases where students have difficulties in learning or behavior
- as well as personal problems. This implies a fundamental understanding of the difficulty the student is facing, in order to recommend one or more steps to the student in solving the problem or to provide, if necessary, additional help.

Help to coordinate psycho-social activities aimed at supporting students. The coordination of these activities is the responsibility of the school management, but the student / educational advisor can be of crucial importance in coordinating the activities of other experts, the school psychologist, the social worker and others.

### ***1.2. Functions of the school pedagogue in Bulgaria***

The functions of a pedagogical advisor are discussed in various sources. [12] distinguishes the following four basic functions pedagogic adviser: diagnostic, advisory, preventive, corrective developmental function. He lists tasks very detailed, precise and systematic which includes each of these four functions. In short, using the job description given on the website dokumantacia.com, the following basic functions of a pedagogical advisor can be distinguished:

#### **1. Help function**

- covers provision of help and support in the field of psychological development and health of children and students, training for making decisions related to further education and employment, adjustment of students in the educational and social system.

#### **2. Diagnostic function**

- implies the establishment of the entry level (initial state) at the beginning of the school year; identification of difficulties in cognitive, social-emotional development and student behavior, identification of gifted students, as well as students in need of additional educational support; evaluation in the area of professional orientation and direction.

#### **3. Advisory function**

– Includes individual counseling with: students - about problems related to their behavior, relationships with peers, parents and teachers, personal development; teachers - about problems arising from interaction with students and colleagues; parents - about the problems of mutual relationship with children, developmental problems, career development.

– Group work that includes:

- training focused on the development of social skills and realization of social relations;

- solving problems related to health risks;
- developing skills needed to deal with different forms violence.

Advising the school management and the school team regarding:

- preparation of school regulations, programs and projects;
- school climate;
- solving problems related to the development of the school.

#### 4. Mediation function

- It seems that mainly when dealing with conflict resolution between students, teachers, parents and school leaders.

### ***1.3. Functions of the school pedagogue in Denmark***

The pedagogical-psychological service is interdisciplinary organized, so that it can respond to the various needs of its users. Based on an insight into information about the work of the PPR service, for example, a large number of municipalities can conclude that these services have the following functions [5]:

- preventive
- preventive work with students from vulnerable groups with the aim of
- prevention of problems in the learning and development of a child/student; diagnostic
- assessment and giving recommendations on the types of help that is
- the child needs, as well as giving recommendations on the need to include them in special education; advisory and instructive
- providing assistance to parents and teachers / schools in solving the problems they face and in achieving an encouraging learning environment for learning and development; stimulating
- direct work with students who need additional support in education and consultative support of teachers in working with those children.
- The role of counselors is to help children and young people make informed decisions about further education or employment.

Functions of the school teacher in Croatia

- In the document that contains a proposal of concepts for the development of the pedagogical activity of professional associates in Croatia, the following professional functions are distinguished in the work of professional associates (Jurić and colleagues 2001)
- operational (immediate work on preparation and implementation of the educational process);
- studio-analytical (continuous monitoring of educational

- process in the school, which is done with the assumption of evaluating the quality of the institutions and their improvement);
- informative (providing information for participants in school work in accordance with their needs);
- instructional (giving advice, instructions, suggestions for solutions to participants in the educational process - students, teachers, parents, directors, etc.);
- advisory (work on specific developmental problems of students and professional needs of teachers);
- research (acquiring knowledge about changes and innovations that will contribute to raising the quality of student development, the work of teachers and the functioning of the institution as a whole);
- normative (development of appropriate norms, procedures and protocols for professional and quality performance of work tasks and exchange of experiences).

#### ***1.4. Functions of the school teacher in Croatia***

In the document that contains a proposal of concepts for the development of the pedagogical activity of professional associates in Croatia, the following professional functions are distinguished in the work of professional associates [7].

- operational (immediate work on preparation and implementation of the educational process);
- studio-analytical (continuous monitoring of educational process in the school, which is done with the assumption of evaluating the quality of the institutions and their improvement);
- informative (providing information for participants in school work in accordance with their needs);
- instructional (giving advice, instructions, suggestions for solutions to participants in the educational process - students, teachers, parents, directors, etc.);
- advisory (work on specific developmental problems of students and professional needs of teachers);
- research (acquiring knowledge about changes and innovations that will contribute to raising the quality of student development, the work of teachers and the functioning of the institution as a whole); → normative (development of appropriate norms, procedures and protocols for professional and quality performance of work tasks and exchange of experiences).

