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Integrated social work management model in the Republic of Slovenia

The social work of today is dealing with partially unsuitable knowledge, which has been produced in a different epoch of the welfare state and as a consequence, social work is still dominated by various twentieth century theories that are primarily focused on direct practice expertise. Nowadays social work globally has changed and in order to achieve desirable outcomes, social workers also need to understand and learn about complementary skills that extend their extensive knowledge about direct practice. Already back in 2004, management was recognised as one of the 13 core purposes of the social work profession, however, there are still concerns about social workers' lack of knowledge and skills in management practice. Authors believe that management can help in the progress of the field. Based on a thorough literature review and analysis of existing secondary data, authors propose a systematic approach towards an improved social work management model that integrates the field of social work with related areas (namely humanitarian organisations, the deinstitutionalisation process, calls for higher process and budget efficiency, appropriate management skills and organisational design). These five pillars of the integrated social work management model, therefore, advance the frontiers of social work science. The authors also discuss the contribution of the model to the social work management theory and its practical usefulness.

Key words: managerial skills, public administration, social security, humanitarian organisations, deinstitutionalisation, social services.

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Integrirani model menadžmenta v socialnem delu v Sloveniji

Socialno delo se danes srečuje s problemom deloma zastarelega znanja, ki je bilo ustvarjeno v drugačnem okolju socialne države in se praviloma nanaša na znanje o socialnem delu v praksi. Socialno delo se je na globalni ravni spremenilo in za doseganje želenih rezultatov danes morajo socialni delavci razumeti potrebo po pridobivanju komplementarnih znanj in spretnosti, ki lahko še dodatno razširijo njihovo obstoječe znanje o socialnem delu v praksi. Že leta 2004 je bil menadžment priznan kot ena izmed 13 ključnih funkcij socialnega dela, a se danes v praksi še vedno srečujemo s socialnimi delavci, ki nimajo dovolj znanj in spretnosti glede menadžmenta. Avtorji trdijo, da lahko menadžment pomaga pri napredku socialnega dela. Na podlagi obširne raziskave literature in analize sekundarnih podatkov avtorji predlagajo sistematični pristop k izboljšanemu modelu menadžmenta v socialnem delu, ki povezuje socialno delo s povezanimi področji (kot so humanitarne organizacije, proces deinstitucionalizacije, zahteve po večji procesni in proračunski učinkovitosti, primerna menadžerska znanja in organizacijski dizajn). Pet stebrov integriranega modela menadžmenta v socialnem delu bo tako pripomoglo k napredku znanosti v socialnem delu. Avtorji raziskujejo tudi prispevek predlaganega modela k teoriji menadžmenta v socialnem delu in njegovo praktično uporabnost.

Ključne besede: menadžerske spretnosti, javna uprava, socialna varnost, humanitarne organizacije, deinstitucionalizacija, menadžerske storitve.

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Introduction

OECD (2017a) defines gross domestic product (hereinafter GDP) at market prices as the expenditure on final goods and services minus imports: final consumption expenditures, gross capital formation, and exports less imports. Santos (2016) argues that there is, generally, a correlation between a country's wealth, and the share of GDP going to social policies, however, this is not necessarily the case in every country. In the case of the Republic of Slovenia, competitiveness is slowly improving and the economy is recovering after the global economic and financial crisis (Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Economic Development, 2017). Secondary data regarding GDP shows that the Republic of Slovenia is now, approximately, at the same level of GDP growth as prior to the crisis that started in 2009, however, social problems still continue to increase. The authors provide, in Table 1, an overview of GDP growth rates in the Republic of Slovenia in the period from 2008, including the spring 2017 estimates for 2017 and 2018:

Table 1: GDP Growth Republic of Slovenia (2008–2018).

Important indicator	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (est)	2018 (est)
GDP (real growth rate, in %)	3.4	−7.8	1.2	0.6	−2.7	−1.1	3.1	2.3	2.5	3.6	3.2

Source: Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Economic Development, 2017.

Nevertheless, according to the International Institute for Management Development (2017) report on the competitiveness of countries, the ranking of the Republic of Slovenia remains relatively low. On the top of the scale of competitiveness out of the observed 63 countries studied are Hong Kong, Switzerland and Singapore, and among the European Union (hereinafter EU) countries, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Denmark are the leading players. The Republic of Slovenia is ranked in the second half of the list (43rd place), which positions it at 20th place among EU countries. However, the future forecast in general remains moderately optimistic as most of the macroeconomic indicators in recent years have improved and reached values closer to values prior to the crisis. The authors add that social problems will not be resolved solely by the regrowth of GDP and improved country competitiveness.

