

## Social Work Research impact on Developing a Model of Alternative Community Sanctions in Jordan: Implications for Criminal Policy and Social Work Practice

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### ABSTRACT

Social work research encourages the production of evidence-based knowledge in order to provide further insights into how to respond to the social needs of individuals, society and policymakers. This pilot study was conducted by academics of social work based in a university social work department, on students who had violated university discipline regulations and had the potential for aggressive behaviour, seeking evidence to not only support the Ministry of Justice in reforming Jordan's judicial system and establish community sanctions for juveniles and adults, but also developing the university's counselling system and disciplinary regulations. This was part of an EU project in collaboration with Jordan's Ministry of Justice. The methods used to collect the data were mainly qualitative. The research findings present evidence of the need for and effectiveness of community sanctions accompanied by anger management. The study's findings have played a significant part in supporting the development of criminal policy and approving the integration of community sanctions in juvenile judicial law in Jordan. This research will add to the international literature an evidence to the scientific knowledge of social work research.

**Keywords:** social work, community sanctions, judicial system, Jordan, community services.

### INTRODUCTION

The recent development policy in Jordan encourages supporting academic research with practice which had a positive impact on certain professional practice and service settings, such as social work (Almakhamreh and Libal, 2012). Producing evidence-based knowledge is encouraged in Jordan's field of social work and by this profession's national bodies for many reasons: to encourage acknowledgement of the status of social work as a profession; to encourage an academic response to social work regarding people's needs and societal development; and to localise the practice of social work in Jordan while at the same time linking it with and supporting international missions and perspectives of social work, i.e. prevention, intervention and

participation in developing policy that impacts on citizens' well-being (Almakhamreh, 2005; Cocks *et al.*, 2009; Almakhamreh *et al.*, 2015).

This paper, which is an initiative of social work researchers, is of a significant importance as it attempts to examine how social work can turn out to be an alternative solution to resort to when young university students violate the university's regulation system. Such students, often, receive two warnings and may then be expelled from the university due to aggressive acts such as fighting or destroying public properties. This study seeks to find other alternatives to such penalties since such punishments, from the perspective of social work, are not a solution to behavioural problems.

The study was suggested and designed by social work academics to produce knowledge about dealing with young offenders in order to support the Ministry of Justice in reforming Jordan's judicial system with the help of EU experts. In other words, supporting the

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official policy and practice at kingdom level, i.e., for the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Development.

The aim of the pilot study was to examine the workability of community sanctions in the Jordanian society, to help Jordan's Ministry of Justice to establish alternative sanctions in a context where the only punishments for breaking the law are either going to prison or being issued a fine. In the case of young offenders they are sent to juvenile centres. Social work educators took this opportunity to develop a university discipline and counselling system to respond to the needs of students who are enrolled at the universities and are breaking the university rules or are a subject of the current university discipline regulations.

In this study, the researcher uses the term 'community service' for students, where it meant 'community sanctions'. This is because of the sensitivity towards their situations; they are offenders but not eligible to legal court.

The importance of this work is that it is an exploratory study, conducted for the first time from a social work perspective to explore the understanding of university students as offenders and potential offenders in society of the suitability of alternatives to punishment in Jordan, in the hope of supporting the development of criminal law for young offenders and adults. The participants were young members of the local community. Our main research questions were: do alternative community sanctions work in the Jordanian cultural context? To what extent is social work able to produce evidence-based results that will impact crime policy? What are the applications and implications of social work in criminal policy and practice in Jordan? We sought to produce transferable knowledge to international social work on the ability of scientific social work research to produce knowledge and evidence based on MacIntyre and Paul (2013). The sought result could be used to promote and influence a change in

policy (Shaw 2018).

This study offers a model for how social work researchers and academics' using perspectives and university-based knowledge proved that social work can be connected to society to influence policy and social work practice in the field of criminology, encouraging other professionals in different disciplines to incorporate and utilize social work values and principles.

