

## SUPERVISION, ONE OF THE MAIN ASPECTS IN SOCIAL WORK IN GEORGIA

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**Abstract:** This article aims to describe the origin and development of supervision in Georgia, especially in the sector of social workers whose services are focused on the needs of people in difficulty. We will also talk about how training programs and providers (supervisors) are organized today. The intervention of supervisors in social work is very recent in Georgia, but it is notable that it has already impacted in a positive way, which statistics are shown in the article. The information is important for practicing supervisors, those in training, as well as those considering training, and also for those who would simply like to know more about the subject. Currently, scientific and statistical publications on the supervision of social workers in Georgia are quite scarce. We are interested, from a comparative and international perspective, in how supervision is developing in Georgia and where it stands today. The following description presents, from an outside observation, the result of research, statistical data, and interviews carried out with social workers, as well as with the group of supervisors of The LEPL Agency for state Care and assistance for the (statutory) victims of human trafficking of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

**Keywords:** supervision; supervisor; social worker; ethics; discourse.

### 1. Introduction

Today, in a developed world, supervision is an essential activity in the profession of social work. Its objective is to support them in the appropriation and consolidation of their identity and their professional judgment, by reflecting on their roles, their practices, their interventions as well as on the issues that arise from them. It promotes rigor in the exercise of professional activities and correct and well-thought-out discourse with the beneficiaries of the service. It is aimed at both service/social work students and social workers – beginners or more experienced. For example, in its Continuing Education Policy adopted in 2007 in Quebec, the OTSTCFQ describes

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the supervision process as "being an activity of participation for the supervisees and achievement for the supervisors". The Order thus officially recognizes that supervision is a central continuing education activity in the professional development of social workers. Several benefits are associated with this activity for both social workers and employers. First, supervision provides a stimulating and conducive environment for learning and improving professional practice.

It also aims to improve the quality of services, thus joining the protection of the public and customer satisfaction. Finally, it encourages staff retention, which increases employee satisfaction. The objective of this approach is to promote the rigor and quality of professional supervision while serving as an aide-memoire for social workers in preparing for and carrying it out. Finally, it looks at what supervision should be, taking into consideration the different conditions of the practice of the profession. The supervision of social workers also aims at improving their relations with the beneficiaries of the service by using the techniques of the Code of Ethics of Social Workers which manifests itself not only in the work in the office or in the field but also in discourses addressed to people in difficulty.

## 2. Main part

### 2.1 Origin of social work

It should nevertheless be noted that the phenomenon of social work saw its first day in the United Kingdom, where the social intervention of collective interest has been an integral part of the history of social work from its origins. In England at the end of the 19th century, the first experiences of community-type social work appeared in suburbs whose inhabitants suffered from poverty and deep misery. For the reason given in 1884, a vicar S. Barnett created the first Settlement Houses in London. "Settlement houses" work with and for the inhabitants, in search of improving their standard of living. It is also remarkable that employees help their beneficiaries during their social struggles in different state institutions.

In France, the creation of the first social residence/house dates back to 1896. Inspired by the Anglo-Saxon "Settlement House" model, which the Marquis de Beauregard had reported in his book (published in 1896), social residences became the first form of social work.

Designating themselves as social workers, established in working-class neighborhoods, women representing establishments, carry out much popular education and social education activities by talking with people or giving well-prepared discourses. This ancestor of collective social work remained very marginal and existed until 1909.

In the United States The first "Settlement House" was founded in 1896. At the end of the 19th century, social workers in the USA created "Community Councils" which

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supported all neighborhoods in initiatives to respect their rights. The first workers speak the words and make collections. The most fragile population of the country begins to have real benefits in 1920. The works of the Chicago school, Howard Becker, Saul Alinsky, and Erving Goffman in particular, have strongly influenced the practice of social intervention not only in the United States but also in Europe including France. Social work is defined as community work. Saul Alinsky wrote a social facilitator's manual that marked the social development of neighborhoods in France. Goffman's asylums is part of antipsychiatry and the criticism of institutions of confinement. In these institutions, an underground interaction is built between internees and execution staff, which allows internees to negotiate a space of relative autonomy (freedom) with the minor staff.

