

Assisting families at Risk of Poverty in the Context of Social Services

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Abstract:

Objective: The aim of the research was to identify forms of assistance and use of Social Services by people from families at risk of poverty.

Design: Quantitative Research.

Participants: The characteristic sample group was a target group of adults (18 years and over) in the Czech Republic in the capital city of

Prague. Research centers have been deliberately chosen for the Social Services Centers: the Salvation Army Day Center in Tusar Street; the Day Center of the Archdiocesan Charity in Prague 8 Pernerova Street; the Non-Profit Organization of Hope in Prague 2 U Bulhara Street. Altogether, 300 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, of which 253 questionnaires were correctly filled. The sample comprised 253 respondents (51 women and 202 men).

Methods: The research was conducted in the winter months 2016-2017 through a questionnaire survey. The results were evaluated by statistical evaluation of the chi-square of the test with 95% confidence and dependence was verified by the Pearson Contingency Coefficient.

Results: The tables show that the availability of assistance to families at risk of poverty in Social Services is sufficient within 60 years. It can be said that the ignorance of young families at risk of poverty which do not know of the available Social Services, plays an important role.

Conclusion: Research shows that mutual assistance and cooperation between Social Services and the availability of information, programs on existing services for families at risk of poverty are very important in this area.

Introduction

The issue of families at risk of poverty is the result of many influences and areas and it is a complicated, internally differentiated social, political, economic, health, legal and security issue (Arndt, Tarp, 2017). It turns out that the complex work with families at risk of poverty requires the simultaneous use of a number of other services and work areas that are not mentioned in the Social Services Act but are necessary to work with these families. The aim is to identify the forms of assistance and the use of Social Services by persons from families at risk of poverty, with their help, offer a possible supplement or extension of these services (Matousek, Kolackova, Kodymova, 2010). It is also necessary to describe the most common causes of the family at risk of poverty and prevention, which is not yet a strategy for us. However, poverty prevention is more effective and financially less demanding than family consequences. Social Services represent a clear and legal offer to address the social exclusion of families at risk of

poverty (Mares, 1999). Social Service providers must offer their services primarily in the context of current social policy. Loss from family breakdown, loss of employment or housing is often the culmination of the complex life situation of a person and a direct reaction to the fact that this situation or a certain phase of life has not been dealt with. The theme is the challenge and the moral duty of society to seek answers to the theoretical and practical questions to help threatened families (Matousek *et al.*, 2011).

Methods

The research was conducted from December 2016 to February 2017 through a questionnaire survey. The basic set was made up of adults - individuals from families at risk of poverty (18 years or more) in the capital city of Prague by means of deliberate choice (Fejtkova, 2017). The following centers of Social Services in Prague were used for research: the Salvation Army Day Center

in Tusar Street; the Day Center of the Archdiocesan Charity in Prague 8 in Pernerova Street; the Non-Profit Organization of Hope in Prague 2 U Bulhara Street. Altogether 300 questionnaires were distributed, of which 253 were filled in correctly (84.3%). The questionnaire contained a total of 30 questions to identify goals, research questions and hypotheses. The quantitative research used, helped to obtain data that meets the criteria of validity and reliability. Results were

Results

From Pivotaltable 1 it is clear that the length of stay of families at risk of poverty in Social Services is not influenced by the education of the respondent. Statistical test value = 31.4 with 20 degrees of freedom. The value of the Pearson Contingency Coefficient is 0.2198. Dependence is considered to be stronger when the coefficient value is closer to one. It can therefore be said that this is a weak association.

Pivotaltable 1: Calculation of the hypothetical relative frequency of length of the vulnerable person by poverty.

