Social work in Romania

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Where we are...
Romania...
Romania – General information

- GDP/inhabitant (PPP) - 12.476 $/year (2011),
- Capital: Bucharest (1.6 mil. Inhab.)
- Official language – Romanian; Ethnic Minorities: Hungarian, Roma, others
- Religion: Christian orthodox
- Independent since 1866
- 01.01.2007 joined EU
A historical perspective on social work in Romania

- XIV-XIX century mainly charity work for the poor and disadvantaged
- Examples:
  - 1365 near Bucharest (Campulung Muscel) a village for the ill (blind, disabled)
  - 1480 in Moldova (Stefan the Great)
  - 1524 near Bucharest (Curtea de Arges monastery) – shelter, food, clothes and money
  - XVI century – regulations – poor card/allowing begging – only for the disabled; poor able to work receiving help only if proving insufficient gains from work, begging forbidden
  - 1686 – the dean (clerical) of Bucharest – a list of the poor receiving money from the city hall budget
Beggars neighborhood
– 1695 – two main social assistance institutions for the poor
– 1775 – Child Protection Law
– 1782-1785 - Poor box

– 1831-1832 – Organic Regulations – social assistance established
– 1881 – social assistance service of Bucharest city hall
Social work education - history

- 1929 University education in social work - Principesa Ileana School of Social Work– with sociologists support
- 1929-1936 a Social Work Review
- 1947 communist rule
- 1952 Social Work education from university to post-high school
- 1994 – first SW graduates (4 years study)
- Since 2005 - 3 years undergraduate (Bologna)
- In 2011: 22 Social Work programs at university level
Social work in Romania

- After the fall of the communist regime the images with children living in institutions/orphanages in international media – revealed a shocking reality (see documentary “Children of the decree”)
- over 100,000 children in residential care – 1990
- In the ‘90s – charity work
- 1997 – the reform of child protection system
- 1999 children with disabilities from hospital-type institutions & boarding schools – changed administration from health/education to social protection
- 23,000 children in residential care – in 2012
Current situation: 1990-2012

- Transition from socialist/centralized economy to free market
- Economic downturn, restructuring, unemployment, migration (1.8 mil. in Italy), demographic decline (22.5-19 mil), polarization (GINI 1989 – 21; 2008 – 32)
- 1995 first social welfare law (with WB support)
- International donors – IMF, WB, EU, USAID
- Construction of social work services and system
- 2001 – first social work law/then 2006, 2011
- 2004 – law on the statute of social workers – established National College of Social Workers
Socio-economic data

- Pensioners – 2.5 mil. – 1990 vs. 5 mil. 2012
- Employees – 8 mil. 1990 vs. 4.8 mil. 2012
- Dependency ratio: 1.36
- Unemployment rate: 7.7% (8.2% men/7.0% women)
- Youth unemployment rate: 25.4%
- Employment rate: 57.9% (64.8%/51.1%) – youth: 23%
- Poverty higher in rural areas
In 2010 the second poorest EU country

Relative poverty (60% of median) 22.4% in 2009

32.2% - material deprivation in 2009

41% at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (49% for children)
Social protection expenditures - % of GDP, 2000-2008, EU-Romania
Example: Social protection of children

- De-institutionalisation policy- external pressures (pre-EU accession condition)
- Development of services for children and families – from large institutions to family-type ones + day-care centers, prevention services, social services in hospitals, services for counseling of families
- Some cash benefits for children and families:
  - universal child allowance – from 2/3 years to 18 yrs. (10 €)
  - means-tested family allowance (10-40€)
  - newborn baby allowance – up to 2/3 years (50 €)
  - birth allowance (50€)
  - newborns trousseau (35-40€)
  - child rearing indemnity for working mothers – 85% of last years income 2/3 years (150-800 €)
  - Minimum income guaranteed (30€/month – 1 person)
- 2001-2004 inter-country adoptions banned, after 2005 quasi-banned
Romanian welfare state...

- Post communist corporatist-conservative (Deacon, 1992)
- Looking for an identity (Lazar, 2000) and moving towards liberal/Southern Rim model (Preda, 2002)
- Poor inegalitarian (Cantillon, 2011) along with the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Cyprus
- Developing Eastern European (Kuitto, 2011), along with the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia
Welfare policy in Romania

- Comprehensive welfare system in terms of organization and vulnerable groups covered
- Public pensions predominant in social protection exp. – social insurance Bismarck-ian model; mandatory private pensions (2008); private pensions less present (260,000 in 2011)
- Universal benefits/services reduced (education, child allowance)
- Health social insurances
- Mainly cash transfers, but small value
- Many changes...
Human resources delivering social work services

- huge discrepancies between rural and urban areas
- average number of personnel working in a public social assistance service (including for children, but not solely) is 25 – urban vs. 1-rural,
- More than 60% of those working in prevention services at rural (64%) or urban level (61%) do not have specialized university education
- From those with higher level education just 1 in 4 person has an appropriate qualification.
- In terms of staff working in specialized child protection services (including residential institutions and prevention services) from 2007 until 2011 their number decreased by 20% and only about 25% of them have specialized qualifications, 8% being qualified social workers.
- 0.9% of GDP on social services (Kuitto, 2011)
Human resources qualifications in Social services – rural vs. urban, Q1 2011

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No HE</td>
<td>post-high school specialised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff with SW responsib. In localities without Public Social Services</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total categ</td>
<td><strong>42.62</strong></td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff employed of PSS</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total categ</td>
<td><strong>6.21</strong></td>
<td>0.91</td>
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Recent changes

- GDP down by 9% in 2009-2010
- In 2010 – IMF, EU and World Bank (WB) 20 billions euros bailout
- In July 2010 the government cut overall public spending by 25%.
- **cash benefits** for children and families
  - cut by 15% (e.g. child rearing indemnity for working mothers),
  - tightened eligibility criteria (e.g. means-tested family allowances – lower threshold),
  - dissolved (e.g. birth allowance, newborns trousseau).
- child allowance – **still universal ???**
- Wages of all public sector employees were cut by 25% between July 2010 and January 2011 and other work related benefits were abolished.
- Around 100,000 civil servants were fired and new hiring frozen.(1 new employed for 7 vacancies)
- Since January 2011 wages in the public sector increased by 15% and in June 2012 (just before local elections) another 8% were added still not achieving the previous level (before the cut).
Changes in the social work system

- New law - in December 2011 (law no. 292/2011)
- New Reform Strategy for 2011-2013 (with WB support)
  - To reduce public spending on social assistance by 0.8% of GDP.
- The new legislative package
  - more **conditionalities** on the beneficiaries of services and benefits,
  - more **individual** responsibility
  - more **active participation** from the recipients of benefits.
  - to improve administration and reduce fraud and errors, **the Social Inspection** is receiving a more important role in monitoring the compliance with the new regulations – **control**
  - More room for contracting out
  - **Services** vs. cash
- The general political discourse is stigmatizing towards those relying on benefits from the State (not only social assistance recipients, but also pensioners).
- A national control of the Social Inspection on the minimum income guaranteed scheme in 2010 revealed that 12% were illegal beneficiaries
Conclusion

- Romanian social policies are still looking for an identity
- Toward minimalist welfare state/US?
- Services for the poor underdeveloped
- Poverty & material deprivation – present; 2020 target 580,000 less poor
- Trend - more targeting and blaming of the poor...
References

- Eurostat database for statistics
- *Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection* website (for data and legislation) [http://www.mmuncii.ro](http://www.mmuncii.ro)
- Social legislation
Thank you for your attention!

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