The scientific debate here is allied to the international call for the recognition of social work as a distinct discipline, and for best practice based on the best available research evidence to carefully create an evidence base through research (Shaw *et al.* 2006; Cnaan and Dichter 2008; Höjer and Dellgran 2013; Gray and Schubert 2013; Gray and Sharland 2014, Moriarty *et al.* 2014).

Shaw *et al.* (2006), Shaw (2018); Moriarty *et al.* (2014) call for greater awareness of research and its role in promoting effective practice. They argue for multidisciplinary teams and interagency work. Gray and Schubert (2013) believe that social work research is empirical, building on realism and producing analytical knowledge. The core knowledge of social work reveals its diversity and its holistic nature as a discipline and an approach which is value-based.

Mullen *et al.* (2008) suggest that high-quality evidence drawn from educational research can guide recommendations about 'what works', while knowledge transfer can move research evidence and knowledge from one place to another. Shaw *et al.* (2006), Gray and Schubert (2012); Moriarty *et al.* (2014) advocate the enhancing and the accessibility of knowledge products.

Social work professionals acknowledge the importance of identifying potential juvenile offenders, considering this as a prevention stage (Ibrahim, 2010; Blanc, 1997).

This study on students who break the rules contributes to evidence-based knowledge for use in the field of crime prevention, as it offers a valid evidence

base with implications for criminal policy and practice.

Currently national and international universities have a new strategy to attract international funders such as Erasmus, Mundus and Fulbright to annual conferences to encourage practical international, multi-country and sector collaboration. The author argues that educators and researchers in social work are able to produce knowledge that have an impact on policy decisions.

The concept of community service was adapted to create some form of unpaid work in the community as an additional sanction for students who break university regulations. This option should be used for offenders who do not have complex problems such as poor mental health, substance misuse, etc., and should not be used in serious crime cases. The success rates are high for low-to medium- risk offenders. The number of hours of work can be varied to match the seriousness of the offence (Rex and Gelsthorp, 2004).

Rex and Gelsthorp (2004) state that community service encourages active citizenship and emphasises social responsibilities as well as political rights. Social and moral responsibility, political literacy, and community involvement all form part of the description of citizenship. Community service can reinforce or spark an interest in a young person's engagement with local issues and their resolution. According to desistance theories in building social capital, the significance of community service is that when offenders are involved in high-quality projects that are seen as worthwhile and of benefit to the community, there is a reduction in reoffending. Expanding this attitude to identify problems in the community will help the youth develop resources to cope with problems in the future, for example at work.

### **Context of the study**

In Jordan, social work education was introduced in 1965 with a two-year diploma, which in 1998 was upgraded to a four-year bachelor's degree programme.

Currently, Bachelor of Social Work programmes are running at two public universities in Jordan, with two Masters' programmes, one specific to migration and refugees (AlMakhamreh and Libal, 2012). Research is encouraged as a means for academic promotion as well as to support in maintaining social work's own autonomy and legitimacy, promoting, and enhancing its status as a profession in Jordan and internationally. The Society for Social Work and Research states that 'research addresses issues of social work practice and policy and promotes a diverse and equitable society' (Shaw, 2018, p 4). The collaboration between the social work department at Al Balq'a Applied University (BAU) and the Ministry of Justice emerged as part of the consultancy undertaken by EU experts regarding the improvement of the criminal justice system in Jordan.

The two teams had mutual interests, as the university was working on dealing effectively with students who had breached its regulations with anti-social behaviour, and the international project was exploring the new concept of probation and community serves sentences. Universities do not offer rehabilitation to young students who break the rules with violent criminal behaviour, nor do they send them to prison. Such students are given a warning or are suspended for a period of time or are expelled from the university. There are some young students aged 19 or 20 who are violent and who are involved in physical fighting, verbal assault, smashing windows and tables, and possessing sharp instruments, all of which are forbidden at the university, with the intention of harming others. The target group had a history of violence and had been before a disciplinary committee more than twice. The university lacks a counselling department, although some colleges have a counsellor, possibly unqualified, with no clear system for referring cases. Visiting the counsellor is not compulsory either. As a result, not trying to help these young students to solve their behavioural problems and avoid being suspended from the university is risky,

simply transferring the problem to their families and communities turning them into repetitive offenders in conflict with the law.