OECD (2017b) defines the unemployment rate as the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force, where the latter consists of the unemployed plus those in paid or self-employment. Magister (2016) argues that unemployment is a major problem for society, both economically and socially. In Slovenia, in 2014 almost 55% of all unemployed people were receiving some kind of cash benefit (social assistance) from the state (Magister, 2016). Similar to the regrowth of GDP, the situation in the labour market in Slovenia continues to improve. The number of persons employed is now at about the same level as in 2008 (prior to the crisis). At the end of July 2017,

84,793 persons were registered in the unemployment register, which is 15.0% less than in June 2016 and this represents a significant improvement (Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Economic Development, 2017), however, the majority of people that remain unemployed will still require some kind of social assistance in the near future.

The Slovenian smart specialisation strategy (Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, 2015) is a platform for focusing on developing investment in areas where Slovenia has a critical mass of knowledge, capacity, and competence, and on which it is has an innovative potential for positioning in global markets. One of its goals is to strengthen the competitiveness of the economy by strengthening its innovation capacity and another goal is to increase VAT per employee. With improving competitiveness, Slovenia would be able to generate more GDP growth and to create new jobs, which would indirectly influence social work. However, nowadays, despite a clearly set smart specialisation strategy and relatively favourable economic picture, the positive indicators are not yet noticed in the field of social work. Still, as a consequence of the last economic and financial crisis, the Republic of Slovenia is dealing with the problem of growing numbers of social benefit recipients and growing numbers of socially excluded people. Utilising existing secondary data obtained from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Figure 1 shows the increasing number of people that were entitled to financial social assistance in the period from 2012 to 2016.

Figure 1: Number of people entitled to financial social assistance in the Republic of Slovenia (2012–2016).
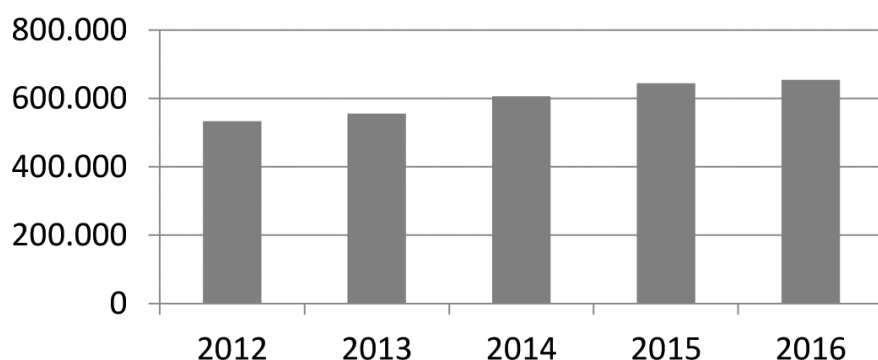
Source: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2017.

Moreover, examining existing secondary data regarding the national budget of the Republic of Slovenia, Table 2 presents data about country expenditure, current transfers and more specifically, data about transfers to individuals and households. As evident (Table 2), resources allocated to these specific budget items are slowly declining, implying that stakeholders in the field of social work will have to acknowledge the limited resources allocated to their work field and learn new ways of how to better manage existing funds.

Simon Colnar, Vlado Dimovski, Barbara Grah

Table 2: Budget constraints for social work in the Republic of Slovenia, 2012–2016.

Budget item	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Expenditures (€)	9,013,907,176	9,631,070,611	9,816,668,881	9,947,105,165	9,540,115,392
Current transfers (€)	5,258,423,527	5,355,953,256	5,237,580,698	5,087,220,008	5,202,073,710
Currents transfers (% of expenditures)	58.34%	55.61%	53.35%	51.14%	54.52%
Transfers to individuals and households (€)	1,416,057,089	1,262,949,920	1,198,317,841	1,180,387,855	1,220,319,689
Transfers to individuals and households (% of all expenditures)	15.71%	13.11%	12.21%	11.87%	12.79%

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2017.

Economic indicators such as GDP growth, competitiveness, unemployment rates or national strategies are aspects which definitely influence the functioning of social work, however, they are perhaps areas where social work cannot directly influence future movements or trends, therefore, it makes sense to point out other areas in which social work can act upon and improve its functioning inside their own field. Managerialism was introduced into social work as a new approach to the coordination, management and delivery of services, loosely based around the concepts of the three M's: markets, managers and measurement (Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald & Pettigrew, 1996) and the three E's: economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Audit Commission, 1983, p. 8).

