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#### SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF RUSE AND SOCIAL WORKERS ACQUIRE BASIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN SIGN LANGUAGE AS A PART OF A PROJECT

On April 18th and 19th 2019 at Angel Kanchev University of Ruse an educational module “Let’s communicate without barriers (acquiring basic skills in sign language)” was held. It was realized by the experts Stefka Toncheva, Julia Stankova from the Regional organisation of blind people – Ruse and the chairman of the organisation Vladimir Vladimirov. Social Work students from the University of Ruse, social workers from social services, experts from the Social Assistance Directorate and employees from the Social Work Department at the Ruse Municipality took part in the event. Through the two-day training during the event the participants had the opportunity to get to know more about the work, structure and management of the Union of the Deaf, the theory and practice of sign language, the profession of a sign language translator and the ethical principles of his work, as well as the dictionary of the sign language in Bulgaria. The participants were very interested in acquiring these skills through practical exercises aimed in different directions: alphabet, numbers, days of the week, months, names of objects, activities, people, as well as terms and expressions related to social work and the work of the social workers. All participants agreed that the training in this specific module has a significant benefit to the improvement of their communication competence as a component of the professional competence. It will developed through the website of Social Work Specialty in the tab “Let’s Learn Basic Sign Language” in which have been integrated links to three free platforms with handbooks and videos for English sign language learning (British English, American English, and Australian English) as well as to the website of the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria. (<https://socialaffairsru.weebly.com/10441072-109110891074108610801084-10861089108510861074108010901077-10851072-1078107710891090108610841080108410801095108510801103-1077107910801082.html>).



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The activity of the first module of the university workshops for knowledge ended with the shaping of a poster in which all participants expressed their impressions of the training for acquiring skills in the basics of the sign language they had undergone.

This training was the beginning of the project “Educational and social platform for knowledge, creativity, growth and development” which is realised by the Social Worker’s Club at the University of Ruse with the support of the Foundation “Ruse Free Spirit City”. The project is being implemented in partnership with Regional directorate Social Assistance Ruse, Municipality of Ruse (Health and Social Activities Directorate) and the non-governmental organisations: Association Equilibrium – Ruse, Association Child and Space, Association Center Dynamica – Ruse, Foundation Friend Support – Ruse, Foundation Third Age, Association RALIZ – Ruse, Regional organisation of the blind – Ruse (Union of the Blind – Ruse), Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas – Ruse, Bulgarian Association of the Social Workers.

The purpose of the project is to create a wide-spectrum platform with social, educational and professional characteristics. It will function as sustainable source of knowledge, creativity, growth and development and to serve an important factor for:

- acquire, exchange and promotion of good educational and professional practices;
- realising active and constructive interaction between education and practice in social work with a focus on acquiring knowledge, skills and experience, realising creative production aimed at accomplishing growth, development and spirituality;
- discussing and analysing contemporary issues in the field of education and practice in social work and looking for possibilities for their solving as well as their materialisation as good education, social, professional practices.

The changes which are going to be accomplished through the realisation of this project include contemporary and important aspects related to:

- positivation of the public attitude towards the important function and role of social work and the social worker's profession in the contemporary context through activities that promote the knowledge, social and creative activities of the participants (students, professors, workers in the social work field and their partners in the project);



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- increase in the effectiveness and productivity of the interaction between education and practice in the field of social work in the direction of exchanging good educational and professional practices which accumulate in themselves contemporary knowledge and significant academic, social, professional and creative experience;
- acquiring values, knowledge, skills and experience related to the good educational and professional practices in the specialised educational and creative directions of five educational modules in the context of “University Workshops for Knowledge”;
- production of new knowledge through interaction between education and practice in the specialised educational modules; promotion of the creativity of the participants and its expression with important social resonance through the three Creative Workshops “Ruse – city with rich historical past, dynamic modernity, and future development”.

The project ends with a Christmas concert for the social service users from the Municipality of Ruse. Social work students, social workers, specialists in social services, professors, parents and representatives of non-governmental organisation will take part in the concert's preparation and realisation. This will confirm the teamwork and the positive partnership and interest in development of everyone who is part of the initiative.

The efforts of all partners are oriented towards the formation of a broad platform with educational, social and professional characteristics. Its effective functioning as a source of knowledge, experience, creativity, growth and development and the quality of the work and production of the participants will be ensured through usage of contemporary form and methods of social work, education, training and creativity. The platform is expected to keep working and to affirm itself as an annual initiative of the organisers and the partners. The end of the project and the report on its results will be based off the motto “Ruse – the city of knowledge, creativity and free spirit for which development we work actively”.

During the next month the second educational module from the project “Let’s support and help with competence (acquiring knowledge and skills in using psychotherapeutic approaches in the helping professions)” will be realised.



# University of Ruse Angel Kanchev

## 70 Years

### Facing Knowledge, Youth and Future



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The results from all activities included in the project will be presented in front of the academic and professional community and the wide public through media reports on local, regional, national and European level. At the end of the project will be published corpus “Good Educational and Professional Practices in Social Work – knowledge and experience for growth and development”.

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