Community Social Work in Ukraine: towards the Development of New Practice Models

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Abstract. The reorganization of social welfare due to the decentralization reform implemented in Ukraine calls for the development and implementation of new practice models of service delivery best suited for community social work. The research is dedicated to discussion of the development of new models of community social work from a Ukrainian perspective, taking into consideration the community social work and community social service delivery concepts given in the literature and community-based practice models implemented abroad. The article reviews the major competencies social workers need to provide services within the local communities. Implications for future research in the field of community social work are addressed in the concluding part of the paper.

Keywords: community social work, community practice, community social service delivery, community social work practice models, amalgamated territorial communities, Ukraine.

Bendruomeninis socialinis darbas Ukrainoje: naujų praktikos modelių plėtojimas

Santrauka. Įgyvendinant decentralizacijos reformas Ukrainoje buvo reorganizuota socialinės gerovės sistema. Reformos paskatino plėtoti ir įgyvendinti naujus bendruomeninių paslaugų teikimo praktikos modelius. Darbe yra analizuojami Ukrianoje įgyvendinamų bendruomeinio socialinio darbo praktikos modelių ir kitose šalyse egzistuojanČių praktikos modelių skirtumai ir panašumai. Taip pat atliekama reikalingų kompetencijų teikaint paslaugas bendruomenei apžvalga. Galiausiai yra pateikiamos įžvalgos tolimesniems tyrimams bendruomeninio socialinio darbo kontekste.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: bendruomenės socialinis darbas, bendrijos praktika, bendruomenės socialinių paslaugų teikimas, bendruomenės socialinio darbo praktikos modeliai, sujungtos teritorinės bendruomenės, Ukraina.

Introduction

Ukraine is undergoing radical transformations through introducing the decentralization reform. The last is set out in two central documents, the "Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Structure of Power" (Ukraine, 2014), approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in April 2014, and the "State Strategy for Regional Development 2015–2020" (Ukraine, 2015), approved in August 2014. Due to reform of decentralization, the government passed series of laws in 2014 and 2015 which enabled the creation of new Amalgamated Territorial Communities (ATCs), which would have access to a greater share of revenues from the national and local budgets, and would exercise more control over a range of functions in their local communities.

The reform also brought about changes in state social welfare policy in Ukraine. Approved by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in 2016-2017, the Methodical recommendations (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017) opened new opportunities for the local self-government bodies in the field of social welfare and created a new perspective for improving the quality of life of the citizens. According to the Acts (mentioned above) local governments are able and have to turn out social programs, organize social services delivery for different types of clients according to their needs and interests on the "one-stop-shop" basis by starting their own social agency or ordering and buying services in current social agiencies, NGOs, or by involvement of multidisciplinary teams (social security service providers).

It constitutes a challenge, but still there is no clear idea how to provide high-quality and affordable social services for members of ATCs in Ukraine. The analysis of the experience of those ATCs which have already started to provide social services for their citizens (Slozanska, 2016a, p. 92-102; Slozanska, 2017b, p. 77-101) showed lots of problems they faced. They were divided into two groups. To the first group it was refered those related to social services delivery: lack of social agencies in some local areas; inability of existing providers to bridge political, social and distance gaps; limited capacity to reach out to individuals or families unwilling or unable to seek help; citizens' unawareness about the types of social services provided by agencies; the need to simultaneously address numerous problems; lack of qualified and motivated social workers in the local community (Slozanska, 2017b, p. 77-101).

The second group of problems was linked with direct practitioners work. Social workers in ATCs in Ukraine are overworked (Slozanska, 2016a, p. 92-102). They have to provide different social services and address a wide range of problems; work with different categories of clients (internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, orphans, neglected and adopted children, deprived and "at risk" children and youth, unemployed, families at risk, etc.); fulfill numerous roles (a guide, an activator, a therapist, a social skills teacher, a broker, a case manager, an advocate, etc.); plan and make interventions with individuals, groups and community, apply appropriate methods of social work (case management, emergency intervention, group work, community organization, etc.). All these require essential competencies. While general practioners of existing social agencies and graduates of social work programs of Ukrainian HEIs suggest that they have lack of the basic skills and knowledge about social work practice and social service provition in ATCs (Slozanska, 2018, p. 84-103).