Hasenfeld (2010) confirms that there has been an external shift to new managerialism and business management strategies. In the example of the UK, Trevithick (2014) argues that it was introduced to improve practice and the cost of service provisions (Hughes & Wearing, 2012, p. 21). It was also introduced to improve professional decision-making (Munro, 2010, p. 12). Since its introduction, managerialism has received some criticism, as Trevithick (2014) asserts that the rigid forms of managerialism pose the most serious threat to the future of social work and how social workers are seen by others, including the general public, and emphasises that managerialism's greatest weakness is its failure to recognise the importance of emotions. Undoubtedly, social work values constitute a unique framework for the practice of management (Webster & Tofi, 2007).

Contrary to the opinion of Trevithick (2014), Ruch (2012) argues that in the past few years we have witnessed a growing recognition of the importance of management and leadership in the social work profession, accompanied with the need for dedicated programmes of training and support for frontline managers. Furthermore, the impact of the current financial climate on social work practitioners and the lack of investment in professional education and training have led us to a situation where there is more for social workers to do, but in less time and with fewer opportunities for reflection and new learning (Kelly, 2016).

Globally, and in Slovenia, social service organisations often promote social workers from direct practice to middle management positions or ask them to

add administrative responsibilities to their existing roles. In this transition, social workers often encounter problems as they are typically equipped with knowledge and skills that pertain more specifically to direct practice, but are asked to assume responsibilities that often contradict the direct practice perspectives and skills they possess (Tolesson Knee, 2014). Shera & Bejan (2016) similarly add that many social workers with primarily direct practice experience have been increasingly moving into upper-level administrative roles within organisations and that, unfortunately, many of these leaders do not have an adequate base of knowledge and skills needed to manage human service organisations. To further highlight this issue, the Ministry of Public Administration of Slovenia (2014) emphasised that in general, neither public sector employees nor public sector middle and top management have sufficient managerial skills. Furthermore, the acquisition and development of knowledge in the field of management is not carried out in a comprehensive and systematic manner. As social work is part of the public sector, this represents a gap in knowledge that needs to be addressed.

The case of Slovenia and its public sector is interesting from the researcher's point of view as its public sector once functioned better than today and was, according to the Measurement of the quality of government and subnational variation report issued by the University of Gothenburg (2010), ranked 17th in the EU-27 countries regarding quality of government (government effectiveness, control of corruption, rule of law and voice and accountability). Whereas Lipnik (2016) argued that only Slovakia, Greece and Italy have a worse functioning public sector than Slovenia. The constant worsening of the situation is alarming and the public sector in general needs to improve. Social work as an integral part of the public sector which also offers services to users could represent a starting point, where modern management measures could contribute in addressing the gap in managerial knowledge, thus, improving its overall functioning and quality of services. With the aim of improving the situation in the public sector, measures taken in the social field in Slovenia could represent a benchmark or an example of good practice for similar countries in southern Europe and also more globally, addressing local specifics of specific countries.

To gradually integrate more management topics into the field of social work, we would have to start with steadily adding more specific management topics into educational social work institutions. Based on the curricula of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Work, 2018), the authors hypothesise that a lot of the study today in Slovenia is orientated to shaping students into excellent social workers in practice with a very solid knowledge base regarding their profession, however, we believe that nowadays social workers also need to have more knowledge related to other topics, namely management, as eventually down their career paths they will have to perform several tasks that are out of their primary field of expertise. The authors argue that some minor modifications to the existing curricula of the Faculty of Social Work, such as the inclusion of more management topics, would be beneficial for future social workers and managers in Slovenia.

Figures, facts and phenomena presented, along with the growing needs and desires of socially endangered people, demand new and innovative approaches in the field of social work. Flaker (2016) argues that social work knowledge, produced in the time of a robust welfare state, is no longer sufficient. With new roles and tasks given to social work (where Flaker adds that they are mainly against the people and not for and with them) and with the lack of resources that social work can provide, they have become, without doubt, no longer useful in today's world. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyse, examine, and discuss complex issues that have arisen in the field of social work in recent years. The goal of this paper is to propose a systematic approach towards building an interdisciplinary integrated model of social work management that strives toward the optimal use of allocated budget funds and improving the quality of social services for users. By conducting a literature review and using existing secondary data, this research represents the starting point of a gradual movement towards more complex managerial and organisational issues in social work.

