THE USE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE PROFESSION
A.M. Breaz

Alina Maria BREAZ
PhD, university lecturer
"Aurel Vlaicu" University, Arad, Romania
alinamariabreaz@gmail.com

Abstract: There is a short overview of the history of the social assistant profession internationally and in our country. Emphasis is placed on community social assistance and the development of this system of social protection in the interwar period, the communist period, and after the revolution of December 1989. The stages of the development of the higher education of social assistance in the county of Arad after the revolution are marked. The paper presents the charity activities carried out by students at the UAV Arad under the guidance of their teachers and the media coverage of these actions (by press and television). Media coverage has led to a better knowledge of the profession and an increase in the number of students who wish to take up this profession.

Keywords: social work, charity, publicity by media coverage

A brief review of the history of social assistance

In antiquity

The idea of helping, underpinning the social welfare system, appeared very early in the history of mankind. Babylonian Code of Laws, of Hammurabi, is the first written manifestation of the idea of aid, in the form of the support of men among them, in a time of restraint (1750 BC) (Drimba, 1999). Also, in other countries of the ancient world, this idea signals its presence under different aspects. Thus, in Israel (1200 BC), the people believed that helping others is a divine commandment, and God expects them to help the poor.

To the Greeks (500 BC) there is the term "Philanthropy" which means acts of love for mankind. In Greek cities, this idea is institutionalized, appearing organizations to help. Citizens donated money, with which they bought different goods (clothes, food) for the needy (Mânoiu, Epureanu, 1996). In China (300
Confucius formulates some theses known as "Confucius Annalships," in which the idea arises that people must be linked to each other by yen (a kind of sympathy expressed by helping the needy).

In ancient Rome (100 BC) there was a tradition in which patrician families distributed grains free of charge to poor Romanian citizens.

The emergence of Christianity is a real revolution in this field, and philanthropy (charity acts) becomes a thesis of it. After the legalization of Christianity by Emperor Constantine the Great in 313, the church is under obligation to help those in need.

In India, China and the Middle East countries, in the medieval period, there were institutions called "hospitals" which, in fact, were places of refuge in which the poor or disabled were accommodated.

By the fourteenth century, all Western European countries had different forms of helping the poor and various settlements or shelters in order to support those in need, the vast majority of them were under the patronage of the church.

In our country

In 1831, Chapter 8 of the Organic Regulation (the first Constitution of the Romanian Lands) establishes social assistance institutions, as: the Relief House for the Poor, the House of Beggars and a Birthplace, and a midwife school.

In 1869, the Romanian countries legislate, the commune's task of dealing with infirm children. At the same time, there are also concerns for mother and child assistance, in addition to helping the poor.

In Transylvania, social assistance is organized by the Austro-Hungarian administration. In 1888, there was a "White Cross" society that handles orphaned or abandoned children. There were also some orphan centers that managed the funds needed for orphaned and disabled children.

Interwar social assistance

Romania also introduced, in 1912, among the first countries in the world, legislation on sickness, old age, accidents, disability and funeral, legislation preceded in 1902 by the Law on the organization of the House of Incident Insurance and death for craftsmen.

After World War I, a systematic and scientific activity of social assistance and protection emerged within the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, as a result of the large number of widows, war orphans, invalids and people with a worsened situation. In 1941, the Municipal Committee of the Bucharest Patronage Council was established, with a view to combining in a single action all the efforts that took place in the capital, for the building up and removal of social dependents and the organization of rational social assistance. In this sense, an action has been taken that has covered all
areas of social protection and assistance. In 1948 the labor and social assistance problems were reconsidered according to the provisions of the law on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (Mânoiu, Epureanu, 1996).

Between World War I and World War II, as a result of the destruction, social assistance problems increased, poverty, beggars and vagrants grew. The development of the industry brings with it the development of cities, the necessity of bringing the level of living and education of the village to the city level. There were only a few intellectuals in the village and in the neighborhoods of the cities. Usually these were the priest and the teacher. By nature, the village had some events that everyone attended: baptism, wedding, funeral, but it did not deal with post-war problems. It was the question of knowing the social realities that it faces, and the potential of all those who have a certain education to be used, because that is the only way to solve the social problems. Thus, the community, which previously fell to a religious community, ethnic community, etc., began to become a more complex ensemble, to take more of a geographical and administrative space.

