

## PREVENTIVE AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING LEISURE TIME: CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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*One of the planes of human functioning, in which we can find the foundations of social work is leisure time. This sphere is extremely important for every human being, and it is a particular area of the search and activation of values and social forces slumbering in each person, group, or institution, and any other component of the environment. At this point it is worth paying attention to the promotion and its preventive character with the ability to use it in social work.*

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### INTRODUCTION

A change as a feature of a developed society in a rapidly developing civilization – as well as the relativism of values, consumerism, increasing self-centeredness – seem to push to the margins such values as justice, social support, caring attitude, help to another human being in difficult situations. These social behaviors known since the dawn of history, today are becoming forgotten, sometimes devalued. Human life in the present reality is not easy. Social work offers help, thanks to which the man has a chance to meet their needs to the extent that allow them to carry out their own life consciously, as a life worthwhile. One of the planes of human functioning, in which we can find the foundations of social work is leisure time. This sphere is extremely important for every human being, and it constitutes an area of search and activation of values and social forces slumbering in each person, group, or institution, and any other component of the environment (Olubiński, 2004, p. 10-11). Its tasks in this place are aimed primarily at people in need (the poor, lonely, old, etc.), for whom the subjective or objective conditions make it difficult or impossible to meet the basic needs characteristic of each person (Art. 6, art. 12, Law on Social Assistance of 12 March 2004, Gov. Journal 2004 No. 64, item. 593).

In this article, in addition to the theoretical foundations of social work there has been analyzed the applicability of the objectives and tasks of social work at the level of free time, especially in the field of prevention (minimizing risks) and promotion (creation of conditions to optimize the development, strengthening the forces of life and satisfaction with the activity in leisure).

### CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE TERM “SOCIAL WORK” IN THE POLISH LEGISLATION

The concept of “social work” appears in the name of the American Association “National Conference of Social Work” already in 1917. Since then, its importance has been modified using a variety of criteria, such as: formal - by country of origin of their authors, or according to the chronology of the development of reflection in this matter; substantive - as the accuracy of compounds with a specific scientific discipline (sociology, psychology, etc.). criterion for understanding the basic categories of care, assistance, support; criteria: theoretical, practical and other<sup>1</sup>.

Often the term “social work” is associated with professional performance, which indicates the role of the social worker stepping into the relationship between the individual and the environment by

reducing or solving problems (Kantowicz, 2012, p. 9).

European definition was introduced in 1967 by the Council of Europe in Resolution No. 16. In line with the assumed position, “social work” was recognized as a specific occupational activity, aimed at better adaptation of individuals, families, groups and social environment in which they live and to develop a sense of dignity and personal responsibility in the way of referring to the potential for people to inter-professional links, as well as power and social measures (Szatur-Jaworska, 1995, p. 108).

Polish first approach to the analyzed term can be found in the “Act of 29 November 1990 on social assistance” (Art. 8, sec. 5). It has been described as “a professional activity aimed at helping individuals and families in strengthening or regaining the ability to function in society and creating conditions conducive to this goal” (Act of 29 November 1990 on social assistance, Gov. Journal 1990, no 87, sec. 506). This approach shows the subject and scope of social work, but not on the values, for which it should be implemented<sup>2</sup>.

Meanwhile – according to E. Kantowicz – “Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideas that relate to the respect for the equality and dignity of all people, and that the service is provided for ‘individuals and families regardless of their income’” (cf. Art. 45 sec. 3, par. 4, the Assistance Act of 12 March 2004, Gov. Journal 2004 No. 64, sec. 593; Hare, 2004, p. 409, 418, 419 – ed. JD). Moreover, it confront people’s needs with their creative abilities. It uses the diversity of experiences, techniques, and practices that are consistent with a holistic orientation to people and their environment. And so, according to the author, the term “social work” means a professional activity, carried out “in a particular social space and time, and regardless of what character it takes, it is focused on changes, troubleshooting, and help for individuals, groups or collectivities in achieving their satisfactory standard of living” (Kantowicz, 2012, p. 11; Lepalczyk, 1981, p. 233; Kamiński, 2000, p. 431-448). The above recognition of social work enables to draw the general conclusion that it boils down to securing the needs of individuals, groups, communities, triggering (or strengthening or restoring) their creative abilities and strength towards achieving welfare and quality of life and prevention of social dysfunction (Art. 119, sec. 1, Social Assistance Act of 12 March 2004, Gov.

