

REPRODUCTION OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

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Abstract

The human factor is present in every activity, regardless of whether it is a profit-making private sector or a public or non-profit sector that is primarily focused on securing public goods and services. The wider public sector includes the social services sector which has undergone a very dynamic development over the past period in connection with an aging population and an increasing number of needs to look after the target group of seniors. Securing the reproduction of human capital in this specific sector is very demanding. This paper deals with the extremely current issue of securing a new generation of professionals working in social services. We will show the current state based on the results of the empirical research solved in the dissertation thesis. The current measures for effective supplying of the new generation of social services workers have proved not to be successful so far. Therefore, it is necessary to look for new possibilities for the professional staff training, without which it is not possible to provide quality social services and to ensure the sustainability of this sphere.

Key words: reproduction of human capital, social services, social work, social services home

JEL Code: E24, J24, O15

Introduction and literature review

Even in a market-oriented economy, it is necessary to ensure the entire spectrum of goods that are necessary for life of population, but the private sector is not interested in it. Lack of interest of the private sector in producing these goods most commonly results from economic unprofitability (high costs, low profit). Due to this fact, the public sector has an irreplaceable role in economy based on market principles as it has arisen from the need of market failure.

A part of the public sector is also the sphere of public services. Public services are provided mainly by the state itself or by the authorized entities that provide these activities on a contractual basis, respectively on the basis of delegation. The specific feature of the provision of public services is not preventing anybody from the consumption, there is not

rivalry between consumers and the fact is that these services are provided to everybody without difference. Lately, the area of social services has been dynamically developing among the public services. Provision of social services was a response to the need to ensure the care for selected population groups (Kamanová, 2016). The most vulnerable and the most perceived group in society are the seniors. In addition to anthropological aspects (Lyko, Lehoczka, 2009), according to Dávideková, it is necessary to observe a high level of humanity as well as the legal norms when providing these services. Following the author, other authors (Slovák and Dudžáková, 2015) remind also the ethical level of the provision of social services and social responsibility of the workers in this sphere. Ethics is not only about the sphere of direct provision of social services, to which different social services homes and retirement homes belong, but also all public sector workers in the field of social care, as Mura and Machyniak write (2014).

Aging population is the problem of the whole society not only in Slovakia, but also in other EU states. For this reason, it is necessary to deal with this issue intensively. While social services were the domain of the state and the higher territorial units in the past, today, doing business in the area of social services provision is common – as Bočáková and Kubičková (2016) state. The difference between the services provided by the state, respectively by public institutions is mainly in quality (Mura, Orliková, 2016). According to Dávideková (2013), the level of quality of the provided services is automatically reflected into the life quality of the seniors living in social services homes. Changes that have occurred in the transformation of the social services sector through the involvement even of small providers, have a positive impact on the functioning of these facilities (Szudi, Kovacova, Konecny, 2016).

Serious problem arises after the creation of a large number of social services facilities in their staffing and care for the next generation of social services professionals. The need of not underestimating the human resources aspect in various organizations attracted Mura and Horváth (2015). In some areas of the economy (for example in the manufacturing), personnel agencies help the subjects to solve this problem (Potkány, 2008). Current trends in work with human resources in the small and medium-sized business sector were examined by Bartakova, Gubiniova, Brtkova, Hitka (2016). The fact that even in the sphere of social services the reproduction of human capital is a very actual problem, can be found in several scientific thesis. Slovák and Dudžáková (2016) state that the area of social services requires the legislator to innovate the current legal norms so that all the subjects in this sphere can respond flexibly to the personnel and material securing of the functioning of social facilities. Among others, Olšovská, Mura and Švec (2016) dealt with the evaluations of the latest development

in the area of staffing of the organizations. The authors point to the necessity of a change in education, changes in motivation and changes in access to human resources, as the Slovak labour market lacks a highly qualified workforce in several sectors, not only in technical services, but also in the services sector. We state that without change in the approach to ensuring the reproduction of human capital at the macro level, changes in this issue at the micro level cannot be expected. The management of social facilities can only be based on the current legislation and financial options set by central government authorities.

1 The objective, material and methodology

The main objective of this article is to map the current situation in the area of human resources reproduction in the social services sector. We assume that the social services sector does not belong to the attractive areas where the younger generation would be interested to work and stay in such a job for a long time. Therefore, there is a rather acute problem of how to replace the current generation of human capital with the new generation.

The primary data we obtained during the initial survey on the sample of social services facilities in the Trnava region in the Slovak Republic were the starting point for us. In addition to field data, it was necessary to focus on professional literature relating to this issue. Professional literature was used mainly from the major scientific databases and scientific events. In designing the methodology, we chose questionnaire technique and logic-recognition methods. We contacted a total of 400 employees of social services facilities within the territory of all districts of Trnava region with this questionnaire. 248 completely and correctly filled questionnaires returned in total. Subsequently, we evaluated the data verbally and using the graphs. Not only regular employees of social services facilities, but also managers at different levels of management participated in this survey. This enables us to get more comprehensive view of the current situation and to make some recommendations for the common practice of social services facilities.

