

# TO BE A MANAGER IN SOCIAL WORK AREA

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**Abstract:** *This presentation shows the difficulties and challenges involved in social management, how to adapt the general functions of management in social work's field and some specific activities in social services, such as volunteering and professional development of social workers. It presents a global analysis of several interviews with managers of social services from Brasov County.*

**Key words:** *management in social work, managerial skills, managerial roles, develop of human resource, volunteering.*

## 1. Introduction

Lack of social work during the communist period meant that after 1990, social services are organized a little chaotic, particularly due to the lack of professionals and legislation. This led to the practice of social work by persons with another specialization than the social worker.

Also, the management of social work organizations was made mainly of people with different professional training of social work and management. Therefore, it began to appear structured ways of training of specialists based on a methodology such as specializations courses of Social Work, Master in Management of Social Services, which provides vocational training qualifications in this field.

During the time, things have changed on social work, because the social sector is very dynamic and supposes changes of more perspectives: social, human, legal and financial.

At present, it is interesting to see what means the management in this social field, social care and how and what is difference between business management and social work management. It is also interesting to see the difference between management of non-governmental organizations, which live from projects and sponsors and the management of state institutions, which have exclusive financing from the state budget.

## 2. Some theoretical considerations

The main managerial activities in which managers made:

- Communication with the formal submission, receiving and handling of information documents;
- Traditional management where are important the planning, decision making and control;

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- Action on the networks: interacting with people outside the organization, informal socializing and political action on the inside people;
- Management of human resources: motivation and consolidation, discipline and punishment, management of conflicts, staffing, qualifications and developing employees (Luthans, Hodgetts, Rosenkrantz, 1988 *apud* Johns, 1998).

All these activities are described in the literature (Dragomirişteanu, 2000; Neamţu, 2001; Gherguţ, 2003; Nicola, 2003; Bódi, 2007; Neamţu, 2015) by fulfilling the functions, so the organization to meet its goals:

- Planning - evaluation of the future and initiate necessary measures;
- Organization – building of the management structure of the organization;
- Personal function - human resources management;
- Leadership - to have a vision of the organization;
- Control / supervision - monitoring and evaluation the performance work.

These activities can be performed by people who have certain skills / abilities in management:

- Technical skills - refers to the level of competence in a specific activity; includes the ability of manager to use his/her knowledge, methods and instruments to achieve specific tasks and activities;
- Human skills - managers' ability to work effectively with others people; for this, the manager must know and understand the psychological theories on human motivation and human needs;
- Conceptual skills - manager's ability to see the organization as a whole; the accent is on knowledge and understanding of the science of management theories, human and organizational behaviour and put them in management practice (Neamţu, 2003; Neamţu, 2015).

### 3. Research methodology

The present research was qualitative, with interviews applied of managers in social services. The instrument used was the interview guide, which focuses on these topics: professional route of a manager in social work, managerial skills, managerial activities, advantages and disadvantages of the position of manager, development of human resource in the organization and supervision.

I have analyzed thirteen interviews, six of them were with managers / chief department of the state institutions and seven of them were with managers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from Brasov County.

I've analyzed the data through coding thematic, because the topics were fixed and I wanted to watch similarities and differences between the general management and the management in social work. Thematic coding supposedly studied groups are predefined before interviews and best suited for comparative studies (Scârneci, 2007). I also use and open coding to identify on each topic studied, the categories discovered, revealing thus the comparative analysis, how see the managers from social work, their work.

In this article, I present a few topics discussed: skills/ qualities managerial activities of a manager of social work, advantages and disadvantages of the position of manager, human resource development within the organization.

#### 4. Analysis and interpretation of research data

Managers of social work area were identified as management skills the following (with the specification that there were not significant differences between the statements of managers of NGOs and the state institutions):

##### a. Technical skills:

- good knowledge in the field:

*"Assumed to be always very well developed and connected with changes in legislation that is changing very fast" (NGO);*

- long experience in the field:

*"...(he/she) must come from the system and have worked for years, because you can not coordinate anything unless you have practiced" (NGO);*

##### b. Human skills:

- communication skills:

*"A manager needs communication skills. Communication is very important in such a profession, and in such a field. A manager needs vision, organizational skills, and leadership qualities, to impose and to make themselves heard by the team" (state institution);*

- ability to work in a team and to motivate it:

*"To know well your team and it always motivate and you to be the one who pulls the first " (NGO);*

##### c. Conceptual skills:

- manager's ability to see the organization as a whole:

*"Good organizational skills, a good listener, a person with vision and overview of things, a good capacity for networking, analysis, communication, determination and empathy" (NGO).*

Some of the subjects remembered the qualities that should have a social work manager, these are being very similar with the specific qualities of social workers:

- Integrity

*"Must be a person with integrity, to have empathy and to like children, to like good of the child, so first of all we have to put the interests of the child" (state institution)*

- Patient

*"Patience, I think a lot of patience" (NGO)*

- Trust

*"Needs big dose of confidence in people" (NGO)*

- Empathy

*"He/she has to be empathetic, to provide support, to show a really concern towards others do, to have a sense of humor, team spirit, to be sensitive to act with tact and good sense" (state institution).*

