

komplikuoja socialin situacij ir apsunkina tiek klient , tiek didesni sistem pad ties keitim ;

2) nevyk s ištekli paskirstymas, institucini (stacionari) – kartu ir brangi paslaug dominavimas ir nepakankamas akcentas organizuoti param bendruomen se ir bendruomeni j gomis;

3) daugelio ger statym nuostat nesilaikymas, l tas j diegimas, finansini galimybi neskai iavimas prieš priimant tuos statymus;

4) privilegij klientams gausa, stipri klient ir

darbuotoj orientacija konkre ios materialin s paramos gavim ir teikim ;

5) maži socialini darbuotoj atlyginimai;

6) aukštos kvalifikacijos socialinio darbo d stytoj ir tyr j stoka (n ra socialinio darbo doktorant ros);

7) koordinacijos ir reguliacijos socialini darbuotoj rengimo srityje stoka;

8) socialinio darbo praktikos ir vadovavimo jai (supervizijos, prievaizdos) stoka.

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PRACTICAL AND ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK DEVELOPMENT IN LITHUANIA

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Broadened summary

Introduction. Several years ago the reaction of an ordinary Lithuanian citizen, politician or even a professional (teacher, medical doctor, psychologist) to such word combinations as *social work* or *social worker* was not only awkward but often negative: What a strange word combination! Is it necessary to make references to *work* when naming a profession? Maybe such notions of recent past as *party work*, *party worker* or *trade union worker* accounted for the negative attitude towards the said word combinations. Almost 10 years passed, and the concepts, such as *social*

work or *social worker* became common. They no longer jar on anybody's ears. However the following questions are still topical: What is social work? What do social workers do? Is it science or art?

The majority of sciences have developed from philosophy. They have scientific names, usually of Latin or Greek origin. The beginning of social work is associated with charity or philanthropic activities. Like other professions originating from human life practice, social work also encounters many difficulties in its fight for an academic

(especially scientific) status. Any area of knowledge of practical descent has to wander about the fortress of science for a certain period of time until finally it is recognised as both academic and scientific field of investigation. Social work is pushing ahead with some difficulty, though its expansion in past years has been really impressive.

But let's put the issues relating to the academic and scientific character of social work aside. The purpose of this article is more concrete: to examine major aspects of social work development in Lithuania. In order to distinguish such aspects, it is necessary to present the conception of social work, and to provide its definition.

All sciences complain about a multitude of definitions. However social work surely takes first place here. Its every trend, theoretical paradigm or perspective offers its own understanding and its own definition. Real trouble is that an exhaustive social work theory is absent. What is called *social work theory* turns out to be a consistent description of theories borrowed from neighbouring sciences (psychology or sociology). The *multifunctional* character of social work - clients' needs, contextual factors, the multitude of applied methods and interaction - also accounts for the great number of conceptions and definitions. A social worker has to act within the space of a multidimensional system: clients represent its first axis, work methods - its second axis, and contextual factors etc. - its third axis. However a concrete case will always be unique; it will never be like the previous or future ones. So, the core of social work may include: * *discovery, evaluation and solution of a social problem*; * *social service giving*; * *organisation and management of social services*; * *interaction between a social worker and a client*; * *reaction to a client's need (concern)*; * *sociotherapy*; * *seeking a change*; * *prevention of social problems*; * *counselling*; * *mediation*; * *changing the environment – client interaction*; * *manipulation of contextual factors*; * *intervention in case of a crisis*; * *socialisation and social integration*; * *social skills' development*; * *integration of knowledge (theory), skills (practice) and values (ethic)*; * *etc., etc., etc.*

If we consider *The Professional Profile of a Social Worker* and *Qualification Requirements and Procedures of Certification* approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL), we shall find that social work and social workers are expected to do many other things besides the above-mentioned ones. In terms of its width and multifunctional character, social work as a practical profession may be likened to medicine. Medicine treats the diseases of a body, and the ones of bodily functions, while social work treats the social diseases of a human, as well as the ones of small or big social groups.

The conclusion is simple: it is impossible to cram the definition of social work into one sentence. Social work can only be described by means of enumerating its functions, or by indicating what a professional social worker is to know and be able to do. A rough model of such a description is provided in Fig. 1 (see Lithuanian version). Social work as an activity (response to concern, solution a problem, manipulation, intervention, etc.) isn't a short-lived reaction. It is a process covering the three most important interacting components: the **client**, the **contextual factors (circumstances)** and the **social worker** himself or herself. It is the social worker who integrates **knowledge** (theory), **skills** (practical activity), and **values** (professional ethic) in the process of interaction with the client. In this model we put a stress not on a one-direction move (social work @ client), but on the interplay (interaction, transaction). In this model the client with his/her concern (need, situation) is also active. The client is not isolated from small groups, community, or society, or, in the times of globalisation, - even from super-societies or international communities (for example, the most recent Lithuanian cases in the Strasbourg Court).

Modern social work is oriented to the client's activity. The client is not expected to be a passive social service consumer or gift recipient. The client must participate actively in the process of problem solving. Social worker becomes a leader in the process of change of client's social situation. Social worker indicates the ways how to satisfy the client's need or to reduce his / her anxiety. So, *social work is the interplay of social worker and his or her client (often a group of*

clients). It is converted into a fact in definite circumstances (political, legal, or material situation, human resources, community or society attitudes). Social worker becomes a kind of manager in the area of discovery, evaluation and solution of client's problems (and sometimes of social problems in general).

