bendruomen s supratimo ir atidumo (jautrumo) vairioms kult rin ms perspektyvoms.

2. Kai atsiranda rizika individui ar grupei individ , ginant vis interesus prioritetiškai privalo b ti gerbiamos žmogaus teis s.

3. Socialiniai darbuotojai su kitomis profesin mis agent romis ir valdybomis atsako už vaik ir suaugusi j išnaudojimo identifikavim ir prevencij .

4. Vyriausyb s, paslaug žmon ms profesionalai, skaitant profesional socialin darb ir savanorišk darb , taip pat darbinimo agent ros privalo kartu pad ti bendruomenei ir skatinti socialin vienyb ir efektyvias paslaugas individams ir bendruomen ms.

5. Socialinis darbas turi b ti dirbamas gerbiant bendruomen s ir kult ros tradicijas, taip pat paslaug vartotoj teises ir norus.

6. Etikos kodeksai ir socialini darbuotoj ir agent r elgesys yra pagrindas efektyviai socialinio darbo praktikai ir norint užtikrinti pagarb žmogui.

7. Agent ros yra atsakingos už paslaug ir kokyb s standartus, kurie atsižvelgia vartotoj poreikius ir l kes ius, etikos principus, profesinius tikslus ir naudingum bei atsiperkamum . Šie standartai turi apibr žti atliekant tyrimus, taip pat turi b ti aišk s ir

reguliariai tikrinami. Socialiniai darbuotojai turi b ti traukti ši standart nustatym ir tikrinim .

8. Pirminis išsilavinimas ir profesionalus mokymas privalo b ti dalis t stinio mokymosi, skaitant mokym si vis gyvenim ir aukštesn išsilavinim .

9. Socialini darbuotoj mokymas turi apimti socialinio darbo mokytojus, praktikus ir vartotojus. Aukštojo išsilavinimo institucij socialinio darbo praktikos mokytojai privalo patys tur ti socialinio darbo praktikos patirties.

10. Socialinio darbo pl tros pagrindas yra tyrimai. Visi socialinio darbo praktikai privalo suprasti tyrim panaudojimo galimybes, sugeb ti paaiškinti j naud , taip pat tur ti galimybi j imtis ar juose dalyvauti.

11. Agent ros, atliekan ios socialin darb , privalo remti šiuos principus kurdamas atvir darbui aplink , nuolat žinoti tyrimo rezultatus, paslaug vartotoj poži r ir socialini darbuotoj patirt .

12. Socialini darbuotoj darbo aplinka privalo remti etikos princip ir geros praktikos gyvendinim .

13. Socialiniai darbuotojai turi tur ti profesinio tobul jimo galimybi (ekspertai praktikai, valdymas, akademinis išsilavinimas).

14. Socialini paslaug paskirstymas patenkinamu kokyb s lygiu reikalauja atitinkam socialinio darbo profesional žini apsikeitimo tarp Europos šali mechanizm .

Literat ra

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2. *Trumpos rekomendacijos socialiniams darbuotojams*. Europos Tarybos Socialin s vienyb s komitetas, Strasb ras, 2000.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE ELIMINATION OF POVERTY IN LITHUANIA
Vytautas Ži kas

(Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

In 1995 the United Nations' summit at Copenhagen reminded the world how important social work was to the progress of democracy and the development of society. People who feel themselves left out of society do not further its development. Poverty concerns not only the poor, it also impoverishes the whole society. By signing this document leaders of 117 states of the world who took a rather active part in this meeting committed themselves primarily to:

• fight against poverty,
• encourage the creation of new work places,

- give a chance to socially alienated people to participate in the process of social and economic development of their countries.

The signing of this document indicates that the resolution of the states of the world to solve the issues of abolition of discrimination and inequality in a complex way, and to help everyone whose human dignity has been injured or whose skills are not used properly is growing steadily.

