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ACTIVE AGING OF SENIORS IN SLOVAKIA

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ABSTRACT: *It is very important for an aging society as well as for the elderly themselves that seniors are as active as possible in old age. Older activities bring a higher quality of life for seniors and save money for society. Today, the concept of active aging is an important part of coping with the aging process in developed countries. The work emphasizes the principles of active aging of seniors, based on the National Program of Active Aging for 2014-2020, while appealing to the availability, quality and financial sustainability of social services.*

KEY WORDS: *aging of seniors, active aging, principles of active aging, social services*

INTRODUCTION

The core of active aging is a concept that emphasizes the participation of individuals in the life of society, so as to fully apply their human, experiential or wider social potential. Active aging encourages people to strengthen the participation of older people in the labor market and postulates the demand for their greater participation in other areas of society. As part of the principles of active aging, we will be based on the National Program for Active Aging for 2014-2020. Starzenie się społeczeństwa

THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ACTIVE AGING (2014-2020)

The National Program for Active Aging 2014-2020 is based on all relevant international instruments, such as: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Principles on Older People, International Plan of Action on Aging (adopted at the First World Assembly on Aging in Vienna 1991), Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging 2002, European Social Charter, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Digital Agenda for Europe. The elaboration of the National Program for Active Aging follows directly from the Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2012-2016, where in the section "Quality of life of elderly people and citizens with disabilities as an important determinant of a cohesive society" In choosing the structure and system, the results of the European Active Aging Index project, which defines active aging for EU Member States as inspiring, were: productive activities (helping family members or volunteering) and living a healthy, independent and safe life" (Active, 2013: 6).

The aim of the project was to create an effective tool for measuring progress in the creation and implementation of national support (activating) policies. In order to measure the progress of progress, four areas (domains) that fulfill active aging have been identified, including indicators that can be used to measure:

- A. preconditions for active aging within a supportive environment (determined by indicators such as life expectancy at age 55, healthy life years after age 55, mental health, social relations, use of information and communication technologies (hereinafter "ICT"), level of education).
- B. the contribution of older people in paid work (indicators are the employment rate in the age groups 55-59 years, 60-64 years, 65-69 years and 70-74 years).
- C. social activities and participation of older people (indicators are the rate of volunteer work, care for one's own grandchildren or other older people or political participation).
- D. independent and autonomous life of older people (indicators are physical performance, availability of services, independence, financial and personal security and lifelong learning)

Protection of human rights, support for active independence and civic participation of older people - based on the legal order of the Slovak Republic and international treaties for the protection of human rights by which the Slovak Republic is bound, older people have the same right to respect and dignity as other groups. Due to the fact that they are among the most vulnerable groups in society, they face impaired access to their rights, ill-treatment or illegal actions. For human rights to be effective, older people need to know their rights and their enforceability and to recognize their violations, both from their loved ones and from the wider community. Therefore, it should be a society-wide priority to increase, by providing quality education, information and awareness in this area among the general public and the target group itself.

Promoting the rights, legitimate interests and needs of older people through the support of senior organizations - organizations promoting the interests and needs of older people must be partners in shaping public policies and addressing issues that affect them. Policies have an impact on older people and should therefore be effectively influenced by them. It is also a prerequisite for ensuring the full and effective participation of the older generation in the economic, political and social life of society and at the same time a means of ensuring the continued active integration of older people into the development process and strengthening their rights. The aim is to create a society friendly to all age groups, in which even older people will have the conditions for a dignified active life without discrimination.

The National Program for Active Aging of the Elderly for the years 2014-2020 defines the principles of active aging: it divides the following principles:

- the principle of independence - seniors need access to work or income, to influence the pace of their exclusion from employment, to access services and assistance, access to education and training, to a safe environment and to live in their natural home environment for as long as possible (Kováč 2013).
- the principle of solidarity - social solidarity is primarily related to the formation and distribution of living conditions and resources of individuals and social groups in order to fulfill the idea of social justice. Solidarity is an expression of the fact that man is a social being. Therefore, always and in all circumstances, its existence is to some extent dependent on others, it is dependent on coexistence in society as a whole (Krebs 2015).

People depend on each other and depend on each other in different ways. Therefore, they are required to properly implement this dependence, for the good of the individual and society as a whole.

Through human individuality, its self-realization, the principle of solidarity penetrates interpersonal relationships into social and social relations and integrates various social activities in the interest of human development in earthly life while respecting the functional development tendency of communities (Gasperová, 2008; Aftyka, Novotna, 2018).