Guided by such theoretical attitudes, we would like to view social work in Lithuania. Its short history coincides with the 3rd period of independence in Lithuania's history. We shall consider briefly the becoming of social work and the tendencies of its development. We shall look at its current circumstances, major client groups, social problems, and the training of professional social workers – a major indicator of social work development. Currently Lithuania experiences a strong process of “social fermentation”. This process also involves something that can be already expressed by the following phrase: “*social work in Lithuania*”. It is too early to speak of the **Lithuanian social work**, but social work in Lithuania is already a well-palpable, well-perceived and increasingly weighty reality. It is even more important to stress that the process of social work's becoming and developing has completely outgrown the stage of negentropy: chaos and disorder has turned into a harmonious system - the order of professional activity stabilises (a number of important decrees and laws have been passed), social work is recognised by society and government; a liberal but orderly service system is formed; the contents of activity widens; the rendering and managing of social services turns into professional activities. ***We face the following fact: Within the Lithuanian reality of culture and social functioning social work subculture has emerged and is rapidly forming itself.***

The sources of social work. As has been mentioned, the chief sources of social work are neither philosophy nor sciences originating from it, but practical activities of a human. Only much later, that is in the 20th c. this important area of human practical activities and knowledge identified itself and established intimate relations with the so-called proper sciences, however never merging with any of them completely. When looking for social work sources one has to examine a more distant past of

human history - even to reach beyond it.

First of all, the *social character* of human nature is to be stressed (by the way, one of the meanings of the Latin word *socialis* is *friendly*). Though egoistic tendencies are characteristic of all forms of life (hence aggressiveness, agonistic behaviour, individualism), social animals (including our pre-historic ancestors) could not avoid acquiring opposite, that is altruistic and affiliative tendencies of behaviour. They account for mutual assistance, co-operation, joint care and protection of children, and later - in the historic period - empathy, love of one's neighbour, social support, etc. The development of such pro-social development (from the simplest animal pro-altruistic form through the human altruistic one to the organised social support (or social work) may be shown by means of an image of a branched tree. The *pseudoaltruistic* behaviour of animals gives the offshoot of proper *altruistic* behaviour of hominids. Without it, any sociability (friendliness) is impossible. Later, with the appearance of Christianity, charity and philanthropic activity is formed. It is followed by the understanding of **care** and care institutions (Middle Ages). Out of care tendencies social welfare (support, protection) elements formed before the beginning of the 20th century. In early 20th c. all these beneficial activities turned into the direction of professionalism to eventually become social work. Consequently, the 20th c. can be called **the century of social work development**. In the second half of the 20th c. the tendencies of social work's internationalisation (globalisation) became more prominent. International agreements and United Nations' documents (declarations of rights of various groups of people, equal opportunities rules, social charters, the European social integration) international social workers' organisations, and numerous international social projects are sufficient evidence of social work globalisation.

If altruistic behaviour (and mutual help) is rather individualistic, social welfare and social work is an organised activity carried out on the governmental level. Modern support system and its chief element social work can be regarded as a **transindividual** activity, that is an activity

combining various tendencies originating from altruistic behaviour, complex social network of clients, a multitude of possible social forms and social services, and the legislative basis of social support.

Human cultural activities have modified cultural development beyond recognition. It has diversified the tendencies of altruistic behaviour and mutual help to such an extent that it is risky to derive social work just from this particular point. Social work represents an absolutely different quality. Altruistic behaviour and altruistic human brain are only a biological predisposition to the formation of beneficial activities on the cultural level. Social workers are using conception *solidarity*. However the roots of its understanding are to be looked for in the Catholic social teaching, the Protestant ethic and classical philosophy. The notion of solidarity has been and still is especially exploited by socialist and democratic political movements. Thus, social work may be defined as a joint organisational activity.

Stages of social work development in Lithuania. Social support and social work are very closely related with social transformations. Capitalist economy and industry with which contemporary social welfare system is linked especially strongly, developed geographically in very different periods (compare, for example, the appearance of capitalism in the Netherlands and in Lithuania). Various political perturbations (revolutions, occupations, fights for independence) were involved in the process of social work development. Thus its division into periods differs from country to country. The development of East European social work differs greatly from this successive qualitative and quantitative development. It was complicated by the war and post-war occupation that lasted more than 50 years. In East European countries all this period was the period of silence in social work. Yet in some of the so-called socialist countries certain tendencies in social work had formed before World War II. However such a tradition was absent in the territory of Soviet Union. So, social work as a profession started to form only after the restoration of independence. Due to the attempt not to lag behind Western countries on

the one hand, and to the large-scale social work internationalisation (experience transfer) on the other, the becoming and the development of social work was so rapid and expansive that representatives of other areas of science or practical activities could only envy it. The stages of social work development that lasted for decades in the countries that did not experience any perturbations were overcome by Lithuania in the course of several years. Surely, the mechanical transfer of ideas and experience does not secure properly qualified high-quality social work. Ideas must take root, become a part of individual and collective consciousness or transform into a cultural element of society; or eventually become a professional activity *uniting knowledge, values and skills into a harmonious whole*. It is noteworthy that this process is going on very rapidly. Social work will turn into a professional activity and an area of social knowledge in some 10-15 year - in less than a half of human life span.