Though social policy after the restitution of independence was definitely targeted on the population who had the smallest income and were in difficult circumstances, though it rested on charity traditions, it was obviously insufficient to put a stop to poverty and its dissemination. A number of important decisions relating to the elimination of poverty, the development of employment and social integration support have been taken in Lithuania since the Copenhagen summit. Among them there are the ones that deal with the three basic areas stressed heavily at that meeting. However a survey shows that poverty still is a very acute problem and the chief factor of denial of equal chances to society members. Lithuania's report on the implementation of Copenhagen summit results was prepared in 1999. It was presented to the United Nations and the widest circles of society. This document described Lithuania's achievements in the area of introduction of principles defined by the Copenhagen Declaration. It was a serious step towards the complex strategy of national poverty reduction. The national report revealed that the most urgent issues included the improvement of well-being of village population, the support of families with many children, and the integration of groups of socially vulnerable persons into society. Data given in the report show the growth of social security costs over past years and the decline of relative poverty in the Republic of Lithuania.

Currently it is widely recognised that poverty represents a very complicated multidimensional problem. A thoughtful strategy combining in itself the policy of micro-economy, regional development, agricultural and social development able to use the existing resources more reasonably is needed to solve it on a national scale. To prepare the strategy economists and other professionals representing social sciences, medicine, education and village development were invited. The preparation of strategy was determined by the necessity to have a holistic view and to share responsibility in the attempt of fighting the outcomes of poverty and isolation. The preferred policy is to secure a constructive dialogue among various social partners. It is to be applicable in the area of co-ordination of interests of state and private sectors and civil society for the advantage of all parties. This policy, above all, is to be effective not only in the targeting of the most painful points in the society but also in choosing adequate measures for the solution of the said problems.

The strategy is in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. It provides that the satisfaction of people's needs and purposes are the basic goal of society's development. It means that economic growth is to be politically, socially and economically related with the development of well-being of all citizens.

The strategy defines the concept of poverty adapted to the Lithuanian situation. It also describes poverty-coping techniques. It gives data on poverty distribution and determines the poorest groups of society. On the grounds of information received, the following strategic goals were specified:
- general reduction of poverty level; and
- support to the most vulnerable groups.

In the first place the strategy sets the task to eliminate extreme poverty in Lithuania by 2003. Everyone who is short of food, shelter for the night, or warm clothes will be supplied with such indispensable things. Everyone will be granted necessary medical care. Every child and teenager under 16 will be given a chance to study.

Attempts are made to reduce poverty (estimated by the relative poverty line) by 13 per cent by 2005. By 2005 the most acute poverty (estimated by the relative poverty line) suffered by the poorest social groups (single parents with children, big families, jobless people, and agricultural workers) is to be reduced by 20 per cent.

The strategy distinguishes ten major public policy areas. On their basis the strategic provisions on poverty reduction and situation improve-

ment are formulated. The implementation of the above-mentioned provisions is dealt in detail in supplements to the strategy.

In reducing poverty, the basic strategic goal is to offer more jobs, create favourable conditions to get adequate education, and to start or develop business. Employment encouragement is a very effective method to cope with poverty. Lithuania has prepared a National Employment Actions' Plan for 2000 - 2002. It provides measures for the development of employment and social continuity by means of local initiatives and active labour market techniques. Social enterprises will be created for people with modest professional education, for unemployed persons and people with social problems. In such enterprises social rehabilitation and personality development will be as important factors as the work itself. The purpose is not only to create work places but also to encourage the reintegration of persons with social problems into society.

In order to secure gender equality and the reduction of women's poverty, the Government takes active actions. The securing of equal chances within labour market is one of the basic directions of the National Employment Actions' Plan. Beijing + 5 plans and the relation between gender equality and economic policy is also taken into account.

Subsidiarity and solidarity are the basic principles of poverty reduction strategies. The strategy stresses heavily the importance of NGOs and social partners in the solution of poverty problem.

There is no doubt that the development of economy, the increase of employment, and ensured distributable social justice are very important poverty- reducing conditions. However they mainly concern the active part of population. The inactive alienated part of population needs special measures. So, the elaboration of social support system is another successful poverty-reducing condition. It may secure the improvement of benefit targeting, the reasonableness of benefit system, and the development of social services. It is necessary to secure accessibility of social services to all people, to give chances to poverty-injured persons to take care of themselves and to reintegrate into the society. Special consideration should be given to socially estranged

(isolated) groups of persons. Whereas such persons belong to a separate social risk group, conventional social support methods (benefit payment, service rendering) are hardly applicable. Socially isolated persons do not have a place of permanent residence. They do not appeal for benefits. Besides, they often have bad habits (drug and alcohol dependence) or mental problems. Dwelling-places owned by such persons often turn into temporary places of residence of people leading a similar way of life. Their neighbours do not feel safe. Minor children of socially-isolated parents find themselves in a tragic situation. They fill the ranks of offenders more often than their peers. Assessments carried out by municipal social workers show distinctly the complicated character of this problem. Evidences indicate that the number of minor offenders is growing.

