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GHEORGHİȚA NISTOR

**FROM PROTECTION
TO SOCIAL WORK
OF FAMILY**
Values and Interventional Strategies



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REFERENȚI ȘTIINȚIFICI:

Conf. univ. dr. Monica Luminița ALEXANDRU, Universitatea din București
Lect. univ. dr. Mirela ANGHEL, Universitatea din București

Redactor: Elena Onea
Tehnoredactor: Marcela Radu
Copertă: Aurelian Leahu



Redacție:
tel.: 0732.320.664
e-mail: editura@prouniversitaria.ro

Editura Pro Universitaria



Librăria UJmag:
tel.: 0733.673.555; 021.312.22.21
e-mail: comenzi@ujmag.ro
ujmag.ro

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INTRODUCTION

Social work as a profession can be approached from several points of view, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and is based on a series of paradigms and scientific researches that reflect the past and concerns towards this field of action. To better understand these concerns, we present the global definition adopted by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) in July 2014: “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

(<https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>)

The actions of social workers are based on a series of *ethical principles* that respect *peace and social justice*, the *rights of all people*, because we cannot build the well-being of communities and society, if we do not support and help those individuals who cannot achieve their own well-being. In other words, development and economic health is approached from the perspective of the direct link with development and social health. Social workers support people in building the environments they want to live in, in finding positive ways to overcome difficulties or crises in their lives. In this sense, we are not discussing charitable actions, but *social policies, social*

protection systems that have the responsibility of building a society based on *social cohesion and inclusion*. Thus, social workers must have that social and professional expertise, based on a series of knowledge and skills to support individuals and communities in building and achieving individual and collective well-being.

Social protection thus becomes an objective of all communities regarding the respect of the rights of all people, regardless of race, nationality, religious beliefs, sex, state of health, sexual orientation, etc.

Social workers support the building of communities through actions that involve social responsibility, co-determination, social change contributing to the improvement of social life and increasing the well-being of as many individuals, families, groups as possible.

CHAPTER I: FROM PROTECTION TO SOCIAL WORK OF FAMILY

1.1. Social work: from acts of charity to professional interventions in the modern period

1.2. The role of social work in social protection systems: welfare and social development

1.3. What needs do we have and how do we ensure them through social work services

1.4. Social work services for family: functions and principles of organization

1.5. The child in difficulty: protective measures and social work. Application: evaluation of the placement measure

1.1. Social work: from acts of charity to professional interventions in the modern period

The beginnings of *social work* in the world are linked to certain charitable actions, which, over time, were institutionalized through a series of legislative acts that legislated this profession. We could say that social work is related to the history of collectivities, of humanity, because there have always been individuals or groups who were in difficulty, unable to manage on their own, unable to meet their basic needs. The causes were different for those individuals or groups, from individual, genetic causes to those related to the natural or social environment in which they lived. In the same way, the members of the communities took care of those who were in difficulty, in poverty or unable to survive; in other words, no type of civilization has been without care and compassion for its citizens.

The emergence of the idea of *collective responsibility* highlighted that the individual rights of each person can be respected and fulfilled only if each of us assumes responsibility for others, for the development of relationships of support and help in the communities of which they belong. Social work will thus place a special emphasis on supporting people's rights and assuming responsibilities in order to achieve *individual and collective well-being*.

Social work as a profession in Romania is related to the School of Sociology from Bucharest, **Dimitrie Gusti**, academician and sociologist, being the one who lays the foundations for the training of specialists and organizes the interventions of practitioners based on sociological research. After the end of the first world war, in 1918 he founded the Association for Science and Social Reform, which will use the results of scientific research in future practical interventions. The year 1929 is a reference year for the training of specialists in social work, because the Higher School of Social Work in Romania "Principesa Ileana" is established, under the coordination of the Romanian Social Institute, recognized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of those times (E. Zamfir 2002, in Pop L., coord.).

These innovative aspects were consistent with concerns at the international level, such as the actions and concerns of **Jane Addams** overseas, in the USA, the first woman who in 1931 received the Nobel Peace Prize. Also, in the USA in 1898 graduated the first degree in social work at Columbia University, specialists who developed social work services in various private and charitable organizations, to meet the needs of those in need (National Association of Social Workers, USA, 2022, <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Facts/Social-Work-History>). J Addams' interventions were aimed at supporting immigrants at the beginning of

the century, by establishing settlement houses in Chicago, respecting the rights of all people, regardless of sex, race, faith or sexual orientation, promoting peace.

Another important name related to the organization of public services was the nurse **Florence Nightingale** (1820 - 1910) in Great Britain, who organized the health service, being also an important statistician for those times. It imposed itself through ambition, altruism and devotion, transformed the hospitals of the 19th century into institutions suitable for the treatment of health problems, imposing certain standards related to specialized staff, hygiene conditions and care of the sick, especially in certain circumstances related to the campaigns military. Due to her dedication and involvement in the British medical care system, the Military Medical Academy and the School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital were established at that time.

