

THE APPLICATION OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES IN SOCIAL WORK

Edited by Karel Paulík

This book summarises the key results of the research project entitled **The application of psychology and other social sciences in improving the quality of social services in the Ostrava region**, which was funded by the Czech Ministry of Education. The project focuses on the ways in which psychology and other human sciences, especially sociology and various branches of economics, can be applied in the process of searching for the best possible correspondence between the needs of social services clients and the nature and accessibility of social services. The human sciences mentioned above can contribute a wide range of knowledge related both to human adaptation to living conditions in the given environment and also to human needs arising from the problems and difficulties of the adaptation process for both individuals and groups. This knowledge can help to clarify the theoretical conception of social work and can contribute to the development of diagnostic, research-based and conceptual intervention methods used by professional social workers.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first is entitled **Theoretical issues of counselling in social work**. The second part is named **Social services and the needs of selected population groups**. The content of the individual chapters is as follows:

The first chapter, **Social work as an activity and a scientific discipline**, offers a brief overview of the history of social work and deals with a number of key figures who have contributed to the development of the profession. The chapter examines social work as a component of social services and as one of the helping professions. Additionally, the author describes social work as a practical activity carried out with varying degrees of professionalism, dealing with the difficulties involved in determining the necessary professional competencies of social workers, examining social work as a rapidly growing subject of study at further and higher education institutions, and presenting social work as a scientific discipline. The chapter also highlights the problems connected with the theoretical definition of the subject, the aims and main tasks of social work, terminological difficulties and the relationships between social work and related disciplines.

The second chapter, **Counselling in social work**, analyses the issue of the role of counselling in the helping professions. The author outlines the general characteristics of counselling with particular emphasis on professional social counselling and psychological counselling. The individual types of counselling are examined in terms of the number of clients (individual counselling, group counselling, mass counselling) and the location where the counselling is carried out (counselling at counselling centres, residential counselling, field counselling). The chapter also deals with the relationship between psychological counselling and psychotherapy and between counselling intervention methods and psychotherapy or counselling, in terms of the practical influence of these activities.

The third chapter deals with the **Personality of counselling professionals**, focusing especially on the necessary personality requirements for carrying out the counselling profession. The author refers to existing professional literature on the subject of the role of social workers and the issues involved with social workers' psychological resistance.

The fourth chapter, entitled **Several barriers to effective social work with clients**, deals with factors which hinder social workers in carrying out their profession and which are experienced and evaluated as negative factors. The author analyses the concept of psychological stress in the helping professions with relation to the workload of social workers and their ability to deal with organisational issues.

The fifth chapter, **Professional training of social workers**, examines the types and forms of training for social workers. The author of this chapter deals with the current legislative framework governing the training of social workers in the Czech Republic, relevant policy documents, and methods of funding social work training.

The sixth chapter, entitled **Application of sociology in social work**, examines the similarities and differences between social work and sociology. Both disciplines deal with the common denominator of society as a phenomenon which is subject to certain specific functional patterns. For social work, sociology is one possible source of knowledge applicable to the interpersonal relationship between the client and the professional as part of the process of multi-faceted support for the client's ability to function within society. The relationship may be described, for example, as a process of reaching a dynamic balance between the client and his/her environment. Sociological knowledge, however, does not affect the aims and methods of social work directly; the analysis of research data provides social workers with information on which problems must be dealt with, but does not suggest how such problems should be approached. The question thus arises whether social workers should carry out such methodologically precise research at all, or whether sociological research should rather be left to specialists.

The seventh chapter, **The application of economics in improving the quality of social services**, gives information on economic issues connected with improving the quality of social services. The author describes the economics of the public sector, public services and social services, with particular focus on employment-related social services and the active and passive tools used.

The eighth chapter, **Types of social needs**, analyses social needs for both practical and theoretical purposes, drawing on the conception of needs used by contemporary psychologists and in particular on J. Bradshaw's classification of social needs into normative, felt, expressed and comparative needs. Professional evaluations of the level of needs in selected population groups are used to determine normative needs. Felt needs represent the degree of subjective requirements of people; these are declared as expressed needs. The determination of comparative needs is based on the comparison of the requirements of various population groups. The probable future requirements for services in a specific group of people to whom no service has yet been allocated, or who have not declared their need for the service in question, are estimated on the basis of experience gained during work with groups of a similar nature which already use a given service.

The second part of the book begins with the ninth chapter, **Meeting the needs of social service clients**. The chapter deals with the ways of determining normative, presented and comparative needs in social work. Normative needs form an important component of plans for social development; as part of planning, normative needs are set out and services set up within a particular area on the basis of demographic developmental analyses. This chapter cites a wide range of examples of indicators based on the development of the population in the Czech

Republic as a whole and in the Ostrava area in particular. One planning method involves the community planning of social services, taking account of both the capacities of the service providers and also the needs of clients. The chapter concludes with a projection of demographic developmental trends in order to determine expected future needs for social services in Ostrava.

The tenth chapter, **Needs of handicapped clients**, focuses on social needs typical among people with physical disabilities, partial sight or hearing, intellectual handicaps and mental illnesses. Such handicaps have a significant effect on the lives of individuals and make considerable demands both on the individuals themselves and on the people around them. Physical and mental handicaps are often closely related to social problems. The chapter examines important factors in the social integration of handicapped people. The author focuses mainly on the requirements for a family environment, integration, independence, understanding and tact, self-realisation, the creation of social values, social usefulness, help in meeting basic life needs, and emotional experiences.

The eleventh chapter, **Immigrants and their social needs**, deals with the largely specific problems encountered by refugees in connection with their adaptation to a new socio-cultural environment. The author describes the necessary requirements in order for this group to adapt to their new social environment, highlighting the legislative and administrative framework in the Czech Republic with relation to the issue of refugees. The chapter characterises asylum seekers and organisations dealing with refugees, highlighting certain factors which prove useful in working with this group.

The twelfth chapter, **Social services for children and young people**, includes an examination of the issues dealt with by professional counsellors caring for children and young people. Counselling for these groups does not form an independent unit within the social services. In order for these social services to be effective, knowledge must be drawn from a range of scientific disciplines – especially psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law and medicine – and mutual cooperation must exist between institutions and organisations involved with the problem, both from government and the non-governmental sector, in order to create a wide range of services as part of a counselling system.

The thirteenth chapter, **Unemployment in the Moravia-Silesia region**, deals with the specific features of one of the Czech Republic's eight NUTS regions in relation to the labour market and unemployment. The author deals with the issue of long-term unemployment and related high-risk groups on the labour market. The chapter examines the phenomenon of social exclusion and the people affected by it, the possible ways of dealing with unemployment in the region, and the economic evaluation of employment services in the region.

The fourteenth chapter, entitled **Social work with other marginalised groups**, examines certain aspects of the specific social needs of the Roma community and other groups outside majority society, including homeless people and sexual minorities. The author presents a number of points for consideration by social workers dealing with these groups.

The fifteenth and final chapter, **Conclusions for the improvement of social services**, summarises the potential applications of the knowledge presented in the previous chapters of the book. The chapter is organised into individual areas of social work and for each area

presents several possibilities for improving services from the point of view of service providers and clients.