Some foreign countries have their own social inclusion programs. France has its Law on Social Integration. Many countries have rich experience of involving NGOs into the solution of such problems. East European countries have just started to take part in this process, however the situation is getting worse in many countries. It drives us to speed up those processes.

The strategy provides the elaboration of social support system. It is to be carried out in conformity with the following principles:

- To refer to the relative poverty line indicator when determining the official poverty line.
- To develop support granted to families with children.
- To balance social support subsidies against indirect support of families, or children in the first place.
- Social support is to be adjusted to income tax policy (in order to avoid poverty trap, that is a chance to live on social benefits instead of seeking independent employment).
- To develop social work with families in order to reduce their dependence on social support or to shorten its duration.
- To create a municipal social dwelling fund giving priority to apartment rent development.
- In order to secure special support targeting, it is necessary to implement a universal income and property declaration system.

- When developing social support system, to co-ordinate paid benefits with the provision of necessary social services.
- When developing social service network within communities, to stress the role of social workers and to involve the community into the solution of social issues on a wider scale.
- When creating and implementing target programs, to integrate socially isolated persons into the society.
- To promote social integration of disabled, drug addicts, alcoholics, persons released from prison, arrest, social and psychological rehabilitation institutions, refugees and other persons alienated from society.
- To achieve that poor people are guaranteed free legal services and legal education.
- To elaborate the system of poor families' support.
- To elaborate the organisation of free meals at general education schools.
- To secure accessibility of social services to every person in need or threatened by poverty; to create conditions for them to take care of themselves and to integrate into the society.
- To promote social integration of drug addicts, alcoholics, persons released from prison, arrest, social and psychological rehabilitation institutions, refugees and other persons alienated from the society.
- To give disabled people and their families equal chances of education, training, and work; to achieve adequate life quality standards and to participate in community and civil life.

Definite poverty reduction measures provided by the strategy are implemented mostly on a municipal level. This process involved not only municipal institutions but also NGOs, volunteers and non-formal service givers. Currently we are looking for effective ways of co-operation of municipal organisations and NGOs.

Strategic provisions for the development of social support and social work imply that social work is a very effective instrument of implementing basic poverty reduction strategies. It would be very difficult, or maybe even impossible, to set the limits of activity of professional social workers and their helpers: activities are versatile. Rich experience gained in this area by foreign countries is reflected in their multidimensional character.

Social work is one of the basic measures to fight poverty. However it is the only effective means in the work with marginal groups of population.

For this reason highly professional social work is necessary in the above-mentioned areas of activity. To put it otherwise, it is necessary to train highly-qualified social work professionals and to prepare adequate social service provision and monitoring standards. Currently European Council is drafting social work recommendations. If they are adopted, they will become a model document to all member states, including Lithuania. The recommendations are based on a number of documents issued by the United Nations and European Union. It also rests on the Final Declaration of the Copenhagen World Summit. It must be stressed that the recommendations are prepared taking into account the EC principle to seek a greater unity among EC member states for the consolidation of their safety and the implementation of ideals and principles that constitute their common heritage. The globalisation of world economy, swift political and social transformations not only speed up the development of world economy but also encourage social changes. Consequently, they create social tensions. Social work is a rather important reply to economic and social changes that create difficulties to certain groups of population, leave them out of the active part of society, and push them towards poverty and despair. The idea that general European co-operation in this context is a very important factor deserves special attention.

Social work improves social well-being of individuals, groups and communities. It also encourages social solidarity during the periods of change. It supports and protects vulnerable members of society and encourages co-operation with service receivers. Unfavourable life changes encountered by certain people produce a negative impact on their ability to fight for well-being. So, they need help, direction and management. Other people need only care, help and protection. Social

workers react to these needs: their contribution to the promotion of social solidarity is very significant both in the area of direct social work and in the promotion of preventive measures. This makes social work an important investment into the future of Europe's well-being.

