

Social Work in Crisis Times: New Challenges and Lessons of Civil Society Initiatives

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Challenges and lessons of the pandemic time

- Time of pandemic
 - Tragedies and losses
 - Initiatives and discoveries
- Isolation and distance
- Cohesion and support

- According to our survey of people with limited mobility in May-June 2021,
- the altruist attitudes and willingness to help people around (even unfamiliar)
- increased during the last year in more than 30% of the sample.

Cohesion is
weakened

- especially in deprived social groups who found themselves in a social vacuum



Among the elderly,
persons with
disabilities, ethnic
minorities, poor

- there was a lack of support from the state and family



CSOs became
more visible

- extended a helping hand to the needy, the infirm, cancer patients, children and adults in care institutions and hospices

A photograph showing the interior of a bus. Several passengers are visible, including a man in a blue beanie and a woman in sunglasses. The word 'ЭВАКУАЦИЯ' is overlaid in large white Cyrillic letters.

ЭВАКУАЦИЯ

EVACUATION project

Almost a hundred of
persons
released from the care
institutions and

placed in foster families
or in accompanied
accommodations

EVACUATION project

The most important outcome:

a unique policy as a result of
negotiation with four
governmental departments

on a shared custody between

the director of an institution
and reliable friends of a resident



CSOs initiated the project

- In Moscow:
 - Home with a Light House
 - Life Path
- In Saint Petersburg:
 - Perspektives
 - Anton is Nearby
 - City Association of Public Organizations of Parents of Children with Disabilities (ГАООРДИ)



Public reaction

- Ambiguous public reaction to the Evacuation project
- Lida Moniava, the director of a CSOs Home with a Light House,
- became the guardian of 12-year-old boy Kolya
- was hit by a wave of hatred and accusations on social networks,
- complaints were filed with the guardianship authorities



- Among the disaffected were parents of children with disabilities, who opposed Kolya's inclusion in school.
- Lida was reproached for bringing a child with a severe disability to school, swimming pool, other public places




"We already have enough of our negativity"

"Good deeds should be done quietly"

"Do not flaunt yourself"

CSOs rendering social work services, promote values



Micro: individual level of promoting new practices, approaches and values, also within organizations

Meso: promoting values and changing behaviours, adopting new policies on the local ground but also within administration bodies and institutions

Macro
within the political context, at the legislation level, within the system of social services, education

Conclusions

The pandemic has compounded issues of accessibility and inclusion,

exposing the issue of deprivation and exclusion

The isolation conditions have exacerbated the needs of the most vulnerable and needy.

A concept of 'inclusion' acquired real meanings,

But it turned out that not everyone shared them



The civil society initiatives made an important input not only in basic service provision, but also induced policy changes.

Conclusions



A case of 'Evacuation' project as an important step towards de-institutionalization of care for people with disabilities in Russia

- The results show that the endeavors of CSOs may induce challenges and even generate conflicts
 - especially when they work on the edge,
 - insisting on revolutionary actions in the direction of social work,
 - challenging and promoting certain values,
 - becoming an engine for policy making

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