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Community social work as a condition for improving the quality of life of the population of the northern region*

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Abstract. The article identifies the components and factors of the quality of life of the population of the northern region. The specifics of social work in the North are presented. The authors considered the rating of Northern regions of Russia on quality of life and noted the relationship between the quality of life with a form of social work. The potential of community social work in the North focused on activities in the local community and aimed at strengthening individuals, families and social groups is also discussed. The authors revealed priorities and individual areas of social work according to the territorial principle in the development of approaches to implementation of the Federal project "Strong family" of the party "Edinaya Rossiya" ("United Russia") in the Arkhangelsk region.

Keywords: Northern region, quality of life, community social work, local community, political party project "Strong family".

Improving the quality of life of the population of the northern regions while organizing social work

The sustainable development of the northern regions of Russia is a condition for ensuring security since these territories have a special geopolitical significance and natural resource potential. Mission of the North is in the financial and economic support of the country's transition to an innovative stage of development. At the same time, attention is focused on the need to improve the quality of life of the population of the northern regions by creating opportunities for full-value life.

The quality of life integrally combines the index of human development, the degree of satisfaction of the vital needs of the population, and the social and economic welfare of the region. One of the mechanisms for improving the quality of life of various categories of the population is social work aimed at adapting and self-realization of the individuals in a society, changing the social situation, developing public structures at all levels. At the same time, the quality of life is not a "standardized" category, it is a variable system of indicators that can be formed by considering the specifics of the territory and the nature of the needs of the population. In this regard, it seems

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possible to draw a parallel between the quality of life and the form of organization of social work in a particular region.

The basis for the construction of community models of social work in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation was the RF Government Resolution No. 117, March 1, 2004, which approved the "Procedure for the preparation, approval and adoption of agreements between federal executive bodies and executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, transfer the exercise of a part of their powers to each other ...»² (the resolution has lost its force by now — *author's note*). At the same time, no complex long-range studies on the dynamics and comparison of the quality of life across the regions of Russia had been done. We can only operate the indicators of individual ratings, based mostly on statistical data.

The rating of the subjects of the Russian Federation on the quality of life - 2016, compiled on a comprehensive record of 72 indicators, including environmental and climatic conditions, demographic situation, level of economic development, degree of development of the territory and development of transport infrastructure, income level of the population, employment indicators, labor market, housing conditions and security of residence, provision of social infrastructure etc., demonstrates the low positions of most of the northern regions. So, the Arkhangelsk region ranks 71 out of 85.³ In the conditions of the north, indicators of the quality of life are directly dependent on the so-called "northern factors", e.g., the high cost of reproduction of all types of capital, the economic costs of living, severe climatic conditions and man-made load [1, Skufina T.P.]. The situation is complicated by the increase in territorial disparity in the parallel from the center to the periphery and by the social and economic polarization of the population due to disproportion in income, which leads to an increase in social tensions.

At the same time, it is not necessary to associate low quality of life indicators with the status of the northern territory, since the experience of a number of regions where increased attention is paid to the organization of social work is indicative of the opposite. E.g., the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (Yugra) is among the top ten leaders of the above-mentioned rating⁴ and it has the lowest infant mortality rate in the country, and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Dis-

² Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Rossijskoj Federacii ot 01.03.2014 g. № 117 "O poryadke podgotovki, soglasovaniya i utverzhdeniya soglashenij mezhdu federalnymi organami ispolnitelnoj vlasti i ispolnitelnymi organami gosudarstvennoj vlasti subektov Rossijskoj Federacii o peredache imi drug drugu osushchestvleniya chasti svoih polnomochij, a takzhe o vnesenii izmenenij v takie soglasheniya" (v red. ot 09.07.2004). [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 117, 01.03.2014 "On the Procedure for Preparing, Agreeing and Approving Agreements Between the Federal Executive Bodies and the Executive Bodies of State Power of the Subjects of the Russian Federation on Transferring Part of Their Powers to Each Other, and on Making changes in such agreements" (amended on 09.07.2004).] URL: https://rg.ru/2004/03/11/polnomochiya-dok.html (accessed: 15 November 2017). [In Russian]

³ Rejting rossijskih regionov po kachestvu zhizni — 2016. RIA Rejting [Rating of Russian regions on the quality of life - 2016. RIA Rating] URL: https://ria.ru/infografika/20170220/1488209453.html (accessed: 11 November 2017). [In Russian]

⁴ Ibid.

trict ranks first in the ranking of regions by the standard of living of families⁵ and it is a subject of Russia with a high degree of social stability by a generalized characteristic of the living standard of the population [2, Korchak E.A.]. In this regard, it is required to consider the issues of organizing social work in the northern region as a mechanism that contributes to the improving the quality of life of the population.