Therefore, social workers have continued to call for action to develop the counselling system at the university. This collaborative project offers a great opportunity for academic social workers researchers, as members of their committee, to include the principles and values of social work based on human rights and social justice, equal opportunities, and the prevention of crime. According to Jordan's judicial policy, the main sentences given by judges for minor criminal acts are fines or jail.

After receiving the university's approval of this study, a memorandum of understanding between the university and the Ministry of Justice was developed. Informal and formal focus group discussions were conducted with several university students and local members of the community.

It was decided that several alternatives to suspension for the participants could be implemented through social workers. This helped with designing the intervention programme. The first idea was to create an anger management or aggression replacement training (ART) programme that could be delivered to the students by the tutors of the social work courses, aiming at helping them to control their anger. The second idea was to pilot some form of structured work hours (community service) for these students, either at the university itself, or through working with local community-based organisations, piloting two options that might later be used by the youth and adult courts as alternative sanctions. It also offered the university another option for dealing with delinquent students.

The programme manual and training outline were developed jointly by the Jordanian social work academics and EU experts and were delivered to a total of twelve local academics and workers at the Ministry of Social Development who would run the programmes locally.

### **Preparations for designing the community service**

The social work researchers agreed with the University Students Deanship Affairs that it would be best for the student to use the term 'community services' rather than 'community sanctions'. It was also agreed that the community sanctions should consist of a programme that works on changing behaviours and attitudes. According to the discussion with the university students and local community members, the closest programme responding to local needs or intervention with community services/sanctions was aggression replacement training (ART), which was chosen because it enables vulnerable people to strengthen their resilience and promotes change and wellbeing. This is the core of social work's values and principles (IASSW, 2001). ART, which became known as J-ART (Jordan ART) included key elements that would be helpful to the chosen Jordanian students. It was originally developed for juvenile offenders in North America and utilises a cognitive behavioural approach, for which there is significant evidence of success in changing behaviour. There is evidence that the programme is efficient at reducing aggression and anger. The quality standards for ART training are rigorous. The programme requires at least one accredited trainer (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007). The programme developed exercises and role plays suitable for the Jordanian context but remained consistent with the core approach of the original.

The J-ART training programme was first delivered for 70 hours to 10 social work academics, who then delivered 50 hours to 44 students. In this paper, the focus is on the community services of university students' pilot study.

Community service was chosen, to be conducted after the J-ART training in reducing aggression. Offender students would undertake short periods of unpaid community work at the placements (Rex and Gelsthorp, 2004). One social work academic and the EU

team visited some of the possible placements, which collaborate with the Social Work department and are accredited as a field placement for social work field training. They discussed the idea behind the pilot study and the planned arrangements for the students.

The students were warned that they would be returned to their 'original sentence' that is either receiving a warning or being expelled from the university if they failed to respond to the alternative punishment. However, this method of community service hours has been proved to reduce reoffending in other jurisdictions and was expected to succeed.

### **Community service research and intervention design**

A qualitative approach is preferable for the social work culture, as searching for understanding and in-depth meaning and the data collection techniques reflect the communication skills and the core of social work practice (Flick, 2002).

The J-ART intervention targeted students with more than two infractions relating to aggressive and/or violent action as well as students who have a problem with managing their anger. They were all seen as a potential J-ART recruits. Forty-four students were identified who had problems with aggression and were the most involved in disciplinary proceedings. Most of their offences were destroying university property, with two cases of possessing a weapon (i.e., a knife or scissors) with the intention of harming others. Five groups of eight to ten students, including both males and females, with one all-male and one all-female to ascertain the best model for the Jordanian and Arab country context, were each co-run by two social work tutors. The students were in the group age of 19 – 20 years. One group had no aggressive incidents and none of the students were on their final warning, but they all had problems with handling their anger and becoming involved in arguments and disputes at college. They had taken the initiative to enrol themselves in the programme.