Ten years is such a short period of time, the density of events is so great, the rates of development are so rapid that it is even difficult to distinguish definite stages of qualitative change. If in Western countries social work development can be traced back by means of identifying qualitative changes like in a "slow motion film", social work development processes taking place in Lithuania might be likened to a "rapid motion film". Things that had been developing for the whole century in West Europe and North America, here occurred in the course of 10 years (surely, the same standards of social work quality have not been achieved yet: circumstances, especially economic ones, hampered the progress; besides, time is needed for social work culture to become mature).

In spite of such a rapid and extensive penetration of social work into the Lithuanian social reality, it is possible to offer some division into periods. However when dividing social work development into periods we at the same time divide into periods many other aspects of human social activities - social security in general, social policy, development of social services, etc. Our division into periods of Lithuanian social work development is provided in Table 1. Other variants of division into periods are possible (e.g. it is possible to reject absolutely the period of Soviet occupation, or the other way round: to widen

Table 1. Social work development stages in Lithuania

Period	Stage of development	Characteristic
Until 1794	GDL and the Union with Poland	First asylums, Commission of Hospices
1794–1918	Period of Tsarist occupation	Natural family-type support, charity and care; Public Care Administration
1918–1940	Interwar independence	Weak NGOs, charity, family-type support, care provided by church
1940–1990	Model of Soviet social security	Institutionalisation, segregation, medicinisation
1990–1992	Formal acceptance of the notion of <i>social work</i>	Social security reform, demand for social work
1992–2002	Professionalisation of social work	Legal basis, academic boom, international support, primary certification
After 2002	Professional social work	Prevalence of social work professionals, integration of values, knowledge and skills
From 200?	Social euro-integration	Internationalisation of social guarantees and social services

Until 1794: the period of GDL and the Union with Poland. In 1518 the first asylum was opened in Lithuanian. By 1794 the number of such institutions increased to 194. The total number of residents housed by them amounted to 5279. Undoubtedly, the creation of such asylums (hospices, alms-houses) in Lithuania was encouraged (as usual) by social life changes taking place in Europe. Though the first European asylums emerged in Middle Ages, serious changes in the area of supporting poor people (basically beggars) started as late as in the epoch of Enlightenment. The appearance of first asylums and the philanthropical activities in Lithuania were promoted by the firmly established Christianity. However, according to R. Praspaliauskien (2000), more serious discussions of social problems started in the United State of Lithuania and Poland only in the second half of the 18th century. The creation of the Commissions of Hospices (separately for GDL and Poland) was a decisive step in this direction. The GDL Commission of Hospices worked (off and on, to tell the truth) until 1808. To put it otherwise, the Commission extended its activities even into the period of Tsarist occupation. To quote the above-mentioned R. Praspaliauskien (2000), the Commission of Hospices was an institution analogous to contemporary health and social security system. It regulated asylum and begging activities, (while today begging in Lithuania seems to be absolutely beyond regulation). Surely, the abundance of beggars indicated that social care provided by parishes (other types of care were simply absent

then) was developed inadequately.

1794–1918: the period of Tsarist occupation.

Our knowledge of this period is still very vague (historians are more absorbed in the political and economic change of countries than in their social development). It is necessary to remind that at that time peasantry (mainly Catholic) was the prevailing estate (some 90%) in the territory of Lithuania. In that period the simple support of familial nature was dominant. Living by begging was widespread though Tsarist authorities made every effort to fight this phenomenon (arrests, forced labour, deportations to Siberia). However movements of disabled people came into existence, and first schools for handicapped were created then. Churches engaged in care activities. Here and there philanthropic acts would occur.

Just several years after the beginning of Tsarist occupation in stead of the Commission of hospices the Public Care Administration was created. It existed until 1914. Very late (almost one hundred years later than in the countries of West Europe) Lithuanian charity organisations came into being. The first one (1808) was established by Vilnius Charity Society. Later charity associations of similar character sprang up in other towns of Lithuania. Parish charity societies started their activities.

1918–1940: the interwar independence period.

Practically, the period represented the extension of the previous tendencies of care, charity and philanthropy. Mutual aid was widespread not only in Catholic families, among relatives and within communities (e.g. bees in case of some emergency) but also in quite

numerous Jewish communities. Non-governmental organisations appeared. Social work of this period also calls for a separate analysis.

1940–1990: the Soviet social security model.

Social support forms were widely distributed in the years 1940 to 1990. Practically, an all-embracing social support system (such a one that we have now) was absent. Social support (and some major services) were given by trade unions, medical institutions, executive committees, later - by social departments of major institutions, etc. Let us consider an interesting paradox of that period: according to the principle of democratic centralism, all management and control was highly centralised (e.g. all republican ministries were subordinate to corresponding union ministries), however two of them - the Ministry of Local Industry and the Ministry of Social Security - were not regulated from the centre (just because union ministries of such type did not exist).

Elements of social service giving could be traced in trade union or party workers' activity (e.g. a wife could lodge a complaint against her violent husband-party member), or in the activities of teachers (mainly special pedagogues), psychologists, medical people, psychiatrists and other professionals. Organisations of handicapped people were also decentralised: for example, Lithuanian societies of blind, deaf and disabled people (up to 1960). Social activities, support and other rather numerous services provided by the Lithuanian Society of Blind People could be hardly put into one big book. The activities included employment of people with impaired eyesight, opening of psychological (and social) counselling rooms, organisation of leisure activities, establishment of a rehabilitation school, application of the notions of social rehabilitation and social integration, and organisation of corresponding activities, establishment of research laboratories, conduction of local social research, censuses of blind and weak-sighted people (1969 and 1987) in which the collection of social information prevailed (V. and V. Andrejauskas, 1974; A. Bagdonas and co-authors, 1989). The Lithuanian Society of Blind People was the first to introduce into practical usage such professional categories

as a *counselling psychologist* or a *rehabilitologist*. Corresponding services were offered.