Despite the many existing problems state government and local authorities are looking for appropriate strategies and mechanisms for community social work organizing and social services delivering in ATCs. For these it is good to build practice models that are unique, more sensitive, and oriented towards community development that can be applied at the local level due to community assets, its changing and the population compositions.

Thus, the paper discusses the development of the new practice models of community social work from the Ukrainian perspective. The paper has three aims. First, to analyze foreign and Ukrainian approaches to understanding the concepts of "community social work," "community social work practice," "community social-services delivery," and develop a working definition of "community social work." Second, to study the newest community-based practice models developed abroad and explain the skills and competencies social workers need to apply them in the community. Third, based on the foreign experience and Ukrainian reality, design and develop community social work practice models which can be applied in Ukraine. Finally, the conclusion outlines directions for future research to improve community-based social work practice.

The concept and definitions of community social work

The practice of social work at the level of local (ATCs) communities has received much attention in professional literature abroad (Delgado, 1999; Fellin, 1995; Popple, 1996; Rothman, 1995; Twelvetrees, 1991; Weil, 1996, etc.) and in Ukraine (Batanov, 2000; Bezpalko, 2006; Bezugly, 2009; Ivashchenko, 2016; Semigina, 2004, etc.). Literature analysis shows that scientists have different views on the concept of social work in community. To have a clear understanding of this and to see the dinamics of how the concept changed more than 100 publications dedicated to the community social work practice published in the last few years have been analyzed. The Web search was undertaken using keywords "community social work," "community social work practice," and "community social-services delivery."

The review indicates that the term "community social work" is the most general and close in concept to "social work in community" widely used in Ukraine. It describes the area where social workers provide services (Fellin, 1995), improve living conditions (Barker, 1995), satisfy identified needs and solve problems (Návrh **štandardov** terénnej sociálnej práce …, 2004, Payne, 2005) by working with individuals, groups, organization, institutions as target population (KP, M. P. & Sathyamurthi, 2017). It involves employing trained social workers; the planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of social services (Návrh **štandardov** terénnej sociálnej práce …, 2004, p. 10-11). The term "community social work" deals with the realization of social programs (Romm & Romm, 1999), initiation of structural (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2018) and social changes (Fellin 1995); improvement of community organization (Drolen, 1991), and activation of community citizens (Bopp & Bopp, 1998; Twelvetrees, 1991; Ivashchenko, 2016); making cooperation within the community and out of it (Payne, 1997). It focuses on the power dynamics and social relationships between various structures and diverse communities (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2018), formal and informal networks to solve and prevent individual and group problems (Holiček & Baldwin, 2009), conflict management and resolution (Taylor & Roberts, 2013).

Community social work is one of several methods of social work (Glisson, 1994; Fellin, 1995; Semigina, 2001). As a method it aims at developing different types of interventions in the communities (KP, M. P. & Sathyamurthi, 2017; Skochills, 2001) focuses on solving the individual and community problems (Smith, 2001; Sophie & Clemens, 2001), understanding and addressing human needs, issues, and concerns (Miller, Tice & Hall, 2008). Like a method it is a comprehensive resource for social workers to practice effectively in complex systems and diverse communities (Hardcastle, Powers & Wenocur, 2004).

Community social work is not the field of practice of social workers only. It's also seen as an area of activities for non-goverment and private sector actors (Forde & Lynch, 2014); collaborative working within teams, formal and informal social network; "dialogue" between individuals, families, organizations and the community; active social care, supervision and control organized by members of the community; availability of resources for people in need (Watt, 1991), and fundraising (Boehm, 2006). Smale et al. (1988) sees community social work as a way of changing the organizational perspective of social services and social work practice and argues that community social work involves a process of working out aims and objectives through a review of needs and resources with a wide range of people.

