

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE CITY OF PARDUBICE, EXAMPLES OF THE GOOD PRACTICE OF THE WORKING GROUP

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***Abstract:** This paper describes and analyses the process of community planning and its phases: general information (the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs); information applied in the process of community planning of social services in Pardubice and specific issues of the “working group”.*

***Keywords:** process of community planning, phases of community planning, working group of community planning, good practice*

1. Introduction

Community planning (CP) should be a tool for framing the regional social policy. Based on the analysis carried out by the Czech Republic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (<http://www.cz/cs/858>) there is currently political support for planning social services in all the regions of the Czech Republic. While in some of the regions the planning is carried out, more or less, within all of the municipalities with expanded competence, in other regions active planning is carried out by only a few municipalities or towns. The municipalities where the social services are being planned are in different phases of the planning process.

The aim of this article is: to show the example of the “good practice” of the city of Pardubice, that well prepared and implemented phases of CP of the social services allow for planning the social services and the related services and their implementation in the way so that the needs of the citizens as far as the offer of these services, their availability and quality are concerned are met. Three parties - those who provide the financial support of these services, providers of these services and their users - are involved in an active way in this planning and implementation.

2. Community planning

2.1. Community planning – its concept and phases

CP of the social services is based on the cooperation of three parties - those who provide the financial support of these services (municipalities, regions), providers of these services (individual organizations) and their users (clients) - during the elaboration of the plan, the negotiations concerning the way the social services should look in the future and the implementation of particular steps. **The joint aim is to provide readily available and quality social services.**

The planning of the social services is based on the comparison of an existing offer of these services with the real needs of their (potential) users. The results of this comparison serve as one of the key foundations for determining priorities in the area of social services.

After the elaboration of the community plan the next phase is its implementation that is the priorities or individual provisions of this plan are implemented. The monitoring of the progress and the extent of implementation of the set tasks is also part of this phase. This plan is usually elaborated for a period of a few years. After the termination of this period the whole planning cycle repeats again. (<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs847>)

3. The History of the Process of Community Planning in the Statutory City of Pardubice

CP was implemented in the city of Pardubice based on the project “Community Planning of the Social Services in the City of Pardubice” which was funded by the financial resources of the European Union. This project was elaborated in 2005 and the proposal to apply for the financial support for this project was approved by the resolution of the City Assembly on November 1, 2005. On May 30, 2006 the City Council approved the signing of the contract on funding the project “The Community Planning of the Social Services in the City of Pardubice” from the Joint Regional Operational Programme (JROP). This project began on June 1, 2006 and ended on April 30, 2008. It was focused on reinforcing social stability and solidarity of the citizens through supporting cooperation within community.

On March 11, 2008 the document “The Community Plan of the Development of Social Services and Related Services in the City of Pardubice for a Period of 2008-2011” was submitted to the City Assembly. This document was approved by the resolution ZM/732/2008 and has become part of the strategic plan of the city in the area of the development of social services.

During the preparatory phases of this community plan the task of the working groups was to carry out individual steps which led to the implementation of this plan, to define the target group of users of the social services, to determine the key areas and to define the aims and provisions leading to their implementation.

The document “The Community Plan of the Development of Social Services and Related Services in the City of Pardubice for a Period of 2008-2011” is the result of the activities of working groups and the coordinating group of the community planning of social services. The aims and provisions stated in this document reflect the needs of the users of social services and are based on the analyses, research and statistical and other data furnished by the providers of these services.

During the current phase while the priorities or individual provisions are being implemented the progress and the extent of the implementation of the set tasks or their updating are monitored.

The following working groups according to the target groups of users of the social services have been established for the process of CP in the city of Pardubice:

“Physically and Mentally Handicapped People”

“Foreigners and National and Ethnic Minorities”

“People in a Difficult Life Situation and Socially Inadaptable People”

“Seniors”

“Families with Children and/or Teenagers”

In May 2008 the mentally handicapped people, people with a combined handicap and people with mental diseases were excluded from the working group “Physically and Mentally Handicapped People” and two new working groups “Mentally Handicapped People and People with a Combined Handicap” and “People with Mental Diseases” were established. The coordinating group is responsible for managing and coordinating the working groups, mediating the communication among the working groups, the communication with the city authorities, with other institutions and with the public. It is also responsible for determining the joint aims of CP and for elaborating the final shape of the community plan.

4. An Example of “good practice” from the implementing phase of the community planning of a particular working group

The mentally handicapped people and people with a combined handicap were excluded from the working group “Physically and Mentally Handicapped People” and a new working group “Mentally Handicapped People and People with a Combined Handicap” was established. The first meeting of this group was held on May 13, 2008. Eleven people participated in this meeting. This working group currently has 17 members. On average 12 members participate in the meetings. The meetings are held once a month (with the exception of summer holidays) at the places of work of individual members of the working group. They are about 2 to 2 and a half hours long. This system allows getting to know these places of work and increases the motivation for participation in the meetings.

In 2008 attention during the meetings of this working group was paid in particular to the issues of the document “The Aims and Provisions of the Community Plan” that is personal care assistance, respite care and employing mentally handicapped people and people with a combined handicap. Three complex documents “A Report – an Overview of the Providers of Personal Care Assistance”, “A Written Summary of the State of Respite Care in the City of Pardubice” and “The Possibilities of Employment for Mentally Handicapped People” were elaborated. These documents were elaborated by the most involved members of this working group. They reflected an objective state of personal care assistance, respite care and the possibilities of employment for mentally handicapped people. They were available to the other working groups, to the coordinating group, to the employees of the Department of Community Services, the Committee for Social Affairs, the City Assembly and the City Council.

The members of this working group also participated in other activities such as the evaluation of projects in the area of social affairs of the City Hall. A general discussion concerning the problems of social services in the Czech Republic, in Pardubice Region and the city of Pardubice was held. The information about the city eliminating barriers for handicapped people was presented by the Commission for the City eliminating Barriers for Handicapped People. The problem areas were presented and solved based on the needs of this working group and based on the already elaborated material of other working groups. Invited guests also participated in the meetings. These guests were, for example, an employee of the Bureau of Labour in Pardubice and an employee of the House of Technique.

In the plan of activities of this working group for the year 2009 the priorities were the same – personal care assistance, respite care and the possibilities of employment for mentally handicapped people and people with a combined handicap. In 2009 this working group also had the task of mapping and summarizing the other three areas of community plan - socially activating services, the daily centres and assisted living and also the aims and provisions of the community plan. Two documents “Report on Solving the Aim and Provision 1.2.2. of Socially

Activating Services for the Mentally Handicapped People and People with a Combined Handicap in the City of Pardubice” and “The Implementation of the Aim 1.2.3. of Community Plan of the City Hall – Daily Centres – the Extension of Capacity of Social Services and Their Offer for Mentally Handicapped People and People with a Combined Handicap“ were elaborated. The last above-mentioned task - assisted living – was completed by the members in the last quarter of the year 2009.

5. Conclusion

The system of CP in the city of Pardubice allows for planning and implementing social services and related services in the way so that the needs of the citizens as far as the offer, availability and quality of the social services are concerned are met. Three parties - those who provide the financial support of these services, providers of these services and their users - are involved in an active way in this planning and implementation.

References:

- [1] “The Community Plan of the Development of Social and Related Services in the City of Pardubice for a Period of 2008-2011”. This document is available on
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