#### ***1.5. Functions of the school pedagogue in Ireland***

The school counselor in Ireland has rather limited functions in primary education. His work is much more pronounced at the level of lower and higher secondary education. The following functions of school counselors can be derived:

1. Identification of specific needs of students.
2. Assisting students in identifying schools/educational programs they wish to attend.
3. Advising students about their opportunities, interests, abilities, choices.
4. Support of personal and social development related to free time, problems and challenges that are a

consequence of growing up, stress, managing one's own learning, successfully passing through all levels of school education.

5. Referring students to additional, specialized help outside of school, when necessary.
6. Determining how to help students who live in unfavorable circumstances.
7. Prevention of early school leaving.
8. Joint involvement of teachers and other professionals with whom they work for students with special educational needs.
9. Support for students belonging to minority groups and immigrants.
10. Provide support in the education of adult students, if such programs exist in the school.
11. Participation in the process of inclusive education by creating strategies to encourage motivation and self-assessment; understanding racial, ethnic, and intellectual differences; regular school attendance; suggests opportunities for further education or employment for school leavers.
12. Work with parents for personal and social support development, education and career development of their children.

Each school designs its own pedagogical program for guidance and

work with students, where the main role is played by the school counselor. These programs differ depending on the level of education - basic, lower secondary and higher education. This school document, generally speaking, contains planned activities aimed at providing assistance to students on the following occasions:

- the selection of teaching subjects;
- adaptations after the transition to a higher cycle / degree of education;
- selection of schools / educational programs (and final certificates);
- use of internal support / services provided by the school;
- getting to know the roles and functions of the members of the school team (ie, it primarily applies to students attending the first year in the given school);
- Informing about what things and skills are needed to
- achieved educational standards for the end of a certain cycle / level of education;
- planning your time;
- choosing the field of further education and future careers;
- familiarization with competencies and skills for different areas of work / jobs on the labor market, including how to successfully find a job;
- achieving an objective self-assessment in terms of achievement, abilities, attitudes and interests and to

see how it relates to career choice;

- the selection of subjects, activities, roles, responsibilities, practices
- during the so-called transition year, which is the first year of secondary education;
- visits to educational events, such as days of open doors at colleges and universities, professional seminars in the field of professional orientation;
- meetings with former students, as well as visits to employers;

selection of courses for adult education programs (in schools that offer such programs).

According to the instructions of the [10], the program for pedagogical guidance and counseling in the school should contain three segments:

- 1 Guiding and advising all students in their personal and social development, learning (education) and career development.
2. Guiding and counseling only some students, above all those who pass from one level of education to the next, that is. which are final or first years of a certain level of education.
3. Guiding and advising only individual students, those who have them specific problems or going through a period of personal crisis, where the involvement of other experts is necessary.

### ***1.6 Functions of the school pedagogue in North Macedonia***

Basic professional competencies that professional associates should possess in order to successfully perform their professional role are defined within seven areas of work, each of which contains a large number of sub-areas [8].

- to work with students (support for students in learning, monitoring and support in school development; professional orientation);
- work with teachers (supporting teachers in planning and implementing the educational process of assurance and self-evaluation; supporting teachers in working with students; supporting teachers in working with parents);
- work with parents (individual and group counseling
- and consultations with parents; Pedagogical education of parents; involvement of parents in the life and work of the school);
- cooperation with the community (cooperation with the local community, cooperation with professional institutions and organizations);
- professional development and professional cooperation (personal professional development; support for professional development and cooperation with school employees);
- analytical-research work (analysis and assessment of educational work; research of educational work);
- school structure, organization and climate (school structure and organization - planning and monitoring of the educational process, pedagogical records and documentation, evaluation; school climate, safe

environment and democratic participation).

- In addition to the competencies that are common to all professional associates in the specified areas and sub-areas, specific competencies are determined for each expert profile separately (for pedagogue, psychologist, sociologist, social workers and special education teachers).

### ***1.7. Functions of the school pedagogue in Malta***

The system of psychosocial support includes a wide range of activities, of which they are most often:

- counseling at the school;
- educational, professional and career guidance in the school;
- career guidance / counseling;
- psychological services in the school;
- social work of the school;
- school safety programs.