The sample of students was chosen by the university's Student Affairs Deanship, and those chosen agreed to participate voluntarily. It is worth mentioning that the college to which the students were affiliated is located in a conservative area, although the students came from a variety of places in Jordan. Only students at risk of expulsion from the university and those on a university final warning and took the anger management training were continuing the community sanctions.

The social work academics were aware that there were groups of students at the university who were aggressive and were always together. When distributed among the groups, the staff made sure of two things: first, that groups were separated, and second, it was intended that the lecturers running the groups would try to avoid also being in a teaching position with these students during that period. The students' offences were dealt with by the university's regulations; there was no involvement of the justice system. However, dealing with their problem while they are students was from a social work perspective preventive from crime.

All focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were moderated by the social work academic researchers. They were recorded and transcribed, then interpreted and analysed with the participants' consent. The coding helped in analysing the data. The analysis was coded and conceptualised themes were derived from the data according to systematic themes, so as to increase the validity of findings. This inductive method followed the grounded theory approach, as it explored areas lacking in previous knowledge, and the aim was to generate explanations and information about the subject Strauss and Corbin (1998) Baier *et al.* (2014).

### **Data collection**

The data were collected in five stages, and when the research team started to discuss applying the community sanctions as an alternative punishment, the team made sure that the students would know them as 'community

service hours'. The methods and question design included students' views about cultural consideration and where and when the programme should be delivered to fit in with their study schedule. The students' feedback from these meetings was very positive, and they were keen to start, indicating that the programme was responding to their unmet needs.

First, four pre-pilot focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Three of these were with the students who had received a warning; those who were potentially aggressive; and those who were willing to participate in the discussion without having had any previous conflict with university discipline or law. The other focus group was of members of the local community. This took place before starting the training and community sanctions. The concept of community sanctions had been identified before starting the discussion, making clear that it is equal to community services. The second phase involved four group discussions with the students after finishing the ART. The third phase comprised six semi-structured interviews with two students who had finished 15–20 hours of community services. They did the community service hours one month after finishing the anger management training to allow for their final term and exams. Three interviews were carried out with placement supervisors, and one with a university tutor. The fourth stage was collecting the field notes from the supervisors and students who had finished their community services.

The fifth stage was the evaluation after a period of six months conducting the training. Another FGD was held with students who had finished the training, three of whom had done community services.

The Students Affairs Department files were checked to ensure that none of the students had any continuing problems with their behaviour.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The students were treated anonymously, and their consent was a priority in this research. They approved

the confidentiality of information representing the findings. The students' commitment to the programme was discussed, leaving to them the choice to enrol or not, assuring them that this would not affect their university marks. By doing so we were committed to social work values and ethics that is respecting self-determination and empowering, enabling the participants and offering the chance of hearing their voices. The students' participation and contributions were valued and acknowledged as offering a chance to develop their country's juridical system and university disciplinary procedures. The participants were given a certificate upon completion of the programme, with a graduation ceremony. This would be valuable to them if they wanted to go on to deliver the training and become certified trainers. They were very keen to develop their skills, and the trainers felt that this had positively affected their self-esteem. This offered them a chance to practice social justice (IASSW, 2001). There was a possibility that the students would confuse the roles of the lecturer and the programme trainer, because at some points in the training the trainers tell their own stories about incidents that had happened to them. However, the social work academics were using social work communication skills and motivational interviewing techniques. This reduced the possibility of ethical conflict and in fact the trainers did not encounter any such problems during the training.

### **Findings**

The participants believed that the combination of J-ART and community sanctions was a suitable response to minor theft and such crimes as street fighting, violence, driving offences, and other misdemeanours, but not to drug or alcohol offences. Murder and serious personal issues have too great an element of revenge attached for the victims and society to accept alternatives. Offenders must undergo a case study to check what works.

*J-ART and Community sanctions could be applicable to offences such as fighting, damaging property or speeding. (Pre-pilot FG, local community, and students)*

*First J-ART and then Community services is possible also to minor thefts, loans...fraud... (Pre-pilot FG, local community, and students)*

*It's impossible to have community sanctions for killing crimes and honour killings: the family of the victim will not accept this, and it will make them enraged. (Pre-pilot FGD, local community)*

### **Cultural sensitivity**

The students and local community members believed that there should be equal legal punishments between genders when receiving the verdict. However, the difference is in how this should be managed with respect to gender issues. For example, female punishment should be less visible, taking place indoors, because of the shame involved:

*Boys or girls should be treated the same when it comes to judgement and punishments. However, for the community sanctions girls should be inside intuitions. (Pre-pilot FG, local community)*

*I don't mind, but not cleaning the street outside, my family would not approve of this; they [would approve if it was] with elderly people and inside an intuition. (Pre-pilot FG, female student)*

### **The community sanctions model**

This pilot has shown that aggressive behaviour can be reduced effectively if anger management is accompanied by community sanctions. This approach helps to enable new positive behaviour and teaches the person concerned to take responsibility for breaking the rules.

*Anger management is very useful to reduce temper but should be followed with community services as they help very much. (Pre –pilot FG student)*

*J-ART changes your behaviour then community service emphasises the lessons learned. (Pre-pilot FG student)*

The findings from the FGDs with students and local community members suggested that there is a range of possible community work; for example, improving the environment, tasks such as cleaning the street, charity work, helping the police with for instance schoolchildren crossing the road, tasks which use the offender's skills, improving local facilities such as gardens, helping at a health centre:

*I was telling the university I can paint or plant trees, but we did not have such instructions at our discipline. Pre-pilot FG student)*

*They can help with construction, in the local environment, planting, building and in cleaning. They can do teaching lessons for mathematics or English language for children as a summer course (Pre-pilot FG, local community)*

### **Policy implications**

Monitoring the community sanctions was vital. Students and locals stressed the fact that unpaid community services would not be a strong enough sanction unless there was a strong independent monitoring committee or organisation unrelated to any ministry. However, they suggested that ministers of Justice, of the Interior, and of Social Development must collaborate in supporting the community sanctions. The responsibility could be shared with the counties' municipalities. Social workers are also key in this. This would prevent family and community 'favours', i.e., turning a blind eye to breaches if the community organisation knew the student and their family.

However, others believed that it might be better if it were run at first by non-Jordanian experts so that the pressure of relatives and tribes and the median (*wasta*) would not impact the punishment arrangements, and once established, locals could take it over.

*Professionals must be strong and independent.* (FG, students)

*Social workers are vital in the programme, they are trained on advocacy at policymakers' level.* (FG, community, and students)

*Most importantly, all people must be treated the same with no wasta involved.* (FG, community, and students).

### **Findings after conducting community sanctions**

The findings from students, and institution supervisors and field tutors suggest that community sanctions or services as a local unpaid community work can be applied successfully in Jordan.

Community sanctions promote mental well-being. The students believed that work with community gave them a chance to pay their community back. In addition, it enhanced their feeling of citizenship.