1990–1992: formal acceptance of the conception “of social work”. Separate specialists of related areas of science (especially psychologists and sociologists) surely knew the notion of *social work* and used social work categories as early as in the Soviet period. However many of such notions did not fit in with the social life and political system context of that time. So, they were not kept in mind. Therefore it seems now that we have not known anything about social work. However independence came bringing with it the following reforms: liberalisation of entire economic life, privatisation, a massive “rush” for business (even temporarily turning one's back on science and culture). All this caused new social problems. Absolutely new social risk groups appeared. New problems, such as unemployment, homelessness, prostitution, strong economic differentiation among people, poverty, growing rate of public offence were added to the old problems of Soviet period, such as alcoholism and disability. An urgent need to change the ineffective discordant social support system into an effective European one appeared immediately. Here an acute demand for such concepts as *social work* and other related notions and categories was felt.

In 1990–1991 the first social workers from the West (usually North American citizens of Lithuanian origin) arrived. First workshops for medical people were organised, consultations were given to the staff members of Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In 1992 the notion of *social work* was recognised officially. First social work study programs (VU, VMU and Utena College-type Medical School) were prepared. This notion entered the vocabulary of social security system institutions (social welfare and care departments, ministry, care institutions). The years 1990 to 1992 cover the period of social works' official approval.

1992–2002: professionalisation of social work. This is the current stage of our life. Events are recent, consequently, they are too differentiated or fragmentary. Their evaluation

depends on definite individual experience (what did I see? what did I feel? what did I do? what was my impression?). The professionalisation of social work started in 1992 when Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University and Utena College (the former Utena College-type Medical School) began to train social workers. Some may think that the beginning of social work professionalisation should be related with 1994 when first diplomas evidencing the completion of social work studies were issued to graduates. However this result – in the form of study programs – was envisaged in 1992 already.

Circumstances favourable to social work developed rapidly (except, perhaps, economic conditions): legal basis developed and evolved, the infrastructure of social support changed rapidly, like from a horn of profusion support from Western countries flowed to the social area not only in the form of financed projects but also in the form of theoretic and practical training. Who can count now how many social service givers or social politicians and managers have visited Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Germany and other countries in the course of 8 years? Who will count how many social work professionals from other countries organised workshops and training on various levels – starting with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and finishing with municipalities or definite institutions? Who will register literature on social work, both bought and donated to us? It will be enough to mention the library of VMU Centre of Social Welfare Studies. Its rich stock of books has been collected thanks to the USD Conference of Catholic Bishops.

And finally, in the years 1992 to 2002 the Lithuanian Social Workers' Association was formed and further developed. In the course of time it should become a major element of professional self-regulation (licensing of social workers, supervision of professional code of ethic, protection of social workers' rights).

The end of this period – 2002 – has been indicated by us just for orientation purposes. Social work is a continuously changing and developing profession. This change has no limits. However in 2002 we shall have about 4000 trained social workers. This will represent

approximately 50 % of the total number of all people engaged in social work (providing social services). The primary certification will be completed by that time. Practically, in the area of social practice there will be not a single person unaware of elements of social work, social policy, or professional ethic. Certification will urge part of them to undergo retraining.

From 2002: professional social work. It is difficult to evaluate the quality of social work, that is the level of professionalism, objectively as the latter depends on a multitude of factors, not only on professional qualifications of social workers. However: 1) approximately in 2002–2003 the number of professional social workers will be equal to, or maybe even exceed, the number of social service givers without professional qualifications; 2) almost 100 % of the latter will have improved their professional skills by means of various training courses, including obligatory courses for certification; 3) we shall have sufficient quantity of translated and original literature. Social workers will learn how to integrate the three most important components – knowledge, values and skills – into their professional activities.

General conclusion. Practically, the whole period of history of Lithuanian social support from the GDL formation till 1990 may be viewed as a stage of non-professional support. It is characterised by the prevalence of institutionalised social services provided by various professionals and non-professionals. Until 1940 such activities were regulated by charity and secular philanthropic organisations, and, to a minor degree, by state. In the years 1940 to 1990 – 50 years precisely – it was nationalised which minimised the role of the church. After 1990 an all-embracing system of social security calling for decentralised professional social work and its types was started.

Globalisation and internationalisation of social work. The events in the area of social activities of past decade indicate that social work feels cramped by the limited space of one country. Within the scope of western civilisation this activity keeps abreast with the globalisation in other areas, or maybe leaves them behind. Social work internationalisation and globalisation levels

off the differences among East, West, North and South. It urges less developed countries to do their best. In this way the social Europe - one of the purposes of European integration - is created. Social eurointegration means not only universal social support guarantees within the European territory but also standardisation of quality requirements for support giving (and social work), sharing of experience, and preparation of joint social projects. Social work internationalisation and experience distribution is encouraged also by international social workers' and social work schools' organisations, international schools, workshops and conferences, and joint international projects. Lithuanian social work specialists, social service institutions and social workers' training institutions are participants of many important events and members of many above-mentioned organisations.