France, Belgium and the Netherlands are often considered as models of transition, with a continental tendency for the first two (and a Mediterranean nuance in France), and a more liberal tendency in the Netherlands. The influence of England was felt in France from the very beginning of social work as a profession under the impulse of Protestants and philanthropy.

Europe, through the European social fund and European law, is an important factor for harmonization in Europe. France has a centralizing tradition, with significant state intervention organizing all social action and social work, even after decentralization. Social work is a public service intervention, even when this service is provided by an association, this association has most of the time a delegation of public service by agreement, authorization, approval...

In Germany, a federal country, a large part of social work is the responsibility of the Länder.

## 2.2 Emergence of the social worker supervision model

After the Second World War, Marguerite Pohek (1904-1990) was the person who helped Western Europe countries with the reconstruction of social work. On the occasion of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) program, it set up a European exchange program for social workers which enabled 60 social workers and teaching staff, representatives from 13 European countries, to participate in international seminars (in English) on social work.

As a result, Marguerite Pohek had a decisive influence on the development of "case work" and its learning. She also organized seminars ("Seminar on Teaching and Supervision of Social Casework in Europe") in Vienna (Austria 1950), Woudschoten (Netherlands 1951), Keuruu (Finland 1952), Dobbiaco (Italy 1953), and Leicester (Great Britain 1954).

For Europe and each of the European countries, it determined the methods of adapting the method and favored wide dissemination of the "Casework approach" before proceeding to the systematic study of the techniques and methods of "

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supervision", with small groups of social workers who were to spread out. 6 For this mission, she used as trainers and "supervisors" her network of friends from the United States and Canada, for example, Mrs. Amy Gordon Hamilton (1892- 1967), Florence Hollis (1907-1987), Rosemary Reynolds (1906-1980), Katherine A. Kendall (1910-2010), Cora Kasius (1897-1984) and in Great Britain: Eileen Younghusband (1902-1981).

Over time, Social work has become a professional and academic discipline committed to the pursuit of social welfare, social change and social justice. Fieldwork towards research and practice to improve the quality of life and the development of the potential of each individual, group and community of a society. Social workers practice interventions through research, policy, community organizing, direct practice and teaching, and discourses. Research often focuses on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, program evaluation, and international and community development. Social work, an interdisciplinary field, includes theories of economics, education, sociology, medicine, philosophy, politics, psychology, and as well as anti-oppressive and anti-racist discourse.

It has become clear that the social worker must comply with a set of missions defined by the institution which employs him, either with the aim of helping the person in the acts of daily life or with the aim of facilitating the integration of the accompanied person, respecting their rights, such as the free development of their personality and the free choice of their profession guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 22 and art. 23).

Therefore, it became clear, that the social worker without a team or supervisor faces several difficulties, and the branch of supervision of social workers begins to spread.

### 2.3 Beginning of social work in Georgia

The Georgian Association of Social Workers, as a non-governmental non-profit legal entity, was established in Tbilisi in 2004. The association is the first initiative in Georgia that advocates the importance of the role of social workers and social assistance recipients. Today, the association has over 350 members in Georgia. The main task of the Association has been to protect the social rights of the society in Georgia and to promote the development of professions and practices of social work. The main axes of the association is to:

- Advocate for social policies based on the principles of good governance and promote the development of the relevant legal framework.
- Promote the development of social services.
- Development of the educational base of social work (formal and informal).

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- Development and introduction of professional standards for social work;  
Development of a professional network of social workers.

The Association begins to work with governmental and non-governmental agencies, local governments and universities. It collaborates and partners with international partners to advocate the role of social work in the implementation of social protection mechanisms in areas such as child protection, juvenile justice, social housing, Mental Health, Social Work in school, Ethnic Minorities, People with Disabilities and Others. Its influence extends to management, coordination, education, counseling and research work. It is part of the "Statement in Support of Social Workers in South Caucasus Region". The European Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) expresses support for the development of the social work profession in the South Caucasus region and acknowledges the challenges that our colleagues are facing in their day-to-day professional activities. We compliment them on the very real progress that is shared by all social workers to secure a fair society. The main areas of the association can be described in the following framework:

**Table 1.** The definition of Social Work in Georgia

A humanistic profession as diverse as the population it serves, social work is firmly established globally as a profession that promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Social workers challenge the abuse of human rights that continues to occur in all parts of the world.
The infrastructure necessary to ensure that social workers have the necessary knowledge, skills and support to perform their duties effectively is less well developed in a country that has a turbulent history of conflict and change and where democratic accountability is a relatively new phenomenon.
Professional regulation is an essential element of our accountability as social workers and IFSW Europe urges all the relevant stakeholders to support professional bodies in their efforts to establish the systems necessary to protect the interests of those who use our services.
Despite 20 years of history in the region, social work has a little tradition as an academic or professional path in most former Soviet countries. The training program for social workers at the university level was established in 2006 in Georgia.