Journal 2004 No. 64, sec. 593). It is necessary to take into account in this action of captured holistic perspective of human development and the needs of society.

Recognition of social work in the context of pedagogy, allows us to define it as a human development assistance. In this sense, the educational activity – social education – combines the necessity to meet the diverse needs of the successful development of those in care. Assistance understood in this way has advantages of educational assistance, which is important at both the methodology of social work and its final outcomes (for example, achieving full independence of a person in care) (Olubiński, 2007, p. 264; Kantowicz, 2008, p. 103-107). On the other hand, Bogdan Więckiewicz draws attention to the importance of support for education and care for families and their children (Więckiewicz, 2013, p 23).

### OBJECTIVES, FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF SOCIAL WORK

The basic assumption of social work is to help those in need in self-help, which boils down to solving problems and meeting their socially recognized needs and aspirations. The specificity of the objectives and tasks of social work is associated with a very wide range of activities: from the intervention, the incidental, institutional, environmental, animation, organizational help, to the activities of a welfare (Art. 119, sec. 1, Social Assistance Act of 12 March 2004, and Gov. Journal of 2004 No. 64, sec. 593; Olubiński, 2007, p. 257).

According to A. Olubiński the main assumptions of social work can be reduced to 4 key objectives. The first is to support, strengthen and recover the full capacity of human life and enable the man to participate in social life. This aim includes of a number of specific objectives:

- saving targets - relate to the protection of basic living conditions;
- compensation targets - come down to fulfillment of the individual needs of people who are not able to meet them on their own or as part of other institutions;
- protective goals - their essence is to minimize the negative impact of the factors that cannot be changed or removed;
- promotional purposes - meaning assistance in solving problems, overcoming difficulties in order to achieve a more satisfactory quality of life.

Another elementary goal of social work is to strengthen the capacity of local groups and communities to solve their own problems independently and development.

The third objective is an effective organization of various forms of assistance and management, development of appropriate infrastructure corresponding to the changing needs of society.

The fourth essential purpose of social work boils down to, *inter alia*, the development of adequate local social policy through active participation in planning, establishing, developing services and programs necessary to meet social needs (Olubiński, 2004, p. 30; cf. Szatur-Jaworska, 1995, p. 107-108).

In broad terms, the aim of social work is the activation of the society, engendering in it a sense of social awareness, self-organization and self-help in a society (Kantowicz, 2012, p. 22).

Social work expresses an interest in man and their relationship with the environment, living conditions and the impact on human culture in different phases of life, the impact of humans on the realization of the value of their adoption and fostering environments and the processing of the human forces in the name of a certain ideal (Mikołajewicz, 1995, p. 106-138). Therefore it takes into account intrapersonal (bio-psychological) and exogenous (environmental) factors, a social, cultural and natural heritage, forming a system of interaction with the unit implicated in specific problem. Social work activities thus boil down to diagnosis of the interaction conditions and social forces of the environment (including manpower), in the context of the risks arising from them, as well as development factors (also in the area of free time – ed. JD). In this respect, the specificity of the assistance activities of social work (they are directed at solving social problems and the objectives and tasks of the development of a preventive and emergency services) can be defined as a psychobiological, caring and social, as well as teaching (Olubiński, 2007, p. 254-255). From the above objectives of social work result its fundamental functions, they are the following:

- therapeutic – are designed to eliminate factors which may cause the states of distress or dysfunctionality;
- rehabilitation – boiling down to the reorganization and restoration of disturbed behavior or interaction;

- developmental – whose goal is to build upon the existing resources and enhancing opportunities for the person concerned;
- educational – based on familiarizing the public with the terms of the need for new or different resources or the means by which social objectives may be completely fulfilled;
- early detection, braking, eliminating the conditions and situations that may threaten the normal functioning – preventive functions – they are meant to prevent problems in the interaction between individuals and groups, including the prevention of risks of social pathologies (Olubiński, 2004, p. 33-35).