Contextual factors of social work in Lithuania. The social drama takes place not in an empty space but in the environment full of various factors - under certain circumstances (within a certain context or against a certain background). *Contextual factors of social work include everything that determines social work success (or failure) and a possibility to change client's situation, or solve a social problem, or give social services, etc.* Contextual factors can be divided into three groups:

1. **External factors.** They represent the background, or everything that influences the "social worker – client" system from the outside. External circumstances include the legislative basis of social work, cultural traditions, socio-economic situation, changes in political life, etc.
2. **Client's characteristics.** They represent essential biological, psychological, behavioural and adjustmental properties (e.g. personal characteristics, intellect, gender, health condition, style of living, habits, inclination for dependencies).
3. **Social worker's characteristics.** They represent social worker's competence, age, gender, education, economic status, attitudes to social risk persons, personal properties

(communicability, aims oriented to other people, friendliness, empathy, social intelligence).

Here we shall consider external factors very briefly and formally, without any penetration into the deep layers of client's or social worker's personality.

The influence of **socio-economic situation** on social work is of two kinds: 1) by interacting with client's characteristics, it becomes the external source of social problems and of separate categories of clients; 2) it determines the success of social work (e.g. money and human resources, possibility to satisfy clients' needs).

There are social problems and there is a circle of clients that has always been and will be independent of the functioning of economy. They are disabled, old-age pensioners, families with a disabled child, families with many children, and their problems. The satisfaction of social needs of persons of these groups is the social problem in this case. However the liberalisation of market that started in the period of "Perestroika" and gained speed after the declaration of independence stimulated abrupt social differentiation of people. If the liberalisation had been more consecutive and less "wild", and if privatisation had been more honest, the number of unemployed, or impoverished farmers, or offences and offenders, cases of corruption, etc. would have been smaller. Weak economy and gradually decreasing number of working people have to bear a heavy burden, that is to maintain an enormous number of the so-called socially excluded persons: disabled, prisoners, orphans, homeless, unemployed or employed in black market but supported by social guarantees from public support funds.

Let us have a look at the socio-economic reality of Lithuania. In 1990, 90% of people were employed in state sector; today – a little more than 20%. The result might have been satisfactory if private sector had secured the level of production observed, for example, in 1988–1990.

In 1992 the number of prisoners amounted to 9175; in 1999 it totalled to 14404 (though the number of amnesties is increasing). We are informed that up to 10% of Lithuanian citizens have had or still have criminal records. Such

criminalisation of society must have been generated by unfavourable conditions of life. Let us add to this number some 8–9% of disabled, 15% of unemployed, an unidentified number of poor (it is said that they rate up to 18–22%) or otherwise ill-functioning people, let us add children, high and higher school students. We shall see that the social burden borne by employed people is enormous. It is worthwhile to note here that Lithuania's GDP per capita rate is three times smaller than that of Greece, the least-developed EU country, or five times smaller than the corresponding average EU rate.

Periodically conducted household surveys ask respondents to give a general evaluation of their quality of life. 25.5% of respondents consider themselves to be very poor or poor. However as many as 72.2% think their life quality is medium. The same question was given to 1031 disabled persons (1998–1999 survey). The rate of handicapped who consider their life quality to be medium is only 40.2%. Subjective assessments of life changes in past 5 years is assessed rather negatively. Back in 1994, "Baltijos tyrimai" survey group examined people's opinion about the most acute problems relating to the place of residence. Among the listed problems, alcoholism, unemployment and poverty scored highest. The same list of problems we offered to social workers (600 respondents – in 1997; 150 respondents – in 1999). The above mentioned three problems also took the leading position.

The general conclusion is obvious. The socio-economic situation is not favourable to the development of social work: numerous social problems limit the contents of social work as clients predominantly require material support (such orientation has been evidenced by several research works made by us); limited resources for the solution of social problems and for the satisfaction of clients' needs. However the development of social work progresses rather quickly. It means that enough of attention to social sphere has been spared by those who take political decisions (seeking for electors' votes, driven by their responsibility, etc.). Surely, bad socio-economic situation itself urges to do something, that is to enlarge the range of social services and to develop social work.

One of the paradoxes of our social reality is the following: the decline in economic life has not hampered the creation of relatively good and modern **legislative basis** of social support (and social work). As far back as in the first years of independence the *Law on Social Integration of Disabled People* was passed. Basing on it, the *State Program for the Rehabilitation of Disabled 1992–2002* was prepared. It was this *Law* and subsequent *Program* that enabled us to create a complex infrastructure for the support of disabled people. To tell the truth, many provisions of this law are ineffectual or simply inactive. There are weak elements within the infrastructure (e.g. assessment of disability), but the advance made since the Soviet situation is immense.

The *Law on Social Services* is the most close to social work. It gives a definition of social services, lists the purposes of service giving and circumstances under which the said services are granted, it offers a social service classification. Pursuant to the *Law* the *Social Service Catalogue* is to be issued annually (the first was issued in 1997, the second – in 2000).

Social support (and social work) is made even more concrete by various decrees, orders, regulations and other documents passed by the Government, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Special attention should be paid to the following documents: *Professional Profile of a Social Worker*, *Social Workers' Qualification Requirements and Qualification Certification Procedures*, *Social Worker's Training Standard*.