Source: <https://www.ifsw.org/definition-of-social-work/>.

#### 2.4 The Basics of Supervision in Georgia

In the start-up seminar in Vienna, Cora Kasius presented the basic principles of supervision: "Supervision is a teaching process. The supervisor is a teacher in the field; its job is to create a safe framework in which the student can work; (...) The supervisor must help the student to recognize his attitude towards himself. (Corgiat 1954, pp. 76). This laid the foundation for supervision in its current form. In this discourse, the student/pupil is synonymous with the social worker whose

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professionalism has become the keyword in the development of the social service structure in Georgia.

If we carefully consider Chapter II of "Law of Georgia on Social Work" taken on June 13, 2018, we will find the following articles there:

**Table 2.** The Important discursive aspects in social work in Georgia

<p><b>Article 5 - Binding nature of the principles of social work</b></p> <p>1. In carrying out social work, a social worker is obliged to take into account the following principles: respect for human rights, social justice, equality, sectoral competence, proportionality, and individualization, the observance of good faith and professional ethics, and systemic social work.</p> <p>2. The violation of the principles of social work by a social worker shall give rise to liability provided for by the legislation of Georgia.</p> <p><b>Article 6 - Principle of respect for human rights</b></p> <p>1. Social work shall be based on respect for the dignity and other fundamental rights of every person.</p> <p>2. Not only shall a social worker refrain from violating human rights but he/she shall also contribute to the exercise of fundamental human rights.</p> <p><b>Article 7 - Principle of social justice</b></p> <p>1. A social worker shall serve to ensure the achievement of social justice in public relations.</p> <p>2. A social worker shall contribute to social progress and the elimination of social inequality in society.</p> <p><b>Article 12 - Principle of observance of good faith and professional ethics</b></p> <p>2. The norms of professional ethics for a social worker shall be based on an obligation to maintain confidentiality, a relationship established under the principle to respect for the dignity of an individual, a recognition of the right of a beneficiary to make a decision and a recognition of his/her self-determination, and recognition the best interest of the beneficiary in carrying out social work.</p>
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Source: *Law of Georgia on Social Work*

<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4231958?publication=0>

"The Law of Georgia on Social Work" of 2018 represents a rather important legislative document for the development of the country, however above all the content and articles cited have presented social workers with new challenges.

The challenges of Georgian social workers:

In order to do the job well, social sector employees mainly face the following difficulties:

- Insufficient legal training/knowledge.

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- Ignorance of ethical standards for social workers.
- Problems with relations with the beneficiaries within the framework of correctly constructed dialogues/communications.
- Absence of the practice of working in a team.
- Lack of continuing trainings.

Over time, it became clear that social workers in Georgia needed the help and support of specialists who would be at their side to solve the problems cited.

Introduction of the professional supervision instrument for social workers in Georgia In 2020, The LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking creates a division specializing in professional supervision for social workers in Georgia.

As part of this research, Head of Professional Supervision and Project Design Division explained the main aspects and points of the work of supervisors in her division.

The training and supervision of social workers is carried out almost every day in individual cases, however, there is a concrete pattern that the division follows.

Every three months the supervisors work on four main areas:

1. Administrative supervision:

- Management of the quantity of work for each employee.
- Define priorities.
- Adapting to teamwork and seeing its role in the common cause.
- Carrying out practical activities in accordance with the legislation.
- Proper case management.

2. Educational supervision:

- Deepen professional knowledge and adapt it to practice.
- Learn and use different methods and techniques in practice.
- In the examples of completed cases, reflection on the renovation of work strategies.
- Introduce all existing domain services in Georgia for their involvement in daily work.

3. Emotional supervision:

- Identification and prevention of burnout.
- Know the boundaries between professional and personal life.
- Raising motivation.
- Show the important role of each social worker in the common affair.