So, since 2008, according to the Resolution of the Government of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug — Ugra No. 174-p⁶, social work in Ugra is organized according to the precinct principle, which implies maximum approximations of social work to the place where families live; ensuring the client's stay in the usual social and cultural environment; the prevention of family and social problems; development of interdepartmental interaction with the active non-profit sector involvement, public and volunteer initiatives. Each social site got the population standard introduced: in the municipal districts, it ranges 1,500–5,000 people; in the urban districts, 5,000–7,000 residents. In the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, an intensive institutional establishment of the community social work is going on with a view to maximally approximate the population. More than eight years ago, the development of district social services was started. Now, their activities are focused on preventing family troubles and social deviations.

Considering the examples given above and the complexity of transferring the experience of traditional sectoral forms of social work from the subjects of central Russia, the need to form the community models of social work in the northern regions reveals.

The potential of community social work in the northern regions

Community social work is the direction of social work with the local community, through which individuals, families and social groups are involved in the planned activities to solve urgent problems. The focus of community social work is the realization of vital human functions in the family, society and community. A key principle of community social work is the family-oriented approach, which involves working with the client within the usual social and cultural environment, the actualization of the family resources, the neighboring and local community. The term "community" means people living on the territory of the municipality and united by common interests in matters of local importance. The work "at the grassroots level" is built on the broad cooperation of the community with formal systems, which means internal social changes and a high level of community's responsibility [3].

⁵ Rejting regionov po blagosostoyaniyu rossijskih semej po itogam 2016 g.RIA Rejting. [Rating of regions on the welfare of Russian families by the end of 2016. RA Rating] URL: http://riarating.ru/regions/20170515/630062559.html (accessed: 11 November 2017). [In Russian]

⁶Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Hanty-Mansijskogo avtonomnogo okruga — YUgry ot 20 avgusta 2008 g. No 174-p "Ob organizacii socialnoj raboty po uchastkovomu principu v Hanty-Mansijskom avtonomnom okruge — YUgre" (s izm. na 31.10.2014) [Decree of the Government of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug - Ugra of August 20, 2008 No. 174-p "On the organization of social work by the precinct principle in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra" (amended on October 31, 2014)] URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/991021580 (accessed: 12 November 2017). [In Russian]

In other words, it is supposed to transfer social responsibility to the municipal level and delegate authority for the development of the social situation to the communities. It is proved that the ways of increasing the effectiveness of social work are based on the social involvement of the community and the increased participation of citizens, especially socially vulnerable groups, in the implementation of municipal social policy [4]. The basic structure of the community model of social work is the district social service, which is within a "step-by-step approach" and includes a multidisciplinary team of specialists (social and medical workers, teachers, psychologists and lawyers). The institution oversees the territory with a population of up to 2,000 residents and operates in an autonomous mode. As a rule, it has a dual administrative subordination and several sources of funding. In the Russian reality, such centers can be transformed into social assistance centers for families and children, the social protection department of the municipality, and integrated social service centers.

Community social work is a kind of a "buffer" mechanism that allows to implement constructively social policy at the level of municipalities. It originated in the last quarter of the 20th century in the UK and has proven itself to be an effective organizational form, in comparison with sectoral social work focused on solving identified problems and assisting based on a fact of belonging to a particular client category. Social technologies, aimed at working with microsocial formation, are well institutionalized in the Nordic countries, where the local community plays a decisive role in social development thanks to the presence of the population stable connection with the so-called phenomenon of "social rootedness" — local individual and collective identity [5 Ryabov L.A.].

In Russia, the community form of social work is presented fragmentarily. Its wide spread, according to researchers, is hampered by the paternalistic orientation of social policy and the passive position of the greater part of local communities [6, Volchenko S.Yu., pp. 125-126]. The need for territorial differentiation in accordance with the differences in the conditions of life, self-development of communities, providing management autonomy at the municipal level have been identified in 1992 in the concept of social and economic development of the North districts and they are the basic conditions for the re-running the model of sustainable development in the northern regions, based on the interests of an individual and the improvement of living conditions.⁷

However, at present, most residents of the northern regions are more likely recipients of state aid and support than active participants of social policy. Similar behavior has been developed since the times of the USSR when the social security system was based on a policy of protectionism and compensation and contributed to the consolidation of sustainable paternalistic attitudes. Some of the population developed "marginal" mechanisms of adaptation to the conditions of the

⁷Koncepciya socialno-ehkonomicheskogo razvitiya rajonov Severa: utv. Rasporyazheniem Pravitelstva RF ot 18 yanvar-ya 1992 g. № 107-r. [The concept of social and economic development of the North: approved by the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation, January 18, 1992 No. 107-r].URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901607038 (accessed: 12 November 2017). [In Russian]

North, which are manifested in the presence of dependent moods, the lack of motivation for labor, the spread of alcoholism, the growth of violence and aggression as a means of realizing their interests, which becomes the basis for broad determinism deviating and delinquent behavior [7, Konstantinova T.N., 8, Stepanova P.P., 9, Trubitsyn D.A.]. Researchers also observe trends in the devaluation of cultural and family values, the destruction of marriage and family relations, which leads to an increase in the scale of ill-treatment of minors and the growth of social orphanhood.