(https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Nightingale)

But at the beginning of the 17th century, in England, the law appeared that imposed a "tax for poverty": the "Elizabethan Poor Law", which required the establishment of a fund from the taxes collected from landowners, from which poor people were helped, elderly or people with disabled. We could consider that now the foundations of social work being laid in a first institutionalized form.

Later, at the beginning of the 19th century, insurance-type social protection systems appeared in Germany, England and France, following the model of the social insurance system proposed by Bismarck (E. Zamfir 2002, in Pop L., coord.).

The church had an important role in the evolutionary periods of humanity, being the first institution involved in charitable acts, supporting those in need. Even if there were different forms of helping the poor, in which the church, the community, were involved in supporting those in difficulty, the social work measures were

limited and oriented only on overcoming crises in the lives of individuals, they did not have a preventive character or more, therapeutically, to support the reintegration and participation in social life of those individuals or groups.

As historical periods for the involvement of the church in the territory of our country, we mention the year 1365, the year in which *Radu Basarab*, the re-founder of the city of Campulung Muscel (today), founded the destitute hospice at Mățul de Jos (near Campulung), coming to support people with disabilities (shelter for the blind, lame, crippled and other poor), an institution owned with land and exempted from the taxes of those times. Later, *Neagoe Basarab* recommends to his son Teodosie "that he use the excess wealth to give rest and peace to the poor" (p. 6). In the 16th century in Muntenia, in Bucharest, *Negru Vodă* established certain social work settlements, called "calices" (*calicii* in Romanian language), which were financed from various taxes (divorce, customs collections, "mercy box").

In 1695, the first hospitals, Coltea and Pantelimon, were built, which also had interventions related to the support of the poor, orphans, therefore they also performed social work (in the time of Constantin Brancoveanu and Grigore Ghica). In Moldova, around 1480, the first mentions of social work appear in the time of Ștefan cel Mare/Stefan the Great.

Among the first social work institutions, we can mention the *brefotrophies* (for small abandoned children); *orphanages* (RO - orfanotrofiile), *parthenocomia* (RO - partenocomiile, institutions for young girls who came from poor families) and *ghirocomia* (RO - ghirocomiile, institutions for elderly, single widows). A series of formal relief organizations also appear, such as: the "Manea Brutaru" Asylum (1798), the "Elena Doamna" Asylum (1862), the "St. Ecaterina" (1897), the Society "Cercurile de

gospodine"/ Housewives Clubs (Mănoiu F., Epureanu V., 1996, p. 2-6).

The adoption of the Organic Regulation in 1831 will lead to the emergence of a structured system of social work, and after the union of the Romanian Principates, in 1859, the foundations of interventions at the community level are laid, by assigning responsibilities to services at the level of communes and counties. The appearance of the first laws (*Law on Pensions* in 1912 and *Law on Social Aid Services* in 1931) laid the foundations for a system of benefits and social services for different social categories in difficulty: orphans, people with disabilities, war widows, etc.

The profession of social worker was more and more visible, the specialists being trained at the "*Princess Ileana*" Higher School of Social Work in Romania (1929). The monographic school of sociology from Bucharest, under the guidance of Professor D. Gusti, has made an important contribution to the development of the field.

However, during the communist period, all these aspects are destroyed, the education and training system of social workers being abolished. Only after 1990 is it resumed, and it is reorganized, as we see it today, in the year 2022 (E. Zamfir, p. 122-126, in Pop L, 2022).

After the two world wars, with the emergence of the concepts of *social peace, welfare or the welfare state*, we find the involvement of public institutions and the state in the social security and protection systems to maintain a social balance. The development of a legislative system based on the principle of *social justice*, on the idea that all citizens have equal rights, social work is increasingly found in the promotion and support of these rights. Thus, social work is not a problem influenced by political goodwill, but will become a social necessity for development and social peace.

1.2. The role of social work in social protection systems: welfare and social development

The *International Federation of Social Workers* presents the role and importance of the interventions of social workers by recalling the figures presented in a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2015, where it is stated that more than 73% of the world's population does not benefit from access to social protection systems or access is very limited, leading to extreme poverty and major difficulties in their lives (I.L.O., 2014, World Social Protection Report 2014/15; International Federation of Social Workers; <https://www.ifsw.org/the-role-of-social-work-in-social-protection-systems-the-universal-right-to-social-protection/>). In the following period, progress was made in reducing this percentage, 53.1%, approx. 4.1 billion people still do not have access to social protection systems, as the same organization's report shows. But analyzing by sector, in different regions of the world, the figures show situations with significant gaps between and within these areas: in Europe and Central Asia, the rate of access to social benefits was 83.9%, in Asia and the Pacific - 44, 1%, Arab States - 40% and Africa - 17.4% (ILO; World Social Protection Report 2020-2022, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_817574.pdf). Communities have the responsibility to develop those *systems of protection and social security* that should lead to social cohesion and inclusion, and social workers must possess the professional expertise to work and support people in the process of social change to achieve individual and collective well-being. Through *social policies*, the state can develop those activities, actions, programs in the social field that contribute to the well-being of the individual, group or community. The central

concept that gravitates in these social programs specifically aims at *individual and collective well-being*. Each country establishes its own social policy with certain objectives. "The explicitly declared objective of the social policy of the 20th century is welfare" (T.H. Marshall, 1970, *apud* E. Zamfir, C. Zamfir, coord, 1995, p. 23).

