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SOCIAL WORK WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

In the article the concepts of "refugee" and "internally displaced person" are differentiated, information on the number of IDPs depending on the region of the country and the problem of calculating the real number of internal migrants are provided and analyzed. The authors highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the current state of social work with IDPs (for example, the existence of a Strategy for the Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and the implementation of long-term solutions for internal displacement, which identified the main problems of IDPs and general solutions). Government agencies are not flexible enough to create a comprehensive assistance system. A significant part of the work to help refugees is undertaken by volunteers and NGOs, partly supported by international partners. The authors also point out the areas of social work with IDPs, its purpose and objectives, methods, forms and principles of work of social educators with IDPs.

s. 69-77

KEYWORDS

internally displaced person, refugee, social work, directions of social work, principles, forms, methods of social work

Introduction

Social work must be flexible and responsive to new vulnerable groups, new needs or social challenges. The arsenal of its interventions is in a state of constant development, which requires the study of those practices that have had positive results, and carries out a critical reflection on the theoretical and methodological justification of the activities of social workers.

In Ukraine, one of such new challenges for social work, which in itself is a relatively new type of professional activity in our country, has been the emergence of «internal migrants» who in the scientific literature are called «internally displaced persons» (hereinafter - IDPs).

The general document defining the legal status of refugees and other categories of forced migrants is the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The Convention includes a general definition of «refugee», unrelated to specific national groups.

According to Article 1 of the Convention, a «refugee» is a person who is outside the country of which he or she is a national because of well-founded fears of being persecuted by religion, belonging to a particular social group, race, political opinion, or nationality, and who is unable or unwilling to accept the protection of this state or to return to it for fear of being persecuted; or does not have a legally established nationality and is outside the country of former residence as a result of such suspicions [2].

Problems of registration of internally displaced persons in Ukraine

Ukrainian legal system differentiates subjects of forced migration between «displaced persons» and «refugees» according to their nationality, referring to the Convention. The main difference between these terms, according to Ukrainian laws, is that IDPs have Ukrainian citizenship, unlike refugees, but both have left their place of permanent residence nonviolently.

In the national legislation of Ukraine, in accordance with the law, there is the concept of «internally displaced person», is defined as a citizen of Ukraine, a foreigner or a stateless person, who is on the territory of Ukraine on legal grounds and has the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, who has been forced to leave or leave his/her place of residence as a result of or in order to avoid the negative consequences of armed conflict, temporary occupation, widespread violence, human rights violations and emergencies of technogenic character» [6].

This Law establishes certain social guarantees for IDPs, which consist in ensuring the realization of the rights of registered internally displaced persons to employment, pensions, compulsory state social insurance, in case of unemployment, due to temporary disability, from an accident at work and an occupational disease that caused disability, to receive social services is carried out in accordance with the laws of Ukraine [6].

As of June 1, 2020, according to the Unified Information Database on Internally Displaced Persons, 1,447,129 migrants from the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (oblasts) and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea have been registered.

About 60% of IDPs are retired, 23.1% are able-bodied, 12.8% are children and 4.1% are disabled. The share of registered IDPs is 4% of the total population [11].

According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, as of January 1, 2020, the current population of Ukraine was 41,902,416 people, excluding the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol [12].

Note that data on the number of IDPs from different official sources differ significantly or contradict each other. There is some difference in the methodology for registering internally displaced persons of the Interdepartmental Coordination Headquarters (ICH) and the Ministry of Social Policy. The first (ICH) records persons who have sought assistance in resettlement and accommodation. At the same time, the information is entered into the register of citizens of Ukraine who move from the temporarily occupied territory and areas of the Joint Forces Operation (JFO).

The Ministry of Social Policy registers persons who have applied for the payment of their due pension or social assistance at their new place of residence. In reality, the Ministry of Social Policy covers not only migrants, but also those who actually live in the occupied territories and periodically come to the territory controlled by the central government to receive a pension or social assistance (so-called pension tourism).

In any case, the number of migrants is much higher than the population of many countries, including European ones (for example, the population of Montenegro is 647

thousand, and Estonia - 1265 thousand). Ukraine is one of the leading countries in the number of migrants.

In addition to the regions of Ukraine, residents of the temporarily occupied territories and the area of the JFO are also relocate outside the state, for example, moving to Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, etc.

According to the Ministry of Social Policy, the largest number of internally displaced persons was registered in Donetsk (676,533 people), Luhansk (251,231 people), Kharkiv (212,557 people), Kyiv (127,026 people), Zaporizhia (118,878 people), Dnipropetrovsk (76,457 people), and Kyiv (48,975 people) oblasts.