The attainment of social work requires making within it a number of tasks that can be put through the prism of the duties of a social worker referred to in Art. 119 of the Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance. These include:

- making the analysis and evaluation of phenomena that cause the demand for social assistance benefits and eligibility to obtain these benefits;
- provision of information, advice and support (counseling) in addressing issues of life to those who through it will be able to solve problems that are causing a difficult situation; effective use of the law in the execution of these tasks (see. Kantowicz, 2012, p. 23);
- assistance in obtaining for people who are disadvantaged counseling in solving problems and assistance of the competent institutions and support in obtaining assistance;
- assistance in accordance with the rules of professional conduct;
- stimulating social activity and inspiring self-help activities in meeting the life needs of individuals, families, groups and social environments;
- cooperation with other specialists in order to prevent and reduce the negative effects of pathology and social phenomena, poverty alleviation;
- initiating new forms of assistance to individuals and families with the difficult situation in life, and inspiring the establishment of institutions providing

services to improve the situation of these persons and families;

- participation in inspiring, developing, implementing and developing regional and local social assistance programs aimed at improving the quality of life (Act of 12 March 2004 on social work, Gov. Journal. 2013, sec. 182).

These objectives, functions and tasks of social work indicate a holistic, multidimensional, interdisciplinary and systemness of its activities. Their proper and effective implementation requires a professional preparations of social workers for reliable execution and performance of a wide variety of roles – listed by E. Kantowicz – such as: a methodologist, strategist, researcher, mediator, counselor, therapist, animator, guardian, teacher (Kantowicz, 2012, p. 24), with a focus on contemporary challenges and expectations of the profession.

### **PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK**

Social work remains in close contact with its major disciplines, such as sociology, psychiatry, medicine, psychology, social policy, health, ecology, economics, praxeology, education (social). As a profession, “constantly maturing”, is in a constant state of development, this process makes use of additional progress in the field of science and the social and its basic sciences. This interdisciplinary dimension of social work should be seen against multi-faceted needs and circumstances of life of individuals and groups, as well as the opportunities and trends to create a better, more humane reality, and at the same time the possibility of generating new scientific knowledge arising from practical activities (Olubiński, 2007, p. 255).

Pedagogical aspects of social work leads to examining it on the plane of social pedagogy. The discipline of a praxeological, teleological and prognostic character analyzes the process of education, recognized as a complex system or intentional interactions aimed at the development of certain types of attitudes and behavior of the juvenile, or as a specific system of components and optimizing its development factors. So understood the educational activity brings educators’ endeavor to enter into interpersonal relationships and social contacts with juveniles, which result in no change in their personality. In this matter there is the issue of relationships and dependencies between

education and attitudes of care and assistance. It leaves open room for maneuver in terms of social work education. In this sense, social work is defined, inter alia, as an aid in the recovery of the ability to function independently in society, which in a broad sense refers to providing the defendant with forces and resources that will enable them to develop and function independently in society (Olubiński, 2007, p. 257). In this context, the pedagogical aspects of social work can be seen primarily as: educational and caring attitude – (especially in a situation of social workers of the individual case – as long as they function independently ward) as well as development aid (i.e. aid activities – primarily of prevention – serving to enrich human development). In addition, teaching social work from the perspective of processing can be understood as the social forces of the environment, or by means of factors and values inherent in the environment. Education in this context means activation, strengthening (in English Empowerment) of the environment (Olubiński, 2007, p. 257-265).

This perception of social work indicates its links with the humanistic pedagogy. At the core of all its activities is – like in teaching – care for human beings, its development and quality of life.

