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Implementation of Monitoring, Evaluation and Supervision for More Quality Social Service in the System of Social Protection of the Republic of Macedonia

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Abstract

The need for implementation of monitoring, evaluation and supervision in the system of social protection, in fact, stems from the need to modernise the organisation and work methodology of the providers. Service providers are often required or given support in developing ways to monitor the services provided (monitoring) and in the assessment and evaluation of the results of those services (evaluation). Supervision focuses on the fact how the work is done to quantitatively and qualitatively acceptable level. The following have been defined as research priorities in this area: the impact of monitoring, evaluation and supervision for better social service and determining the status for their application in institutions of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia. This paper explains its three components (areas):

monitoring, evaluation and supervision in the social work. The objectives of their implementation are the welfare of the beneficiary, improving the quality of work and professional development of professional workers through the preservation and development of professional standards and the standards of a given service.

Keywords: monitoring, evaluation, supervision, social work

Introduction

Social care is an organised network of institutional and non-institutional facilities designed to meet the needs of citizens. The reforms that are taking place in social protection are influenced by modern trends in social work, expressed through

decentralization, de-institutionalization, pluralism, strengthening of civil society and the possibility of providing private services, affecting and enriching the content of social work. These change the relationship to the client's position and improve the professionalism of social worker.

Social work has its application in various areas, but when it comes to social work in the Republic of Macedonia and beyond, it is often understood as social protection, an area in which the social work is formed and has the oldest tradition. Hence the most frequently used working method is social work with an individual and family. Also in the literature, the social protection is often pointed out as a primary social work, therefore when talking about social work, primarily meant is the area of social protection and the mention working method.

One of the primary goals of the reform in social protection in the Republic of Macedonia is introducing the quality system, in terms of monitoring, evaluation and supervision, and any authorised service provider is obliged to ensure their implementation. The goal is to provide quality services by preserving and developing professional standards and the standards of a given service.

The need to implement monitoring, evaluation and supervision in the system of social protection actually comes from the need to modernise the organisation and methodology of the service providers, as well as the needs of professionals who daily face complex life problems of their clients.

Monitoring and Evaluation in the Social Work

Monitoring and evaluation are procedures that ensure the highest possible level of service quality. The term "monitoring" means procedure of identifying what happens in the process of service provision: fairness of requested actions, consistency and continuity of the requirements, level of meeting minimum standards. Namely, the monitoring includes activities for monitoring and surveillance of the services foreseen in the individual action plan, developed together with the client. Also the dynamics of work is monitored, respect of deadlines and other terms of the planned activities. In fact, the monitoring is mostly implemented according to pre-defined plan, and only in exceptional circumstances an extraordinary monitoring can be done. (Spooner, McDermott, 2008) Monitoring also involves systematic and regular data collection in the process of providing services, to prepare the "ground" for adequate evaluation.

The evaluation is a procedure to assess the results from the service provided: the extent to which the service contributed to maintain or improve the quality of life of the beneficiary, the extent to which level beneficiary is maintained or improved with the service, the level of client satisfaction with the service. (Spooner, McDermott, 2008; Čuk, 2009)

The evaluation is not only a final assessment of the service, it can be an assessment of all phases of the planning and provision of social services or the activities undertaken with the predetermined criteria or standards. It is an assessment of the results of the previously projected and planned activities of an individual, group or institution. Therefore, the evaluation is an important element in the choice of methods of work, as well as in the building of a strategy to achieve the final goal. It may be internal or external. The internal evaluation makes self-assessment, who I am, what I am doing, with whom I work, how I act, how the others see me, in which institutional frameworks I act, and external evaluation refers to who is assessed, what is assessed, why is assessed, how is assessed, time when assessment is done and assessment results. (Donevska, 2014: 189)

Namely, if the monitoring is designed to monitor the process of service delivery, the evaluation is geared towards what results, i. e. effects the service provides. Monitoring and evaluation are activities that can equally be used, whereby one procedure does not exclude the other. The manner of their implementation depends on: the group of beneficiaries, their number and their potentials, resources available to the service provider to conduct the evaluation, the complexity of the information required during evaluation. The service provider chooses how to conduct monitoring.