Although not specific question, the interviews have been off the roles of social work manager, which can categorized like managerial roles described by Mintzberg (1973 cited Johns, 1998) and Quinn et al. (1990 cited Neamțu, 2003):

- a. interpersonal roles:  
*"Team members will feel useful. Usually people tend to follow people who say that something can be done and not those who give 200 reasons that can not be done. "(State institution);*
- b. information roles:  
*"To represent the Association in various occasions such as press conferences, events organized by companies or TV ..." (NGO);*
- c. decision-making roles:  
*"Must be able to speak, immediately to find solutions, but also to project the possibilities for conflict or delicate situations" (NGO).*

An activities of manager of social work does not seem to be totally different to other managers in the productive management, functions of management being achieved in social services, also:

- the planning  
*"You have to know all the time, every moment where you are, you look back do analyzes, make evaluations, you go forward and you go analyze..how is the „market” in this area, what other problems have your beneficiaries? How you can help a category of beneficiaries depending on what you have as organization [...], always you have to connect to what does and what wants to make your organization" (NGO);*
- organization/structure  
*"To organize and design the activity of the institution that you're leading" (state institution);*
- coordination  
*"To ensure the function of organization having the necessary funds to keep the staff in organization [...] every day to know at any time what stage are the projects, if are risks that may appear in implementing them ... how do you lower ? or how do exclude its forever? How to put into practice the organization's development strategy and the strategy itself that you implement all objectives of the organization" (ONG);*
- leadership  
*"(the manager) have the ability to share this vision with his/her colleagues and with team from the department he leads" (NGO);*
- the control  
*"Part of control, part of evaluation, uh ... the part of the institution's development and it means that you have think about partnerships with similar institutions, with other types of institutions that can do these partnerships, to develop projects for the institution to grow "(state institution).*

Managers remembered advantages and disadvantages of work manager in this sector non-profit.

Thus, among the advantages, managers were highlighted social network development, high salaries, a higher social position, the opportunity to help people develop, a holistic vision of the organization and the field, also:

*"Offering a statute and a position in the organization and in society" (state institution).*

*"You see the big picture and if things go well, the results appear and then satisfaction is very high" (NGOs).*

The disadvantages of work manager were focused on the same problem: lack of personal time:

*"A personal challenge that I experienced was when I got to an imbalance between private life and professional life (too much time spent on work - I left the office at 18:00 because I was scheduled to give birth to 18.30" (NGOs).*

Another disadvantage has been described as a occupational stress, only in state institutions, which dominate the bureaucratic system:

*"We have received works today with the solve term for tomorrow or even tomorrow or some of them come with the term imposed two days ago, that is happend because of bureaucracy" (state institution).*

The large volume of work is another disadvantage described by managers:

*"You have a lot of reports and that should do it yourself and you have to be fit and open for any need arising" (NGOs).*

Regarding the topic of managing human resources, the accent was placed on the professional development of employees and the vision of volunteering.

NGOs highlighted the teams cohesive and who are motivated to work in the organization, the social workers are appreciated by the management team, while in the state institutions, the staff is not enough and that seems to be a problem of management and for quality of social services. It is about the massive departure of social workers from the system because they didn't were financial motivated to be social worker in state institutions:

*"Maybe in the future, depending on how legilatia evolves, we will be able to hire a psychologist, counseling is required in the many activities that we conduct" (state institution).*

Volunteers are seen by both organizations as an important resource for development of the organization. All managers interviewed highlighted the role of volunteers in their organizations, even some developing training programs for volunteers:

*"We have a training program for volunteers ... who offered to volunteer to us must have some skills to work with children because they already have some knowledge in the field" (state institution).*

Managers see the involvement of volunteers from two perspectives. On the one hand, for organization winning, the volunteers work are appreciate by the organizations:

*"Although volunteering can not make quantitative human resource (in organization), they can accomplish qualitative visions, new ideas and concepts, and that means a big help for any organization" (state institution),*

but also for the volunteer, they can develop their skills in practice, in addition he/she benefit from various advantages offered by the organization and his/her work is recognized as work experience on professional route (see volunteering Law no.78 / 2014):

*"The involvement of volunteers is vital to the organization, is somehow a partnership type of win-win, that means we as organization gain from their experience and with their help made some activities and, at the same time, we believe that the volunteers can effective learn and implement their theoretical knowledge "(NGOs).*

Managers give increasing importance of professional development of employees. The ways in which managers encourage participation in courses of continuous training of their employees are paying taxes for training, monthly meetings with the team, for sharing

information and experience, inviting specialists from outside the organization, change of experience with other organizations:

*"We offer training courses and for this we have a special budget, where all the staff is trained and is more than the law demands, trying to find courses for professional development and beyond these courses [...] we have a monthly meeting where each of those who have the capacity and want, offer to the others peer training, a mini-training about different themes, for example communication with the difficult child or we invited specialists from another organizations"(NGO).*

## 5. Conclusions

The data presented shows a global analysis of some topics from interviews with managers who activated in the social services sector, both state and private. After analyzing the interviews, some new themes have emerged, which may be developed later into a new research.

This research came with a new perspective, to professionalize the profession of social work manager.

The next step is to improve the research instrument and to identify other areas of management of social work.

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