The principle of solidarity must also be applied at global level. Here, a legal order is required that will be equally binding for all mankind, and to the extent of a specific need, it is necessary to create legal institutions that are all the more necessary, which makes the mutual contact of nations more intense and immediate (Vaňo 2006).

- the principle of participation - includes the possibility of co-decision, application of knowledge, skills, social initiatives, the possibility of establishing movements or associations of senior citizens (Kováč 2013).
- the principle of equality - the principle of equality means that biologically and mentally different individuals are seen as equal, that is, individuals with the same natural human rights. Equality is an important condition for dignity. In fact, individuals are not equal in ability, genetic

predisposition, or health. Therefore, natural inequalities between individuals must be compensated for in order to achieve equality. Various special conditions need to be adjusted for certain groups of people. Thus, historically, principles have been developed to regulate the equality of persons of different races and nationalities, cultural, religious and linguistic orientations, genders, health conditions and ages. On the one hand, discrimination is prohibited and, on the other, objective differences are compensated for in order to achieve equality between men and women, children and adults, young and old, and so on. (Tomes 2011)

Completely different it is with public normative ideas about which age groups deserve most social recognition and respect. According to public opinion, such a claim, which does not reflect the real but desired state, begins to form more significantly only after the age of 60, ie in the period which for most people means the cessation of economic activity and retirement, and culminates in the Seventies. Social recognition and respect should therefore belong to people, especially in old age, and reflect their previous contribution to society. However, the real position of older people in society differs quite sharply from this normative ideal and is generally considered weak or worse compared to younger people. (Bútorová 2013)

- the principle of dignity - this is primarily an ethical category on the recognition of man and his rights in society. Human dignity is guaranteed by the Constitutional Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but the right to dignity is not defined there. (Tomes 2011)

Human rights are rights to which people are entitled because they are human beings regardless of age, nationality, nationality, race, ethical origin, language, gender, sexual orientation or ability. If these inherited rights are respected, people will be able to live in dignity, equality and without discrimination. (Hetteš 2011)

- the principle of participation - in each society there is a considerable diversity of individual and social goals, interests, wills and abilities, preconditions and possibilities for certain activities. This fact gives demographic societies the opportunity to participate, to participate in social life and also in social policy. Each subject has its goals and in each specific situation it behaves according to the degree of interest

and motivation and, of course, also depending on the possibilities and abilities and assumptions to realize the goals. Fulfillment of the principle of participation is a gradual, longer-term process, which can be called in short as the transition from man as an object of social policy to man as a full, responsible and respected subject. (Krebs 2015)

- the principle of education - in the implementation of education during preparation for aging, the basic premise must be taken into account, namely that these will be citizens who have been out of education for a long time. It follows that in order to clarify some concepts and interpret new knowledge, a different tactic must be chosen, different forms than for young people. (Fizova 2003).

Educational activities are often focused on the prevention of imminent deficits, or their elimination and compensation. The main goal of this action is to maintain physical and intellectual strength. The effort to ensure a better and more dignified life also plays an important role. Promoting the relevant offer of education for seniors should be an integral part of the approach of an advanced society, from which we expect its members to ensure safe and dignified aging and enable them to participate fully in all civic activities. (Janis 2012).

- principle of care - includes family and social assistance, access to health, social and legal services and institutional care. (Kováč 2013)

By care we mean an activity aimed at satisfying the needs of an individual, group or community, while social care itself can be focused on the client or on the social environment. It is an obligation to take care of the client, to take responsibility for him. In terms of social assistance, it is an obligation to support the client and help him find a solution to his own problems. (Laca 2015)

- the principle of employment - from the point of view of the employment of older people in the labor market, we are incorrectly oriented only according to the calendar age, which represents a certain degree of discrimination. The indicator of the current functionality of a person is the biological age, which is a better indicator of the performance of seniors. We can say that work and movement do not harm the senior, on the contrary, they keep him in mobility until old age. However, what affects his health, work pace and work environment. The older person should have the right to determine the pace of his work himself and should take a longer break during his work, as the older organism

needs a longer time to recover. In practice, two basic approaches to the employment of seniors can be assumed. In the first case, it is assumed that the older workforce is less productive due to its age, lower education, ability to master new technologies or foreign languages. In the case of the second approach, it is assumed that it is the life situation of the elderly that brings relief from family worries, experience and maturity that create the preconditions for the reliability of work performance. (Balogová 2005)

Retaining older workers can be a great tool for intergenerational knowledge transfer. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the elderly as a source and not a burden (Hetteš 2011).