The professional character of social work requires high professionalism and great responsibility in decision making. High standards of professionalism, in their turn, demand adequate education and professional retraining. The above-mentioned requirements ask for the observance of certain principles (see Supplement).

The European Council recommends the governments of member states to consider the principles specified by the Supplement and to take adequate actions, giving priority to the creation of a stable legal basis for social workers' activities. In order to secure high quality of services, it is necessary to invite not only social workers but also social service recipients to the establishment and supervision of service standards.

Political and social development undoubtedly makes a great impact on social work in Europe as well as on primary, continuous and follow-up training of social workers on all levels. This calls for the support of continuous development of new communication technologies in the area of social work training and its elaboration. Involvement of social work students, teachers and practitioners with the minority or ethnic group background is to be encouraged. The development of social work methods reflecting the needs of the whole society is to be supported.

It is necessary to support the inclusion of an obligatory course on human rights into the social work training program and to secure that both the rights and the ethic codes are put into social work practice. Agencies are to be required to cherish good practice traditions through the integration of ethic codes into their service-rendering regulations. Also the principles governing labour conditions are to reflect the said requirements for ethic. Mechanisms putting a stop to the employment of persons formerly sentenced for violence against children or adults (in the area of care) but seeking a job in social service institutions are to be created.

It is necessary to support the preparation of training aids relating to the issues of human rights and minorities. To encourage the translation of the Document on Human Rights and Social Work: a handbook for schools offering a social work course (UN human rights' centre) into the languages used in corresponding local social practice.

It is equally necessary to develop and support a better methodological and practical compatibility and comparativity in all areas of social work training and to support initiatives encouraging such processes. It is essential to establish measures for the support of mobility of social work professionals, teachers and students within European countries.

Related agencies working in close co-operation with the professional institutions of social workers are to pay careful attention to the said recommendations for social work quality. They are expected to support more vigorous involvement of social workers into the area of social services.

Here are the principles securing achievement and maintenance of social solidarity through social workers' co-operation with their professional institutions:

1. Human rights and freedoms are to be respected. It is equally important to pay special attention to the influence on human behaviour, including social, economic and psychological factors and religious or cultural traditions. Effective social work training and practice in the flexible and diverse modern European society demands the understanding of ethnic minorities and attention (sensitivity) to various cultural perspectives;

2. When an individual or a group of individuals is at risk, a priority in the defence of everybody's interests is to be given to human rights;

3. Social workers together with other professional agencies and boards bear special responsibility for the identification of children's and adults' abuse and its prevention;

4. Governments, professional service providers, including professional social workers and volunteers, as well as employment agencies are to serve a community and to encour-

age social solidarity and provision of effective services to individuals and communities;

5. Social work is to be carried out in the key of community and cultural traditions, paying due attention to the rights and wishes of service recipient;

6. Ethic codes and behaviour of social workers or agencies are fundamental to effective social work practice and respect for a human;

7. Agencies are responsible for service and quality standards covering users' needs and expectations, ethic principles, professional goals, utility and cost-effectiveness. The said standards must be defined on the grounds of research results. Besides, they are to be clear and regularly checked. Social workers are to be involved in the establishment and checking of the said standards;

8. Primary education and professional training are to be a part of continuous training, including lifelong training and higher education;

9. Social workers' training is to cover social work teachers, practitioners and users. Social work practice teachers at higher education institutions are to have some social work experience themselves;

10. Research is the basis of social work development. All social work practitioners are to be aware of the application of research work, and be able to explain it. They must have a chance to undertake or participate in it;

11. Agencies carrying out social work are to support the said principles in the creation of an open-to-work environment, be constantly aware of research results, service users' attitude and social workers' experience;

12. The environment of social workers is to promote the implementation of ethic principles and good practice;

13. Social workers are to be given a chance of professional development (experts for practice, control, academic education);

14. The distribution of social services of satisfactory quality demands corresponding mechanisms for the exchange of social work knowledge among professionals of European countries.

References (See Lithuanian version)