

ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES THROUGH QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Abstract: *The paper focuses on the social services issues that are a part of modern social policy. Social services are considered to be one of the forms of assistance provided for people and if they are to be organised and effective, it is inevitable to develop them from the point of view of the quality management system.*

Keywords: *Social assistance, Social services, Social services providers, Social services financing, Social services clients.*

1. Introduction

Social services can be defined from various points of view. In the international literature the social services are described as services that are public, humanitarian and also those that provide advantages for people with problems. Further, they can be defined as activities carried out for the benefit of another person (not in the form of allowances and regulation). The social services definition itself, in fact, extends behind the description of the sphere of activity, which is, in the end, shown in the area of covering, coordination and management of social services. The Act No. 448/2008 Collection of Law on social services in the Slovak Republic in the amendment No. 1 presents the standards of quality of social services that are divided into categories.

2. Implementing Quality Management System in Social Services (ISO 9001:2000)

The quality management system, which focuses on defining the processes and production methods, gives the businessmen and their customers a guarantee that all outputs related to production of products or services are assumed to have universal and defined quality.

The essential *objective of the organisations, businesses is to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and quality.* It is important to understand that *quality management system* (the QMS) is a *necessity* nowadays. On the other hand, it is necessary to say that implementing the QMS does not mean automatic improvement of management of an organisation or a business; it is a long-term process that should lead to enhancement of satisfaction of the customers and interested parties, effectiveness, expense reduction, risk reduction, productivity enhancement, clear definition of responsibility, and, of course, enhancement of quality of the product itself.

The basic pillars of the system:

QUALITY – the basic pillar of the quality management system

We need to know what quality is, what we should see behind this concept and how to reach it if we want to work with it systematically. Quality is a dynamic system that includes products, services, and organisations. It is a benchmark of work effectiveness of the whole organisation. Quality is an objective in pursuit of excellence. Quality is also a method and a way to support active participation of the workers, based on involvement and responsibility of each individual. The current definition in accordance with ISO 9001:2000 says: Quality is a standard in which the needs and expectations of a customer are met.

Legislation for the quality management system:

It is not possible to implement the system into practice without accepting the basic STN EN ISO. The norms present a standard that must be provided by an organisation in the process of implementation. At the same time, the norm can be understood as an essential methodological tool that enables an organisation to prepare for the process of implementation and subsequent certification more precisely.

The quality management system development has become an inseparable part of management of every organisation. The objective of the ISO norm is an ability to manage an organisation as mutually interconnected and communicating processes. Implementation of the quality management system results in effective internal organisation but mainly in meeting the demands of the citizens – clients; they should get the services that suit their demands and needs.

Implementation of the quality management system strengthens the position of the social services institutes in various areas. It leads to, mainly:

- client – citizen satisfaction enhancement,
- guarantee of quality of the services provided,
- culture improvement in the organisations,
- more effective communication with the employees, clients and interest partners,
- obtaining the trust of the clients, employees and interest partners,
- more effective usage of accessible resources – materialistic, personnel or financial.

When implementing the quality management system in the social services institutions, the most important is the first step which is *a status and management system analysis* in the social services institutions – the diagnostic audit. The information on the intentions, objectives, activities, employees, existing documentation, records and infrastructure is included in the analysis. The outcome of the analysis is assessment of strong and weak points. The next step is to *create the quality team* whose members are the employees of the social services institutions, social and healthcare services section, and the personal issues section.

At the present, there are organised the consulting meetings with *the Services Quality Institute* for the elderly that *provides counselling and assistance during implementation of the ISO norm.*

The Services Quality Institution programme:

- Enhancement of quality of the existing services for the elderly
- Enhancement of quality and competence of the services management
- Counselling and assistance for quality guarantee
- Exchange of experiences among services providers
- Assistance with establishment of international partnerships
- Capacities development, exchange of know-how in care for the elderly

The outcome of the quality management system ISO 9001:2000 should be the quality policy whose effort should be meeting these intentions and objectives. The existing processes of an organisation in accordance with EN ISO 9001:2000 such as documents management, records management, internal audit, operating processes, controlling processes, organisational documents, restoration activity, prevention activity, etc. are documented continuously.

The benefits of the quality system implementation for an organisation can be evaluated in various levels.

1. In customers, recipients, users of services:
 - meeting the demands,
 - reliability,
 - service accessibility in the right time,
 - long-term maintenance of the required quality level.
2. In workers within an organisation:
 - better working conditions,
 - better work satisfaction,
 - better safety and health protection,
 - better ethic approach and morale.
3. For investors:
 - increased economic return,
 - better operating outcomes,
 - higher market share,
 - competitiveness.
4. For suppliers and partners:
 - relationship stability,
 - cooperation enhancement,
 - good partnership.
5. For a company:
 - guarantee of the sustainable company development,
 - enhancement of the safety and health protection guarantees,
 - reduction of adverse effects on the environment.

3. The Strategy for Implementing Quality Management System in Public Administration 2009-2012

The Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing in the Slovak Republic designed the strategy for implementing the quality management system in public administration 2009-2012. This strategic key document has been submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic to be approved as a state policy of quality in the Slovak Republic.

The strategy represents a key strategic document in the area of quality divided into two parts: 1st part: State quality policy of the Slovak Republic,

2nd part: Implementation of the quality management system in public administration 2009-2012.

