**The Historical Development of Volunteering and its Influence on the Professionalization of Social Work in the Czech Republic in the 1990s**

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**Extended abstract**

Social work is a field without which we could not imagine key public services today. According to Jones (2013), social work is an unquestioned part of the European social model. In post-communist countries in the 1990s, the primary focus was on restoring the professional status of social work, reforming existing services and filling in the missing services. The carriers of innovation in this sector were mainly non-governmental non-profit organizations and churches, of which volunteering was an inherent part (Lorenz, Havrdová, & Matoušek, 2020). Thus, this research focuses on the evolution of the relationship between volunteering and the professionalization of social work - mapping how volunteering gradually contributed to the emergence of professional standards and methods that define the field of social work today in the Czech Republic during the 1990s.

At the same time, the mutual influence of this voluntary and professional spheres can be observed throughout history, particularly in the area of values, approach to clients or adaptation to the context of the times. The time frame of the research is directed to the 1990s because of the mapping of one of its biggest transformations in history, i.e. in terms of legislation, Act No. 83/1990 Coll., on the association of citizens, was adopted, which was followed by further legislative steps during the 1990s, i.e. Act No. 308/19991 Coll, No. 308/1995 Coll., on freedom of religious belief and the status of churches and religious societies, Act No. 248/1995 Coll., on public benefit societies, and Act No. 227/1997 Coll., on foundations and endowment funds. The amendments to the Civil Code concerning interest associations cannot be overlooked either. At the beginning of the 1990s, a new type of volunteer management also emerged, in which, according to the author Frič (2011), authentic volunteer activity was developed on a professional basis. The author highlights just as a typical example of this issue the professionalization in volunteering in the fields of social and health care. A major breakthrough in the context of volunteering also occurred in the late 1990s, specifically in 1999, with the establishment of the first volunteer centre in the Czech Republic, HESTIA, which professionally deals with management, education and research in volunteering (Tošner, 2008). The research will draw mainly on contemporary literature and archival materials (contemporary documents) from the National Archives of the Czech Republic (the fund of social welfare, development of non-profit organizations and documentation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), the Ostrava City Archives and the Zemský archiv in Opava.

Historically, volunteering has always been an important part of social work, although not in the way we know it today. According to legislation, the beginning of formal volunteering dates back to the 19th century, when volunteering in the charitable sector was regulated by a Reich law. Frič and Pospíšilová (2010) divide the development of volunteering from a historical perspective into three stages - before the Second World War, during the totalitarian regime and after 1989, which are the focus of this research. The historical development of volunteering in social work is very thematically extensive, so it is important to establish the basic pillars for presenting the relationship between volunteering and professionalization in social work during the 1990s. These include the areas of training, funding, the role and status of the volunteer in social work, the development of the relationship of professional social workers working with volunteers and influencing the quality of social services.

The first area mentioned is the need for education. Education has historically been one of the first steps towards professionalising social work and distinguishing it from voluntary work. Already Alice Guarrigue Masaryk was of the opinion that *"charity is always more or less personal. It is usually a voluntary donation which gives the donor a pleasant sense of merit and sometimes almost exaltation. Social work, on the other hand, presupposes a theoretical knowledge of the organization and development of society, and seeks the causes of unhealthy social phenomena while at the same time eliminating them"* (Third Annual Report of the Girls' Lyceum, Prague, 1914, pp. 5-9). Thus, the practice of volunteering in general does not imply the need for specific training or experience with the target group, as opposed to professional social work, which should be supported by appropriate education (Witkowska-Paleń, 2012). During the 1990s, changes in the approach to volunteer education took place, culminating, see above, in the establishment of a volunteer centre focusing on the professional training of volunteers. In his 2011 article, Frič points out the consequence of the growing need for volunteer training, namely the high qualification of volunteers and the associated change in role from 'paid staff assistant' to 'expert and partner'.

The role of the volunteer naturally changed throughout the 20th century. In particular, however, it is important to note the change in the relationship between volunteers and professional social workers. According to McCurley and Lynch (2006), the pattern of volunteer participation in social work has gradually changed over time. The roles of both these actors are clearly defined by Toshner and Sozanska (2002), with the social worker being a professional with formal qualifications to practice their profession, as opposed to the volunteer who works mainly on the basis of motivation and willingness to give their time. However, an interesting change that began with the development of volunteer education in the 1990s is that volunteers' willingness to participate is more dependent on their personal interests and needs and less on traditional values. Frič (2011) describes a clear change in the roles of volunteers - they demand freedom of choice in what they will do and prefer tasks leading to tangible results. The author also foresees a continuation of this trend and social work organisations will need to find solutions to reconcile volunteers' demands for greater freedom with professional demands for control (Frič, 2011). The threat of deprofessionalisation of social work arises here too.

The obvious and well-known reason for using volunteers is that it is a cost-effective way of providing social services. However, this does not mean that volunteering is free, which needs to be reflected. There are transaction costs for the volunteer (e.g., commuting time to and from the organization, transportation costs) and for the organization (e.g., recruitment, training, screening, managing volunteers) (Freeman, 1997). However, volunteering differs from paid work primarily in that it is an act of free will that is not dependent on the expectation of monetary rewards (Bonjean, Markham, & Macken, 1994). Most studies and research on the interchangeability of paid work and volunteering are relatively recent and relatively limited in scope. In many cases, budget cuts are forcing organizations to replace paid workers with volunteers (Liao-Troth, 1999), again a threat leading to the deprofessionalization of the social work field.

The involvement of volunteers in social work also influences the quality of services provided, which is another indicator of professionalism. This aspect has also changed a lot during the 1990s. The authors Vandell and Shumow (1999) saw the involvement of volunteers as an opportunity to improve the quality of services for recipients, and also in part by improving the caregiver/recipient ratio. These combinations allow specific needs to be met that would otherwise be impossible or impracticable (McGonigle, 2002). This has allowed volunteering to become an integral part of professional social work, where it not only complements professional activities but also creates new opportunities to more effectively address the needs of social service clients.

The aim of the research project is to describe and analyse the historical development of volunteering in social work in the context of the professionalisation of social work during the 1990s. The results of the historical research will not only provide a deeper knowledge of the development of volunteering in social work, but will also provide an insight into the development of professionalisation in relation to the aforementioned volunteering.

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The Archives:

National Archives of the Czech Republic - fund of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, fund of the Czech Red Cross

Archive of the Charity of the Czech Republic - records of volunteer help in social services

Ostrava City Archives, Opava Provincial Archives - documents on the activities of local volunteer organizations