Social protection in the Republic of Slovenia

The main goal of social protection in the Republic of Slovenia is to ensure dignity and equal opportunities, as well as to prevent social exclusion. A fundamental condition for the functioning of the Republic of Slovenia as a social welfare country is harmonious economic and social development. The social development strategy facilitates social policy as a set of goals, measures, and other instruments that the state develops and uses to enable individuals and groups of the population to satisfy their personal and collective interests and act as full and equal members of society, as well as the state. Social policy is in the strictest sense defined as a set of measures to ensure an individual's social security. Social security is defined by professional principles, rules and activities that enable an individual to become involved and remain involved in the social environment, as well as to actively participate in it. In doing so, the state provides material and social rights, whereas the individual contributes in the form of taxes and other compulsory duties. The rights of the individual are explained in more detail in the Social Protection Act (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2017).

A social welfare country is definitely not a new concept, as it has its roots in Bismarck's Germany in the second half of the 19th century. In the social welfare state, social work organisations occupy a key structural position as providers of social benefits and services. As this volume attests, considerable efforts have been made to understand these important organisations and how they operate (Hasenfeld, 2009). A social welfare country has always been based on the assumption that the society creates enough VAT per employee and thus, creates a surplus that can enable the minority to temporarily receive social assistance. Through the expansion of social rights, which was mainly due to pre-election promises and to the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis, we have now encountered an absurd situation,

where the number of dependent citizens, who can no longer survive without state social assistance, next to everything else the state offers free of charge, is now greater than the number of contributors in the state system (Sušnik, 2016). Moreover, current projections predict that the number of older people (65 and older) in the Slovenian population will almost double in the next 35 years, which will also have serious additional consequences on several fields, including the social security system (Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). Mali (2016) adds that the rapid ageing of the population and the simultaneous decline in the proportion of young people in the western world has already introduced many changes into, hitherto, stable systems.

When state social services (governmental) organisations cannot satisfy all of the population needs, the role of humanitarian (non-governmental) organisations becomes even more important. In the Republic of Slovenia the Law on humanitarian organisations (2003) defines that

> the status of a humanitarian organisation under this act may be acquired by societies and federations of societies in which their members, in accordance with the principles of non-profit and voluntary actions in the public interest, carry out humanitarian activities in the fields of social and health care in accordance with this act.

The role of humanitarian organisations in the Republic of Slovenia in helping vulnerable groups and individuals in alleviating the poor social situation and the various disadvantages of the population has increased significantly during the global economic and financial crisis (Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). According to Novak (2015), in 2013, at least once, the aid of humanitarian organisations was necessary for 739,318 persons, while in 2014 the number of people who turned to humanitarian organisations at least once reduced, however, 655,354 people still needed help. Humanitarian organisations have also acknowledged that users of their programmes need a greater amount of assistance, their problems are more complex, they are included in the programme for a longer time, and the resolution of their problems requires broader knowledge in different areas.

Nevertheless, despite favourable macroeconomic indicators and positive trends in the field of employment, non-governmental and humanitarian organisations also do not perceive that the situation related to their work with materially poorly positioned individuals and families has improved. In addition, social work centres have indicated they agree with the humanitarian and non-governmental organisations' opinion (Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). The authors argue that the role of nongovernmental institutions will only grow in time and that another similar trend will be to involve more volunteers in social work practice. Related to this topic, it is necessary that social workers will be able to manage volunteers, and have administrative skills. As stated by Brudney & Meijs (2014), this trend of involving more volunteers is a consequence of limited budgets and the growing demands for social services.

Deinstitutionalization in the Republic of Slovenia

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2015) adopted the European Commission's definition of deinstitutionalisation as the abolition of (total) institutions and the process of development of a whole range of community services, including preventive ones, to eliminate the need for institutional care. We also need to understand the process of deinstitutionalisation as a change in the relationship between professionals and users, taking on new social roles and higher involvement of users, the shift of power from professionals and institutions to the users, as well as a change of the epistemology of understanding long-term distress. Flaker & Ramon (2016) define deinstitutionalisation as the process of closure of total institutions, while simultaneously creating services that have the potential to support people in distress and enable them to live as ordinary lives as possible in the community. Rafaelič (2015) adds that we do not today discuss deinstitutionalisation only because of its ethical and practical reasons, but also because it is indirectly and directly dictated by numerous human rights declarations and other international and national documents.

The opening of institutions is a process that began in the western world immediately after the Second World War. After successful attempts in Italy and Great Britain (in the 1980s and 1990s), deinstitutionalisation became a global platform and strategy. The deinstitutionalisation processes in Slovenia has been going on for a long time, bringing positive and negative results. The Republic of Slovenia encountered three waves of deinstitutionalisation, the first one being in the 1980s in educational institutions. The second occurred in the 1990s, by multiplying community forms of care in all areas, especially through the initiative of different civil initiatives and movements, and was carried out by non-governmental organisations. The third one took place in institutions over the last decade, with the relocation of a large proportion of residents into accommodation units.

