

**University of West Hungary
Faculty of Economics**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT
IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL SERVICES WITH SPECIAL
REGARD TO THE SUPPORT OF FAMILIES**

Doctoral (PhD) Thesis

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1. Antecedents of work, set objectives

Hungarian society has undergone several changes in recent decades. A sort of redefinition can be detected even in the seemingly eternal values. The most common interest in both the professional field and everyday life, in addition to that of the recovery from the economic crisis, surrounds family issues and problems because the values represented by the institution of family form the basis of individual well-being, mental health and also the development of society. A major challenge of today is to strengthen society by the families and to catalyse economic growth by the system of social care.

On the one hand, this dissertation embeds in a social and economic framework the significant public duty of supporting and strengthening families and on the other, it presents, in a comprehensive and synthesizing way, the professional policy problems of social service with special regard to family assistance generated by the changes in society and the families, the reactions to the arising needs and the possibilities of applying new methodological techniques.

Instead of straightforward algorithms and in accordance to her professional commitment and integrating her acquired knowledge, the author examined the social-economic-social work aspects of developing social services – all along heuristic principles.

In her paper she kept in mind the carrying out of the abstract tasks that is why she formulated her **research objectives** as follows:

- to give a comprehensive picture of the current Hungarian social service system;
- to highlight the situation of the available social and child welfare basic care, the growing social needs and risks;
- to identify and summarize the opinion and assessment of professionals about the Hungarian social welfare system;
- to explore how to improve the social services;
- to point out how it is possible to coordinate and make efficient the elements of the social welfare system in a coherent and well-structured frame, that would serve satisfactorily the support of the families;
- to explore and produce a model of how it is possible to improve the quality of life in a secure social net.

On this basis the author set up the following **hypotheses**:

H1. The support of families, the management of their social problems can be ensured on the basis of legal, economic and social professional rules and within a predefined framework keeping in mind the ever-growing and polarising needs.

- H2. The social problems of families can only be managed effectively by the provision of integrated services that is why it is necessary to specify the content of social care and to develop service contents. Innovation has to be realised along flexibility – adaptation – quality.
- H3. The development of social services has to be involved in a community action plan that is consulted with the experts of the social profession and of science and is debated by a wide range of community members. The community action plan is based on the deliberate cornerstones of community decisions.
- H4. The constant changes of law and the tight budgetary framework laid down by the state make it difficult to form and operate quality family assistance. The number of family assistance centres operating within an independent organizational framework is continuously decreasing, the service is less and less available in smaller communities while the family caregivers cater to a growing number people. Thus the efficiency of the professional work is constantly at risk.
- H5. The social service provided for families can be effectively ensured using new methodological procedures, even within a recast organizational framework. This requires the examination of the solutions that support the functioning of families, with special regard to the family care method.

2. Content, method and justification of research

The author focussed her dissertation on improving the value of social services, including family assistance as a personalised basic social service and family care, a method that strengthens the services. The examination of the resulting theoretical background and the everyday practice was carried out by document analysis and secondary research.

According to the criteria of scientific works, the author used the method of resource and document analysis for the interdisciplinary approach of the topic and the foundation and elaboration of the professional literature background.

The author carried out primary empirical research twice during the work, the results of which influenced and strengthened her in achieving her aim. According to empirical research, during the examination of the social welfare system, the proof of the theory was done through careful observation and reasonably well based experience. The author acted in accordance with the conventional research process, the deductive method: formulation of the research question – collection of data – analysis – drawing of conclusions indicating milestones.

The assessment of the social services was done by analysing statistical data, after which the author carried out empirical researches with questionnaire survey.

The experience of the first survey was positive. Here, the continuous cooperation with the teachers on field resulted in that the questionnaires were returned and could be evaluated in a large number.

The experience of the second questionnaire survey was not this positive since on the basis of the returned and evaluable questionnaires the author cannot disclose exact results.

To explore family care, a helping activity that developed during the use of legislation and professional methodology, the author chose a method that has been used less in this field. This method is value analysis.

Family assistance is a professional social service which is predominantly a practical activity. Therefore, according to the chosen research method, the author first defined the needs of the users of the service and the functions of family assistance. And then, based on the results of the analyses and the in-depth interviews, she carried out the criticism of the functions and proposed, by presenting a new service model, the formulation of a complex service realised by the method of family care.

3. Results

The range of scientific researches and examinations of professional development and training related to the social and child protection system and certain benefits has been continuously growing over the last ten years. The theoretical and methodological

development of the profession, the social inequalities that lie behind social conflicts, the appearing new social risks, the challenges caused by the shrinking resources, the concept of welfare mix that appeared in socio-political thinking and the aspirations to make the provision of services economical – all draw attention to the diversity of this topic.

“Training and Practice” research

The author achieved the research objectives. 72 questionnaires were handed out by social pedagogy students during their individual practice, for the institutions that provide social services.