The smallest number of IDPs was settled in Ternopil (2,722 people), Chernivtsi (3,149 people), Rivne (3,204 people), Zakarpattia (3,462 people), Ivano-Frankivsk (4,116 people) and Volyn (4,033 people) oblasts.

This fact indicates an uneven regional distribution of IDPs in Ukraine, which leads to excessive social and administrative burden on communities, local labor markets and social infrastructure of regions of the population. Uneven placement of internally displaced persons by region complicates the implementation of employment policy.

The choice by a large number of IDPs of the regions closest to their previous places of residence indicates an intention to return to abandoned settlements. Excessive concentration of migrants places a heavy burden on the infrastructure, labor market and housing of the resettlement regions. At the same time, according to sociologists, some IDPs focus on permanent living in other regions of Ukraine. In particular, among those displaced to the western regions, there are 45% of such IDPs.

It is very important to develop a clear selection mechanism and criteria in order to provide assistance to internally displaced persons depending on their financial and social status.

The necessity for a differentiated approach to providing social support to IDPs is evidenced by the experience of other countries, including Azerbaijan. In this country the problem of IDPs remains relevant after more than 20 years since its inception: «IDPs are a rather heterogeneous group. Some of them really need the state support. However the other people have managed to arrange their lives over the years. Therefore, the privileges of IDPs sometimes irritate the rest of the population. On the other hand, they shape the mentality of dependents in some IDPs» [13].

The introduction of a unified system of migrant registration will allow to determine the volume of needs of IDPs and to plan the provision of social benefits, as well as to prevent possible abuse of state and donor aid. Information on the gender composition of IDPs, including age groups, should be a mandatory registration point.

Despite the numerous shortcomings in the work with IDPs, there have been some positive things over the last five years. Thus, analyzing the state of social work with displaced persons, we note that on November 15, 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Strategy for Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and Implementation of Long-Term Decisions on Internal Displacement until 2020. As stated in the Strategy, their timely implementation should ensure the solution of the problem of internal displacement of citizens of Ukraine and its consequences, in particular the host territorial communities [7].

To implement the Strategy on November 21, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers Of Ukraine approved the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and Implementation of Long-Term Decisions on Internal Displacement until 2020.

The Strategy and Action Plan are important for solving the problems of IDPs, as IASC (The Inter-Agency Standing Committee) argues that integration into host communities is one of three long-term solutions for IDPs, especially when it is impossible to return [5]. International studies on internal displacement show that access to housing and livelihoods are a major obstacle to integration. Provision of property rights, social services, governance, and the attitude of host communities towards IDPs are also important [9].

According to Elizabeth Ferris (Co-Director of the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement) and Kate Half (Head of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre), and we agree with them, that IDPs have the right to long-term solutions. Given the difficulties with returning in many areas, it is necessary to pay more attention to local integration as possible alternatives for IDPs living in protracted displacement. IDPs must be able to prolong their lives [3].

The system of social work with IDPs in Ukraine

We emphasize that the system of state social institutions and departments was unable to respond quickly to the emergence of these new social problems. State structures are not flexible enough to create a system of comprehensive assistance, although IDPs, according to O. Balakireva, expect help from the state in the first place. A significant part of the work to help refugees is undertaken by volunteers and NGOs, partly supported by international partners [1].

A survey of representatives of public and state organizations shows that the most common activities today are related to improving the conditions of IDPs (humanitarian aid; improving the existing living conditions in places of compact residence); previous traumatic experience (trauma counseling and work with post-traumatic stress disorder; first psychological aid); families with children and some their members (providing child care, access to education); specific needs (orientation in the regulatory field).

For example, in the place of mass stay of internally displaced families with children in Luhansk region, the information and counseling center was established. It is located in a separate room and equipped with furniture for consultations. There is a computer, a laptop, a printer, a scanner, a copier, a telephone and an Internet access.

The main services of the information and consultation centre:

- consultations of specialists (social workers, psychologists, lawyers);
- redirection (to competent social and other services);
- photocopies and scanning of documents (to restore documents, receive social benefits, etc.);
- recording information on external media (for sending to the competent authorities for renewal of documents, receiving social benefits, etc.);
- communication with relatives (by phone, social networks, e-mail, etc.);
- providing opportunities to view operational new ones from the hometown;
- providing opportunities to review the schedule of traffic (trains, buses);
- purchase of tickets.