However social work and practice distribution has been advancing in one direction: social work of western type influences social work development in Lithuania. It is possible that western experience in Lithuania encourages new ideas and a search for new methods of influence. **International context** exercises its influence on the Lithuanian social work by many channels, such as training courses, lectures of visiting teachers, literature received, conferences, workshops, Internet, mobility of students, teachers and social workers, etc. For example, joint project of World Bank, SIDA (Sweden) and Lithuania resulted not only in 14 pilot community service centres but also in more than 100 workers trained in Lithuania and Sweden, regular

conferences, further development of community and service centres through the created methodological centres.

When assessing the influence of international context on social work in Lithuania, the first place should be given to Scandinavian countries (especially Sweden). Among other countries Holland, Germany, USA, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, and Great Britain should be distinguished. Social work internationalisation, its rapid development in Lithuania encourages another interesting phenomenon: Lithuania is gradually becoming the centre of transit of social work ideas in the direction of the East.

Social services givers represents an important component of social work too. I have written *social service givers* not *social workers* intentionally. Social services that do not require high professional competence so far dominate our social support system. However with the development of social support, an increasing demand for professional social workers - social service organisers, administrators, counsellors, aides, mediators, etc. is felt. It is important to make sure from time to time what specialist we have in our social support system.

Under the current boom of social work development, qualification improvement and retraining, assessment of social service givers' education or their professional competence seems to be a risky endeavour. However it is possible to state at least the following: non-professionals, or to be more precise - people having other professions, sometimes very distant from social area - still dominate social support system. In 1997 we surveyed social service givers of 4 regions (Anykšiai, Molėtai, Utena and Švenčionys) as well as those working at Vilnius and Šiauliai Care and Welfare Departments and at some care institutions. In 1998–1999 the same survey covered 121 people working at pilot centres of the said regions and towns. In 1998–1999, 200 questionnaires were distributed among 50 municipalities (4 questionnaires for each one). 159 filled questionnaires were returned to us. Data indicate that the prevailing professions of social service givers are as follows: teacher, engineer, health care worker, and economist.

603 social service givers who participated in

1997 survey were given a list of functions to perform. The choices show that 3 years ago social service givers' activities were sufficiently versatile: besides material support distribution they also acted as counsellors, or problem discoverers, or care takers, or nurses, or service givers at home. The usually chosen functions were as follows: counselling and advising – 73.1; care – 73.3; educating – 47.1; evaluating – 43.3 %. Answers to the question what functions should be carried out by a social worker were the following: counselling – 92.4; care – 86.6; educating – 79.9; service organising – 72.6 %. When asked to give the time needed to carry out particular functions, they revealed that the greatest amount of time was needed for service giving at home, for educating and counselling. The structure of time needed to carry out official and practical activities depended on the office held by a respondent: senior inspectors and inspectors use most of their work time to carry out organisational work and give consultations, while ordinary employees – to give services at home, care and nurse.

Until the beginning of year 2000, chaos has dominated the area of positions held by social workers: though municipalities belonged to the same state they had different office systems. In many municipalities the office called *social worker* was characterised by one of the lowest qualifications. Activities corresponding to social work in terms of their contents were carried out by inspectors. The 1997 survey showed that 33% of respondents called themselves *social workers* (usually those were workers rendering services at home); 8.2% considered themselves to be - heads; 6.8% – senior inspectors; 8.7% – inspectors; 8% – nursing workers; 5% – nursing aides; 14.4% – teachers; 9.4% – other office holders.

By the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of January 07, 2000, a list of positions held by persons engaged in social work was approved. Next to every position corresponding functions carried out by a person holding the said position are given.

The approval of the office list will not only standardise the system of offices but will also encourage the establishment of social work as a professional activity in the consciousness of

society. Another step will be the relation of positions held by social workers with social workers' categories approved by MSSL order of January 29, 1998. This document provides not only the categories of a social worker but also qualification requirements and the procedures of social workers' qualification. Though the primary qualification of social workers has not been completed yet, we can say assuredly that this document and the qualification will play an especially positive role in the development of social work in Lithuania:

- 1) it has encouraged and will further encourage persons who give social services to study social work and undergo retraining;
- 2) it made all social service givers without any exception (including those without a university or higher non-university training) to widen their knowledge by taking the following obligatory courses: a) The Lithuanian Social Security System; b) The Elements of Social Work; c) Co-operation and Professional Ethic; d) specialisation subject;
- 3) qualification requirements given in the document are kind of a ministandard according to which social worker's functions are regulated;
- 4) the very process of qualification and the description of one's own experience will help to disseminate positive social work experience (the more so that persons who seek higher social category are encouraged to do it constantly);
- 5) the introduction of social workers' categories will help to differentiate wages, to forecast possible career of definite persons.

The categories of social worker (SW assistant, junior SW, SW, senior SW, leading SW and SW expert) are connected with the level of education. Additionally to the level of education, major factors in category acquisition are: labour experience duration, qualification improvement by various courses, and the quality of carried out activities.

The academic and the research aspects of social work. In 1992 we did not have any single person in Lithuania who could introduce himself / herself as a social work specialist. In the spring of 2000 we had about 825 qualified social workers (and social pedagogues): 395 of them

acquired professional qualifications and a degree (bachelor's or master's) at universities, 430 – at college-type schools. Currently we experience a boom in social workers' training: in 2000/2001 academic year more than 2500 persons will be studying social work or social pedagogy according to various social work programs (in 1999/2000 academic year their number totalled to approximately 2500). Social work and related variant studies are organised by universities (*social work* – by Vilnius and Klaip da universities; *social welfare* by Vytautas Magnus University; *social pedagogy* – by Vilnius Pedagogical and Klaip da universities; *social pedagogy and psychology* – by Šiauliai University; *social work in the area of children's rights protection and penitentiary system* – by the Academy of Law; *social management* – by Vilnius Technical University; *social work within the health care system* – by Kaunas Medical University; *social education* – by Kaunas Technological University); college-type schools and colleges (*social work* – by Utena, Šiauliai, Panev žys, Kaunas, and Klaip da Medical colleges; *social pedagogy* – by Utena Medical and Vilnius Pedagogical colleges) and even by vocational schools (e.g. Aukštadvaris Vocational School).

