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SOCIAL WORK IN RUSSIA: CHALLENGES DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

Modern social work in Russia is still in a state of development, that means the creation and development of new public institutions, new forms of social work as well as the rules and regulations associated with the providing of social services. The economic crisis became the reason that there are a large number of clients needing in a variety of skilled care in one side, and there is the needs of social work from others side. One of main issues is the creating and controlling the market of certain services provided by the professionals. This process is connected with many significant problems including (1) professional identity of social worker that should be associated with a particular set of functional characteristics and with a sense of belonging to a particular professional group, (2) lack of recruitment in social services, (3) losing self-esteem of professional status of social worker, (4) low social mobility of the professional workers, (5) unsatisfactory level of quality of social services. Social work should be associated with innovative activities designed to benefit society, rather than low-paid non- prestigious occupation The further development of the institute of social work in contemporary Russian society demands changing the relations the between social workers and clients, because now the position of passive client is dominated very strong, but it is the time of recognition of the significant role of clients who appropriated an active position in future work.

In times of crisis there is increasing the role of social partnership in social work, includes authorities, pubic services institutions, education institutions and NGOs. The interaction of social partners depends on the decision of the main tasks of a professional training of highly qualified specialists, competitive and flexible labor market, and the introducing new methods and principles of acting, an improvement of the quality of social services.

Proceeding from the fact that professionalism in social work assumes a high level of knowledge and skills of specialist providing skilled help to people in solving their problems, the special attention should be paid to the specificity of higher education in the field of social work. In contemporary Russia reforming the educational system including higher education in the sphere of social work takes place under pressure first of all of market but not society demands. This situation could be of being harm to not only by professionals but also to society as a whole through low quality services of incompetent staff in the field of social work. Reforming the educational sphere will inevitably affect both social work and society as a whole, since all these elements are interrelated and determine the modernization and transformation of each other; hence the directions of reforming should be determined not by short-term economic benefit and the public interests and benefit to social work clients.