The 1st part: State quality policy of the Slovak Republic

The strategy for implementing quality management in public administration 2009-2012 respects the relevant conceptual materials approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic (*the National Strategic Reference Framework for the period of 2007-2013, the Community Strategic Guidelines, the Strategy for Sustainable Development in the European Union, the National Strategy of Sustainable Development in the Slovak Republic/the Action Plan for Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic 2005 – 2010¹, the Conception of the Regional Development of the Slovak Republic 2001 and the programmes of economic and social development of the self-governing regions*). It also uses the information from the *European Quality Charter and from the sources of the studies and analyses that were published by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), and from the sources of the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN)*.

The objective of the EUPAN is assistance and support for exchange of experiences, ideas and information on the practices applied in the state and public administration, and development of the common tools related to administration of the public affairs in the member states of the European Union and in the European Commission.

The designed vision and mission are common for all the strategic areas. In each of the strategic areas, there have been identified the strategic objectives common for all the ministries and other central organs of the state administration. The vision is to achieve the status in which quality becomes a permanent and natural value and a part of life of the citizens of the Slovak Republic; and to guarantee quality of life of the citizens of the Slovak Republic on the level of the average quality of life in the member states of the European Union. The mission of the programme as the strategic framework of the state quality policy *is to support the strategies for development of quality of production and services, quality of public administration and sustainable development of the entire society*, and also to motivate interested parties to meet the mission. The strategic objectives (global and long-term objectives):

Population safety in the basic quality-of-life indicators (energetic, food, hygienic, information, information technologies, traffic quality, environment quality, and public quality – of life, health, social security and personal property).

Health care – the global objective of this sphere is enhancement of the conditions affecting health status of the population in productive age and also in non-productive age through healthcare quality enhancement.

Social sphere and employment – the global objective of this sphere is enhancement of employment rate increase, unemployment rate decrease, social inclusion, human resources development promotion, enhancement of quality of services provided by non-profit organisations, obtaining, dissemination and development of information on employment, social exclusion, poverty and social services in direct connection with practical use of information, quality environmental infrastructure that is a key aspect and condition to guarantee sustainable economic and social development, and human resources development promotion and enhancement of quality of services provided by public administration organisations.

Public administration services – public administration is the activity performed by the organs of state administration, local administration and statutory undertakers when providing public tasks. The global objective of this sphere is to enhance quality of the provided services,

¹ More information at www.normoff.gov.sk, www.enviro.gov.sk.

to enhance effectiveness of the processes in public administration, and increase activity effectiveness of the public administration organizations through quality management implementation.

Informatisation of society

Entrepreneurship

Culture

Education, science, research and innovations – a scope of research, development and innovations plays a key role from the point of view of the structural and global convergence of the Slovak Republic. Their development significantly underlies speed and quality of the restructuralisation processes of the existing production structure and transformation to knowledge-based economy. *The sphere of science and research is closely related to the education system quality. This sphere is strongly connected with the business processes and their ability to develop and introduce new products and services with a high added value able to compete on the international and local markets. The global objective of this sphere is modernisation and enhancement of the effectiveness of the system for education, science, research and development promotion, and to improve quality of higher education infrastructure so that they can contribute to economic competition enhancement, reduction of regional differences, establishment of new innovative (high-tech) small and middle-sized businesses, establishment of new workplaces, and enhancement of the educational process conditions at higher education institutions.*

Recommendations for practice:

We would like to present a few strategic objectives that are necessary to achieve a global objective:

- to enhance effectiveness of school activities on all levels through quality management implementation (quality tools and models),
- to enhance quality of education as a basic condition of social integration and labour market integration (general accessibility of education for all employees),
- to apply quality management system as a basic unit for evaluation of competence to carry out research and development,
- to cooperate with entrepreneurial sector in innovations development,
- to cooperate in educational sphere with an accreditation commission of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic,
- to promote application of the results of scientific-research work of SAV (Slovak Academy of Sciences), SMÚ (Slovak Institute of Metrology) and higher education institutions in practice,
- to enhance quality of education to increase environmental awareness of a society and to obtain information on technical tools of environmental management along with promotion of participation in eco-innovations,
- to implement the subjects of quality management at elementary and secondary schools to enhance quality of education on quality management systems.

4. Conclusion

Management as a form of direction is of a great importance also for social work and especially for the sphere of social services. Social work as a practical activity is carried out within a few various resorts, institutions, and organisations that may be institutions of state

administration, local administration, self-governing regions, non-profit sector, or non-governmental subjects. Each of the institutions is directed by a manager. Work performed by a manager and workers is the basis of success and quality of the services provided. Qualification competence, further education of the employees, and lifelong education and lifelong counselling conceptions have quite an important role in the process. We work with the key concepts such as business social policy versus business social work.

The main objective of *business social policy* is development and cultivation of human potential of the business employees and establishment of optimal economic and social climate in the business. Business social policy includes maintenance of working conditions, workplace culture, sanitary facilities, storage of clothes, personal belongings of the employees and their vehicles, meals for the employees, and their qualification. It can be defined as a means of collective and individual development of human resources in relation to better achievement of economic effects. Its essential idea and intention is development of human resources of a business and its good economic and social climate.

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