Community social work is clarified as local social agency working in the sphere of social services delivery within neighborhood in response to social and political demands (Semigina, 2004; Bopp & Bopp, 1998; Romm & Romm, 1999) taking into account the differences in local conditions, needs and growth of communities (Hadley et al., 1987), and embracing the social justice values (Delgado, 1999). Compton, Cournoyer and Galaway prove that community social-services delivery has to be individual- and environment-oriented; Tropman, Erlich and Rothman (1995) suppose that communities, organizations, and small groups being the key arenas of macro intervention, have superiority over the individuals in providing social services and developing more effective participation of local populations in determining the scope and types of services. According to Hadley and Leidy (1996) state that the main trends of community social work are the decentralization and integration of existing services; adoption of a wide range of intervention techniques; staff, users, and local community participation.

Different approaches to understanding "community social work" give us the possibility to give the authors' own definition. "Community social work" is the interweaving of macro-, mezzo-, and micro-social work practice where social workers intervene to solve or prevent problems, satisfy the needs of people within the neighborhood, or work for the development of the local community and its citizens.

In the context of Ukraine, community social work practice is seen as a direct social service providing by practitioners at the local level or neighborhood (Semigina, 2004, Slozanska, 2017) for individuals, groups and all community with the support of the local citizens, authority, and other stakeholders. It involves the application of various theories and frameworks, numerous methods and techniques, community organization and community development through implementation of community social work practice models. *Community social work practice* on capacity enhancement models offers a significant potential for multicultural local communities (which undoubtedly are Ukrainian communities) for making physical changes in them (Delgado, 1999).

Community-based practice models used abroad

The review of the literature shows that the context of community-based practice depends on the main model of community social work implementing in permanent local community (Weil, 1996). Community-based practice models also help practitioners do their jobs well. So, throughout the past century many scholars and practitioners from various parts of the world aimed at developing models for community practice (Weil, 1996). Different authors differentiated various approaches to understanding the concept of community-based models and argued about the basic knowledge and skills practitioners should produce to provide social services in communities (Nash & Munford, 2001).

So, there is no universal community social work model. The first attempts to differentiate practical models of social work in the community go back to the 1920s in England (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). But, the most successful is considered to be the classification of three models (local development, social action, social planning) proposed by Rothman (1968). He differentiated the mechanism of community work organization and the role of social workers in community social service provision (Checkoway, 1995; Hardina, 2000; Twelvetrees, 1991; Weil, 1996). However, Rothman's models portray only three areas of community practice intervention and do not satisfy community social work practice completely.

The extremely rapid social changes as the result of economic and political developments, increasing of the number and rate of social problems at the local level in various countries lead to the development of alternative community social work models at the end of the twentieth century, such as feminist (Hyde, 1996; Saunders & Marchik, 2008), policy practice (Droppa, 2007; Hong, 2007), economic development (Hoyman et al., 2009), community building (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007; Mulroy & Lauber, 2002; Naparestek & Dooley, 1997), community capacity (Fawcett, 2007; Saunders & Marchik, 2008), community advocacy (Crampton & Coulton, 2009; Otis, 2006), community engagement (Butler & Eckart, 2007; James et al., 2009), and others (Checkoway, 1995; Rothman et al., 2009; Wandersman 2004; Weil & Gamble,1995).

According to Boehm and Cnaan (2012), all these models are synthesized from and include a unique combination of major categories of community practice, for example, goals, area of intervention, strategies, tactics, and the practitioner's roles. The unique combination of these categories depends on a coherent framework or a quasi-theory for potentially better understanding the domain of community practice and reflects a particular functional trend in practice. These models lay the intellectual foundation of community social work practice; serve to generate knowledge and research, make the field better understable, and guide practitioners toward the formulation of strategies in practice.