Supervision in the Social Work

Supervision as a method of learning the professional knowledge in the area of social work began to develop in the USA in the late 19th century. It is related to the actions of Mary Richmond, who first used the term "supervision" when trying to organize a charitable social work. The word "supervision" derives from the Latin words "super" (above) and "videre" (to observe, to see). Hence, the supervisor is defined as an observer or a person who supervises the work of someone else in relation to the way it was done and in terms of how much is done. The supervision is interested in how the work is done to quantitatively and qualitatively acceptable level. In the beginning of social work, supervision was aimed at organizational supervision and control of social work. According to some authors supervision refers to inspection and audit of programs and the work of institutions, and rarely the work of individuals within programs. (Kadushin, Harkness, 2014)

The objective of supervision is to provide quality work, adequate organizational structure, and professional development of social workers and increase their competences. The supervision is conducted by a professional, trained for this type of work. Hence, the supervision is aimed at: the protection of the interests of the beneficiary, respect of the standards and procedures, promotion of professional and quality work, personal and professional advancement of experts through continuous learning, encouraging and strengthening the professional staff to take responsibility for their work and decisions, prevention of professional stress and burn out. Supervision is a process that ensures effective review of practical work, or its

outcome, and preservation and promotion of professional and organizational quality standards. (Dimitrijoska, 2011/2012; Kadushin, Harkness, 2014)

Supervision is divided into internal and external supervision. During internal supervision, supervisory process is implemented continuously in the organisation of the authorised service provider. A professional – supervisor can be employed for its implementation or the task can be assigned to some of the employed professionals, who among other jobs, part of the time will work as a supervisor. The person should have the necessary knowledge and skills, know supervision methods and techniques, and possess appropriate moral qualities. The external supervision means hiring supervisors outside the organization of authorized service provider. When engaging an external supervisor, it is required to make an agreement for the implementation of supervision, as well as for the mutual obligations. (Kadushin, Harkness, 2014; Dimitrijoska, 2011/2012)

Depending on the number of people the supervisor works with, the supervision may be *individual* or *group*. In the individual supervision the supervisor works with one person that is supervised. The purpose of individual supervision is to monitor and protect the quality of work as well as assistance in overcoming the problems and difficulties in the work. Also, individual supervision should encourage the professional development of the supervised worker and strengthen his personal and professional competencies. Group supervision takes place in a group of supervised people, whereas the mutual interaction of the group and the supervisor creates a good foundation for their self-understanding as professionals, their core values and core services they provide. In the group process, interaction and exchange of experiences are essential factors for progress of each individual member, and the group as a whole. The purpose of group supervision is to help group members to recognize and integrate all the factors that affect their professional work, and thus to strengthen and develop their personal and professional competencies. The work group allows interaction between group members, exchange of experiences and mutual support. (Dimitrijoska, 2011/2012; Kadushin, Harkness, 2014)

The supervision has three main functions: *administrative, educational and supportive*:

Administrative function means introducing and maintaining new/good standards in the work, coordination and harmonisation of the practice and administrative procedures and ensuring efficiency in the work;

Educational function means stimulating the educational development of each engaged worker with an aim to raise the awareness for the importance of continuous learning and advancement;

Supportive function means maintaining harmonious working relations, both with the beneficiaries and colleagues, and support to the supervised service providers

who work on complex problems of the beneficiary. (Kadushin, Harkness, 2014; Dimitrijoska, 2011/2012)

The Situation in the Republic of Macedonia with the Application of Monitoring, Evaluation and Supervision

In the Republic of Macedonia, monitoring and evaluation of services in the social protection system are applied occasionally and supervision has not yet been applied but the Institute for Social Affairs performs surveillance of the professional work and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy performs inspection.