*The community services made me feel good about myself and gave me the chance to be a good citizen. I wanted to volunteer at the centre.* (Student)

*The community services gave me a chance to improve my understanding of things; also, it is like a second chance, I am happy to know that there are people who care for me.* (Student)

*The changes in students' behaviour were so evident in their unpaid community services, with more feeling of responsibility and belonging.* (Tutor)

*Community services discipline our children and offers them the chance to learn from their own mistakes.* (Institution supervisor)

*We could not believe that this student had been breaking the university rules: he is well-behaved and helped a lot with organising activities. He was very patient with the children.* (Institution supervisor)

*I felt how responsible they are, caring for the community and working very hard. This is citizenship.* (Institution supervisor)

*The students were working hard, they worked as a*

*team, and respected others' views and even worked more than was expected of them. I'm astonished, and happy to have been involved in the supervision.* (Tutor)

### **Evaluation of the following up**

The students of community services follow-up after six months of conduction their services. It was evident that the training and the community services were benefiting the participants, and that their involvement with community was successfully responding to their needs, building their personalities, and nurturing their feelings of responsibility and commitment. The students' recommendations emphasised the importance of prevention of crime. They call for working with younger children, and they articulated clearly that school could be a good point to start.

*Must be delivered to the students at schools.* (Student)

*I am now volunteering, and it's a great feeling.* (Student)

*The community services taught me to be responsible and committed to my tasks.* (Student)

*I feel like I'm growing up, and thinking about what I did, it was not right.* (Student)

*Community work is definitely the solution for building personality and citizenship.* (Student)

The research findings helped in building a good advocacy for criminal justice and for other ministries involved, such as the Ministries of Social Development and Higher Education. The final step for the researchers was to collaborate with their EU colleagues to disseminate and discuss the findings. The findings bring evidence-based results into policymaking. It meant to support the Criminal Justice improvement in Jordan by including and identifying suitable provisions to allow community hours work, from existing and draft legislation.

The research findings were written up, discussed, and disseminated to the National Steering Committee of the Criminal Justice Improvement Project, led by the



Ministry of Justice, and other policymakers' national institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Interior Affairs and police head quarter and the Ministry of Education. Evidence was based on practice and research. In addition, it paved the way to application in social work and criminal policy

From the beginning, it was clear that the interventions by the social work academics and the pilot programme were designed to aid the development of the judicial system. The academics were aware of the connection between their research and future action and were free of pressure from any institution. This freedom of not being affiliated to any of the institutions, i.e., the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Social Development gives more credibility of the findings. In addition, academic research facilitated the process of knowledge production and transference and the implementation of practice. This action to establish community hours services pilot at Al-Balqa'a University for students who have infringed university regulations is taken as local evidence and as a base on which to build legislation, creating community sanctions and interventions for offenders in Jordan (Gray and Schubert 2012; Moriarty et al, 2014).

Having the key social work academics located at the university played a vital role in designing, delivering, translating, and transferring the knowledge. Being university academics granted these social work experts the privilege of moving from evidence to implementation at the policy and practice levels. The research concerns were drawn directly from the needs and from the practice context (Mullen et al. 2008; Gray, and Schubert 2012; Webber, et al. 2014).

The researchers' social work background also ensured that they fully acknowledged their collective responsibility for developing people's individual, familial, and community behaviour. The academic social work staff, as teachers and as researchers, wanted to

promote aspects of resilience on the personal level, i.e. self-control, or at the organisational level, i.e. in delivering better services.

At the policy level, the tangible result of this pioneer pilot research was that Parliament, and the legislative authority approved the community sanction law for young offenders in Jordan and began to implement it in 2016. At the university level, the Dean's board approved the inclusion of J-ART and community sanctions as an alternative method of discipline. As a result, the law of university discipline at Al-Balqa'a article (18) was added to the effect that students will be given the chance to train in J-ART and do community service, followed by an evaluation, and if this is found to be successful the warning will be dropped, and the student will not be expelled from university. This is currently on the agenda of the higher university board, when discussed and if approval is granted by the Minister of Higher Education, the policy of punishment could be disseminated and generalized to all Jordanian universities. In this regard, it is worth to mention that community sanctions can be successful in developing countries with limited infrastructure and budgets such as Jordan. However, for the policy of criminal law, judicial meeting steering group agreed that if offenders failed to respond to (alternative punishment) then they would have to be returned to court for being in breach of the order and be subject to the original sentence; that is either going to jail or receiving a fine.