The concept of community social assistance has been used in the interwar period by D. Gusti's sociological school in the attempt to know the social reality and to organize the professional and collective professional interests. In order for the world not to be isolated and confined by needs and weaknesses, programs for the development of a wide network of local community associations should be initiated so that the village can benefit from the energies of all professions in its environment, from doctor to teacher, and from that of all the functions that have developed in the universal world, from the spiritual function of the Church and the priest to the political-juridical function of the mayor or gendarmerie officer (Gusti, 1970).

The end of the First World War brought with it a new concept of social peace, which could only be achieved through a legal system based on the principle of social justice, on the idea that the underprivileged people have rights and that social assistance is not a matter of political benevolence, but a social necessity. Along with this fundamental change of optics in the analysis of the problems of the industrial society, social assistance emerges as a distinct field of activity (Neamțu, 2011).

In the period 1945-1989, the network of social workers, which functioned in the territory, was abolished, and the specialty posts were canceled definitively (communist regime did not recognize the existence of social problems).

Nowadays

After the revolution of 1989, the attributions and forms of organization
of social protection institutions are established. In the field of social assistance, social protection is provided for minors and people with disabilities to support social and professional integration. It also ensures the coordination of social protection of people and disadvantaged groups and collaborates with organizations that aim at social protection.

Social assistance remained after 1989 in an area hard to reach by social policies. The measures adopted after the revolution have failed to constitute a coherent and well-defined system. Benefits categories are dedicated: cash and in-kind assistance, funding and managing institutions for those in special situations, providing specialized services to people at risk. In the category of aid in cash or in kind, according to the "Statistical Yearbook of Romania", both the allocations and the aid granted to the population from the state budget, as well as those granted from the local budgets are included (Banciu, 2006).

After the country's integration into the European Union, social policies are aligned with the Union's social policies.

Social protection systems play a very important role in the European Union in terms of the lives of Europeans and families, as well as in terms of their influence in promoting society and the economy. They guarantee income for people in difficulty while allowing them to accept and adapt to economic and social developments. They also foster social cohesion and economic dynamism. Social protection expenditures represent 28.5% of the GDP of the community, of which the most important part is for pensions and health services (Banciu, 2006).

In 1994, through a Tempus Programme, The University East Anglia from Norwich, provides a training program for teachers who will teach social assistance at university level. There are two teaching staff from each big university center (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Timisoara) and two people from the ministry. Teachers, specialists in related fields (psychology or sociology) are trained for two years on a modular model in order to ensure a good training for the new social assistants in Romania.

Definitions

Social assistance, as a subsidiary system of social protection, operates by a principle other than insurance: it is based only on state budget funds or donations from volunteers and international institutions and does not involve any previous financial contribution from the assisted person.

Social assistance is defined as "an ensemble of institutions, programs, measures, professional activities, specialized services for the protection of persons, groups and communities with special problems, temporarily in difficulty who (...) are not able to achieve by means and their own efforts a normal, decent way of life "(Zamfir, Zamfir, 1995). According to the NASW
(National Association of Social Workers), the fundamental purpose of the social assistant profession is to restore the normal social functioning capacity of individuals, groups and communities. According to Barker (1998), social assistance has several purposes: helping people to obtain resources and services, counseling and psychological support to individuals and microgroups, implementing or improving health services at community level, participating in the development and promotion of social legislation.

Blum defines social assistance as "an institution that, as a part of the social organization as a whole, has the function of providing social support to community members through the channel of public or private bodies and thus satisfying multiple human needs." The social service seeks to integrate the individual, family, groups and communities in the overall social environment (Blum, 1970).

Assistance activity has two main dimensions:

- **the economic dimension** - which is aimed at the allocation of material and financial resources to people who, for a limited period, can not lead a self-sufficient life, have no income. For example, poor, orphaned or abandoned children, deficient, elderly without family support and no pension, people affected by natural disasters and not protected by private insurance contracts.

- **the social and psychosocial dimension** of social integration and social reintegration processes in a broad sense: family, professional, cultural, normative, in the assistance of drug and alcohol addicts, the re-socialization of offenders, the solving of couple problems, protection of victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, solving intra- and intergroup conflicts (Tompea, 2011).

Efforts in the field of social assistance are made both by state institutions and NGOs and by volunteers.