- the principle of identity and recognition of one's own self - the image of human life changes:
 - 1) Loss of autonomy - limiting the ability to be oneself and limiting the ability to freely choose a place, time, people and activities and inactivity with other people
 - 2) loss of control over one's life - limiting the influence on the performed activities and reducing the degree of responsibility for one's decisions (Klevetová, 2008).
- the principle of self-realization - it is important to emphasize within the given principle that older people have the opportunity to fully develop their potential, to have access to educational, cultural, spiritual, recreational opportunities in society (Kováč 2013)
- the principle of security and social role and position in society - every person, as well as senior, needs to belong somewhere, to have their roles in the family, at work and in society. In old age, many changes and losses increase, which are difficult to accept for seniors (Klevetová, 2008).
- the principle of intergenerational cohesion - the application of the principle of intergenerational cohesion is described mainly through the family, which is considered a key institution for sustainable social development, preservation of social values and a key source of intra- and intergenerational solidarity. the problem of active aging is a matter of intergenerational solidarity throughout society. These are first and foremost the priorities of the state, so that seniors after their

lifelong work have something to pay for their stay, medicines, etc. It calls for the need to create resources to cover social risks related to age. (Barancová 2012).

AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

To realize the potential of aging in the 21st century, changes in attitudes, policies and practices need to be achieved at all levels and in all sectors. Following demographic aging, the growing number of older people in need of long-term care, but also in the context of globalization, which is changing the structure of the family and reducing the family's share of informal care, will also have to change social services policies. , resp. long-term care. Long-term care, resp. in general, social services aimed at vulnerable groups in society must become part of publicly provided services and their adequate financial support from the state and local government is also necessary to ensure a balance in the demands on other social protection systems. In the field of social services in the conditions of the Slovak Republic, a systemic solution of their financing is needed. The availability and sustainability of social services is a challenge not only for Slovakia but also for other European countries. One of the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy is to ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion by helping the poor and socially excluded groups to take an active part in society. An important means of achieving this goal is to increase the quality, sustainability and availability of social services and the long-term care system in response to the ever-growing needs of people who depend on the help of another individual, also in the wake of an aging population.

Coordination and integration of long-term health care and social services - the main reason for increasing demand for long-term care services is generally an increase in life expectancy associated with prolonging life in which a person needs the help of another individual, as well as the occurrence of severe disability on the long-term assistance of another natural person. The issue of creating the conditions for a new long-term care system (LTC), especially for elderly clients and people with disabilities who depend on the help of others, depends on the introduction of a new mechanism of financing social services to ensure the client's right to social service and its availability on the one hand.,

but on the other hand also the financial sustainability of such a system. Such a system is financially very demanding due to the ever-growing needs of older clients, therefore it is necessary to look for a society-wide consensus and the necessary resources, resp. a sustainable combination of public and private sources of funding. There is a need to provide more resource funding, combining resources from insurance, taxes, public budgets (state, municipality, higher territorial unit), social service providers and long-term care recipients and their families only to an extent that will not result in risk of covering other living costs with the risk of poverty or financial dependence. Improving the effective coordination and integration of health care and social services and their flexibility by adapting care to the changing individual needs of the client in space and time is a fundamental requirement along with the growing importance of social counseling leading to care coordination. The provision of long-term care in the home environment should take precedence over the provision of institutionalized care (National Program for Active Aging 2014-2020).

CONCLUSION

The idea of aging and its similar strategies have given rise to an equally specific segment of services and organizations that are of interest to various disciplines. Through actors, the way in which active aging is constructed and the implications it seeks is sought. Active aging is not only about the individual lifestyle of seniors and their physical activity, but also emphasizes other dimensions of the active involvement of seniors in the family, in their surroundings and in the community. According to the WHO, activity appears as a much broader concept, which relates primarily to the effort to improve the living conditions of seniors (Hasmanová Marhánková 2015).

In general, population aging is perceived as a problem, threat or crisis. Contrary to this myth, however, we can see aging as a triumph in terms of health, social and economic progress, because the social assistance system brings challenges and affects virtually all areas of society. In the context of longer life, the importance of conventional and statutory age breaks in life changes, such as retirement, is changing as the proportion of the population surviving long after this age increases. Every age group brings important contributions within the community, family or society as such. Emphasizing the group of seniors,

it is necessary to appeal to policies supporting their social and economic integration into all parts of society using a holistic approach (Hetteš 2011).

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