At the national level (on the websites of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Social Policy and others) information is actively disseminated, where IDPs can apply for certain issues (renewal of documents, registration of financial assistance, re-registration of pensions, etc.). However, these are ordinary information services, and they are far from both crisis intervention models and long-term interventions based on the socio-ecological model formed in the practice of international social work [4].

There are few specialists in the state social services that have the appropriate level of training in modern social work, use a number of techniques necessary for effective intervention in a crisis situation, and have the skills to work in force majeure.

In fact, there are not enough modern social services in Ukraine at all, as the current system of social institutions is aimed at a narrow field of needs of single elderly people, people with disabilities and families who are at risk of upbrining their children. In the spring of 2014 there was a massive reduction of social work specialists who carried out inspections and support of socially vulnerable families with children.

Psychologists have taken over a significant part of the implementation of primary social support, although, according to interviews with NGO representatives, displaced persons need more social and organizational services than psychological counseling. At the same time, the provision of psychological assistance, which was actively given by psychologists, is also the responsibility of social workers.

The analysis of the practice of supporting migrants showed that volunteer organizations lack a systematic approach and qualified professionals. Involvement of international donor organizations, although it is important for solving material problems, cannot replace the establishment of a normal national response to the crisis, caused by military-political conflict.

Another challenge facing social work can be considered the philosophy of building a system of social integration of IDPs. According to the research, these individuals are characterized by a predominantly consumer approach, specific value orientations and a narrowed «vision of the future.»

Therefore, it is expedient to build professional social support for IDPs be based on the idea that social integration and adaptation should not focus on the planned satisfaction of needs (and, accordingly, generate dependence on the help of social workers or volunteers) and proceed from the paternalistic paradigm of the Soviet social security, whose practices have been inherited by social protection institutions and social service institutions.

Instead, social workers' interventions to address IDPs should encourage them to take action: job search, affordable housing, social and cultural development, community participation, and so on. It actualizes the step of the IDP social support system, which is just being formed, to the basic idea of modern professional social work, the ideal of which is the improvement, activation of clients and their release from the need for social workers.

Such challenges increase the requirements for training social workers, teaching them customer activation skills and application of problem-oriented techniques, the ability to build non-paternalistic relationships with clients, to distinguish situations in which

professionals can follow policy approaches (for example, during crisis care), from those when non-directive approaches should be applied. On the other hand, social workers should master the strategies and tactics of community development, the formation of their social capital and ability to self-activation, the involvement of community resources, the formation of a team of volunteers, and so on.

The above given reasons to believe that social work in Ukraine at this stage has not taken shape as a professional project yet. That is why it is important, in our opinion, to identify the main directions, goals, objectives, principles, forms and methods of working with IDPs.

There are some areas of social work with IDPs in Ukraine:

- comprehensive study of IDP families: analysis of the current situation of the family and identification of its basic needs;
- studying the potential of the family and the influence of external factors on it for further work;
- organization of interaction with problem families: support for children from families of IDPs;
- assistance in solving problems;
- mediation between the family and various institutions (school, public organizations);
- motivating the individual to self-organization and independent solution of certain problems [8].

The purpose of social work with the families of IDPs is:

- 1) ensuring the availability of a range of services for IDPs and their families;
- 2) providing assistance to migrants in acquiring skills of normal behavior in the new social environment, part of which is the immediate environment (relatives, neighbors, relatives);
- 3) minimization of negative consequences or even complete solution of family or individual problems;
- 4) elimination of difficulties associated with the adaptation of the family to new environmental conditions;
- 5) the provision of effective humanitarian services in order to improve the quality of life of the families of internally displaced persons.

We can also distinguish the main tasks of social work with IDPs. They are:

- providing social assistance to internally displaced persons;
- promoting the integration of IDPs into the social environment in which they find themselves;
- creation of simplified procedures for registration, obtaining housing, employment, business renewal, etc.

The main methods of social work with this category of clients are:

- socio-pedagogical assistance, support, prevention: the choice of programme and action plan;
- discussion of alternative ways to solve the problem;
- assistance in organizing a way out of the problem;
- coordination of efforts of the immediate environment of the individual; creation of a support group;
- relationship correction and rehabilitation: modeling the situation to solve similar problems in the future;
- modeling areas of success (those in which the family can afford realize);
- supporting the initiatives of both the whole family and its individual member;

- restoration of the client's lost skills (in case of injury together with other specialists) and return of the person to normal life;
- counseling;
- support;
- family therapy [10].