### **LEISURE TIME AS THE AREA OF THE EXECUTION OF SOCIAL WORK FOUNDATIONS**

In addition to the historical, cultural, economic prospects of leisure time, the subject of many studies is its social perspective. In such considerations the most commonly analyzed is the scope of leisure time and the way it is used in the different types of communities, in different age groups, unions, among the people of different backgrounds, etc. Leisure time in itself is not a value, nor is it valuable, it becomes such when it filled with the specified content (see. eg. Nowakowski, 2002, p. 10). This category becomes the subject of public discourse, mainly due to the functions it fulfills, both positive and negative ones (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2007, p. 234). Especially the latter is an important argument for the interests and activities of social workers in the field of leisure time.

The revised organization of work and life in the private sphere and the public dissemination of new media and social communication methods make it difficult to make a clear division of human time into working time and “non-work” for leisure and duties (see Rewera, 2009, p. 42-44). The new reality

defined by civilization, cultural, social changes generates a number of problems related to the area of leisure time. These changes imprint on personal life, but also on the general public life. Sometimes they determine the condition and location of people and communities in the local and global community. In connection with the above issues, the task of education sciences is to deal with the challenges that cause problems in a constructive use of leisure time by humans and society, for the purpose of leisure, entertainment, developing interests and rewarding social contacts (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2007, p. 235).

Leisure is an area for development by social work, particularly in relation to dangerous for human development "idling" and "enslavement". Moreover, the use of assumptions in this field in the area of leisure time results from the tradition of social pedagogy, which in the narrow sense is treated as a function of the educational theory of social work (as already mentioned by T. Kamiński, in this paper). Social work in this context refers to the axiological and teleological aspects that ensure the proper execution of its tasks. Measures of social work in the area of leisure time mainly come down to the realm of care and educational, preventive and promotional activities: meeting the basic needs of social-care wards, creating the conditions for the proper interaction of culture in different phases of their lives, the prevention of risky behavior, deviant and pathological ones, strengthening the existing (dissemination of new ones) valuable leisure activities, strengthening the capacity of personal development and problem solving etc.

Particular application in the area of leisure time – because of its qualities and a wealth of educational resources – have preventive and promotional interactions of social work.

### **PREVENTIVE AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL WORK AND LEISURE TIME**

Interpretation of the different concepts of social work leads to the conclusion that the ultimate goal is to improve the social functioning, regardless of whether the need is perceived by the individual or the general public. Talking about the prophylaxis of social work in the area of leisure time, we must specify mainly these actions which seek to eliminate or reduce the potential factors that are the source of creation or deepening problems associated with it (Inglot, 2008, p. 23, 25).

In the context of social work in relation to preventive tasks in our spare time we may

distinguish the following levels (similar to those that have been pointed out by J. Inglot):

- strengthening of social functioning, by carrying out preventive activities in the forms: consulting thematic threats in leisure time and their counteraction; wide educational activities within the various social groups (individuals, families, communities, organizations) and professionals (teachers, sociologists, psychologists, volunteers, entertainers, etc.) resource management intervention activities;
- linking the dependents with the necessary means of preventive activities, raising awareness about the dangers in their leisure time, preventing them; focusing on constructive patterns of leisure time, strengthening the motivation to follow one's interests, passions; improving the system of organization and implementation of

In colloquial terms prophylaxis is said to be worth undertaking, because it costs less than the elimination of the problems that have arisen. Preventive and promotional activity within the leisure time, however, requires professional preparation of social workers, depending on the methods of social work and the level of community organization model, levels of preventive interventions (Inglot, 2008, s. 26-32).

This category of time is associated mainly with the freedom, rest from duties, the implementation of interests, well-being, which causes that taking action in our spare time – by their nature, qualities – becomes a kind of a natural factor that allows the promotion of the constructive forms, and preventive activities. Preventive and promotional activities in the framework of free time, therefore, contribute to the implementation of the basic assumptions of social work - to improve the quality of life for residents.

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