Having evaluated the questionnaires, the author makes the following findings:

1. 60% of the institution leaders passed a professional exam, all of them participated in some prevention or professional (vocational) further training. However, only a third of them were asked to do expert work.
2. The majority of the institution leaders maintain professional relationship with the members of the local or the regional welfare system; some are also members of national advocacy organisations.
3. As regards their own self-evaluation, the respondents highlighted mainly their professional interest and motivation.
4. The respondents identified the appearance and expansion of new problem areas among their clients: the multiplication of financial problems, that family conflicts and domestic violence

became everyday matters, the frequency of mental (psychological) illnesses and an increase in the number of those fighting addictions.

5. According to the opinion of the experts, the present Hungarian social welfare system is a not yet built up system lacking institutions and services. In practice, the needs that have to be faced are significantly greater than what the offered services and service providers could meet.
6. The system is bureaucratic, expensive and the ever diminishing state grant and the narrow financial resources result in hard financial background. All this leads to the decrease of prestige of the already not recognised profession. The constant changes and the remaining deficiencies of legislation make it difficult to establish and operate high-quality care.
7. According to the respondents, the social welfare system deepens the regional social inequalities. They see the solution in the innovation of the legal and financial procedures. Some consider sub-regional partnerships as an appropriate tool, others do not agree. Most of them emphasise that the presence of the civil – social non-profit – organisations should be strengthened in this field.
8. The institution leaders identified the difficulties of institutional management in the first place. Their work is hardened by the

restructuring of social values, the fluctuation of experts and the lack of the opportunities for development (human resource and tool development).

9. In the social sector cooperation among the different areas is of great importance. Currently it is not balanced and basically it is based on personal relationships. Cooperation is inevitable as regards the help of information flow and the effectiveness of problem solving.
10. They consider the renewal of the profession necessary – especially in terms of social acceptance and recognition – but they find it unlikely to happen.
11. Speaking about the professional activities, they highlighted mediation, the use of therapeutic procedures for certain problem areas and the use of conflict and aggression management techniques. Social work professionals should have a working knowledge of computer.
12. The ideal social welfare system based on defined parameters: client-centred attitude, openness, competent professionals, regular and constant exchange of experience, sufficient human and financial resources, computer data management and coordinated legislation.

Questionnaire survey in the West Transdanubian region

The 2012 research is based organically on the results described in 2008. The objective of the research is the empirical assessment of the basic services offered by the social welfare system of the West Transdanubian region and the exploration of the views and opinion of professionals on the social service. The author posted the 2nd questionnaire of the research, using the mailing list of the region's methodology institution, to 155 contact persons and 45 family assistance centres as an e-mail attachment. The respondents returned 27 questionnaires out of which 14 contained valuable responses, the rest gave incomplete data or did not select any response category at all.

Research supported by value analysis

The returned and assessed questionnaires of the empirical research and the drawn conclusions prompted the author to get to know a method which has not yet been applied for social services but which is successfully used in other areas to organise researches, carry out research analyses, for development and to elaborate new products and procedures. The approach and the logical interrelation system of the value analysis are multidisciplinary and in all cases it looks for the optimal solution, practical narrative of the examined topic.

The value analysis is characterised by: using team work, thinking in functions, integrating production, organisation and analytical methods. It takes human factor into consideration and effectively promotes innovation.

The thesis contains as new results:

1. the model of the value analysis of family assistance,
2. the definition of the function schema and function hierarchy of family care,
3. the ranking of functions,
4. the evaluation of the fulfilment of the functions,
5. the enumeration of the functions that prove to be weak,
6. the wording of the team proposal.
7. As a wind up of the research work, the author proposes a specific service model:
 - outlines the organisation of the imaginary institution,
 - identifies the elements of the service,
 - presents the protocol of the professional work,
 - highlights the possible method of accessing the service.

Matching the set hypotheses on the basis of the conducted studies the author formulated the following **theses**:

- T1. To realize the 21st century family policy it is necessary to renew the social services, in particular family assistance, on the basis of legal, economic and social professional aspects, and to elaborate new service models described as complementary to the theoretical and practical achievements of the certain science fields.

- T2. On the basis of the research results, the large number of people cared for by the family assistance and by the child welfare service and the differentiation of the new, identified, diverse and complex problems justify the broadening and the development of social service designed for families. The 3 pillars of innovation are a survey concentrating on the individual / family needs, the formulation of an integrated family assistance service and a legal and financial system formed on the basis of community decisions. The development requires that law makers and executors alike enforce the aspects of flexibility, adaptability and quality.
- T3. The main objectives of the development of social services are cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The development requires the elaboration of a well thought-out strategy extending to the area of economy and society which on the one hand takes into account the scientific results of the social profession and the professional experience of the service providers, and on the other hand it makes the implementation attractive for all participants of the market. The doctrine of innovation is that with the rational use of the available scarce resources it is possible to ensure the formation of integrated services provided for families.