## Discussion

The emerging findings offer evidence of the social work academics' ability and discipline to produce knowledge and to transfer, translate and implement it (Mullen et al., 2008). The training followed social work ethics, paving the way for students' voices, based on the human right to equal opportunity and treatment. There was great emphasis on the involvement of the participants, and the student and local community voices

were heard and integrated into the design of the programme with the aim of reducing student aggression.

Student offenders and other university students and local community members believed that the training and the community sanctions should be designed to tackle related problems such as drug abuse, damaging properties, fighting and speeding. They stressed the need for cultural sensitivity and suitability to both genders. One consideration was about female students taking the J-ART training and then performing their community services inside an institution. They could work in community organisations, or if they had a particular knowledge or talent, they could use it to benefit their community or another community's project. Also, students mentioned introducing crime prevention at a younger age, starting at school.

The design of the programme must combine Jordanian anger management/ aggression replacement training (J-ART). Students stated that J-ART plays a role in changing behaviour by focusing on education and cognitive behaviour therapy. It also provides students with positive skills in their private and public lives, raising their self-esteem and positively affecting their mental well-being.

The term community sanctions used for students as community service. The idea same of alternative punishment but was more suitable for students' context who infringed university regulations but not offenders in conflict with law.

The usefulness of the training was tested when students who had received three warnings and were subject to expulsion were directed to do community service. A strong monitoring process is an essential part of such training. Students who had been through the programme did not reoffend. This makes sense of also using such a programme for the prevention of crime.

The evaluation of the feedback after six months with the students, the institution supervisor and the social work university tutor indicated that community sanctions

could work in Jordan. It was tested in a very conservative area and was well-received by family, students, and institutions in the local community. This means that there is a need to develop the policy of punishments at universities as well disciplines rules, with implications for social work practice in the education sector. This could be applied at schools as well as universities as both prevention and intervention.

Monitoring is a key issue when conducting community sanctions or services. Gaining the trust of the institutions where the community sanctions is carried out must be taken into consideration for useful and successful implementation of practice and policy. Obviously, those who conduct the programme must be highly skilled, knowledgeable, and well-trained professionals with knowledge or experience of anger management training.

The implications of the results call for collaboration and a holistic approach policy, when conducting community sanctions or services, making sure that these include raising-awareness sessions and sensitivity to the gender and cultural contexts as preparation for implementing community services or sanctions, so that the intervention, monitoring, and evaluation are successful.

The evaluation revealed the impact of the programme on behaviour: no offences were committed by the participants during the six-month follow-up period, nor did they receive any court conviction, caution, reprimand, or warning. This pilot raises many suggestions for future work: for example, promoting social inclusion by allowing students who have transgressed university regulations to continue their studies; enhancing students' mental well-being; and promoting a positive attitude. This would entail an expanded university curriculum applying evidence-based practice.

Furthermore, the pilot has proved that community sanctions can reduce aggressive behaviour and reoffending rate. The pilot offers policymakers significant evidence of the workability of the programme to implement in policy on the prevention of crimes and

interventions. It has persuaded the University Board and the Ministry of Justice to make changes to the university and higher education discipline system (Gray and Schubert 2012). It is important to mention that this research design to help developing offender's law.

The limitations of this pilot study should be taken into consideration when evaluating the effectiveness of the programme. If students are committing acts of coercion or violence in a deliberate or planned way, rather than losing their temper or their self-control, the approach may be less effective as such acts could be said to border on instrumental rather than affective violence, some of which could fall outside the scope of the programme. This might be an idea for further research on monitoring and evaluations policy for offenders. Also, further research on policy of counselling at universities in general and its impact on prevention and reducing rate of offending.

This article has argued that social work academics working in universities with multi-disciplinary teams can promote and produce knowledge, as well as being a means of facilitating human rights and social justice and facilitating access to knowledge, and in doing so, maintaining the sustainability of the spirit of the science of social work (Gray, and Schubert 2012). This could add to the theory of knowledge production. Although social work is still developing, social work academics at universities in Jordan have played a significance role in influencing policy and developing professional practice in social work and other professions. Proving that students can be engaged in positive work in the community instead of being suspended.