Deinstitutionalisation should also be understood as a necessary response to the rising demands for formal care. Specifically, between 2012 and 2015, the number of long-term care users increased by 10%, and on average, there are 1,300 new users in the Republic of Slovenia, every year. The demands are also rising due to the ageing population, and partly also because of the changed socio-cultural forms of care - in terms of the increased number of people who need care, but fewer people who are able to provide care; employees are now more under pressure from their employers or care more about their career; more focus is on the individual; and more and more people live in ever smaller households and/or are isolated.

In recent years, the response to the growing demands of the population in the Republic of Slovenia has been, primarily, to increase the capacity of institutional care and the relative stagnation of community services development (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2017). The authors argue that better knowledge of management principles is necessary to tackle pressing issues such as limited funds and growing existing demands for formal care.

Facts and figures, such as the funds per user in institutions are 4 times higher than the funds per user in the community, indicate that deinstitutionalisation is perhaps a desirable outcome from the economic point of view of social work (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2015). Nevertheless, the economic factors have not been, nor should be, the primary basis for determining policy on developmental disability services. However, we still cannot neglect the fact that decisions about institutional downsizing and closure have economic consequences. It is fundamentally important that research based information about these consequences is available to policy makers, administrators and advocates, so that deinstitutionalisation can be planned and implemented in a rational, economical and sustainable way (Stancliffe, Lakin, Shea, Prouty & Coucouvanis, 2004).

Budget and process efficiency in social work in the Republic of Slovenia

Klychova, Faskhutdinova & Sadrieva (2014) define that

> budgeting represents the higher level of business development and allows for focus on long-term results, effective use of financial resources, supervising business activities, and assists in making sound and timely managerial decisions. Budgeting helps towards effective cost management and financial performance of an organisation, and allows organisations to compare all planned costs and anticipated revenues for the coming period.

Process efficiency is the capability of human resources to carry out a certain process in the way that ensures minimised consumption of effort and energy with the purpose of simplifying implementation through obtaining more results with fewer resources (Task Management Guide, 2017).

After the latest global economic and financial crisis, pressures on public budgets have increased and it is expected that this will also have influences on the provision of social services (Kubalčikova & Havlikova, 2016). Anttonen & Karsio (2016) add that governments in all post-industrial societies are searching for socially and economically sustainable solutions to meet the care needs of increasingly older populations. Galpin (2009) also acknowledges that debates about policies, governmental objectives and developments in care services are increasingly placed within fiscal frames. Hafford-Letchfield & Bourn (2011) argue that keeping costs down is now a priority for most managers and should be balanced with maintaining standards of quality in accordance with government requirements. Moreover, the Republic of Slovenia is also experiencing similar issues in the field of social work.

Therefore, the impact of the current financial climate on social work practitioners has led us to the situation, aforementioned in previous sections of the paper, that there is more for social workers to do, but in less time and with fewer opportunities for reflection and new learning (Kelly, 2016). As a result, a relatively recent interest or trend in the public and non-profit sectors has emerged in relation to improving service effectiveness and efficiency as

well as reducing costs (Austin, Ciaassen, Vu & Mizrahi, 2008). More recently, Gillingham (2015) argues that social work should move toward becoming more like a business, and Hubner (2016) adds that it is time to develop social work towards more systematisation, documentation, and cost effectiveness. However, the authors argue that it is important to acknowledge some of the criticism related to managerialism in social work towards finding collaborative solutions that improve the overall functioning without neglecting some of the most important primary functions of social work.

Nevertheless, despite favourable calls for process and budget efficiency improvement in the field of social work there are some important limitations to address as first, social workers often function as both, helpers and controllers. Second, there is conflict between the duty of social workers to protect the best interests of people with whom they work and the societal demands for efficiency, and third, even if we acknowledge the fact that resources are limited, the lack of resources can still have some negative influences on the work of social workers. Moreover, social workers are not often required just to fulfil different budget requirements but can also be pressured into fulfilling different measures from the specific political party, which holds power at that time (International Federation of Social Workers, 2001).