At the same time, social workers providing social services in local communities must demonstrate a various set of competencies to apply one of the differentiated models in practice. Alice K. Johnson (1998) based on the result of literature review summarized six characteristics of community-based models and identified the range knowledge and skills necessary to provide locality-based social services:

- *neighborhood-based and family-focused* – social workers have to understand different types of communities to provide community-based (including parent, peer-to-peer support, home and "support groups" visiting, parish-based support groups) social services, develop and implement support programs (family, community and children interventions), meet a variety of human and young families at risk unique needs;
- *strengths and empowerment-oriented* – community workers must develop and provide individual, interpersonal, organizational, and community levels interventions; empower poor, disadvantaged families and whole communities; organize neighborhood; change social order; develop leadership and cultural competence, etc.; introduce concepts of self-efficacy outcome expectancy based on the ideas of symbolic interaction, social learning, social exchange, etc.;
- *cultural sensitivity and multicultural competency* – is suitable in work with ethnic, minority, religious communities and communities of color; suggest the application of a feminist model for understanding what diversity and conflict are and to develop ways of working with them;
- *comprehensive services* – professionals have to know how to link, coordinate, negotiate, mediate agency contacts and services; provide case management, group work, networking, advocacy, and coalition-building; combine the ideas of direct service and community practice model; integrate all aspects of traditional methods of social work while changing on the behalf of a particular at-risk population and provide continuity in delivering services; demonstrate therapeutic, casework, interviewing, group and community work practice skills; understand the process of the neighborhood group forming and developing; organize mutual care networks and establish relationships between professionals, organizations, groups and natural support systems;
- *networking, advocacy, and coalition-building* – understand the coalitions and public/private partnerships on the local, state, national and international levels of integration between diverse groups for community empowerment, advocacy services provided at the three levels of community practice: case and class advocacy, and organizing techniques;
- *access to integrated services and supports* – social workers should know the structure and role of the public sector in service delivery, act upon the emerging public-private partnerships, analyze, develop policy and programmatic issues in substantive fields (substitute and day care, crisis intervention, etc.), develop and design program, facilitate interagency coordination and improve resource management, establish formal and informal links between service organizations;
- *teamwork and leadership skill* – practitioners should know how to provide consultation, advocacy; build an interdisciplinary team, and undertake community liaison work within agency and out of it involving multi-professional and non-professional team members; provide leadership; apply Delphi, nominal group techniques, force-field analysis, and management; do planning and coordination; build coalition; fundraise and manage budgets.

At the same time, there are lots of questions to the ability of any of the existing model to reflect the enormous diversity (Rothman, 1968; Hyde, 1996). Moreover, the main problem is that any model needs a lot of adjustments to be implemented. Thus, most models were revised and modified to reflect the changing and diverse environments and yet they are insufficient to serve as practice frameworks (Checkoway, 1995; Rothman, 1996; Weil, 1996).

So, making some changes in community-based practice it is possible to increase the number of offered models (Checkoway, 1995; Popple, 1996; Taylor & Roberts, 1985; Weil & Gamble, 1995). Sometimes they are removed from the reality of the practitioners and do not correspond to the reality of community social work practice and social service delivery. To choose a suitable model, practitioners have to select certain priority elements and somehow try to adapt the relevant model to the unique conditions of each community. As a result, existing models based on rich practice or research experience, steamed from different communities may be foreign to the local community in which they are implemented.

Criteria for the development of community-based practice models

Following our analysis and critique of the accepted approaches to the developing of community-based practice models we agree with the position of Boehm and Cnaan (2012) who insist on the "development of a comprehensive community model, based on the approaches of strengths and community empowerment". Such model which guides an action in different aspects of community life and constitute an alternative to separate models that focus on specific, single aspects (Delgado, 1999; Saleebey, 1997).

We agree with Boehm and Cnaan (2012) that models must be practice-relevant and require "concerted effort in recruiting the participation of citizens and cooperation among the stakeholders in the community" (p.146) and should be "predicated on processes of active planning in and by the community" (p.146). The authors summarized some criteria that have to be met while building the community-based practice models, such as a critical dialectical process, level of community involvement, deduction/induction, discursive communication and deliberative democracy, model flexibility, integration of policy and implementation, social capital (Boehm & Cnaan, 2012, p.146-151). Boehm and Cnaan (2012) also offered standards for creating new methods of building a community practice model. According to them, the model should (1) guide the process of change in which social worker and community members can practice and integrate their own reality; (2) be relevant for each particular community, conceived and designed through a reflective process based on local knowledge and practice experience, but not chosen as a ready-made, "off-the-shelf" package; (3) be derived through a discursive process that engages all possible stakeholders; (4) be enrich with the key elements drawn from research in the field of community practice; (5) be flexible, allowing the dynamic changes that are required during its application; (6) include all the issues essential for community change, thereby making the process feasible from its inception (Boehm & Cnaan, 2012, p.146-151).