First of all, one is stunned by the obviously oversized scale of social work and social pedagogy in relation to such a small country. Each educational institution organises studies for several dozens of students, and this increases the education costs greatly.

Another stunning thing is the variety of names given to this profession, for example: social work, social education, social pedagogy and psychology, and social welfare. Not only names but also study programs increase in number, especially those belonging to two different stems - social work and pedagogy (social pedagogy). We have not organised yet a serious discussion in Lithuania regarding the harmonisation of those two traditions. Several solutions to the problems are possible: 1) social pedagogy is a social work specialisation (in this case social pedagogy would be a counterpart of *school social work* as it is called in English-speaking countries); 2) social work and social pedagogy are historically-

developed synonyms though semantic meanings of these notions are different (the German variant); 3) two independent traditions with possible specialisations are left. The author of this paper thinks that a compromise is possible as there are two social work directions at education institutions: 1) one aimed at social welfare, mediation among child, family, school and community; 2) another aimed at social education (the occupational, or educational. A social pedagogue (pedagogical specialisation) might realise his/her functions relating to social education, while a school social worker might realise his/her social welfare functions.

Speaking of social workers' training, another important question should be mentioned: what level of education is needed to secure professional social service giving and organising? In USA and Canada the answer is a Master's degree in social work (6 years of study). In many European countries a higher non-university education diploma is sufficient (3–4.5 years of study). In Lithuania we have in stock all possible variants of the world: from 2-year studies at a vocational school to university studies (4-year Bachelor studies, 2-year Master studies – 6 years in total). The joint Finnish and Lithuanian 1998 project titled *Social Workers' Training in Lithuania* included a recommendation to divide all social welfare activities into two parts: social work (organisational and managerial aspects) and social services (giving of concrete social services at institutions or centres). Social work necessarily requires a university-type education, while the giving of social services requires college or university-type education).

A typical picture of a university social work study model (VU variant) is given in Fig. 9 (see Lithuanian version). It shows a complication characteristic of many other European countries: social work studies finish with the Master degree level as this trend of knowledge is not included in the classification of sciences adopted in Lithuania - which is important in order to organise doctoral studies. Masters of social work have to continue their doctoral studies within the programs of educology or sociology doctoral programs. Such a situation is not advantageous to the training of highly-qualified social work

specialists (researchers, teachers), and, consequently, to social work development.

603 social workers interviewed in 1997 thought that: social work requires no education at all – 7.6 %; secondary education is sufficient – 18.6 %; any college-type education is sufficient – 23.1 %; college-type social work education is sufficient – 28.2 %; higher social work education is necessary – 22.2 %. Respondents felt that they most of all needed knowledge of the following areas: social work – 41.2; psychology – 40; medicine – 21.3; computer knowledge – 13; and legislation – 19.8 %.

Higher non-university social work studies are regulated by the recently adopted *Social Workers' Training Standard*. Similar standard ought to be prepared also for university social work studies. This level of studies badly needs order. Disorder was determined by several factors:

- 1) misinterpretation of autonomy of universities (I do what I want, or, to be more precise, what I can);

- 2) different influences of western-type social work on social work study programs of different universities (for example, Vytautas Magnus University is influenced by USA; Vilnius University – by Scandinavia);

- 3) absence of knowledge in the area of social work; overstressing of some function of social work at the expense of other ones (welfare, management, or education);

- 4) tendencies of **professional reductionism** – the channelling of one area's problems and their solutions into the methodology and category system of another area (pedagogical, psychological or sociological reductionism).

The merging of *social work* notion with the word **research** is a complicated thing. Such word combinations as *sociological, economic, psychological research* sound very convincingly. However the title of this section ends with an interrogative mark. The word combination **research in social work** sounds bad because it has the preposition *in*. The word combination **social work research** sounds as if social work itself were assessed by means of research.

Specific social work research methodology is absent – here the same methodology of social sciences is used, only sociologists call it sociological methodology, psychologists –

psychological methodology, economists – economic methodology (or methods). Therefore we suggest calling social work research (or research in social work) simply *social research*.

As we have a big number of social work students, we cannot help making extensive social research work (course papers, Bachelor's, final, or Master's theses). Several hundreds of such works are written annually. State has never financed social research as yet. To develop social research and to publish corresponding results (they are interesting sometimes) it is necessary to have an independent periodical. Bachelor's and Master's theses, papers of doctoral students, teachers or other researchers could be published in it.