At the same time, the analysis of the life activity of the indigenous population, Pomor people, indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North demonstrate the high importance of the local community in the life of a person. The community played a huge role in the activities of the northerners and acted as an institution of control over observance and reproduction of customs, and traditions. It was the guarantor of full-fledged functioning and social security. Being a complex cultural, historical, social and economic system, it contributed to the folding of the basic stable archetypes, constructs of consciousness, regulating human behavior. E.g., among the northerners, the phenomenon of infanticide and social orphanhood was almost atypical, as the values of family, kinship, childhood, mutual respect dominated. The community supported families who had adopted orphans and they were called "their". A special type of family system in the North was the Pomor family — an extended, multi-generational, living, as a rule, in one big house and common ownership of a collective farm with a sex-age division of labor, rendering each other various kinds of support and mutual assistance [10, Butorina T.S., Smiliklikova E.A.]. The indigenous small-numbered population also cooperated in small groups, collectives and unions based on mutual support and the principles of "moral economics" [11, Sokolova F.Kh., Troshina T.I., p. 57].

Historically, a peculiar social and cultural environment has been historically developed in the northern regions of Russia, the formation of which was due to the spatial and geographical landscape and the natural and climatic status of the territory, the specific social and economic activity, the widespread literacy, the diversity of folk culture, which constitutes potential prospects for the development of community social work at this time.

The specifics of the organization of the community model of social work in the Arkhangelsk region

The largest entity in the North-West of Russia is the Arkhangelsk Region. The region's territory is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity; living conditions are not the same in terms of climatic, social, economic and infrastructural indicators. The population density is less than 2 people per 1 km². The ethnic composition is diverse: 108 ethnic groups. Representatives of the indigenous minorities of the North (Nenets, Veps, Khanty) live in the Mezensky, Leshukonsky, Pinegsky and Primorsky districts of the Arkhangelsk region, but officially only Nenets people are

included in the category of recipients of additional benefits under the category of indigenous peoples.⁸

In the Arkhangelsk region, quite high poverty rates (14.7%) were recorded, exceeding the national average; migration outflow from the region is also high. Social obligations are carried out in the conditions of deficiency of budgetary financing that hinders development of social sphere. The construction of a social work system in the North is directly dependent on a number of features. The most important of them are:

- sparsely populated territory, focal character of settlement;
- economic life-support costs with the prevalence of expenses of households to meet basic life needs;
- distance from the center, subsidized nature of financing the social sphere;
- underdeveloped transport, social, medical, educational and institutional infrastructure;
- complex natural and climatic conditions, weakening the adaptive capabilities of people.

In the urbanized areas, particularly in relatively large towns with a population of more than 20,000 people (Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk, Kotlas, Novodvinsk, Koryazhma, Mirny, Velsk and Nyandoma), the system of social work is well-formed, the nature of the population's needs and the specifics of development considers urban agglomerations. There a network of standard social service centers with elements of innovative technologies is found. Models of social support are developing. However, in most remote and hard-to-reach areas of the region, the infrastructure of social institutions is poorly developed, and centralized management of jurisdictional territories is difficult due to their considerable "scatter".

Certain attempts to introduce a community model of social work can be noted in the framework of the program "Social Support for Citizens of the Arkhangelsk Region for 2013-2018" ¹⁰: In some districts (Velsk, Kargopol, Nyandoma and Lensk) and cities (Arkhangelsk, Novodvinsk and Severodvinsk), state social services for family and children and complex social service centers tested the technology "Social District Service". Its purpose is to identify families in the early stages of ill-being and assistance in obtaining social support, preventing the lack of supervision and homelessness. However, this practice of social work has not been widely disseminated.

⁸ Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Rossijskoj Federacii ot 24.03.2000 g. № 255 "O Edinom perechne korennyh malochislennyh narodov Rossijskoj Federacii" (v red. ot 25.08.2015) [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 255 of 24.03.2000 "On the Unified List of Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" (amended on August 25, 2015).] URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901757631 (accessed: 15 November 2017). [In Russian]

⁹ Arhangelskaya oblast na pribornoj paneli statistiki. *Itogi i perspektivy Arhangelskoj oblasti*. [The Arkhangelsk Region is on the dashboard of statistics. *Results and prospects of the Arkhangelsk region*] 2017. pp. 50–52. [In Russian]

¹⁰ Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Arhangelskoj oblasti ot 12.10.2012 g. № 464-pp "Ob utverzhdenii gosudar-stvennoj programmy Arhangelskoj oblasti "Socialnaya podderzhka grazhdan v Arhangelskoj oblasti (2013–2020 gody)" (v red. ot 20.12.2016) [Decree of the Government of the Arkhangelsk region of 12.10.2012 No 464-pp "On approval of the state program of the Arkhangelsk region "Social support of citizens of the Arkhangelsk region (2013-2020)" (amended on December 20, 2016)]. URL: http://onegaoszn.ru/documents/npa/464-pp.html (accessed: 11 November 2017). [In Russian]

In this regard, the implementation of special programs and projects aimed at updating approaches to the organization of social work and considering the structural changes in the way of life is important.