Management skills in social work in the Republic of Slovenia

Different definitions of management exist. It encompasses four key managerial functions, namely planning, organising, leading and the controlling of resources and processes (Dimovski et al., 2014). Daft (Daft & Marcic, 2009) defines management as effectively and efficiently achieving the objective of the organisation through the process of planning, organising, leading, and controlling resources that are available to the organisation. Daft's definition implies two important findings, first the management process consists of four basic functions: planning, organising, leading and controlling. Second, the essential task of management concerns effectively and efficiently achieving the objectives of the organisation. Dimovski, Penger, Peterlin, Grah, Černe & Klepec (2017) add that management must coordinate resources in the work environment in the most efficient and flexible way.

As emphasised by Ruch (2012), there is a growing recognition of the importance of management in the social work profession. Already back in 2004 (Webster, McNabb & Darroch, 2015) management was recognised by the International Federation of Social Workers as one of the 13 core purposes of the global profession. However, Tolleson Knee (2014) argues some social workers are still underperforming due to their lack of management skills and competencies. Management has an impact on the effectiveness and quality of social services and, therefore, on the outcomes for the users of social services. If social services are to work well, there should be well trained managers at all organisational levels in order to ensure that they inspire and empower their staff, address the needs of social services users, facilitate cooperation between sectors, and use resources effectively and efficiently (European Social Network, 2014).

According to the aforementioned report from the Ministry of Public Administration for the Republic of Slovenia (2014), neither employees nor senior and middle management have the sufficient managerial skills, consequently, the acquisition and development of knowledge in this field is not carried out systematically and comprehensively. As social work institutions form part of Slovenia's public administration this also indirectly implies that employees and managers in social work institutions do not possess sufficient managerial skills in general, similar to the findings of Tolesson Knee (2014).

In addition, the European Social Network's working group (2014) firmly believes that even the best directors of social services would benefit from a strong management team, with a variety of backgrounds to shape a vision for the future, manage organisational changes and to simply perform daily activities more effectively. A strategy of investing in permanent training and the development of employees and their teams is nowadays seen essential. Paradoxically, in many countries including the Republic of Slovenia, the areas often hit first in times of crises in the public sector are funds that are intended for staff training (European Social Network, 2014).

Comparatively, in Austria, a wide range of training modules and master's programmes, including topics such as self-reflection, supervision, and implementation of different management concepts in practice, are offered. Managers from various public sector fields and from the Ministry of Social Affairs participated in such programmes and already positive results have been seen in their organisations in terms of employees' motivation and their satisfaction with the quality of the organisational management (European Social Network, 2014). Therefore, the authors argue that investing in management education in social work also offers the potential for improving services for social services users in the Republic of Slovenia.

Organisational design in social work in the Republic of Slovenia

Robbins (1990) defines an organisation as "a consciously coordinated social entity, with a relatively identifiable boundary, which functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or a set of goals." In today's fast changing environment, organisational design is an everyday, ongoing activity and a challenge for every executive, whether managing a global enterprise, public organisation or a small work team. Globalisation, political risks, and ever-new technologies are just some of the many factors that drive the ongoing redesigns of organisations. As far as the response goes, many new forms of organisational structures have evolved that challenge old ways of organising for efficiency and effectiveness, yet the fundamental questions regarding organisational design remain the same: What are our goals? What are the basic tasks? Who makes which decision? What is the structure of communication, and what is the incentive structure?

The importance of appropriate organisational structure is highlighted by the finding that potential misfits among organisational design components result in a decrease of organisational performance by up to 30%. Organisations that commit themselves to an ongoing organisational design process

must be aware that organisational design is much more than just reorganising the organisational chart, as it involves numerous interrelated components. Researchers have already proved that an organisational design should be chosen based on the particular context, furthermore, the description of the context should be multidimensional, including both structural (goals, strategy and structure) and human components (work processes, people, coordination and control, and incentive mechanisms) as these components enable a holistic approach to the organisational design challenge (Burton, Obel & Hakonsson, 2015).

Organisational design is a topic that sparks interest among managers, with a desire to acquire new knowledge, to act and take impactful decisions that will make a difference in their organisations. In particular, organisational design can be helpful in improving the performance of their unit or the entire organisation (Burton, Obel & Hakonsson, 2015).

Currently, in the Republic of Slovenia, one of the key objectives of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is the reorganisation of social work centres, in order to eliminate the weaknesses and shortcomings of their current organisation. Social work centres in the current social care system are crucial players, as they integrate the entire social welfare system. According to the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the main purpose of the reorganisation is to improve services for users. It is expected that the reorganisation will unify the functioning of social work centres, as well as the administrative procedures, and allow more time for professional tasks, establishing joint services, increasing the efficiency and quality of work, improving accessibility of services, as well as developing new forms of professional work in exercising rights from public funds.

