



PROTECTION AND SOCIAL WORK OF PERSONS BELONGING TO HIGH RISK GROUPS

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Abstract

The social responsibilities of the human personality include meeting the basic needs of the person, family or group, and those in need can benefit from the support of those who can help them, people, state institutions or non-governmental ones. The basic needs are physical, emotional, knowledge, professional or other type of needs. The concept of social need is in natural connection with the process and activity of social service. The evolution of social services is based on the recognition of social needs and on the organization of society so that it can satisfy them. Those who are offered these services are called socially assisted or beneficiaries of social services. In a general sense, the beneficiaries of social services can be: individuals, especially children and families in difficult situations; vulnerable, marginalized or socially excluded groups; communities facing difficult situations generating social risk.

Keywords: social work; social protection; risk groups; socially assisted; beneficiaries of social services; abandonment; disabilities; disability

Social work is a complex of operational models for implementing support programs for members of society through a multitude of general or dedicated, specialized and professional social services.

"Social work as a profession builds its value system starting from the respect of the dignity and integrity of the human being and the recognition of democracy as an essential requirement of social life" (Neamțu et al., 2003, p. 26).

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The purpose of social work is to support those in difficulty through social services, to achieve the necessary conditions for a decent life, helping them to develop their own abilities and skills for a more pronounced social functioning. "Through its purpose, social work is an activity placed in the area of social action" (Neamțu et al., 2003, p. 28).

Social work and benefits are a complementary form of substituting or supplementing the income of the person or family, in order to ensure a minimum standard of living, as well as support measures for social inclusion and increasing the quality of life for vulnerable or individuals with health problems, which have social rights guaranteed and expressly provided by law. "The objectives of social work, summarized, refer to the installation or reinstatement of mutually beneficial interactions between individuals and society to improve the quality of life for all parties involved" (Neamțu et al., 2003, p. 29).

According to the legal provisions, "social services represent the activity or set of activities performed to meet social needs, as well as special, individual, family or group needs, in order to overcome difficult situations, prevent and combat the risk of social exclusion, promotion of social inclusion and increasing the quality of life" (Law no. 292/2011 - Law on Social Work)

Social services are guaranteed by the state, provided through public or private entities and are provided through several forms and methods, in certain locations, as follows (Law 292/2011): in day care centers; at the home of the assisted person; at the home of the person providing the service; in residential centers, with accommodation for an indefinite or limited duration; in the community.

In order to prevent, limit or eliminate the temporary or permanent effects of situations that may generate marginalization or social exclusion of individuals, families, groups or communities, the Romanian state grants both general benefits and some particularly focused on categories of people included in high social risk groups. These benefits are in the form of allowances, social benefit and aids, for families with children, for people and low-income families, for people with disabilities, etc. (Buzducea, 2009, p. 56).

The levels, respectively the amounts of the social work benefits are established in relation to the social indicator of reference, which quantifies the needs and implicitly the risk, by applying a so-called social insertion index.

As established by the legislator, social services are classified into categories such as: primary social services or specialized social services, residential services and non-residential services.

The policy of avoiding or preventing cases of institutionalization, adopted in recent years in Romania, is in line with the European trend of giving priority to non-residential care alternatives in the community.

Social services are regulated and recorded codified in the Nomenclature of social services (GD 867, 2015). According to this document, there are legalized 71 types of social services that are broken down into categories such as service centers, main activities and incidence on the functioning / organization regulation. In the group of social services with accommodation are included by centers, 32 types and in the group of those without accommodation, a number of 39 services. Highlighting the key elements that are part of the evaluation process of the beneficiary of social services such as: initial assessment, detailed assessment, risk identification, intervention design, is done by the social worker through social diagnosis (Roth & Rebeleanu, 2007, p. 34).

With regard to high-risk groups, the discussion starts from the increased vulnerability of people as a result of exposure to shortcomings that may lead to a level of well-being below a threshold considered by society to be acceptable or desirable. In this broader sense, groups such as women in maternity leave, young graduates on the labor market, people migrating for work, etc. can also be vulnerable (Buzducea, 2010). Vulnerability can also be perceived as a permanent problematic state. At the same time, the vulnerability can be linked to an event, an intervention or the failure of a strategy in which case it can be perceived as a transient state.

Although there is no formal definition of vulnerable groups in official European Union documents, the term is often used in connection with the concept of social inclusion, which involves the access of individuals to the opportunities and resources needed to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living considered normal / desirable in the society in which they live: promoting equality and social inclusion requires efforts to ensure that all individuals, including vulnerable groups, can play an active role in employment and in society and have equal opportunities in this regard (Buzducea, 2010). The EU's social policies pursue objectives such as: eradicating child and family with children poverty, promoting access to the labor market, education and training, combating social exclusion and discrimination.

There are many legislative documents that protect vulnerable groups, implicitly or explicitly. For example, the "Employment Strategy" focuses on access to better jobs for all Europeans (including the most vulnerable, such as immigrants or people with disabilities). The Equal Employment Opportunity Directive protects people with disabilities in the labor market. The Racial Equality Directive prohibits discrimination of ethnic or racial origin in the workplace or in other areas of life, such as access to goods and services.

Vulnerable groups are delimited by comparison with the majority of the population as having more difficult living conditions: poor housing or homelessness, unemployment, low level of education, lack of income. Women are considered to be more exposed to the risks of poverty and social exclusion than men among ethnic minorities (with an emphasis on the Roma minority, the largest of the approximately 10-12 million Roma in Europe).

Support for the social integration of risk groups must be achieved by actively involving them in dedicated projects or programs. Social workers must first and foremost understand the needs and not the issues that affect people at risk. A major contribution is needed to increase the utility's trust in society and to make the assisted aware of the neglect and elimination of marginalization by identifying the positive aspects and resources of the beneficiaries of social services.

The key issues of the future development of social assistance services concern the ways of connecting them to a multitude of performance criteria, with directions to follow such as: market development in the form of mixed and integrated services; modernization and new techniques; diversified principles and models; active participation of beneficiaries and free choice.

Following the analysis of social services addressed to the categories of people at high risk in Bihor County in the period 2019-2020, we identified the following:

- The number of projects identified for the social support of the persons included in high risk groups, at the level of Bihor county, is 72;
- The number of institutions in the field of social, state or private services (NGOs - associations, foundations) for the target groups for Bihor county is 53. Of these, 25 are intended for the social assistance of the elderly and 28 for children;
- At national level, Bihor County is on average and higher values in terms of providing social services for people from high risk groups, through dedicated

social assistance centers. On the one hand this shows the care dedicated to these activities and on the other hand the relatively high number of people in need of social assistance;

- The share of social services managed by the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bihor, dedicated to the elderly is 45% and for children 26% of all cases reported for the period 2016÷2019.

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