The article calls for universities to offer equal opportunities to students who transgress their regulations and help to develop their mental well-being by offering behaviour correction services and counselling.

MOU is a joint program to implement services, and both ministries have adopted legislation regarding

community sanctions. It was published officially in Jordanian Juveniles - Law number (23) 2014 article number (24) In February 2018, an MOU was signed between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Development about the referral of juvenile delinquents to a rehabilitation program that includes community service. This is evidence of the impact of this research on policy dealing with juvenile cases. (Ministry of Justice Bureau 2018).

This research contributes evidence to the international literature on the significance of social work and scientific social work research, and how the findings can be useful in changing policies. Social work knowledge was utilised, guided, and transferred to practice, emphasising the continuity of social work in due course.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has provided clear evidence of the ability and significance of academics' research on the use of social work programmes for developing and maintaining good practice. This pioneering study has resulted in the first ART and community service programme in the Middle East. The findings were used to develop Jordan's response to anger control in its young people. In addition, within an international framework bringing evidence-based knowledge to support the development of policy and approved practice. It provides a positive example of transfer practice to policy and collaborations between Ministries and universities.

The findings of the research enable the reactions of the local community and the local community groups to be tested, regarding the community services and placements reactions. The research enables the Support to Improving Criminal Justice Project and the Ministry of Justice to test some assumptions behind the new alternative community sanctions for adults to be developed across Jordan. Moreover, provides a positive model of international and national collaborations.

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## أثر بحوث العمل الاجتماعي في تطوير نموذج العقوبات المجتمعية البديلة في الأردن وتطبيقاتها في السياسات الجنائية وممارسات العمل الاجتماعي

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### الملخص

تعمل بحوث العمل الاجتماعي على إنتاج المعرفة المستندة على البراهين والأدلة من أجل التزويد بالأفكار والمعرفة العلمية حول كيفية الاستجابة للاحتياجات الاجتماعية للأفراد والمجتمع وصانعي السياسات. أجريت هذه الدراسة التجريبية من قبل أخصائيين اجتماعيين أكاديميين يعملون في قسم العمل الاجتماعي، مع طلاب اخترقوا أنظمه الانضباط الجامعي في الجامعة وآخرين لديهم إمكانية السلوك العدواني. إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو ليس فقط إيجاد دليل لدعم وزارة العدل في إصلاح النظام القضائي الأردني وإنشاء عقوبات بديلة للمجتمع والأحداث والبالغين، وإنما لتوفير برهان يساعد على تطوير نظام الإرشاد الجامعي واللوائح التأديبية. كان هذا جزءاً من مشروع الاتحاد الأوروبي بالتعاون مع وزارة العدل الأردنية. والمنهج الذي تم اتباعه في جمع هذه البيانات هو المنهج النوعي التحليلي. وقد خلص البحث إلى نتائج من أهمها أن العقوبات المجتمعية البديلة في الأردن فعالة وناجعة ولا سيما إذا كانت معززة ببرنامج تأهيلي لإدارة الغضب. أدت هذه الدراسة دوراً هاماً في دعم وتطوير السياسة الجنائية وعملت على دمج العقوبات المجتمعية البديلة في قانون القضاء الخاص بالأحداث. وقد قدمت هذه الدراسة أدلة وبراهين عديدة تساعد على تطوير نظام الإرشاد والعقوبات الجامعية. مما لا شك فيه أن هذه الدراسة ستضيف إلى الأدبيات الدولية أدلة على دور المعرفة العلمية لأبحاث العمل الاجتماعي في الشرق الأوسط.

**الكلمات الدالة:** العمل الاجتماعي، العقوبات المجتمعية البديلة، النظام القضائي، الأردن، الخدمات المجتمعية، الإرشاد الجامعي.

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