According to the Law on Social Protection (2013) surveillance of professional work in the Republic of Macedonia of the institution for social protection and their employees, as well as over other legal or natural person who performs work in social protection, is performed by the Institute of Social Affairs. The surveillance is a legally regulated procedure of external control of the institution's work in the area of social and family legal protection. The surveillance of the professional work is performed for observation, monitoring, control, insight and improvement of the manner and quality of professional work and efficiency in performing the functions of social protection institutions established by this law and other regulations. The surveillance of the professional work provides expert assistance in the work of social protection institutions and the employees. Also, according to the Law on Social Protection (2013), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy performs inspection over the implementation and enforcement of laws and other regulations in the field of social protection over social protection institutions, other legal and natural persons who perform certain works of social protection as a professional activity.

The theoretical conclusion is confirmed by a research conducted in 2014, as part of the doctoral dissertation "Ethical profile of the social worker and modern trends in social work"¹ which analysed the use and importance of monitoring, evaluation and supervision as reforms in the system of social protection for better social service.

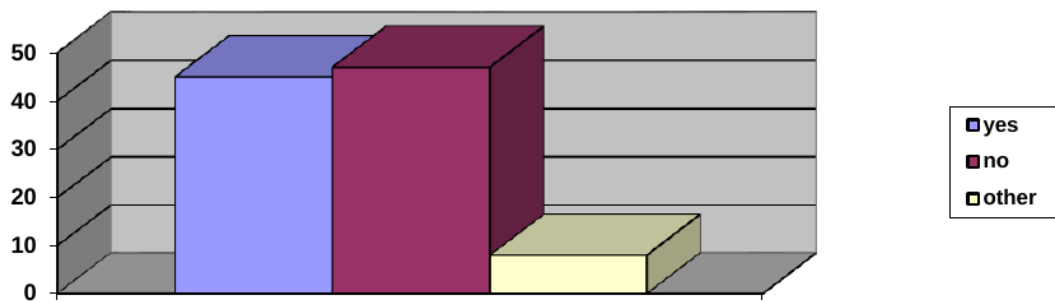
Combined qualitative-quantitative methodology was applied. The research method is exploratory, and in that context, the applied research techniques were: survey questionnaire, interview and content analysis. Data processing used mainly statistical methods, while analytic-synthetic method, comparative method and the method of generalisation were used in the theoretical analysis. Social workers were included in the research as research unit. The research sample has been combined with intended and random choice. The research was conducted in in eight towns in the Republic of Macedonia, considered to be typical representatives of the basic regions (Eastern, Western, Central and the City of Skopje) – Skopje, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, Veles, Kumanovo, Ohrid and Strumica, which represents an intended sample of territorial units and then a total of 100 social workers were chosen at random (from all eight municipalities), employed in public social institutions, and they represent the final sample that was surveyed. The choice in these towns for the

survey was designed to cover all the regions of the Republic of Macedonia and include the larger Centres for social work. Also, expert interviews were conducted with employees of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Institute for Social Affairs and the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy. Interviewed employees were selected at random, and a random sample was institutions that employ interviewed.

Following the analysis and comparison of theoretical scientific materials, legislation and survey results, it can be concluded that they largely coincide, and baseline assumptions are confirmed. Namely, from the conducted research, it can be concluded that the research results fully confirm the hypothesis that modern trends affect the reforms in the social protection system of the Republic of Macedonia.

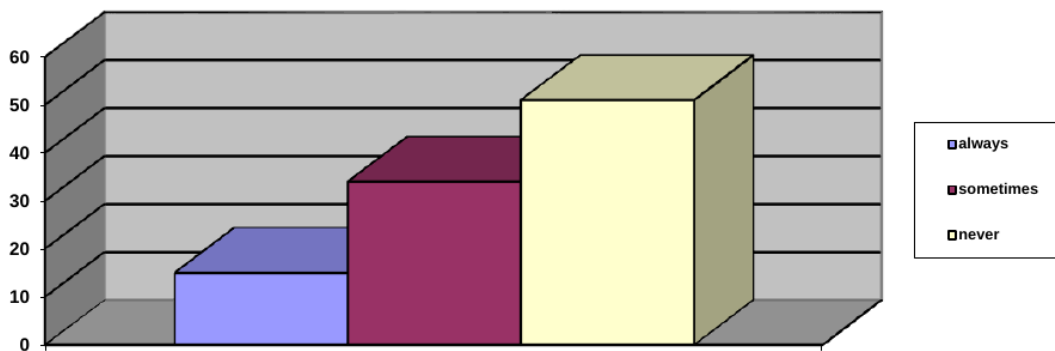
The purpose of the questions in this section is to get knowledge about the changes happening in the public social institutions under influence of the modern trends.