Methods

The approach proposed in this article was developed with the aim of building community-based practice models based on the analysis of foreign and Ukrainian literature that deals with the problem addressed in this paper, unique conditions of Ukrainian ATCs and standards presented above. To facilitate this process, we made a review in order to identify key approaches to understanding the community social work. The review consisted of two stages. In the first stage, we collected and analyzed the full texts of relevant literature in the field of community social work (101 key papers in all). This also included literature written between 1968 and 2017 identified for (a) the key phrases "community social work," "community social work practice," and "community social services delivery," and (d) community-based practice models.

In the second stage, we conducted a literature review of these selected articles and other common sources of information. It explored several central questions: (a) What are the characteristics of community social work and community social work practice? (b) What is locality-based social service delivery? (c) What are the main models of community-based practice? (d) What kind of locality-based social service delivery models are or can be applied in Ukraine? (e) And, what kind of knowledge and skills do social workers need to provide social service in local-communities?

The community-based practice models applied in Ukraine

As it was mentioned previously, despite the numerous models and frameworks of community social services provision, they are not a panacea in all cases and for all countries.

Based on analysis of the existing legal and regulatory framework for social work at the level of ATCs in Ukraine (Slozanska, 2017b, p. 77-101), different approaches to understanding of community social work, a wide range of social services provided by social workers, the variety of clients, and therefore problems, interests and needs that professionals face, taking into consideration Boehm and Cnaan's (2012) criteria and standards three models of community-based practice suitable for the Ukraine are proposed: *the administrative model of social services delivery; the model of organizational development of local community and the model of integrated social service delivery (one-stop-shops).* They are akin to a road map: each set of users can choose the ways in which to go and car to drive (resources), the route they will travel to (problems and obstacles) and destination point (end goal). Proposed community-based practice models are not limited to community workers, but can also be used by administrators, other practitioners in circumstances of initiating of community change, creating of new communities, social and public agencies, initiating of new programs, projects and services, introducing of processes of comprehensive and strategic planning, fundraising and integrating of fields of intervention etc. Perhaps most importantly, two of them can be employed by members of the community without the presence of a professional.

The *administrative model of social services delivery* is based on the idea of building a flexible management system in the area of planning, organization and provision of social

services to the community members through the creation of social agencies network and establishment of partner inter-sectoral cooperation, coherence, coordination and collaboration of all subjects of social relations at the community level and beyond it. By subjects of social relations, we understand the executive authorities of different levels (state, regional and local), social institutions and public organizations that act as social services providers.

For the implementation of the *administrative model of social services delivery* at the level of local community in Ukraine, practitioners should know how to:

- create the social infrastructure and social agencies; train and motivate staff; establish intersectoral and interpersonal interactions between social agencies and state authorities; involve nonprofit organizations to social services delivery;
- assess the citizens' needs and responses; do budgeting, planning, ordering, monitoring and evaluating of social services; inform about service provision; protect the clients' rights;
- initiate, develop and design social projects, monitor and evaluate their effectiveness;
- allocate available resources, fundraise, establish public relations, develop and implement communication and social marketing campaigns; maintain software documentation.

Community social workers implement the administrative model in legal-normative, organizational and advisory operational spheres (Chernov, 2014) and play various roles (administrator, manager, facilitator, teacher etc.), while clients are active participants in the process of solving problems, social services consumers (Slozanska, 2017a, p. 265-269).

The second one is the *model of organizational development of local communities*. Based on the conceptual approaches to the organization of social work in the community, developed by J. Rothman (1995) it is gained relevance under current conditions as a means of implementation of state social policy at the local level in Ukraine (Batanov, 2000; Bespalko, 2006; Besuglyj, 2009). It is understood as a long-term, purposeful, structured process aimed at developing positive qualitative planned changes in the community by implementing a set of measures for improvement the community's capacity, solving its internal problems and ensuring a high level of adaptation by changing external conditions. Organizational development involves working with human resources by activating them.

This model is based on the strategic community plan that contains the list of activities aimed at solving urgent problems of community members through implementing of an effective social policy and high-quality social services delivery; identifying and initiating necessary community changes; planning long and short term interventions; facilitating, activating, improving the living conditions of citizens by involving them at the process of problem solving; developing and implementing social projects; assessment, capacity development and mobilization of community resources, fundraising; establishing cooperation based on the principle of self-help and mutual assistance; developing activity and leadership potential of community members; representing the local residents' interests, organizing advocacy campaigns etc. Practitioners applying the model of organizational development of local communities have to know how to realize these long term initiatives outlined in the strategic community plan.

Social workers act within the framework of this model as facilitators, mediators, nego-tiators, teachers, mentors, experts, activists, representatives of interests (Slozanska, 2017b, p. 265-269), whereas clients are active participants in the process of problem-solving.

The third proposed model is that of *integrated social services delivery.* It is based on the idea of a comprehensive provision of a wide range of social services that cater to population in the community at one place ("one-stop-shop") by qualified direct practitioners employed in a structural unit/department/agency founded in the ATCs (Slozanska, 2016b).

The analysis of European and North American experiences of systematic provision of so-cial services based on an integrated approach (Leutz, 1999; Levesque et al., 1999; Liu et al., 2013; Zvereva, 2006) has proved the effectiveness of the integrated social services delivery approach in working with individuals and families "at-risk" (Slozanska, 2018).

At the same time, integrated approach to the social services delivery in Ukraine is already approved by Methodical recommendations (2016a). And now this model is being piloted in some communities in Ukraine (Slozanska, 2018; Horishna, 2019).

The direct practitioner should know how to identify and provide the minimum package of social services at the local level by using the effective techniques of integrated social services delivery model, such as (1) case management; (2) redirection of clients; (3) monitoring of social service delivery, and (4) baseline, intermediate, and final evaluation. In accordance with the Ukrainian laws, such a package should include: the identification of persons/fami-lies that are "at-risk," assessment of their needs and interests; crisis intervention; providing preventive services, social support/patronage, representing the interests of the clients, coun-seling individuals/families in need; social support of foster families, family-type-homes and foster homes, patronage families; transferring of documents to relevant social institutions; detection of cases of discrimination, violation of rights of the children and adults, and vio-lence; informing the citizens about social services, their rights and possibilities (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). The social worker should also be able to pro-vide counseling, including crisis counseling, case management, group work, work in focus groups, conduct training, seminars, discussions, and work with documents, etc.

Direct practitioners play the practical roles (therapist, consultant, mediator, etc.) while implementing the model of integrated social services delivery (Slozanska, 2017a, p. 265-269), while clients usually act as victims and are consumers of social services.

Currently, three community-based practice models are designed to ensure the develop-ing of social work at the level of local (ATCs) communities in Ukraine as a sphere of social services delivery for people in need and for the creating of a community with high standards of living for its citizens.

Conclusion

Based on the literature review of "community social work," "community social work practice," and "community social-services delivery," the working definition of communi-ty social work has been developed. It has been suggested that locality-based social service delivery depends on frameworks or models of community-based practice implemented in

certain local community. Existing models have to be based on conceptual and empirical knowledge, time- and practice-tested and be applied under the current Ukrainian context. So, our focus was on the development of new, more flexible community-based practice models, in particular, the administrative model of social services deliver, the model of organizational development of local community, and the model of integrated social service delivery.

However, to better understand the community-based service delivery in Ukraine and the mechanisms of community practice models implementation, further actions and research are needed. First, recent changes in state policy, which delegate a number of responsibilities in social welfare to local governments, have to be researched taking into account the community context. Second, three models of social services delivery were developed following the foreign practice analysis, Ukrainian reality, and laws' prescriptions. Different types of research to evaluate recently implemented models of direct social service provision in Ukraine are required. These researches should be aimed at the analysis of social agencies organization and functions, and roles of direct social workers with different types of clients within ATCs. Third, a detailed analysis of the types of competencies of social workers engaged in community social service delivery should be held. And, finally, the types of social services provided within the local community in Ukraine should be reviewed.

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