The activities of school counselors are directly related to the activities of teacher-counselors. School counselors have a higher level of competence than teacher counselors. The school counselor assists the teacher-counselor and other school staff when they contact students or their parents for help or advice. Students receive information about how, where and in which cases they can turn to the teacher-counselor and the school counselor for help.

In Malta, pedagogical work is considered an integral part of the educational process in the school. Pedagogical programs in schools are related to the intellectual, social and professional aspects of the student's personality development [4]. The implementation of these programs involves not only teachers, but all members of the school team. It focuses on identifying the different needs of students, as well as applying different strategies.

These needs include:

- developmental needs during growth, specific, personal, educational and professional needs of all students, as well as other needs arising from the demands that the school system and society place before them.
- the students. Accordingly, the teacher-counselor is focused on the development of students:
- confidence and self-esteem;
- ability to assess personal strengths and weaknesses in building an appropriate work strategy accordingly;
- abilities and skills needed to establish appropriate relationships with other people;
- the skill of career planning;
- the ability to successfully deal with changes and milestones in life;
- personal responsibility;
- personal and social skills to achieve as complete persons in society

The functions of school counselors include:

1. Counseling in order to solve the problem of learning and student progress.
2. Individual and group counseling.
3. Managing students with other departments and agencies depending on their needs.
4. Student counseling when choosing subjects to be attended, choosing a training program after completing secondary education or enrolling in higher education institutions.
5. Improving the competencies of school members in this area of counseling.
6. Providing support for pregnant women and mothers of school age (Malta has several such programmes).
7. Cooperation with parents when it comes to their specific problems with children.
8. Talking with parents about the personal development, school achievements and educational aspirations of their children,
9. Organizing various lectures and courses in the field of professional development of teachers.



**Figure 1.2:** School pedagogue working with students in elementary school.

### ***1.8. Functions of the school pedagogue in Russia***

The pedagogue-psychologist in the school psychological service has the following functions [9]:

1. Psychological - educational function: encouraging students, parents, teachers and school management about the need for psychological knowledge that will be used for personal development.
2. Psychological-preventive function: Prevention of possible psychological problems among students (in Russia, much attention is paid to the so-called maladaptation).
3. Psychological - diagnostic function: continuous monitoring of students during all stages of the educational process, identification of their personal characteristics, tendencies and potential and, as well as the causes of developmental difficulties, learning and social adaptation.
4. Psychological-corrective function: active corrective work in the process of personality development through the joint action of pedagogues - psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, social pedagogues and other experts.
5. Psychological - consultative (advisory) function: provision of assistance to students, parents and teachers in the process of development, upbringing and education.
6. Psychological-rehabilitation function: psychological support of students and their parents during the implementation of consultative (advisory) and corrective work and development of models for adaptive behavior and social interaction, which contributes to successful socialization and integration.
7. Vocational guidance function: helping students in making decisions about future education and occupation in accordance with their abilities, interests, motivation and the social-economic conditions of the labor market.

### ***1.9. Functions of the school pedagogue in America***

There are many different US documents and publications about the professional work of the school counselor. Over 300 universities in all states offer master's degree programs. There are a number of scientific journals in this field, of which they are the most prestigious:

Counselor Education & Supervision; Elementary School

Guidance & Counseling; Journal of Counseling and Development; Journal of

Professional Counseling: Practice, Theory, and Research; Journal of School

Counseling; Professional School Counseling; School Counselor.

Generally speaking, it can be said that the functions of the school counselor are:

planning-organizational;

- evaluative-preventive;
- educational;
- developmental;
- advisory;
- career guidance function.

Based on information from the website of the American School Counselor Association [2] and the [1], the following activities of a school counselor in the United States can be distinguished:

- Assesses students' abilities and interests through interviews and other instruments.
- Identifies problems related to school education.
- It helps the students to understand and overcome social problems in the work in the whole department.
- Performs advisory work - individually or in small groups.
- It works by learning the development of skills, such as organizational
- skills, time management, effective study habits, etc.
- Им помага на учениците да направат план за постигнување на своите цели во учењето и кариерата.
- Advises students about university competition and work.
- It trains students and members of the school team to deal with certain issues, such as violence, drugs, etc.
- Advises students and parents to get outside support and help schools if they need it.
- It strives to prevent early school leaving.