Social services users, as well employees, should benefit from this reorganisation (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2017). However, during the process of reorganization, one of the key propositions, namely, that an organisational strategy is a key contingency factor affecting organisational structure, as emphasised by Chandler (1962), "structure follows the strategy", should not be neglected. Therefore, in the project on the reorganisation of social work centres in the Republic of Slovenia, researchers and experts from interdisciplinary fields, including the field of management and organisation, should be involved to collaborate with social work researchers, experts, and other practitioners, in order to achieve the main goal of social work services, specifically, to improve the quality of service for social service users.
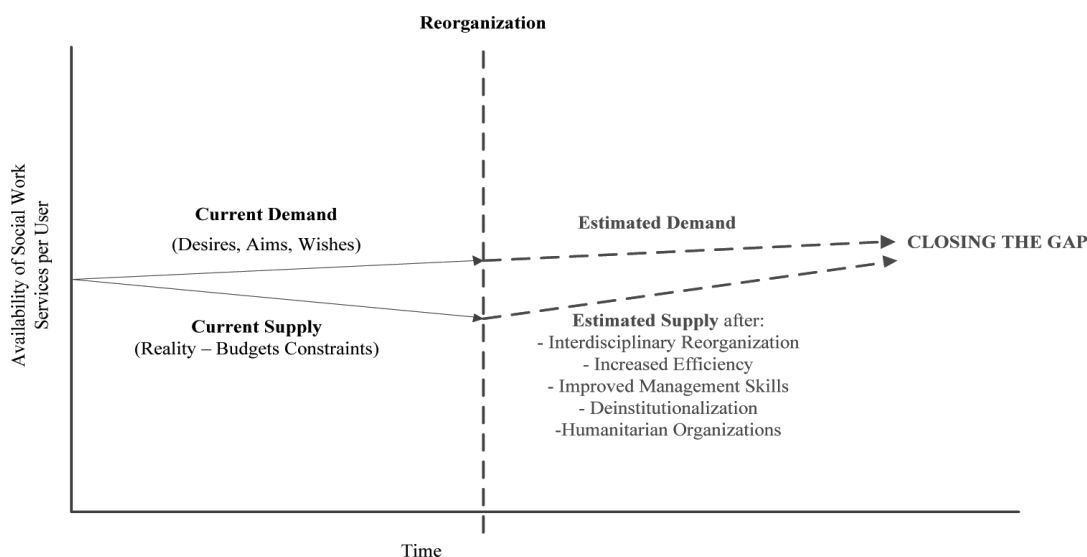
Integrated social work management model

As presented in Figure 2, the social work management model must, on one hand, consider the pressing issues and challenges connected to the field of social work in the Republic of Slovenia such as the limited budgets that continue to dwindle, as well as the growing needs and demands from recipients of social transfers and excluded people. However, on the other hand, the benefits of several aspects of social work can be combined, namely, humanitarian orga-

nisations, as a support system when the state programmes are not sufficient on their own, the deinstitutionalisation process which represents an alternative to the ever pressing demand on formal care in Slovenia, and, moreover, internally, organisations in the field of social work can focus on improving their budgets and process efficiency, developing proper management skills and establishing an appropriate organisation structure.

All of the five mentioned pillars of the integrated social work model can contribute a small part to improving the quality of services for social services users and their overall wellbeing. The proposed integrated social work management model (Figure 2) aims to involve as many stakeholders as possible and advance the frontiers of social work science through interdisciplinary connections among different fields, specifically, social work and management, and organisation.

Figure 2: Integrated social work management model.

One of the indirect benefits of the proposed integrated social work management model is also that it encourages collaboration between various public sectors and other institutions. Huxham (1996, p. 1) defines collaboration as "working in association with others for some form of mutual benefit." Bardach (1998, p. 8) defines collaboration

> as any joint activity by two or more agencies working together that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately.

The authors hypothesise that collaboration between institutions in Slovenia is a segment that is traditionally neglected. As we are going through the process of change in the field of social work, such as is the example of the reorganisation of social work centres, it is typical that stakeholders in such processes try to protect their own narrow interests and tend to neglect other related areas that would improve the general wellbeing. The proposed model or framework aims to highlight concerns about the specific interests of particular stakeholders at

the policy making level and to encourage decision makers to address social work issues at a broader level, promoting collaboration between institutions and involving stakeholders from different, but, similar fields of social work.

