

KONEČNÝ STANISLAV - JAROSLAVA SZÜDI, GÁBOR SZÜDI: SOCIÁLNE SLUŽBY V PÔSOBNOSTI OBCÍ - INŠTITUCIONÁLNY VÝVOJ NA SLOVENSKU

Praha: Wolters Klower, 2016. p. 104

The publication: *Social services within the competence of municipalities – institutional development in Slovakia* has been compiled by Stanislav Konečný, currently working at the Faculty of Public Administration, UPJŠ in Kočice. The collective of authors further consists of the following authors: Jaroslava Szüdi and Gábor Szüdi, employed by the Faculty of National Economy, EU in Bratislava. The book was published in 2016 as a part of a project Vega 1/0216/14 – Transformation of Social Care Services for the Elderly in Slovakia within the context of deinstitutionalisation of social services for the elderly in the competence of local self-government authorities.

The publication provides a complete picture about development of social services in the competence of municipalities in Slovakia. The authors have chosen a holistic approach - from historical perspective until current solutions of social policy in the territory of the Slovak Republic. In terms of content, the publication is divided into four subsequent chapters, further divided into relevant sub-chapters. Within the conclusion of the publication the authors present summary of the attained knowledge from the area of social services in the competence of local self-governments.

It is possible to state that the monograph brings an important all-society topic. Currently, social services in the Slovak republic since 2009 have been provided in accordance with the Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services, entered into force on 1 January 2009. The main goal of the social services is the support of social integration of the citizens and meeting the needs of people in an unfavourable social situation. It is necessary to note that social services, or social support go into the far past and represent a very wide area of supporting citizens.

The publication starts with a detailed characteristics of origins of participation of municipalities in the social area in the territory of Slovakia. Formation of a class of the urban poor was a reason to form a so-called domicile law, through which the municipality was obliged to help its poor. Within this context, the authors describe municipalities and the domicile law, as well as social support and poverty care. They comprehensively explain the character of the poverty care in the system of the Ugrian legislation, the obligations of a municipality to provide social support in accordance with specific conditions laid down in Article 21/1898 (e.g. stating obligations of the municipalities to nurse for the sick). In the first chapter, the authors stress that the system of public (health care) services reacted to first seeds of social state creation in the Kingdom of Hungary, mainly after constitution of

Austria-Hungary, by forming two above mentioned complementing institutes – domicile jurisdiction and poverty care. They assert that both institutions were far from perfect but they consider entrusting the municipality with original responsibility for the poverty care, including the establishment of procedural and economic side of the poverty care, a good basis for further communal social policy formation.

After completing the first chapter, the authors logically resume the second chapter of the publication. They inform the reader about an issue concerning the competences of municipalities in social area in the territory of Slovakia in the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic. Within this context, the authors have succeeded in suitably summarizing information about the given topic. Within the second chapter they have clarified the status of a municipality, the content of the poverty care and responsibilities of a municipality with assessing entitlement, scope and form of poverty care social support and its consequent financing. Concurrently, they inform the reader about the reasons of poverty and a subsequent alternative of solving an unfavourable social situation of the citizens in that time period. In the conclusion of the second chapter, the summarizing characteristics of the competence of municipalities in the period of first Czechoslovak Republic are given in six points. In this chapter we can find interestingly developed tables representing authors' own calculations showing e.g. a size structure of municipalities in the CSR in 1919.

Extensive and highly informative third chapter deals with an issue of communal social policy in 1950s to 1980s. The authors have divided the above mentioned chapter into five sub-chapters. The reader receives clear information about the development of communal policy throughout the following periods: period of years 1948–1953, period of years 1954-1956, period of years 1957-1964, period of years 1965-1975 and period of years 1976-1988. In the beginning of the chapter the authors state that, compared to the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic, a wide range of significant changes had occurred in the post-war time in our country, in the system of social policy as well as in the public administration system, or communal policy. In both these areas, mainly a change in the overall vision about a character of society was reflected. Considering the above mentioned, the authors have paid sufficient attention to and, at the same time, have informed the reader about the development of communal social policy in the particular time horizons. The topic of the formation of national committees is suitably handled in the context of relevant laws, as well as its development with following amendments, while adequately analysing individual provisions of the law. Similarly, the reader is being informed about the extinguishment of the domicile law. The authors pay considerable attention to the Act on national insurance which represented the most significant change in social legislation, as it governed the topic of sickness and pension insurance practically for all citizens.

In connection with the above mentioned Act on national committees, the authors address the social security Act. They have cumulatively elaborated the subject of the adoption of the Act on social security that started the series of four acts with the same title (No. 55/1956 Coll., No. 101/1964 Coll., No. 121/1975 Coll., No. 100/1988 Coll.) The authors illustrate the cross-section of its legislative definition, analyse the system of social security within the context of its individual changes, or amendments of the social security Act. As stated in the publication, the mentioned Acts *“shaped social policy in our country from the half of the 50s factually until the 90s from the point of view of the competences of municipalities, or national committees, as well as the communal social policy.”*

In the beginning of the last chapter, the authors address the subject of decentralization of public administration and transformation of the social sphere after 1989. They pay attention to the baseline situation in the status of municipalities, starting point in social policy as well as communal social policy, concretely for the period of years 1989-1992. They introduce a document: “Proposal for the Reform of National Committees and Local State Administration”, and also the objectives of the reform and consequential steps of the Government within the process of the reform of national committees and local state administration. New characteristics of local administration during the period of 1993-2003 are being clarified. Within the division of public administration into state administration and territorial self-administration, the authors pay attention to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, namely the Title four, on the basis of which they inform the reader about the status of a municipality, the rights of a municipality, ways of realizing self-administration through inhabitants’ assemblies etc. At the same time, the authors have clarified new characteristics of social policy, a so-called social security system, or its transformation to a three-pillar system of social protection. Similarly, they pay attention to new characteristics of communal social policy within the context of the Act No. 416/2001 Coll. on the transfer of certain competencies of state administration bodies to municipalities and higher territorial units. They proceed to 2004, where a considerable part is dedicated to a reform of social services, transformation and deinstitutionalisation of social services, their reasons and frameworks. Within the publication, the authors analyse the Act No. 448/2008 on social services in the context of its amendments, although they have not captured all its significant changes in accordance with the amendments. In the conclusion, the information concerning financing and assuring sustainability of deinstitutionalisation of social services is being given.

It could be stated that the monograph not only attracts the reader’s interest but also clarifies the view of institutional development of social services in the competence of municipalities in Slovakia. The publication holistically captures important facts about the formation of communal social policy from past till present. We think that the monograph brings an indisputable contribution to the

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academia in the system of education, for people working in the social sphere, as well as the public interested in the developments in communal social policy within the conditions of the Slovak Republic.

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