Evaluational conclusions. We have considered several aspects of social work in Lithuania: social work origin, development, basic components, contextual factors (circumstances), and social workers' training. How are we to evaluate this mass of events and their rapid change? What level has the social work development reached? In what direction are we moving? All this occurs before the eyes of those who currently do, study or teach social work. How are we to find the most objective criteria for the evaluation of social work condition in Lithuania? Which of the currently existing peculiarities and tendencies will last? A historian is in a far better position as he / she has to evaluate events of a more distant past. In such a case the persistence of a certain phenomenon and its further development serve as an important criterion. When a current situation is to be evaluated, this criterion loses its validity as we do not know what will last and what will develop further. Therefore we have to choose between the two options: 1) to carry out as objective analysis of the situation as possible by means of a qualitative and quantitative research (it needs human resources and funds); 2) to rely ourselves on the opinion of separate persons though it will always be rather subjective and fragmentary.

An attempt to assess the beginning of social work in Lithuania has been already made: we mean the work done by R. Kulys and R. Constable (1994). Now we have 2001. In the course of 7 years a number of important things occurred: social work has undergone a many-sided

development; circumstances have changed, the training of social workers has become uncontrollably powerful. Social work has become a Lithuanian reality, a specific subculture (as a type of health care, as a network of cultural institutions, etc.). Though at the highest level of research social work lags behind educology, sociology or psychology, in terms of the number of students or abundance of lower-level research and especially the scope of practical work it outstrips all such related areas taken together. Not a single of these areas has such an intricate infrastructure as social work.

Social work has always been and currently is (especially in Lithuania) **many-faced**. This many-facedness and eclecticism is the outcome of inadequate integration of knowledge. If social practice makes us integrate knowledge received by various channels from various scientific sources because every case forces us to do something definite and useful to the client, this said many-facedness on the level of social workers' training (especially university training) reveals itself even formally. At college-type schools and colleges proper social work students are taught related subjects by teachers belonging to social work area. At universities general subjects are taught by department or faculty teachers basing on theories and paradigms of their own sciences, not on the ones developed around social work. In this way students are given fragmentary knowledge of various sciences (economy, sociology, psychology, medicine, law, etc.) that are not directly connected with social work. Some justify this many-faced and reductive character of social work in the following way: social work is essentially an interdisciplinary area of knowledge.

The diversity of social work's naming evidences the same: if an institution offers pedagogical studies – all social work is viewed from the point of pedagogy, so a suggestion is made to name the whole area of human support *social pedagogy* (reason: a human is taught and learns all his/her life); if it is thought that words with the root *educac* are more suitable for naming education, then a profession called *social education* is created; if the organisers of studies feel certain sentiments to psychology or want to make pedagogy more attractive, then a profession

called *social pedagogy and psychology* appears. Law and medical study institutions even at the level of Bachelor studies try to specialise for specific law and order or health care areas. Here we encounter the question: with what profession will those young people identify themselves in several years? With the profession of a lawyer, teacher, educator, psychologist, or health care worker? They will hardly feel real social workers. Our view is as follows: at least at the background (Bachelor's) stage of university studies should follow social work traditions (the so-called *generalistic approach*). Specialisation for various areas starts only after completion of basic studies. They include specialised professional studies, Master studies, specialised qualification improvement courses and specialised practical work.

Let us, however, go back to more pleasant things and consider once more the social work model (Fig. 1, Lithuanian version). I think that a big number of social workers can already state that they have acquired a minimum quantity of **knowledge**, have mastered major social work **skills**, and recognise certain **values** and follow definite principles of **ethics**. However the most weak point must be skills and practical work in general. We lack tradition and culture of proper social work. Practical work management is another weak point. Universities are oriented to academic purposes. They sometimes forget that it is high time to face real life and prepare specialists not only for research laboratories but also for professional work in the area of economy, law, social security, etc. That a professional who not only knows but is also able to apply his / her knowledge in practice is needed.

Responses show that the situation in the area of social service giving is not so bad. The survey of 1997 indicated very favourable attitudes of clients to social workers and their activity. In 1999 we analysed social policy in the area of disability. 1042 disabled people were surveyed in all territories of Lithuania. Again favourable attitude to social service givers was revealed. It is interesting that the farther a public management institution is from a human, the more negative assessment it receives. So, the most positive

evaluations were received by municipal care and welfare departments, church, and NGO of disabled people, while the Seimas and the Government got the least positive evaluations.

The general conclusion is as follows: social work - as an area of study, as a profession, and as a practical activity - already exists in Lithuania. It has the following **strong points**:

- 1) a relatively good legislative basis;
- 2) the infrastructure of social service giving and social work is created;
- 3) social worker's profession is sufficiently popular; the number of students is great, and this will secure selection of really good professionals;
- 4) students, teachers, and already working specialists are highly interested and motivated not only by money;
- 5) solidarity of Catholic families, especially important under weak economy, is the circumstance that makes social work easier;
- 6) international context with its strong and positive influence;
- 7) eclecticism and many-facedness (geographical, theoretical, subject-related) encourages a wider view of social problems and their solution.

Weak points of social work in Lithuania are as follows:

- 1) lack of resources (especially financial ones) - this complicates social situation and makes the change of situation of both clients and larger systems more difficult;
- 2) thoughtless distribution of resources; prevalence of institutional - consequently expensive - services and inadequate stress on support organisation on community-based social services and social support;
- 3) neglect of many good provisions of the laws; slow enactment of laws; inadequate evaluation of chances before the adoption of said laws;
- 4) abundance of privileges given to clients; strong orientation of clients and workers to the reception of concrete support, or to its giving;
- 5) small wages received by social workers;
- 6) lack of highly qualified social work teachers and researchers (absence of doctoral studies);
- 7) lack of co-ordination and regulation in the area of social workers' training;
- 8) lack of good organisers of social work practice

References (See Lithuanian version)