Chart no. 1 Answers of the social workers on the implementation of monitoring and evaluation



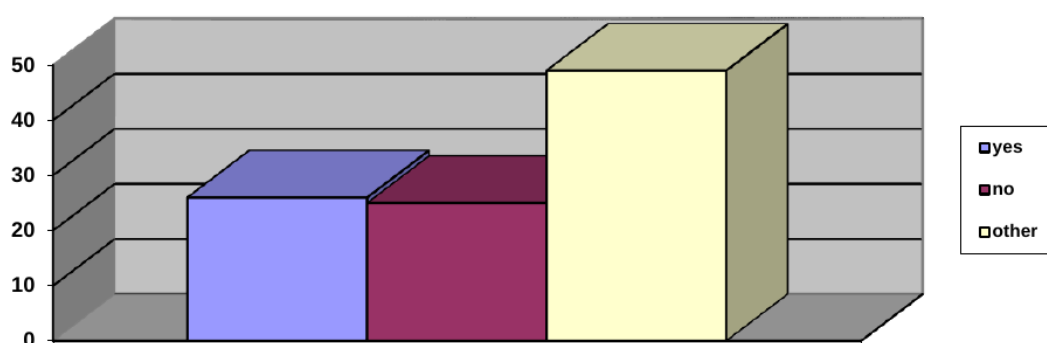
From the results it can be concluded that there is almost an equal number of social workers (45) that perform monitoring and evaluation and those who do not perform monitoring and evaluation of their activities (47), while 8 respondents had no answer to the question.

Chart no. 2 Answers of the social workers on the implementation of supervision



From the data in Chart 2 it can be concluded that the implementation of supervision is not a regular practice in the work of social workers. The majority of social workers (51) said that supervision was never conducted, for 34 social workers it is conducted sometimes and only 15 respondents shared the opinion that supervision is a regular practice, further emphasizing the professional and inspection supervision.

Chart no. 3 Answers of the social workers on external or internal supervision



Most social workers (57) believe that no one performs supervision, because it is not implemented in CSW. 26 respondents think that it is conducted by an external party (social inspection and surveillance of operations), and for 25 respondents supervision is carried out by internal person (that is, person in charge of internal control in operation).

Interviewed experts when asked about the impact and implementation of monitoring, evaluation and supervision in social work emphasize the following:

By increasing the degree of harmonisation of social work with the approach and methods used in developed EU member states and other countries, monitoring and evaluation are imposed as an essential part of social work in case management. The interviewees recognise the monitoring and evaluation as useful, but believe that with the current way of working with professional teams still there is no real, and legal need to implement them. The same view is shared in terms of supervision, which is expected to be implemented in accordance with current and specific needs, plans and legal obligations arising from the new way of working - case management.

Conclusion

The analysis and comparison of theoretical scientific materials, legislation and research results lead to the conclusion that in the practice of social workers monitoring and evaluation of the work are partially implemented, while the supervision has not yet been organised, and much of the social workers confuse professional surveillance by the Institute for Social Affairs and inspection of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and believe they have a supervision over their work. It also imposes a need for organising additional education through which

social workers would be able to keep up with modern developments and trends, to renew the gained knowledge as well as get more information on new developments in social work.

It should be noted that the supervision, monitoring and evaluation as well as the surveillance, besides the different way of realisation and applied methodology, have a common purpose, aimed at improving the quality of work, professional development experts, and are aimed at protecting best interests and welfare of the service beneficiary.

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Notes

1. The research was conducted as a part of the doctoral dissertation "Ethical profile of the social worker and modern trends in the social work"¹ of Biljana Nackovska – Veljkovikj, defended on 29.02.2016 at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje.