

Abstract

Historically, social security started to arise due to the need of preventing social unrest rather than of the need of helping people. Although the society has developed itself towards sophisticated tools of social politics - including social services - general awareness about their significance and their social prestige are still very low. The goal of this paper is therefore to draw attention to the activities of workers and volunteers working in social services and highlight the problems the providers as well as users of the social services and public authorities contend with.

The first part of this paper pursues historic development of social security institutes, which to a great extent determines their current form. The second part of this paper concentrates on an up-to-date valid social services adaptation which has been regarded by experts to be indeed revolutionary. It entirely changes the conception of a users services role from passive care recipients to active agents in finding a solution in their own hard life situations. The third part of this paper concerns with non-governmental organizations, especially the ones, which inherently belong to a social domain for being bearers of civic participation values, personal responsibility, plurality of interests and views, democratic decision-making, equity and solidarity.

Despite many shortcomings, the current situation of social services in the Czech Republic corresponds to contemporary European trends – the offer of types of social services, including social prevention and integration services, is much bigger than in the past. The emphasis is placed on their quality, which ensures registration and inspection institutes or conditions for the pursuit of social services. A user of these services is an equal partner to providers and public authorities. The set-up of the third sector, including the volunteering phenomenon, after the dark period of World War II and the socialist regime, follows the strong First Republic tradition and successfully engages in providing social services.