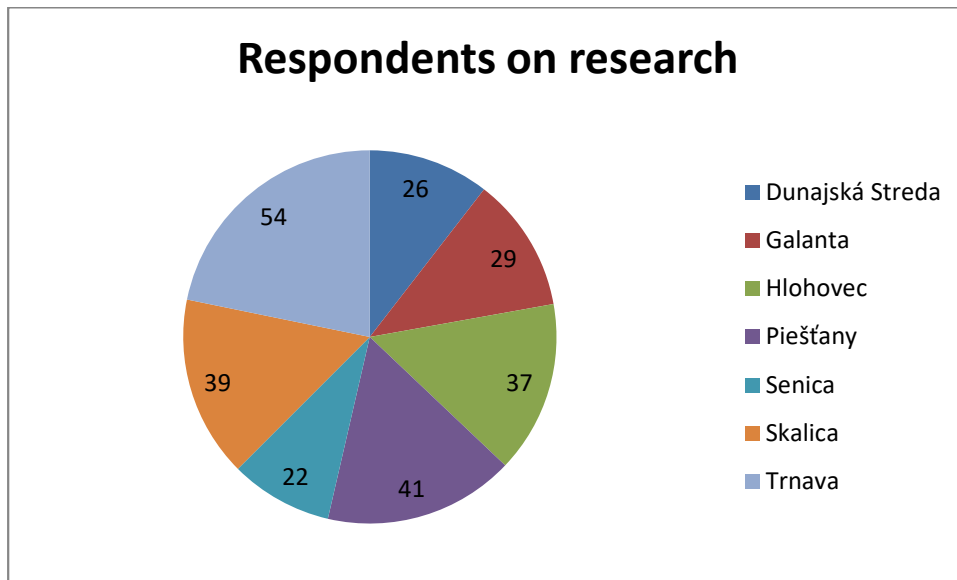
2 Results and discussion

In evaluating the reproduction of human capital, it is necessary to be aware of several facts. Especially, there is the fact that reproduction itself can be understood in two basic levels, namely:

- quantitative reproduction of human capital,
- qualitative reproduction of human capital.

We also used this basic definition when we were realizing the initial survey. Before the evaluation of the reproduction of human capital itself, we are going to characterize the sample statistical file. That represented 248 respondents out of 43 social services facilities in the Trnava region. Graph 1 shows a more detailed view of the sample file.

Fig. 1: Sample statistical file representing the structure of respondents



Source: primary data

Most respondents were from social services facilities from Trnava district (54 respondents), from Piešťany district (41 respondents) and from Skalica district (39 respondents). We were interested whether there was a shift in the monitored diapazon in the social services facilities involved in the primary survey as a part of the quantitative reproduction of human capital, and if so, in what direction. Thus, we oriented on the development and we compared the numbers of workers in the affected facilities in the respective districts. The results are shown in Table 1. Overall, in four cases, there was a positive development in the number of workers and the relevant social services facilities were able to provide the necessary number of experts – workers in social services. On the contrary, in case of three districts, there has been a negative phenomenon – the decline of the experts in these facilities. This occurred in the facilities in the districts of Hlohovec, Senica and the most in Galanta. In our opinion, the reason of this negative development is mainly the migration of qualified labor to social services facilities in the territory of Trnava district and Trnava itself where more favourable working conditions can be created for these experts. On the contrary, in those facilities, where quantitative reproduction of human capital is experiencing a negative

development, the management of the respective facility is facing the problem of securing necessary staff for the future.

Tab. 1: Total quantitative reproduction of human capital in social services facilities in the territory of individual districts

Social services facility in the district:	Year 2010	Year 2017	Difference
Dunajská Streda	101	137	+ 36
Galanta	98	76	- 22
Hlohovec	92	84	-8
Piešťany	110	119	+ 9
Senica	96	90	-6
Skalica	117	124	+ 7
Trnava	131	147	+ 16

Source: primary data

We were also interested in the qualitative reproduction of human capital. In this analysis, we studied the educational and, consequently, also the age structure of human resources working in the respective social services facilities. Table 2 represents the educational structure of human capital in the sample. Again, we put the data into the table form where it is possible to monitor the statistical character - the „education“ of social services workers according to its achieved degree. We monitored the education at the following levels: primary education, secondary education without school-leaving exam, secondary education with school-leaving exam and higher education (without distinguishing the level of the university degree).

When comparing the data in Table 3 to the data in Table 2, we can say that for the 2010-2017 (seven years) diapazon, there has been a movement of the number of employees in each category of education. In most cases, the trend is positive, which means that there has been an improvement in the qualitative reproduction of human capital. Many employees of social services facilities have completed their education, especially those workers with lower education. Workers with secondary education have completed the school-leaving exam and workers without university education have begun and many have successfully completed university education. An interesting finding is the fact that we have discovered a positive correlation between the place of higher education provision and the location of the social

services facility. In those districts where the higher education institution is located, the workers of social services facilities had easier access to obtaining professional higher education in the relevant field (social work, social services and counseling, missionary and charitable work). It was the university city Trnava, as well as the territory of the districts where the university has detached workplaces (Dunajská Streda, Skalica, Piešťany).