- T4. The nationwide coverage of the family assistance services is 93.2%, while the number of independent family assistance institutions has been halved in recent years, so access to the service is not ensured. The number of people cared for, however, reflects the fact that the service is very much needed. In most cases, families struggling with financial problems ask for help from professionals who identify complex reasons behind their problems and when they explore the cases it turns out that the intervention will affect the life of the individual / family in many areas. All this justifies the provision of a service that with its client-centered approach, openness and competent professionals, predictable legal and financial background provides care for families, helping them to improve their way of life.
- T5. Even within the limits set by the available human and material resources it is possible to provide a more accessible and more effective social service for the families if we take into account the significance of community decisions and use our resources in an innovative way to meet real needs. Value analysis is an appropriate method for the examination of family care. As a result of the procedure supported by value analysis it is possible to elaborate a new form of service, to improve the efficiency of family care.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the present dissertation relate to several research works and fit well with ongoing programmes in the social sciences. The extensive adaptation of the innovative complex service model can provide information to other new researches that examine the social service system and this way, after further consideration, new results can arise. The “House of Families” is an important stage of a long-term development work, the realisation of which provides opportunity for further researches.

In the course of the research work, the author aspired to contribute to the development of theoretical and practical social work with her surveys and the conception of the model. The results of the research can be used, in order to improve the quality of professional practice, to develop the social welfare systems, to improve the operating conditions and the funding of services, to define and elaborate the professional requirements that ensure the operation of the services, to measure efficiency and for analyses.

The research started in the present dissertation is worth continuing in the same spirit and reporting the results in national and international forums, thus contributing to the enhancement of the recognition, prestige of this profession.

5. Publications of the author relating to the topic of the thesis

Notice published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal or book

Andrea Riez

What is CSR?

In: The way of the world to “unity”

Edited by: Katalin Tordainé Vida

VJRKTF, Esztergom

2006

pp.152 – 161.

ISBN 978 963 7291 25 8

Andrea Riez

Collection of information in social pedagogy

In: Past and Future – Traditional and new trends in the forms of learning

Edited by: Katalin Tordainé Vida

VJRKTF, Esztergom

2008

pp.113-119.

ISSN 2061-4365

Andrea Riez – Dr. habil. Péter Schmidt CSc.

Social Services – Globalisation and Health Promotion

Health Promotion

2009 (volume L, issue 3, 2009)

pp.2-7.

ISSN 1786-2434

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“House of Families” service model

In: Training and Practice

2012 (volume X, issue 1-2)

pp 135-143

ISSN 1589-519-x

Article published in a foreign language peer-reviewed journal or other publication

Dr. habil. Gabriella Bodnár PhD – Andrea Riez

Identity questions of professors in social pedagogy training

In: European Journal of Social Education, FESET (Formation

d'Éducateurs Sociaux Européens / European Social Educator Training)

No. 20/21

2011

pp.45-53.

ISSN 1810-4789

Andrea Riez

Adaptation of Knowledge and Management in Social Welfare in

Hungary

International Social Work & Society News Magazine, 11th issue

2011

www.socmag.net

Article, presentation published in conference publication

Andrea Riez

Valuable assistance

In: The values of the Renaissance, the renaissance of the values

NYME AK, Győr

2008

pp.237-243.

ISBN 978-963-9883-45-0

Andrea Riez

The organisation of the helping profession on Christian foundations

In: "What you did for even the smallest of these people you did for me."

Christian values in the training of the helping, educating/teaching professionals at Benedek Elek Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of West Hungary

UWH, Sopron

2010

pp.67-7.

ISBN 978-963-9883-69-7

Andrea Riez

Knowledge and Management in the social sphere

In: Intellectual Capital as a Competitive Advantage

or the role of knowledge management in competitiveness

Lifelong Learning Foundation, Budapest

Selye János University, Faculty of Economics, Révkomárom, 2010

pp.1193-1206.

ISBN 978-963-216-270-6

Other publications

Andrea Riez

Collection of information in the assistance work

In: Together in child protection

RAABE Consulting and Publishing Ltd., Budapest

2009 (volume III, issue 6, June 2009)

pp.12-14.

ISSN 1789-2503

Dr. Sándor Haász - Andrea Rostáné Riez

The methodology of case communication

New Széchenyi Plan - UWH

2012

ISBN 978-963-334-066-0

Presentations

Andrea Riez

Dilemmas in the practical training of social pedagogy students

Conference of social pedagogy training institutions

Eger, March 18 2008

Andrea Riez

Child protection/welfare responsibility

Generations for each other Conference

Sopron, October 18 2008

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The opportunities of cooperation between training and field
institutions or training field

“Grasping” Social Exchange

Is a change of attitude necessary in the social services Conference

Pápa, 24 April 2009

Andrea Rostáné Riez

“House of Families” service model

Year of the Family in Benedek Professional Conference

Sopron, 7 December 2011

“House of Families” service model – attitude and value orientation

Nation policy and Hungarians science: international conference

Veszprém, 27 October 2012