Social policies are part of the public policies carried out by a state, alongside by: economic, fiscal policies, housing policies, foreign policies, etc. "Social policy represents the intervention of the state in the configuration of social processes characteristic of a certain community, with the aim of changing them in a direction considered by political actors: to be desirable. In this way, through own mechanisms of distribution and redistribution of resources existing in the community at a given moment, the achievement of collective well-being is attempted". (E. Zamfir, C. Zamfir, coord, 1995, p. 22).

There is a dynamic of the relationship between social work and social policies in the social protection mechanism in general. In the last decades, specialized literature refers to the field of social work in its relationship with other professions/occupations, as well as its place and role in modern society/community, starting from the models of social policies that support it.

However, considering the controversial debut in Romania of social work as a profession/occupation, it should be mentioned that it helped to solve social problems and developed and adapted continuously to the changes proposed by the new dimensions of needs in their dynamics.

A special emphasis is placed on the model of social policies which, depending on the government of the respective state and the political option, propose specific forms of support in social work as well as different implementation strategies for those social categories

that cannot satisfy their needs. The concept of need is defined in relation to a political model, being central in the sphere of social policy makers. As noted by P. Alcock *et al.*, these needs are measured and evaluated with ideological tools and resources are allocated according to this evaluation. "While markets allocate resources according to demand, social policies are concerned with allocating resources according to needs" (Pete Alcock *et al.*, 2002, p. 158, *apud* E. Zamfir, 1995).

Social work as a profession is oriented towards those vulnerable people, families or social groups, who are in risk situations due to social, economic or cultural, external causes or individual, biological or psychological causes, who fail to satisfy their own needs and have a satisfactory quality of life. These types of causes, which can be grouped into external causes (not related to the individual) and internal causes (individual), determine certain difficulties, conflicting states, frustrations, shortcomings in everyday life and, in social relations, in the process of normal integration in the community (fig. no. 1). At the same time, social work does not only aim at the specialized, professional skills that specialists need to help these vulnerable people, it also requires ensuring a deontological and ethical framework, imposing and respecting the moral values required by practice, with the aim of not to harm the dignity of people and to restore their own capacities, in order to integrate and recover them socially.

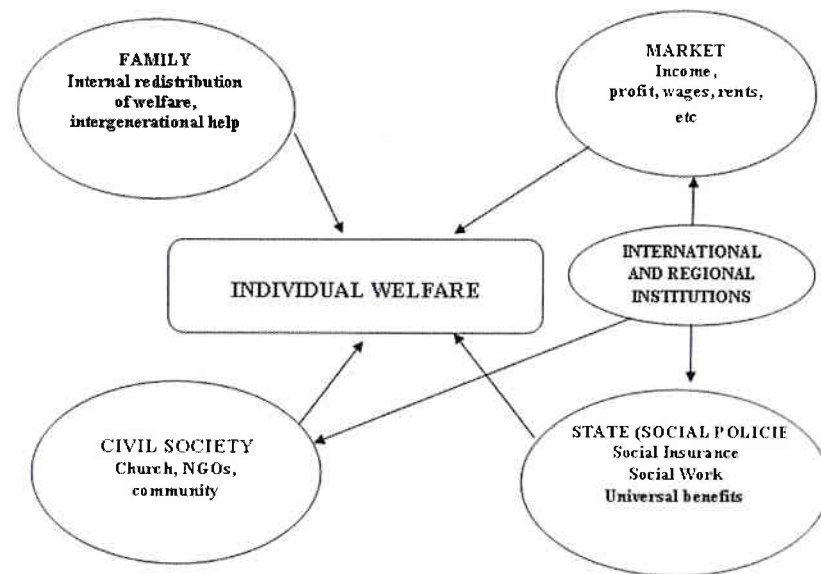


Fig. no. 1: Sources of individual well-being (Source: M Preda, 2002, p.19)

One of the most well-known definitions of social work refers to all the components and necessary elements of the profession and practice in the field.

Definition: "social work is a set of institutions, laws, programs, measures, professionalized activities to protect vulnerable persons, groups, communities, in difficulty due to economic-social, biological, psychological, etc. reasons" (E. Zamfir, 1995, p. 100).

Social work is:

- a universal human right,
- a component of the social protection system,
- implements social assistance programs.

The national social work system has a series of *component elements* aimed at:

- Social work benefits/financial benefits, in money or in kind,