The current forms of work with IDPs and their families, we believe, are:

- individual, giving the client the opportunity to tell face to face his/her problems, which his/her could not tell in the presence of others (confidential information);
- group work, for which the work will be carried out on the principle of mutual assistance or the method of «peer-to-peer».

In our opinion, social work with IDPs and their families will be successful in following these principles:

- voluntary (assistance should be provided on a voluntary basis);
- timeliness;
- personalization (assistance should be provided personally to each individual);
- respect (help should not degrade a person's honor and dignity, self-esteem);
- activation of the client (the main content of assistance is to master a person's ability to solve their own problems);
- complexity (assistance is provided, which should be aimed at relieving unwanted emotional stress and eliminating the reasons that cause this condition in humans) [15].

For IDPs and their families, social maladaptation is a characteristic feature, and hence its manifestations: aggressive behaviour, conflicts with teachers and peers, alcohol and drug use, delinquency (fights, theft, etc.), truancy of school, vagrancy, suicide attempts. Therefore, we believe that the social educator should be aware of these characteristic negative manifestations in order to prevent them. The work of a social educator, in itself, is extremely difficult. He must always be aware of all current problems, know effective ways to solve them or minimize the negative consequences [13].

The main content of the work of social educators with IDPs and their families, in our opinion, is to create an atmosphere of cooperation and partnership.

Conclusions

Thus, social work with displaced people should be aimed at overcoming dependence on humanitarian aid, restoring labor potential, restoring socio-cultural and social ties, and effective self-management.

Working with IDPs, social workers can use both short-term (crisis intervention; outreach work; task-oriented social work model) and long-term intervention strategies focused on the system-environmental model of social work and community development.

We emphasize that Ukraine - planning its programs for IDPs - would be more appropriate to take into account the experience of international social work. After all, the emergence of «internal refugees» in Ukraine has challenged many established practices and highlighted the unwillingness of public social services to reorient to new groups of clients and the bureaucratization of a management system.

It also demonstrated the lack of professional competence of social workers and identified the need to change some aspects of their training, including the necessity to prepare for force majeure and to strengthen the study of systemic-environmental models of social work.

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СОЦІАЛЬНА РОБОТА З ВНУТРІШНЬО ПЕРЕМІЩЕНИМИ ОСОБАМИ В УКРАЇНІ

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті диференціюються поняття «біженець» та «внутрішньо переміщена особа», надається та аналізується інформація щодо кількості ВПО в залежності від регіону країни та проблеми обчислення реальної кількості внутрішній мігрантів. Автори висвітлюють переваги та недоліки сучасного стану соціальної роботи з ВПО (наприклад, наявність Стратегії інтеграції внутрішньо переміщених осіб та впровадження довгострокових рішень щодо внутрішнього переміщення, що містила визначення основних проблем ВПО та загальні напрями їх розв'язання). Державні структури не є достатньо гнучкими для створення системи комплексної допомоги. Значну частину роботи із допомоги біженцям беруть на себе волонтери і громадські організації, частково підтримані міжнародними партнерами. У статті також висвітлюються напрями соціальної роботи з ВПО, її мета та завдання, методи, форми та принципи роботи фахівців соціальної сфери з ВПО.

Ключові слова

внутрішньо переміщена особа, біженець, соціальна робота, напрями соціальної роботи, принципи, форми, методи соціальної роботи

PRACA SOCJALNA Z UCHODźCAMI WEWNęTRZNYMI NA UKRAINIE

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule rozróżnia się pojęcia «uchodźca» i «uchodźca wewnętrzny», informacje o liczbie uchodźców wewnętrznych w zależności od regionu kraju oraz problem obliczania rzeczywistej liczby migrantów wewnętrznych. Autorzy podkreślają zalety i wady obecnego stanu pracy socjalnej z uchodźcami wewnętrznymi (np. istnienie strategii integracji uchodźców wewnętrznych oraz wdrażanie długoterminowych rozwiązań w zakresie przesiedleń wewnętrznych, w których określono główne problemy osób i ogólne rozwiązania). Organy rządowe nie są wystarczająco elastyczne, aby stworzyć kompleksowy system pomocy. Znaczna część działań na rzecz uchodźców podejmowana jest przez wolontariuszy i organizacje pozarządowe, częściowo wspierane przez partnerów międzynarodowych. Autorzy wskazują także na obszary pracy socjalnej z uchodźcami wewnętrznymi, cele i założenia, metody, formy i zasady pracy pedagogów społecznych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

uchodźca wewnętrzny, uchodźca, praca socjalna, kierunki pracy socjalnej, zasady, formy, metody pracy socjalnej