Approaches to the organization of community social work within the framework of project activities

Since May 30, 2017, in the Arkhangelsk region, the federal project "Strong Family" of the party "Edinaya Rossiya" ("United Russia") has been going on. The project is leading in the activity and degree of coverage: its geography is indicated by 72 regions of the country. The aim of the project is to draw attention to the problems of the family by working at the local level, consolidating state institutions, public and non-profit organizations, socially active citizens and solving the specific cases. The range of activities is not limited to family, but includes the development of coordination and corrective work in the field of prevention of social deviations, improvement of legal, organizational and management mechanisms for interagency cooperation, the introduction of innovative technologies in the practice of institutions and social organizations, professional skills of accompanying specialists.

Among the priorities of the "Strong Family" project in the Arkhangelsk region are the following areas:

- support for social networks and self-organization at the local level, "neighbor communities", self-help groups and mutual assistance;
- assistance in the creation of volunteer and public organizations;
- carrying out mass socially significant events;
- educational work among the population;
- development of alternative adaptive capacities of the population through special educational programs.

Within the framework of the project, an experimental site — the Velsk District and its 22 municipalities — has been identified. This area has some advantages in comparison with other areas of the region: e.g., in 2015-2017 the Association "Healthy Cities, Districts and Settlements" successfully approved a program aimed at developing a healthy lifestyle of the population through increased activity of local self-government bodies; since 2017, the local Public Council, which includes representatives of various institutions and departments has been working.

The project "Strong Family" assumes the development of approaches for organization and technologies of the community social work, considering the needs and opportunities of every territory. The research component of the "Strong Family" project is to identify a system of indicators of the quality of life. Their assessment will allow monitoring changes in the needs, interests, social and psychological status of the population. All these aspects serve as indicators of the effectiveness of community social work. Since the category "quality of life" is not static, optimally selected indicators will allow to form an objective picture of the social situation and to predict the variants

¹¹Krepkaya semya. Edinaya Rossiya. Partijnye proekty v regione. [A strong family. United Russia. Party projects in the region]. URL: http://arkhangelsk.er.ru/projects/krepkaya-semya/ (accessed: 14 November 2017). [In Russian]

of its development and correcting the content of social work. The developed scientifically based organizational and management approaches will provide the potential for "transferring" community models of social work to other areas of the region, considering the opportunities and needs of the territory.

Conclusion

The implementation of social work in the form of community models can be a condition for improving the quality of life of the population since they are based on the broad involvement of local communities in the development of the social sphere; objectively consider the specificity and infrastructure of specific territories; optimally involve the resources of social partners and business not limited to the scope of budget financing. On the one hand, social work serves as a mechanism for improving the quality of life; on the other hand, the quality of life is a conceptual platform for the formation of community models of social work since it gives the opportunity – through a variable system of indicators — to reflect the dynamics of social situations and build a system of social support, considering changes in the needs of the population.

The special potential of community social work in the northern region is formed by historically established forms of social self-organization, built on the principle of collectivity, since survival in extreme natural and climatic conditions outside the support of the community was virtually impossible. Community social work, which relies on improving the quality of life, will make it possible to equalize the starting opportunities, parity interests of different social groups, ensure the preservation of the traditional way of life of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North by implementing a range of additional guarantees and benefits. In a complex, this will positively affect the preservation of cultural identity, ethnic and ecological norms of the northern civilization, which is the main condition for the sustainable development of the North [12, Snisarenko S.O.].

The party project "Strong Family" in the Arkhangelsk region is focused on developing campaigns for the implementation of community social work based on the representation of various strata of the population and the independence of the social and economic activities of specific municipal entities in territorial public self-government. Considering the size, heterogeneity of the region and the specifics of the districts, the introduction of community models of social work can resolve conflicts between the need to build a unified network of social services and provide social support to the population on the territory of their residence in the usual social and cultural environment.

Thus, the construction of community social work in the northern region will achieve maximum social efficiency with minimal economic costs and come to a consensus between the mechanism for implementing the policy of sustainable development of the North and improving the quality of life through the focus on strengthening human potential, satisfaction of real needs and welfare of the population.

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