The system of state aid institutions differs from one country to another, depending on the state's budgetary resources and the specificity of the social problems it is trying to solve, the assistance traditions and the dominant ideology.

**Social politics**

The social policy of the state represents a set of goals and tools of analysis through which the public power realizes the normative impact of public resources and the distribution of income in the humanist perspective of social justice (Tanasescu, 2009).

In his work on social policy issues, T.H.Marshall (apud Miftode, 2010), considers that the stated purpose of social policy is welfare. Starting from this premise, under the current conditions of the development of society the main objectives pursued by the social policy are:
- promoting public services: health, education, social security, culture, etc.;
- the protection of some segments of the population in difficulty through the social security system and the social assistance system;
- ensuring social conditions considered to be important for general social development: increasing social solidarity, promoting family and child interests, etc. (Ciumas, Văidean, 2011).

**Personal contribution**

In Arad, training in social care occurs in 1999 at Aurel Vlaicu University, the Faculty of Theology, in the form of a dual specialization: theology-social assistance. In 2004 a specialization of its own is created, first in the Faculty of Humanities and then in the Faculty of Education Sciences, Psychology and Social Assistance.

Throughout this period new teachers are brought, from students who have already graduated at the UAV or graduated from other universities with practical experience in the field.

Today, the Social Assistance Studies program offers not only bachelor studies but also masters studies and provides to Arad county and to neighborhoods counties competent and professional social workers.

In addition to other activities through which the social assistance program is known (such as various Social Assistance Day activities, participation in national and international conferences and symposiums), charity activities are also included.

Initially, during the period 1999-2006, they took the form of charitable concerts. Students organized various charity concerts at the Cultural House of the Trade Unions or at the Cultural Palace, and the funds obtained were used by them to help disadvantaged categories (the elderly in the Care Center, children with various disabilities, women in the penitentiary etc.).

Two years ago, in 2016, the campaign "Help us help them!" was launched, "which aimed to introduce students into the field of social assistance, to motivate society to empathize with vulnerable people, to have the role of subsidiarity" (July 24, 2018, Antena 3, https://www.google.ro/amp/s/m.antena3.ro/amp/eroul-zilei-alina-breaz-doctorul-in-sociologie-care-aduce-zambete-pe-fetele-oamenilor-480002.html).

"This action is a tradition already in the Faculty of Sciences of Education, Psychology and Social Work, where students are particularly active and participate with enthusiasm at each of the new charity actions" (https://www.mandri.ro/alina-breaz-si-studentii-au-ajutat-din-nou-foto/).

Enjoying the support of Mrs. Rector, Professor Univ. Dr. Lila Ramona, who is always with them at every action, and Mrs. Oana Pîrvulescu, DDAC
General Director Arad, who supports them in identifying vulnerable families in Arad, UAV students are solidary and empathetic when it comes to marginalized families (https://www.mandri.ro/alina-breaz-si-studentii-de-la-asistenta-sociala-continua-actiunile-umanitare-foto/).

The actions continued also during the summer as the Adevarul newspaper reports: "The students of the Social Assistance Specialty, at Aurel Vlaicu University Arad, although they are in the holiday season, want to continue the series of charity actions together with the lecturer who guides them" (https://m.adevarul.ro/locale/arad/profesoara-alina-breaz-continua-actiunile-timpul-vacantei-1_5959f0d05ab6550cb8bf472a/index.html).


"The role of the social worker is to support vulnerable people and create a relationship in which empathy towards them prevails. In this case, the maternal presence is completely lacking in this child's life, so our students wanted to be with this family as support, both affective, empathetic and administrative. Most of the time we realize how useful and responsible we are in the case of society's vulnerability, "said their advisor. (July 2, 2018; http://www.livearad.ro/tag/alina-breaz/)

Final considerations

The intense promotion of charity and volunteer acts carried out by students from the Social Assistance Program at the UAV Arad, had several implications, apart from the actual help of the families in difficulty:
- has led to the knowledge of a less congenial but more agreeable aspect of the social assistant profession;
- increased community receptivity to social assistance and its professionals;
- has led to a higher level of professional training of students from this study program by their direct involvement in one of the sides of the practical work of the profession
- increased by a small percentage each year the number of young people opting for this profession.

It is believed that the charitable and volunteer activities carried out have greatly reached the purpose for which they were initiated.
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