4. Supervision of the management of the individual case:

- It is the most difficult task for all supervisors because they follow the complex cases of social workers on a daily basis.

Every six months the division of supervisors organizes group meetings of social workers which are mainly used for professional exchanges among colleagues.



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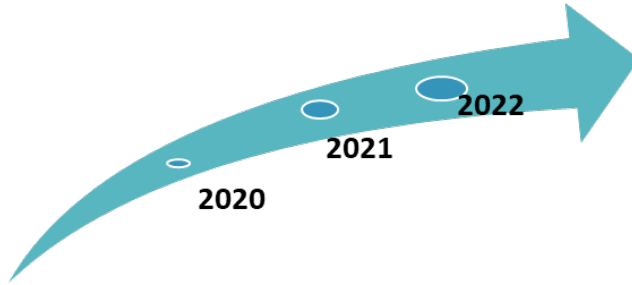
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During these meetings, the role of the supervisors is to give advice based on empirical and relevant examples.

**Table 3.** The statistics of the evaluation of social workers in Georgia

Very Good	Good	Bad
180	60	38

Source: Professional Supervision and Project Design Division of the Georgian Agency



**Figure 1.** The success and number of social workers involvement in Georgia

Source: Professional Supervision and Project Design Division of the Georgian Agency

Currently, supervisors are working with 278 social workers whose recent assessments are followed; however, progress is clearly visible from previous years: According to professional supervisors, "One of the most important elements of good supervision is the correctly constructed discourse with social workers" which means that the supervisor must think well and prepare his/her discourse to carry out the supervision, he/she must use the sentences clear and explanatory while speaking, using appropriate vocabulary to social work.

Another rather important task of the Georgian supervisor and to teach and explain to the social worker how he/she should organize effective communication with the beneficiary. It is notable that any beneficiary is a vulnerable person whose emotional state cannot always be predicted, therefore, the specialist must correctly define his/her emotion when he/she is meeting the beneficiary, it is important to use the correct vocabulary according to the environment.

It is important for the social worker to explain to the beneficiary all the planned steps in detail, to express empathy and caring words in communication with him/her so that the beneficiary understands that he/she is valuable to everyone as a person.



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"The work of the supervisor" is not simple, on the contrary, it is quite complex since all the nuances or aspects must be maximally foreseen".

### 3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted using two methods: studies of authentic documents, meetings and interviews with focus groups. These two methods gave the opportunity to better connect the legislation and the situation that is currently given in Georgia. The focus group interview consisted of social workers and supervisors and their comments were characterized by specific objectives. The authentic and empirical material, as well as the interviews with the professionals of the case, allowed us, not only to deepen, to study of this or that difficult question, but also to create a clear representation of the widespread opinion on questions about social work in Georgia. 4 supervisors of social workers from Georgia, Head of the Professional Supervision, Project Design Division and 24 social workers were interviewed as a part of the study. Such extensive research has allowed us to see in detail the successes and problems that exist in this particular sector of the country.

### 4. Research Results

Respondents share the common practice in the developed world for establishing a good social work system in Georgia. From the numbers and results, it is becoming clear that Georgian social work continues the practices, methods, or techniques of the Western countries. The number of social workers who serve the service offered by the group of supervisors is increasing day by day, as well as the professional supervision of the employees of the sector is recognized as among its auditors, however also, at the level of the whole system.

### 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that after analyzing the data, it turned out that the mechanism of professional supervision of social workers in Georgia has become a fairly effective tool, In terms of providing quality services to the beneficiaries by the social workers, which also had a positive impact on their emotional state, is also improve their professionalism.

It should be noted that the Resolution on the „Approval of Standards of Social Work Ethics“ was approved on October 6, 2021, which also underlines the need to develop the field of social work in the country. Research participants are quite actively involved in the process to learn new techniques of social work, Motivation to learn Proper fieldwork techniques was expressed by all interviewees. It is also very important to note that any social worker understands that only theoretical knowledge is not sufficient to make life easier for the beneficiary, it is also necessary to know

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that human aspects such as effective communication skills, pain sharing, adapting to the environment, are essential skills for all social workers.

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### Author Contributions

The entire article was written by Tamar Gagoshidze

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