Education	How long have you been a person at risk of poverty?						
	0-1	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20 years	Total
Elementary School	18,4	45,2	41,0	21,0	3,2	4,2	133
Taught without leaving examination	10,4	25,5	23,1	11,9	1,8	2,4	75
Secondary school with GCSE	5,7	13,9	12,6	6,5	1,0	1,3	41
Higher vocational school	0,1	1,0	0,9	0,5	0,1	0,1	3
College	0,1	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,0	0,0	1
Total	35	86	78	40	6	8	253

processed using pivot tables and chi-square of the independence test ($\alpha = 0.95$) with 95% confidence. Dependence was verified using the Pearson Contingency Coefficient. The results of the work were compared with related research in the Czech Republic and abroad.

From Pivotaltable 2, it is clear that under the age of 60 there is sufficient availability of assistance and social care for people at risk of poverty. It can be said that the ignorance of young families who do not know about

Pivotaltable 2: Calculation of the hypothetical relative frequency of availability of social care provision.

Age	What is the availability of social care provision?			Total
	Sufficient	Inadequate	I do not know	
Up to 20 years including	20,3	6,3	3,4	30
21-30	31,8	9,8	5,4	47
31-40	39,9	12,4	6,8	59
41-60	71,0	22,0	12,0	105
61 & over	8,1	2,5	1,4	12
Total	171	53	29	253

the available Social Services plays an important role. The value of the Pearson Contingency Coefficient is 0.2786. Dependence is considered to be stronger when the coefficient value is closer to one. It can therefore be said that this is a weak association.

Discussion

According to the survey, 78.7% of respondents are provided with adequate Social Services; 23% of respondents do not have a Social Service offer and 12.3% of respondents have no opinion on the question (Dovidio *et al.*, 2006). In the case of proposals for improvement of provided Social Services, less than 20% of housing assistance in the case of families at risk of poverty, which needed Social Services with respect to their age and health, expressed 15.4% better access; 14.6% of the interviewed respondents would welcome the therapeutic services; less than 14% of respondents reported 12.3% improvement in Health Care and 9.9% legal counseling (Matousek *et al.*, 2017). As shown by the research, the capacity of Social Services is sufficient for 64% of respondents, insufficient for 25.3% and less than 11% of respondents did not have their own opinion on the question. From the results of these frequencies, it is clear that in almost 40% of respondents divorce was the cause of poverty, 26.1% of respondents declared a job loss; 12.6% came to this situation by mistake (gambling, alcohol, drugs); 9% for reasons of health; 4.7% reported the cause of release from prison; 9 respondents (3.6%) were the cause of the loss of housing (Kaduschin, Harkness, 2002). Other reasons were reported by 5.1% of respondents, i.e. debt, widowhood, violence and abuse in relation to their partnership or their own decision. From the above results, it can be stated that loss of employment is the second most serious cause. As can be seen, most respondents had basic education, which was

52.6% of the total number of respondents. The second most frequent group was the unemployed, who accounted for 29.6% of the total number of respondents. Secondary school with graduation was 16.2%, and the higher vocational school with the highest education was the smallest group (1.6%). It is given that people with lower education are more likely to be more vulnerable than those with higher education (Rist *et al.*, 2017). The response of respondents to the question of what is important in their lives is that 37.2% indicate the importance of the family; 20.6% of respondents said that alcohol and drugs are important for them; 11.9% housing; 11.5% of employment (Koukolik, Drtilova, 2001). Other causes were 4.7% money; leisure time; gambling. It is clear from the results that 69.9% of the total number of respondents expressed a positive opinion on the reintegration of vulnerable families through Social Services into society. 47% of respondents expressed a very positive opinion; 12.6% expressed a negative opinion; 17.4% did not have a clear opinion on the issue.

Conclusion

Poverty is often the result of a person's difficult life situation and a direct response to inability to handle this situation. As a result of research, one of the main reasons is family breakdown and another factor is the loss of employment. People suffer greatly from psychological and somatic diseases, and many people have health complications and should therefore work to restore social skills. Social Services, Social Counseling and Therapy are important for families at risk of poverty and in an unfavorable social situation, but interpersonal relationships have irreplaceable living values. Addressing this problem is important for interconnection and cooperation between services

at all levels, as the issue of helping families at risk of poverty is interdisciplinary and requires the involvement of multiple areas and a functional social policy.

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