Plans in detail and keeps records of his activities.

There is a very elaborate document that is a framework for

formulating the educational counseling program on behalf of the American School Counseling Association National Model School and [2]. Every school counselor in the United States develops and implements a program of work that is consistent with the framework requirements of the National Model.

#### ***1.10. Functions of the school pedagogue in Serbia***

Within nine areas of work in the program bases of professional work of associates there are a total of 101 activities that belong to the scope of work of the pedagogue and 83 activities performed by the psychologist. Based on the insight into the jobs and activities of school pedagogues and psychologists, the key functions of a professional associate can be identified: – advisory and consultative function [11]. The professional associate provides help and support:

- students (in understanding and overcoming difficulties and problems in learning, behavior and

achieving quality social relationships; in the development of individual potential; in making decisions about the future, education and occupation; in organization,

- teachers (during planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching; encouragement and motivation of students; different
- methods and forms of teaching work; development of successful communication with students; in cooperation with parents; in professional development, etc.);
- parents (in practice, educational functions of the family; in confrontation with the difficulties and problems that their children have in development, learning and behavior; involvement of parents in school work, etc.);

-analytical function – the professional associate monitors and analyzes: development and student progression; implementation of teaching and extracurricular activities; the reasons for the difficulties arising from the work of the school; effects of innovative activities and projections; application of measures for individualization and individual educational plan; conditions for the realization of school work; the needs of students, parents, local communities, etc.);

-developmental function - the professional associate initiates and implements: measures and activities aimed at providing optimal conditions for the individual development of students, and to meet the needs of students; measures and activities aimed at improving teaching and school work; research activities in the school environment for better understanding and improving practices, etc.)

## **2. Conclusion**

In this research paper we are comparing the curtail question: „What are the functions of school pedagogue in these 10 European countries”, „What are the similarities and differences”? The conclusion summarizes the key insights into the professional performance of professional associates in these countries. The main purpose of this paper and comparison is to serve in every educational institution in the field of pedagogical science. These findings indicate a serious scientific work that will have practical and scientific proof. However, this paper can be useful for professional associates, teachers, principals, representatives of educational authorities, as well as anyone who is interested in advancement in science of school education in other countries.

The comparative overview of the functions of an associate (school counselor) in 10 countries included in the analysis show that the following functions are characteristic for all or most countries:

- diagnostic function - identification of children / students of who need additional support in education (children with special needs in Macedonia learning and development, gifted students ...);
- informational function - providing information for educators in the educational process according to their needs;
- advisory function - individual and group advisory work with students, teachers and parents;
- function of career guidance and counseling - directing students related to continuing education, acquiring professional qualifications and inclusion in the world of work;

- preventive function - prevention of early school leaving and unwanted behavior of students;
- intervention (stimulating) function - work with students who need additional support in education, in cooperation with teachers and other experts;
- mediator function - participation in resolving conflicts between students, teachers, parents and school leaders;
- evaluation function - monitoring the work process in the school and evaluating the quality of school work;
- development function - proposes measures to improve teaching and school work,
- research function - getting to know the necessary changes, good practices and innovations in order to improve the quality of work in schools;
- normative function - developing appropriate
- norms and procedures for professional and quality performance for data and jobs.

Two notes should be made here. First, these functions can be observed rather conditionally. They are separated on the basis of existing documents in analyzed countries, regardless of how they are formulated there – as functions, tasks, directions. Some functions are partially covered, some they may form part of another, more general function, and all together could be grouped into three or four basic functions. However, they are given in this way because it was considered important to indicate the number and complexity of tasks, jobs and activities carried out by a professional associate within their professional roles.

Second, in most countries, certain activities of the professional assistant (school counselor) give priority to other activities. For example, the dominant activity performed by a school counselor in Austria is providing assistance to students in planning their further education and career; in Denmark - supporting the achievement of a comprehensive approach to education; in Ireland - helping students choose the program of education they will attend; in Macedonia - advisory work with parents; in Malta - coordination activities of all persons involved in pedagogical counseling; in Russia - They are in focus problems with the incompatibility of students; in the UK - look after the mental health of pupils (although this is also the case with school psychotherapists). In the USA The dominant activities are different, because they are school counselors specialized in work at different levels of education, and is, for example, in (higher) secondary school value the development of a plan for further education and career.

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