The authors also believe that the integrated social work management model in the Republic of Slovenia can contribute to fulfilling the vision of the network for social work management, which is to create a future in which all social organisations, worldwide, are purposed, high performing systems of service and influence (The Network for Social Work Management, 2017). What is novel in the proposed model is that it deals with three different aspects of social work where there is the potential for improvement. The nongovernmental aspect is the support system when state programmes, as a consequence of limited budgets, cannot satisfy everyone's needs, deinstitutionalisation represents a modern alternative that is a desirable outcome in modern societies and internal aspects, namely, budget and process efficiency, and management skills, moreover, organisational design represents activities in which organisations can engage on their own and improve their internal functioning. As the global trend in social work around the world is similar, with limited budgets and growing pressures, the proposed model, if after implementation in practice is proven to be successful, could also represent a benchmark for similar south European countries, or other countries, in closing the gap between the estimated demand and supply of social services.

Conclusion

Boehm (1961) defines social workers as artists, not only because they blend science and values, but also because the expression of this blending in the form of skill is an achievement that belongs to them and them alone, for the performance of their skills is the expression of their creativity, the creativity of an artist. He stressed that the presence of the artistic component is desirable in social work science and in social work practice, which, according to the authors' beliefs, is still present in the mindset of the majority of today's social workers.

Ruch (2012) adds to the discussion that in social work practice, the non--negotiable dimension of the task (mission) that is devoted to helping people should be the central role of social workers. Lettieri, Bolga & Savoldelli (2004) contribute by discussing that achieving positive economic and financial targets is seen as a means to pursue the mission of organisations, and not the key-target.

However, we cannot neglect the fact that in times of political and fiscal conservatism, cutting social welfare programmes heads agendas, and the question of social work's effectiveness is of paramount importance (Herie & Martin, 2002). Leung et al. (2010) also highlight the new challenges that are due to the emergence of new social problems and welfare cuts. According to Morago (2006), there is a growing recognition of the importance of service users' rights to receive high quality, transparent, and accountable services as one of the key characteristics of modern societies. Therefore, with the proposed interdisciplinary approach to the reorganisation process in social work organisations, as presented in the integrated social work management

model, the emphasis is on the management contribution towards social work being characterised as a profession and scientific discipline devoted to helping people affected by social problems, inducing social change in order to prevent or ameliorate social problems, and above all, improving the quality of life (Rode, 2017).

As emphasised by Flaker (2016), maybe if the propositions of social work in the past were right, in today's ever changing world, with the new roles and tasks given to social work, means that we have to think about different and innovative approaches to social work. Collaboration between management and social work could be a useful starting point. Each of the first five chapters discussed in this paper is a unique opportunity for social work to advance its frontiers of science. Humanitarian organisations with their invaluable help when governmental organisations cannot fulfil all of their tasks, deinstitutionalisation with the liberation of people and its economic consequences of downsizing and closing institutions, calls for budget and process efficiency with their contribution in truly understanding the current pressures on public budgets, and management skills that are now extremely important in any type of organisation, and organisational design with its potential influence on organisational performance. Despite the numerous benefits of the proposed implementation of the integrated social work management model, our research has some limitations.

This is first and foremost an informative, qualitative study based on a literature review and existing secondary data about social work management in the Republic of Slovenia. The findings are not generalizable, however, this is not the intent of this paper as the paper tries to offer an empirical insight that would encourage social work managers and practitioners to dig deeper into the social work management topic and understand what the potential benefits of the proposed integrated social work management model are and try to implement the model into practice. After the implementation of the model into practice, it would be possible to measure, if as a consequence, the functioning of organisations and overall quality of services for social services users had improved.

Follow-up studies could focus more specifically on one of the five pillars of the proposed integrated social work management model. Similar studies could then be conducted in other countries and their public sector contexts, where social work has a gap in knowledge in management skills. Future studies, exploring the management topic in social work institutions, should also involve other qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews with experts in the field, focus groups, or direct observation, to gain more in-depth knowledge about management in social work in practice. Quantitative methods, such as online survey questionnaires could also represent a different useful research approach.

To conclude, Flaker (2016) mentions that there are increasing numbers of people who have lost their homes, are out of work, and left with no friends, moreover, there is an ageing population, a reality in the EU nowadays, which only emphasises the importance of social work today and points to the ever

growing importance of social work in the future. As there are enormous pressures on public budgets and never-ending demands from social service users, the time is now to discuss complex social work problems and implement solutions into practice. The integrated social work management model represents collaboration between social work and management and organisation, and is a possible piece in the mosaic of tomorrow's social work.

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