Tab. 2: Education structure – base year 2010 (in numbers of employees)

Social services facilities in the district:	Higher education	Secondary education with school-leaving exam	Secondary education without school-leaving exam	Primary education
Dunajská Streda	11	49	27	14
Galanta	14	58	16	10
Hlohovec	5	44	23	20
Piešťany	12	51	19	28
Senica	9	46	16	25
Skalica	13	52	35	17
Trnava	27	60	33	11

Source: primary data

Tab. 3: Education structure – year 2017 (in numbers of employees)

Social services facilities in the district:	Higher education	Secondary education with school-leaving exam	Secondary education without school-leaving exam	Primary education
Dunajská Streda	20	66	39	12
Galanta	11	38	13	14
Hlohovec	6	55	6	17
Piešťany	18	64	16	21
Senica	10	46	14	20
Skalica	22	56	34	12

Trnava	43	64	26	14
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Source: primary data

Another monitored factor in the qualitative reproduction of human capital was the age. We monitored and compared this statistic feature also in two periods: base year 2010 and at present (year 2017). The findings are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Tab. 4: Age structure – base year 2010 (in numbers of employees)

Social services facilities in the district:	Age range 18 – 30	Age range 31 – 45	Age range 46 – 60	Age range 61 a viac
Dunajská Streda	12	33	40	16
Galanta	9	24	42	23
Hlohovec	5	29	44	14
Piešťany	10	42	31	27
Senica	8	31	39	18
Skalica	14	40	52	11
Trnava	17	45	47	22

Source: primary data

According to the data obtained during the primary research when dealing with the dissertation, we found out that the smallest number of young employees aged 18 to 30 is in social services facilities in Hlohovec district. We attribute this fact to the close proximity of the regional city Trnava where this generation has better job offers with higher salaries. The more stabilized situation in this age group can be observed in social services facilities in the district of Dunajská Streda and Skalica. On the other hand, in the age group over 61, we can see the highest number of employees of this age in social services facilities in the districts of Piešťany, Galanta, Trnava and also Senica. We see the reason for this mainly in the job stability. This generation is not attracted by better-paid job in another district or in regional city at the expense of commuting to work and such job is not motivating enough for them. From the point of view of employing the younger middle generation (age range from 31 to 45 years), the situation is very favorable in the social services facilities in the districts of Piešťany, Skalica and Trnava. On the contrary, from the point of view of the reproduction of human capital towards future, the situation is more critical, e.g. in the facilities in the districts

of Galanta, Hlohovec and Senica. There will be a need for facility management to solve this issue more intensively.

Tab. 5: Age structure – year 2017 (in numbers of employees)

Social services facilities in the district:	Age range 18 – 30	Age range 31 – 45	Age range 46 – 60	Age range 61 a viac
Dunajská Streda	10	49	59	19
Galanta	6	33	20	17
Hlohovec	7	25	44	8
Piešťany	12	37	54	16
Senica	13	21	34	22
Skalica	15	46	48	15
Trnava	24	59	47	17

Source: primary data

Table 5 indicates that the most critical situation for the reproduction of human capital is in the district of Hlohovec where there is low interest of the younger and younger part of middle generation to work in the area of social services. As we have already mentioned, the geographical proximity of an industrially developed regional city with excellent job opportunities and financially interesting evaluation, is a strong motivator to work elsewhere than in the sphere of social services. On the other hand, the most favorable situation is in the facilities in the districts of Dunajská Streda, Skalica and Trnava, where, in the current situation, the management of social services facilities does not face the critical situation in the area of human capital securing. Of course, the results represent only the selected sample and they do not give us an exhaustive view of all social services facilities in the given territory.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to give an insight into the current situation in the sphere of provision of social services with a priority focus on the problem of reproduction of human capital in social services facilities. The bearer of human capital is a human being with all their knowledge, talent, habits and skills and it is necessary that the management not only of these facilities, but also the representatives of the central state authorities are interested in the

ensuring the continuous arrival of a new generation of experts and their persistence at the workplace.

Besides the theoretical analysis of the problem, we also focused on the actual situation of the reproduction of human capital in social services facilities in the territory of Trnava region in the Slovak Republic. Based on the findings from the primary survey, we conclude with the following facts:

- in the period 2010 – 2017, the number of employees in each category of education has been re-organized. In most cases, the trend is positive, which means that there has been an improvement in the qualitative reproduction of human capital,
- we have found out a positive correlation between the place of higher education provision and the location of the social services facility. In those districts where the higher education institution is located, workers of the social services facilities had easier access to obtaining the professional higher education in the respective fields.
- the smallest number of young employees aged 18 to 30 is in the facilities in the district of Hlohovec. We attribute this fact to the close proximity of the regional city Trnava where this generation has better job offers with higher salaries.
- from the point of view of future reproduction of human capital, the situation is more critical, e.g. in the facilities in the territory of the districts of Galanta, Hlohovec and Senica. There will be a need for facility management to solve this issue more intensively.

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